

Maryland Higher Education Commission
Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2024
10:00 a.m.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) met on Wednesday, December 11, 2024 via video teleconference (Google Meet).

Commission members present:

Catherine J. “Cassie” Motz, Chair	Rebecca Taber Staehelin
Kathleen Bands, Ph.D.	Sheila D. Thompson, Ph.D.
Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.	Craig A. Williams, Ph.D.
Barbara Kerr Howe	Janet E. Wormack, Ed.D.

Commission members absent:

Chike Aguh, Vice Chair	Ray Serrano, Ph.D.
Charlene Mickens Dukes, Ed.D.	Praise Alayode, Student Commissioner

Staff members present:

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.	Emily A. A. Dow, Ph.D.
Geoffrey Newman	Soma Kedia
Anthony Reiner	Kimberly Smith Ward
Derrick Coley	Daniel Schuster
Victoria Johnson	Deborah Ing
Samuel Durai Pandian	Trish Gordon McCown
Alexandra Nguyen	Alexia Simmons
Allie Edelstein	Ann Kellogg, Ph.D.
Bryson Barksdale	Brittany Martin
Cara Martinez	Rose Robinson
Khia Poteat	Shayla Hunter
Kristin Clarkson	Alexandra Chaillou, Ph.D.
Donita Moore	Elena Quiroz-Livanis
Glenda Abney	Melissa Leuschel
Thomas Waters	

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Motz** at approximately 10:01 a.m. A meeting quorum was established with eight (8) out of twelve (12) members present.

Chair’s Remarks

Chair Motz welcomed everyone to today's meeting and gave an overview of the agenda. She mentioned that MHEC was currently preparing for the upcoming financial aid season, as well as planning to relocate their offices next month.

Secretary's Remarks

Secretary Rai shared some reflections on accomplishments in higher education as they close out the year. Among other things, they have been able to expand scholarship opportunities, making the Promise Scholarship available now to non-credit students and those in certificate programs. They have also expanded internships and apprenticeships, allowing students to gain hands-on experience while pursuing their degrees. Maryland is addressing barriers to education by investing in programs that support first-generation college students, students of color, and students from underrepresented communities. However, there is still much work to be done. In the new year, they hope to focus on expanding dual enrollment and early college programs.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Commission Meeting Minutes Approval

Commissioner Howe made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 23, 2024, and **Commissioner Burnim** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Presentation by BCR Cyber and MACC (Maryland Association of Community Colleges)

Chair Motz recognized Mr. Bruce Spector, BCR Cyber Chairman of the Board, and Dr. Monica Randall, Deputy Executive Director of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, to present this item. The Maryland Community College Cybersecurity Workforce Accelerator Program is an initiative led by BCR Cyber and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges. There are currently 30,000 vacant cybersecurity jobs in Maryland. By providing state-of-the-art cybersecurity training at Maryland's community colleges, the state is building the most advanced, highly diverse state and local IT workforce in the nation. The goal of the partnership is to establish a regional training center in each of the 16 Maryland community colleges. By spring of 2025, cyber ranges will be installed at each school. The program hopes to become a model for the rest of the nation to follow.

Updates on House Bill 1244 (2024 Legislative Session) – Information Item

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs, to present this item. One of the requirements of House Bill 1244 (Maryland Higher Education Commission – Academic Program Approval and Institutional Mission Statements – Requirements) is to develop four (4) appendices:

- 1) A list of in-demand occupations (state & regional workforce needs).

- 2) A list of in-demand academic programs (academic programs that would address workforce needs).
- 3) A list of emerging workforce needs.
- 4) A list of emerging workforce need programs.

Dr. Dow explained that the lists will be updated annually. In January, the Commission approves and releases the appendices. She then walked through the processes of developing these lists. Next steps include releasing the lists for public comment, meeting with the Advisory Council on Workforce Shortage to obtain feedback, review received comments, and prepare lists for final adoption at the January Commission meeting. The Commissioners asked questions about Dr. Dow's presentation. **Commissioner Bands** suggested soliciting feedback from the Program Review Process Advisory Council as well. **Chair Motz** agreed and remarked that it would be ideal to meet with the Council to obtain their input before the January Commission meeting. In terms of assessing workforce needs, **Commissioner Burnim** suggested looking at regions within the state, rather than a larger area.

Dr. Dow explained that letters of intent are another requirement. Beginning January 1, 2025, public senior higher education institutions are required to submit a letter of intent for all new graduate programs the institution intends to propose within the 6-month to 2-year time period following submission of the letter of intent. The purpose is to facilitate collaboration between institutions and to provide feedback to an institution before a program is submitted for approval. Potential sections of this letter include basic information, draft program details, mission, need, duplication, intended population, existing resources, new resources, and external considerations. Every 6 months, letters of intent would be requested. After a letter is received, it is circulated to the institutions for their review. It is also reviewed by an analyst for concerns and potential opportunities to collaborate, which are then shared with the proposing institution. The next steps include sharing this information with the Program Review Process Advisory Council for their feedback, preparing materials and guidance, and providing updates to the Commission (including one on implementation after the first round of letters is received in summer 2025). It is expected that the process will be implemented in spring 2025. The Commissioners asked questions about Dr. Dow's presentation.

Dr. Dow explained that mission statements are another requirement, though this is limited to public colleges & universities and regional higher education centers. Currently, criteria are being finalized for review of institutional distinctions. In the spring, MHEC will request the institutions to submit narratives about what makes them distinct. In the summer and fall, MHEC will review and provide feedback on the submitted institutional distinctions. After the 2026 State Plan for Higher Education is released, institutions will be asked to submit their mission statements for review. This is a statutory requirement. The Commissioners asked questions about Dr. Dow's presentation.

Review of NC-SARA Participation Appeal

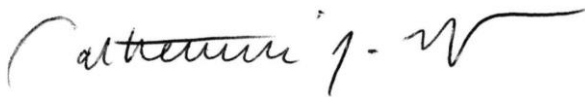
Chair Motz stated that the Commission will now review an appeal. The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) was formed to coordinate regulation of distance education programs to ensure consistency among the states. Maryland is a member, as

well as the District of Columbia. As this appeal relates to the administration of existing law, rather than the development of new policy, this portion of the meeting is not subject to the Open Meetings Act. Therefore, the Commissioners will now adjourn and connect to another virtual meeting link to review this appeal.

Adjournment

Commissioner Burnim made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and **Commissioner Howe** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

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