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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.



SB 9 Academic Program Approval Revisions - Favorab

Uploaded by: Matt Power

Position: FAV



Favorable

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senate Bill 9 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Academic Program Approval - Revisions

Matt Power, President
mpower@micua.org
January 22, 2025

On behalf of the member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) and the nearly 55,000 students we serve, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of [*Senate Bill 9 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Academic Program Approval - Revisions*](#).

SB 9 is critically important to the future growth and viability of MICUA institutions. Without it, five institutions in the State of Maryland will have the right of first refusal to develop graduate programs for Maryland's emerging workforce needs. Undergraduate enrollment at MICUA institutions is projected to be relatively flat and the primary area of projected growth is in graduate programs. In a time of declining State budgets and State support, MICUA institutions need to stay competitive, not only with other schools in Maryland, but with peer schools in other states. Having to put a graduate proposal forward and then wait a year while five other institutions decide if they would rather develop the program is inherently unfair and unreasonable. MICUA institutions are already at a severe competitive disadvantage to their out of state peers because 44 other states either wholly or partially exempt private non-profit colleges and universities from any state approval for new programs.

Throughout 2024, at the direction of the Maryland General Assembly, MICUA participated with the other segments of higher education on the Program Approval Workgroup co-chaired by Senator Nancy King and Delegate Stephanie Smith. The workgroup examined the program approval process and developed a list of recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly. Those recommendations were passed in 2024 as part of program approval reform. SB 9 makes the program approval process consistent with the recommendations of the Program Approval Workgroup. More broadly, SB 9 makes higher education in Maryland more competitive with states across the country by allowing all institutions the ability to develop graduate programs for emerging workforce needs.

To attract talent into the State of Maryland and develop the kinds of graduate programs desired by businesses and students alike, the passage of SB 9 is critical. ***For these reasons we request a favorable report for SB 9.***

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony related to Senate Bill 9 on behalf of our institutions. If you have any questions or would like additional information please contact Matt Power, President, Maryland Independent College and University Association, mpower@micua.org.

SB 9 - SUPPORT - Johns Hopkins - Maryland Higher E

Uploaded by: Michael Huber

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Senator Brian Feldman
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

SB9
Favorable

FROM: Michael Huber
Director, Maryland Government Affairs

DATE: January 22, 2025

RE: SUPPORT – SB9 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Academic Program
Approval – Revisions Favorable

Johns Hopkins supports SB 9 – Maryland Higher Education Commission – Academic Program Approval – Revisions. The bill clarifies that private institutions of higher education are required to submit letters of intent every six months. It also clarifies that any institution of higher education in Maryland may propose emerging workforce need graduate programs.

These changes are vital to allow Johns Hopkins University to continue to meaningfully contribute to the State’s economic competitiveness by allowing institutions of higher education, including Johns Hopkins University, to remain competitive.

Research and advanced degrees are fundamental drivers of economic growth, innovation, employment, and wealth creation in Maryland. The significant contributions of institutions like Johns Hopkins University cannot be overstated. Institutions depend on the ability to be agile in the design and implementation of graduate programmatic offerings. Research and innovation are at the core of many of JHU’s mission statements, and we need the ability to rapidly develop programs – such as what we are doing in the AI space – in response to scientific research breakthroughs, shifting societal or economic trends, and even newly identified national threats or priorities.

We greatly appreciate the Maryland General Assembly’s partnership over the years, and we look forward to continued collaboration on this important issue to institutions of higher education and to the State.

Accordingly, Johns Hopkins respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on **SB9**.