

Maryland Higher Education Commission
Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2024
10:00 a.m.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) met virtually via Google Meet on Wednesday, June 26, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

Commission members present:

Catherine J. “Cassie” Motz, Chair	Rebecca Taber Staehelin
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.
Barbara Kerr Howe	Cierra M. Robinson, Student Commissioner

Commission members absent:

Charlene Mickens Dukes, Ed.D.	Ray Serrano, Ph.D.
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Staff members present:

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.	Emily A. A. Dow, Ph.D.
Lyndsay Silva, D.P.A.	Soma Kedia
Geoffrey Newman	Kimberly Smith Ward
Derrick Coley	Deborah Ing
Glenda Abney	Trish Gordon McCown
Al Dorsett	Alexis Merriman
Alexandra Chaillou, Ph.D.	Brittany Martin
Alexia Simmons	Bryson Barksdale
Alexandra Edelstein	Melissa Leuschel
Victoria Johnson	Cara Martinez
Samuel Durai Pandian	Ebony Walters
Shayla Hunter	Frances Turner
Rose Robinson	

Call to Order

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

Vice Chair’s Remarks

Vice Chair Aguh welcomed everyone and remarked that he was chairing today's meeting on behalf of Chair Cassie Motz. He thanked the Office of Student Financial Assistance for their efforts to assist students and families amidst the FAFSA-related challenges experienced by all at this time. **Vice Chair Aguh** also thanked the work of other groups in the state to promote FAFSA completion. He reported that the Education Policy Committee held its first meeting recently, and he thanked the Commissioners who volunteered to serve on it.

Secretary's Remarks

Secretary Rai thanked the Student Commissioner, Ms. Cierra Robinson, on the occasion of her last Commission meeting. Student Commissioners serve only for a year from July 1 to June 30, and Commissioner Robinson will be missed for her valuable input and unique student perspective. MHEC wishes her the best in all of her future endeavors. **Secretary Rai** then gave an overview of the agenda, noting that there were many exciting updates to report.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Commission Minutes Approval

Commissioner Howe made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 28, 2024 and March 20, 2024 meetings, and **Commissioner Taber Staehelin** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Student Advisory Council 2023-24 Annual Report – Information Item

Vice Chair Aguh recognized Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs, who asked Ms. Alexis Faison, Chair of the Student Advisory Council, to present this item. Ms. Faison gave an overview of the discussion topics at meetings over the course of the previous academic year. Their accomplishments and recommendations included those related to voting and civic engagement, repercussions of the pandemic (medical & health, economic, academic, and social considerations), food insecurity, supporting non-native, English-speaking students, and incarcerated individuals. The annual report presented to the Commission also lists planning suggestions for next year for the incoming Student Advisory Council.

Faculty Advisory Council 2023-24 Annual Report – Information Item

Vice Chair Aguh recognized Dr. Dow who asked Dr. Raenita Fenner, incoming Chair of the Faculty Advisory Council, to present this item. Dr. Fenner gave an overview of the discussion topics at meetings over the course of the previous academic year. Their accomplishments and recommendations included those related to active assailant & campus safety, artificial intelligence (AI), use of student course evaluations (to assess teaching performance), faculty requirement for academic programs, course equivalency guidance, and time spent by students outside the classroom.

Department of Finance and Administration – Financial Aid Updates – Information Item

Vice Chair Aguh recognized Mr. Geoffrey Newman, Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration, who gave some background on the present challenges experienced with the new FAFSA form. Problems began with a late launch of the form (late December, rather than October 1) and continued with the delayed delivery of the first batch of student records from the U. S. Department of Education. MHEC responded by offering trainings to financial aid professionals and town hall meetings for various stakeholder groups. Additionally, MHEC extended the filing deadline from May 1 to June 1. Mr. Al Dorsett, Director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance, reported that, to date, 11,467 students have been awarded, and MHEC is close to selecting a vendor to develop a new student financial aid processing system.

Department of External Relations – FAFSA Outreach Grant – Information Item

Vice Chair Aguh recognized Mr. Derrick Coley, Executive Director of External Relations, to present this item. Mr. Coley reported that MHEC applied for and received a grant in the amount of \$500,000 from the Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC), a nonprofit company that provides support for the administration of the Federal Family Education Loan Program. ECMC was designated as the lead organization for the U. S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Office to support efforts to increase completion of FAFSA applications. The purpose of the award is to increase 2024-25 FAFSA completion rates, combat "summer melt" and increase actual college enrollment rates. (Maryland is currently 24th of all states for FAFSA completion with a 42% student completion rate.) However, the money must be spent by August 31. (The final federal deadline is September 14.) MHEC will be targeting in their outreach those school districts where the completion rate is one of the lowest and pairing them with community colleges.

Department of Academic Affairs – Implementation of HB 1244 – Information Item

Vice Chair Aguh recognized Dr. Dow to present this item. [House Bill 1244](#) (Maryland Higher Education Commission – Academic Program Approval and Institutional Mission Statements – Requirements) takes effect on July 1, 2024. Initiatives that require changes include:

- 1) Statewide workforce need and emerging field analysis;
- 2) Revisions to definition of substantial modification;
- 3) Standards for analysis for unreasonable duplication and unnecessary duplication;
- 4) Mission statement review for public institutions;
- 5) Establish a Program Review Process Advisory Committee;
- 6) Develop process for fully online programs;
- 7) Letters of intent for new graduate programs;
- 8) Conduct harm analysis; and
- 9) Create an administrative procedures guide.

Proposed Topics for Upcoming Commission Meetings – Information Item

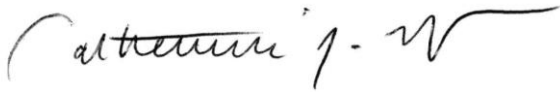
Vice Chair Aguh recognized Dr. Dow to present this item. During the July Commission meeting, topics that will be covered include an update on the development of post-2025

completion goals, an update on substantial modification changes, and an update on the Program Review Process Advisory Committee. The August Commission meeting will include a presentation of the proposed appendix on statewide needs analysis, an update on substantial modification changes, an update on mission statement review criteria, and 6-month reports from the Academic Affairs department. The September Commission meeting will include, as usual, budget presentations from the higher education segments, as well as an update on mission statement review criteria, and regulations for initial approval for publication and public comment (substantial modification, unreasonable duplication analysis, unnecessary duplication analysis, and letters of intent format and process). **Vice Chair Aguh** requested that all meeting materials be shared with Commissioners as far in advance of the meeting as possible.

Adjournment

Commissioner Taber Staehelin made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and **Chair Motz** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:03 PM.

Approved by the Commission:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine J. Motz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Catherine J. "Cassie" Motz, Chair