

Maryland Higher Education Commission
Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2025
10:00 a.m.

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

Commission members present:

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

Commission members absent:

Janet E. Wormack, Ed.D.	
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Staff members present:

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.	Emily A. A. Dow, Ph.D.
Bryson Barksdale	Samuel Durai Pandian
Anthony Reiner	Kimberly Smith Ward
Al Dorsett	Daniel Schuster
Victoria Johnson	Deborah Ing
Everette Jackson	Geoffrey Newman
Alexandra Nguyen	Elena Quiroz-Livanis
Thomas Waters	Alexis Merriman
Khia Poteat	Lyndsay Silva, D.P.A.
Glenda Abney	Younger Oliver

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Motz** at approximately 10:00 a.m. A meeting quorum was established with eleven (11) out of twelve (12) members present.

Chair’s Remarks

Chair Motz thanked agency staff for their hard work amidst challenging and uncertain times. Today’s agenda reflects the breadth and depth of the work undertaken by MHEC.

Secretary’s Remarks

Secretary Rai welcomed everyone to today's meeting. He remarked that, in light of the many recent federal policy changes, MHEC reaffirms its mission to put students first. Earlier this month, MHEC hosted a virtual briefing with the presidents of institutions to update them on the recent federal policy changes. He then gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Commission Meeting Minutes Approval

Commissioner Burnim made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 26, 2025, and **Vice Chair Aguh** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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. With the changing federal landscape, equity will be more important than ever before. He remarked that transparency will be a big part of the process, ensuring that the public and various stakeholders are always aware of what is happening. Secondly, they aim to be inclusive, seeking input from various groups and organizations in the community and industry. Third, the State Plan will be an ambitious plan that puts students first. In the coming months, various speakers who are national experts will be invited to present their work and findings on the direction of higher education in our country.

Presentation: The Future of Work & Learning – Information Item

Vice Chair Aguh introduced Mr. Matt Sigelman of The Burning Glass Institute to present this item. The Burning Glass Institute is an organization that started 3 years ago. It is a fully independent, non-profit organization that is focused on understanding the intersection of the future of work and the future of learning. They do a lot of work with higher education systems and institutions. Mr. Sigelman shared some insights from his work and research. In a Gallup poll that asked how important is a college degree today, the percentage of respondents who answered "very important" dropped from 74% in 2013 to 39% in 2023. Yet, a college degree still pays off and, though credentials work, it is important to have the right ones. In some jobs, artificial intelligence (AI) will shrink entry-level opportunity and, in others, it will drive greater access. AI will reshape key skills for each career. The value of a degree is not just about the university and major anymore. Rather, much of the value of a degree today is in the skills that students learn along the way. The Commissioners asked questions about Mr. Sigelman's presentation.

Pathways into Teaching for Federal Employees – Information Item

Chair Motz recognized Ms. Elena Quiroz-Livanis, Deputy Secretary, to present this item. Governor Moore gave a directive at the end of February to MSDE (Maryland State Department

of Education) and MHEC to collaborate in creating pathways to help displaced federal workers transition into teaching careers in Maryland. This will also address educator shortage in the state. The initiative, also known as “Feds to Eds” will involve work with the state Department of Labor and the Governor’s Office for Children. A more in-depth update will be provided at the next Commission meeting, after a report is presented to the Governor. At this time, MSDE and MHEC are working to finalize a framework for the “Feds to Eds” initiative within the Governor’s 45-day directive. The Commissioners asked questions about the presentation.

Approval of 2025 Workforce Needs Analysis – Action Item

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs, to present the first annual Workforce Needs Analysis, which is required by statute as an appendix to the Maryland State Plan for Higher Education. The 4 draft appendices are found on the MHEC website and were developed in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Labor and the Maryland Department of Commerce, with input from the segments of higher education via the Segmental Advisory Council, the Program Review Process Advisory Council, and the Advisory Council on Workforce Shortage. During the 2024 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly passed House Bill 1244 (CH0963 of the Acts of 2024), which requires the Maryland Department of Labor (“MDL”), the Maryland Department of Commerce (“Commerce”), and MHEC to collectively define, identify, and compile data regarding the workforce needs in the State. The appendix identifies (a) the current and emerging state and regional workforce needs and (b) any specific academic programs that institutions could develop to fulfill or support the identified needs.

These drafted appendices represent a significant step forward in collaborative efforts to align Maryland’s post-secondary education system with the workforce demands of today and the future. Appendix A is a list of in-demand occupations in Maryland requiring more than a high school diploma and projected to have significant job openings. Appendix B is a list that maps Maryland’s academic programs to identify in-demand occupations. Appendix C is a list of emerging workforce needs, and Appendix D is a list of emerging workforce need programs.

The workforce needs analysis will serve as a valuable tool. Institutions can use the data to create new programs or update existing ones to align with workforce trends. It can also be used to avoid unnecessary program duplication and help ensure that new academic programs are developed with labor market demand metrics in mind. Additionally, institutions can explore joint programs and partnerships with industry based on identified needs.

Based on feedback, future iterations will expand data sources, improve usability, and refine methodology to ensure greater accuracy and relevance. Dr. Dow recommended that the Commission adopt the four (4) draft appendices as the “2025 Workforce Needs Analysis” as required by Education Article §11-105. **Commissioner Burnim** made a motion for approval, and **Commissioner Dukes** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Department of Academic Affairs – Report on Institutions of Higher Education Program Review: Secretary Actions for July 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 – Information Item

Dr. Dow provided an overview of actions concerning program objections, new degree programs, new certificate programs, new areas of concentration, substantial modifications to existing programs, non-substantial modifications to existing programs, withdrawn proposals, institutional program partnerships, and proposals not approved or recommended.

Department of Academic Affairs – Report on Institutions of Higher Education Institution Review: Secretary Actions for July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024 – Information Item

Dr. Dow provided an overview of actions concerning in-state institution actions, out-of-state institution actions, out-of-state online registration actions, NC-SARA actions, religious exempt actions, collegiate complaints, a Title IX reimbursement, institutional site visits, other in-state application, and institutional questionnaires.

Department of Academic Affairs – Biannual Report on Private Career Schools: Actions for July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024 – Information Item

Dr. Dow provided an overview of actions concerning three (3) new schools, approvals of change of location, a certificate renewal, a notice of deficiency, and training provider questionnaires.

Department of Academic Affairs – FY 2024 Biannual Report on VA Education Benefits: MD SAA Actions for April 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024 – Information Item

Dr. Dow provided an overview of the Maryland State Approving Agency's actions concerning program actions, other program actions, supervisory visits, an inspection visit, and technical assistance activities.

Department of Finance and Administration – Office of Student Financial Assistance – Approval of Proposed Amendments to COMAR 13B.08.03 – Charles W. Riley Firefighter and Ambulance and Rescue Squad Member Scholarship – Action Item

Chair Motz recognized Mr. Geoffrey Newman, Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration, who asked Mr. Al Dorsett, Executive Director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance, to present this item. During the 2024 legislative session, changes were made to the Riley Scholarship administered by the Office of the Student Financial Assistance (Ch. 223/HB 899 and Ch. 224/SB 691). The legislative changes expanded eligibility for the scholarship to increase recruitment and retention of career and volunteer firefighters and emergency services personnel. Specifically, the legislation eliminated the requirement that an applicant enroll in an undergraduate degree or certificate program. Under the current statute, an applicant may receive the scholarship for enrollment in any course at a public or private nonprofit institution of higher education.

The proposed amendments change the regulations for this scholarship to align them with the statutory changes made by the legislature. Mr. Dorsett recommended that the Commission: (1) approves for publication in the Maryland Register the proposed regulatory amendments to the Riley Scholarship; and (2) authorizes its Assistant Attorneys General to make non-substantive edits to the proposed regulations to conform to the stylistic and formatting requirements of

AELR (Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review) and DSD (Division of State Documents). **Commissioner Howe** made a motion for approval, and **Commissioner Williams** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Department of Finance and Administration – Office of Student Financial Assistance – Approval of Proposed Amendments to COMAR 13B.08.23 – Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship – Action Item

Mr. Dorsett presented this item. The Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship was created in 2017 and was designed to provide financial assistance to students enrolling in an approved non-credit certificate program leading to apprenticeships, employment, licensure, or job skill enhancement only at a participating Maryland Community College. A workforce sequence is a series of non-credit courses or training programs designed to provide individuals with the skills and certifications needed for in-demand jobs in various industries, such as healthcare, information technology, skilled trades, and transportation. The regulations that implemented the scholarship created a decentralized program, meaning that OSFA allocates funds to community colleges, and the community colleges make scholarship awards to students of up to \$2,000 each. The funds are divided on a *pro rata* basis, based on each community college's share of the total enrollment in workforce sequences across the State.

The proposed amendments make a technical adjustment to the allocation method for the Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship. Under the revised regulations, community colleges will receive initial funding notifications by August 15. Funds will be allocated annually based on each college's proportional share of total full-time enrollment (FTE) in workforce development sequences, as reported in the most recent CC3 report. Initially, colleges will receive half of their calculated annual allocation, with the remaining funds to be distributed at a later date determined by the Office. After the initial disbursement, remaining funds will be distributed as follows:

- 1) Colleges that have awarded at least 66% of their initial funds by December 31 will receive half of the remaining allocation on a date set by the Office.
- 2) Colleges that have awarded 95% of their initial funds before December 31 may request an earlier second disbursement at the Office's discretion.
- 3) Colleges awarding less than 66% by December 31 must consult with the Office. If they do not anticipate needing the full remaining amount, they may allow the Office to retain and reallocate those funds.
- 4) Reallocated funds will be distributed to colleges based on their proportional share of awarded funds as of December 31.
- 5) The Office will notify colleges of any reallocated funds by January 21.

Mr. Dorsett recommended that the Commission: (1) approves for publication in the Maryland Register the proposed regulatory amendments to the Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship; and (2) authorizes its Assistant Attorneys General to make non-substantive edits to the proposed regulations to conform to the stylistic and formatting requirements of AELR and DSD. **Commissioner Burnim** made a motion for approval, and **Commissioner Thompson** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Adjournment

Commissioner Dukes made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and **Commissioner Thompson** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.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