

Maryland Higher Education Commission
Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2025
10:00 a.m.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) met on Wednesday, February 26, 2025 via video teleconference (Google Meet).

Commission members present:

Catherine J. “Cassie” Motz, Chair	Ray Serrano, Ph.D.
Chike Aguh, Vice Chair	Sheila D. Thompson, Ph.D.
Kathleen Bands, Ph.D.	Craig A. Williams, Ph.D.
Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.	Janet E. Wormack, Ed.D.
Charlene Mickens Dukes, Ed.D.	Praise Alayode, Student Commissioner
Barbara Kerr Howe	

Commission members absent:

Rebecca Taber Staehelin	
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Staff members present:

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.	Emily A. A. Dow, Ph.D.
Bryson Barksdale	Soma Kedia
Anthony Reiner	Kimberly Smith Ward
Derrick Coley	Melissa Leuschel
Victoria Johnson	Deborah Ing
Barbara Schmertz, Ph.D.	Brittany Martin
Alexandra Nguyen	Yuxin Lin, Ph.D.
Allie Edelstein	Alexis Merriman
Khia Poteat	Frances Turner
Glenda Abney	Younger Oliver
Lyndsay Silva, D.P.A.	Eliza Kritz
Kristin Clarkson	Alexandra Chaillou, Ph.D.
Thomas Waters	Elena Quiroz-Livanis

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Motz** at approximately 10:01 a.m. A meeting quorum was established with eleven (11) out of twelve (12) members present.

Chair’s Remarks

Chair Motz remarked that this was a very busy time for all. She commended the MHEC team and higher education partners for their work. It is important to work together on behalf of the students.

Secretary's Remarks

Secretary Rai thanked higher education partners in the face of recent challenges. He also remarked that the MHEC team was settling well into their new location. Additionally, they were currently busy with the legislative session, attending budget hearings and testifying on legislation. He gave an overview of the agenda and noted that he was grateful to the Moore-Miller Administration for their continued investment in higher education in Maryland. Lastly, he reported that he attended recently a roundtable with the Lieutenant Governor on the topic of artificial intelligence. The event brought together state leaders and academia.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Commission Meeting Minutes Approval

Commissioner Howe made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 20, 2024, and **Vice Chair Aguh** seconded the motion. **Commissioner Burnim** abstained from voting, as he was not present at the meeting. The motion passed.

Commissioner Burnim made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 11, 2024, and **Commissioner Thompson** seconded the motion. **Vice Chair Aguh** and **Commissioner Dukes** abstained from voting, as they were not present at the meeting. The motion passed.

Vice Chair Aguh made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 22, 2025, and **Commissioner Burnim** seconded the motion. **Commissioner Serrano** abstained from voting, as he was not present at the meeting.

Update on the Maryland State Plan for Higher Education – Information Item

Vice Chair Aguh shared an update on the Maryland State Plan for Higher Education. First, he thanked the MHEC team for their work on the Plan. He would like to see a draft plan ready for review near the end of the year. In future Commission meetings, he would like to bring in outside groups who are national experts to hear their perspectives on the direction of higher education in our country. Additionally, feedback from all the higher education segments and various stakeholders will be considered.

Department of Academic Affairs – Office of Research & Policy Analysis – 2024 Performance Accountability Report – Action Item

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs, who provided some background on the Performance Accountability Report (PAR), which is a key

mechanism for ensuring that Maryland public colleges and universities are accountable for achieving institutional and statewide higher educational goals. The report tracks progress on institutional priorities by assessing key metrics, setting benchmarks, and measuring outcomes. PAR is required by statute. Each public institution prepares an annual report on their institutional metrics and benchmarks reviewed by its governing board and submits that report to MHEC. These reports, along with comments and recommendations, are presented to the Commissioners for their approval. Ultimately, the PAR is sent to the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly. The Performance Accountability Report primarily reflects institutional priorities highlighting the progress of a college in achieving its self-defined goals. However, the PAR is just one of many performance evaluation tools.

Dr. Yuxin Lin, Associate Director of Research and Policy Analysis, continued with this presentation. The 2023-2024 Performance Accountability Report summarizes institutions' progress toward the three key goals of the 2022 State Plan for Higher Education. In addition, institutions responded to several reporting prompts related to the long-term equity gaps. Their responses reflect institutional strategies and initiatives to: 1) increase completion; 2) improve the success of transfer; 3) eliminate equity gaps; 4) equip graduates with employable skills; and 5) secure federal grants on student success.

Overall, the performance accountability metrics reflect that the institutions slowly recovered from the negative impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on enrollment and student success. However, many institutions have not returned to levels of performance seen since before the pandemic and are not on track to meet some of their established benchmarks before the end of their cycle. The full institutional reports in the latter part of the report provide a more detailed summary of the efforts that the institutions made to meet the goals, objectives, and priorities of the State Plan.

Dr. Lin presented more findings and highlights from the submissions by Maryland's public institutions for the 2023-2024 academic year reporting cycle. For example, undergraduate enrollment is rebounding, though equity gaps persist. On a positive note, undergraduate enrollment continued to grow in fall 2024, and Maryland has the third highest transfer rate nationwide. The Commissioners asked clarifying questions about Dr. Lin's presentation.

Dr. Lin recommended that the Maryland Higher Education Commission approve the 2024 Performance Accountability Report and ask the Secretary to forward it to the Governor and the General Assembly as required by law. **Commissioner Howe** made a motion for approval, and **Commissioner Dukes** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Update on Workforce Needs Analysis – Information Item

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Dow to present this item. During the 2024 legislative session, House Bill 1244 passed, requiring the Maryland State Plan to include current and emerging state and regional workforce needs as annual appendices. A draft was released in December and shared with various groups. Additionally, a public-facing survey was launched. Some of the feedback centered on data sources and methodology. A draft will be presented at the March Commission meeting.

Closed Session

At this time, the Commission entered into Closed Session to receive legal advice of Counsel regarding a pending Administrative Appeal, in compliance with § 3-305 (b)(7) of the General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

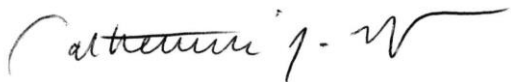
Commissioner Dukes made a motion to go into closed session, and **Commissioner Thompson** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commissioners entered into closed session at 11:36 a.m.

Adjournment

The Commissioners re-entered the open session at 11:46 a.m. **Vice Chair Aguh** made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and **Commissioner Howe** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Approved by the Commission:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Catherine J. Motz", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Catherine J. "Cassie" Motz, Chair