

Senate Bill 455
College Preparatory Programs & College Admissions Applications – Fees – Prohibition
Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
February 14, 2024

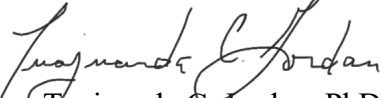
Letter of Information

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share St. Mary's College of Maryland's analysis of Senate Bill 455. In general, this bill prohibits a county board from charging a student (or their parents) any fee related to the enrollment in, or completion of, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program or comparable Advanced Placement courses. The bill also prohibits public colleges and universities in the state of Maryland from charging any fee associated with an application for admission.

As the state's designated public honors college, St. Mary's College of Maryland offers a premier liberal arts education that is both affordable and accessible for academically talented students from a broad spectrum of socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Although the College does charge a \$50 application fee, the Office of Admission participates in the Common Application's comprehensive fee waiver program for students depending on their income or participation in local, state, or federal programs for low-income students. The College also independently offers a significant number of fee waivers to students from a variety of backgrounds – including first-generation students, active duty service members or veterans, low-income students who do not apply through the Common Application, as well as participants in on-campus recruitment events – in order to incentivize their application to the College. For the Fall 2023 application cohort, 40.3% of application fees were waived; similarly, 41.6% of application fees have been waived to date for the Fall 2024 application cohort.

Consistent with our mission, St. Mary's College of Maryland remains supportive of state-wide initiatives to expand access to higher education for Maryland students. However, Committee members should note that the prohibition of application fees would result in a significant loss in annual revenue which supports College recruitment activities; additionally, if the elimination of application fees leads to a significant increase in applications from students who are not a good fit for the College, operational impacts to the Office of Admission would similarly increase.

St. Mary's College of Maryland remains committed to offering a premier liberal arts education that is both affordable and accessible to a broad spectrum of Maryland students. Thank you for your consideration and continued support of St. Mary's College of Maryland.


Tuajuanda C. Jordan, PhD
President