



SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Senate Bill 9
Maryland Higher Education Commission - Academic Program Approval - Revisions
January 22, 2025
Favorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing the University System of Maryland (USM) to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 9 – *Maryland Higher Education Commission - Academic Program Approval – Revisions*.

The USM is comprised of twelve distinguished institutions, and three regional centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor’s degrees in the State. Each of USM’s 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes three Historically Black Institutions, comprehensive institutions and research universities, and the country’s largest public online institution.

USM appreciates the work of the Program Approval Task Force that spent many hours of hard work and deliberations during the 2023 interim to produce final recommendations presented during the 2024 legislative session.

As you’ll recall we supported the original recommendations of the Workgroup introduced in Senate Bill 1022 (2024).

The recommendations provide an opportunity for all Maryland institutions to thrive. They address the critical importance of developing programs to serve the state and its many students. Importantly, they focus on ensuring a predictable, transparent, and collegial process for the review of program proposals, which is so important to the students who wish to study in our diverse institutions. These issues are central to USM’s ability to serve the students of our state and prepare the workforce for the future. Our graduates will drive economic growth, foster innovation, and strengthen our Maryland communities.

We support the legislature’s intent, and we look forward to continued collaboration with our partners in K-12 education, community colleges, the state’s other public universities, independent colleges and universities, and private career schools. Together and with support from the Maryland Higher Education Commission, we can ensure students can find post-secondary options that match their hopes and needs.

