

Maryland Higher Education Commission
Meeting Minutes

April 24, 2024
10:00 a.m.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) met on Wednesday, April 24, 2024 in the 7th floor boardroom in the Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Building (200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201). The meeting was also livestreamed (and recorded), and some Commissioners joined virtually.

Commission members present:

Catherine J. “Cassie” Motz, Chair	Rebecca Taber Staehelin
Chike Aguh, Vice Chair	Sheila D. Thompson, Ph.D.
Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.	Craig A. Williams, Ph.D.
Charlene Mickens Dukes, Ed.D.	Janet E. Wormack, Ed.D.
Barbara Kerr Howe	Cierra M. Robinson, Student Commissioner
Ray Serrano, Ph.D.	

Staff members present:

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.	Emily A. A. Dow, Ph.D.
Anthony Reiner	Soma Kedia
Geoffrey Newman	Kimberly Smith Ward
Derrick Coley	Deborah Ing
Yuxin Lin, Ph.D.	Barbara Schmertz, Ph.D.
Al Dorsett	

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Motz** at approximately 10:15 a.m. A meeting quorum was established with all eleven (11) members present.

Chair’s Remarks

Chair Motz welcomed and thanked everyone for attending today’s meeting. She remarked that the legislative session had ended, and she was thankful for everyone’s efforts and work during this busy time.

Secretary’s Remarks

Secretary Rai welcomed everyone and gave an overview of the meeting agenda. He remarked that MHEC was very busy during the legislative session, attending budget hearings and tracking legislation that will impact the agency.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Department of Finance and Administration – Office of Student Financial Assistance – FAFSA Update – Information Item

Chair Motz recognized Mr. Al Dorsett, Director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance, to present this item. Mr. Dorsett shared an update on how his team is handling recent challenges related to the problematic roll-out of the new FAFSA form, including offering informational sessions to various stakeholder groups. He also provided an update on scholarship awarding. The first round of awards will be completed by May 1st, and the team will make awards on a weekly basis. Mr. Dorsett also reported on the status of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new MDCAPS (Maryland College Aid Processing System), used by both students and institutions. The current system is antiquated with limited abilities. He shared a timeline for the new system, MDSIS (Maryland Student Information System). However, there have been some concerns, including requests from several vendors to get an extension to submit a proposal. **Commissioner Wormack** volunteered to act as the Commission liaison/contact for this initiative. The Commissioners asked questions about Mr. Dorsett's presentation.

Department of External Relations – 2024 Legislative Session Wrap-Up – Information Item

Chair Motz recognized Mr. Derrick Coley, Executive Director of External Relations, to present this item. Mr. Coley highlighted legislation that passed during the legislative session that impact MHEC. Among others, Mr. Coley mentioned the following:

- HB 607/SB 1141 Community Colleges – Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship – Requirements: This bill expands eligibility to students enrolled in a noncredit vocational certificate program.
- HB 901/SB 967 Higher Education – Part-Time Senatorial and Delegate Scholarships – Alterations: This bill allows an applicant of a part-time Senatorial or Delegate Scholarship with a documented disability to request from the Maryland Higher Education Commission a waiver from the requirement to carry at least 6 credits each semester.
- HB 354/SB 718 Maryland Pathway to Nursing Pilot Program and Advisory Committee – Establishment: This bill requires the Secretary of Higher Education to issue grants to at least 2 pilot sites and establishes the Advisory Committee.
- HB 1526/SB 1188 Fallen Transportation Workers Scholarship Program: This bill establishes a scholarship fund for fallen transportation workers' spouses and children.

The Commissioners asked questions about Mr. Coley's presentation.

Department of Academic Affairs – Update: Post-2025 Completion Goals – Information Item

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs, to present this item. A public survey was distributed recently to solicit feedback for Maryland's post-2025 completion goals. Questions centered on 5 specific considerations: 1) equity; 2) meaningful credentials; 3) production vs. population goals; 4) industry-specific goals; and 5) research goals. Our current goal states that by 2025, 55% of Marylanders ages 25-64 will have at least an associate's degree. We are currently not on track to meet this goal. At this time, 45 responses have been received. Dr. Dow explained each consideration in detail, giving examples of what other states are doing. MHEC will continue to engage with key partners in the process, including Commissioners, certain state agencies, legislators, etc. Next steps include circulation of a second public survey and meeting key partners at existing meetings, among other things. The Commissioners asked questions about Dr. Dow's presentation.

Department of Academic Affairs – Update: Transfer Implementation Plans – Information Item

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Dow who gave an update on the agency's transfer initiatives. At an earlier meeting, she mentioned that MHEC will be requesting implementation plans from the institutions. In the campuses' responses, they shared some of their successes and challenges. MHEC was able to take the information shared by the institutions and identify next steps. They also continue to define the data collection around the denial of credit.

Department of Academic Affairs – Office of Research and Policy Analysis – Reporting Prompts for the 2024 Performance Accountability Report – Information Item

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Barbara Schmertz, Director of the Office of Research and Policy Analysis, to present this item. Each year, the agency issues annual guidelines to public institutions regarding the Performance Accountability Report. Within the guidelines, the agency specifies reporting prompts 1) to ensure institutions are held accountable to maintain performance standards and 2) to gather information from the institutions tied to the agency and Commissioners' interests. The responses provided to these prompts are limited to one to two pages of the institution's 10 to 12-page submission.

These are the recommended reporting prompts for the 2024 Performance Accountability Report:

- In reviewing your institutional metrics regarding completion, what specific initiatives is your institution implementing to increase completion rates? Please provide a brief narrative on the impact of those initiatives on completion rates.
- Does your institution have specific goals regarding the success of transfer students? How have those goals been identified and how are they measured?
- In reviewing your institutional metrics regarding equity gaps (in either access or completion), what is the biggest challenge your institution faces as it attempts to eliminate those gaps?
- How does your institution ensure that graduates leave with employable skills?
- Please provide a comprehensive list of current and forthcoming federal grants awarded to your institution. In the list, please include the federal funder, the grant name, the name of the project, the award amount, and the start/end dates of the project. Do not include non-

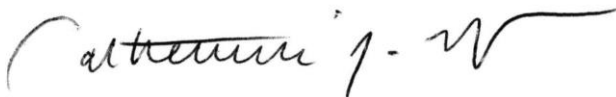
federal grants in this list (i.e., do not include funding opportunities from foundations or other non-profit organizations).

Commissioner Serrano asked if a prompt could be added to ask institutions what they are doing to address the issue of affordability and reducing loan debt. He made a motion to add such a prompt, and **Vice Chair Aguh** seconded the motion. After some discussion, **Commissioner Serrano** withdrew his motion and **Vice Chair Aguh** withdrew his second of the motion. It was decided that the Financial Assistance Advisory Council, whose members represent the institutions, is the best group to address this issue.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Aguh made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and **Commissioner Burnim** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:03 PM.

Approved by the Commission:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine J. Motz', written over a horizontal line.

Catherine J. "Cassie" Motz, Chair