

# **Maryland Higher Education Commission**

## **Meeting Book**

**November 19, 2025**



Wes Moore  
Governor

Aruna Miller  
Lt. Governor

## Commission Member Roster

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.	Secretary of Higher Education
Catherine J. “Cassie” Motz	Chair
Chike Aguh	Vice Chair
Kathleen Bands, Ph.D.	Commissioner
Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.	Commissioner
Charlene Mickens Dukes, Ed.D.	Commissioner
Barbara Kerr Howe	Commissioner
Narcisa A. Polonio, Ed.D.	Commissioner
Rebecca Taber Staehelin	Commissioner
Sheila D. Thompson, Ph.D.	Commissioner
Craig A. Williams, Ph.D.	Commissioner
Janet E. Wormack, Ed.D.	Commissioner
Sarah Otwey	Student Commissioner

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**Maryland Higher Education Commission**  
**Meeting Agenda: Wednesday, November 19, 2025**  
**Time:** 10:00 AM  
**Location:** Virtual via Google Meet

**Key:** \* = Voting Item

- I. Welcome & Call to Order**
- II. Review & Approval of Previous Minutes**
  - A. \*Review of minutes from the meeting on October 22, 2025
- III. Business**
  - A. \*Final Adoption of Regulatory Amendments – Amendments to COMAR 13B.08.22.02 –Teaching Fellows for Maryland Scholarship Program
- IV. Public Comment**
  - A. None
- V. Announcements**
  - A. The next Commission meeting will be on Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 10 AM.
- VI. Adjournment**

## Maryland Higher Education Commission Meeting Minutes

October 22, 2025 10:00 a.m.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) met virtually via Google Meet.

### Commission Members Present:

Catherine J. "Cassie" Motz, Chair	Chike Aguh, Vice Chair
Kathleen Bands, Ph.D.	Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.
Barbara Kerr Howe	Narcisa A. Polonio, Ed.D.
Sheila D. Thompson, Ph.D.	Craig A. Williams, Ph.D.
Janet E. Wormack, Ed.D.	Sarah Otwey, Student Commissioner
Rebecca Taber Staehelin	

### Commission Members Absent:

- Charlene Mickens Dukes, Ed.D.

### I. Welcome & Call to Order

- Chair Motz called the meeting to order.
- Secretary Rai provided opening remarks, highlighting the approval of three new degree programs: Hood College's Master of Business Administration in STEM, Harford Community College's Associate of Science in Pre-Professional Health Sciences, and Johns Hopkins University's Doctorate in Rehabilitation Science.
- Secretary Rai noted that Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) has processed nearly 1,000 academic program proposals over the last two years, many aligning with high-demand workforce sectors.
- He discussed the ongoing work of the state plan steering committee, aiming to create an affordable and contemporary post secondary education system for Maryland.
- A new three-part performance series and the use of digital dashboards will be introduced to promote evidence-based policy.
- Assistant Secretary Dow will share information from the biannual reports ahead of the second annual student success summit taking place next month.

## II. Review & Approval of Previous Minutes

- Commissioner Howe moved to approve the minutes from the meeting on Wednesday, September 17, 2025. Vice Chair Aguh seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

## III. Business

### A. FY 2027 Operating Budget Recommendations

- Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration Newman presented recommendations for MHEC's fiscal 2027 operating budget.
- In fiscal 2026, the state provided over \$3.3 billion in state funds to higher education, with four-year public institutions receiving 74% of these funds, community colleges 16.7%, and non-profit independent institutions 2.2%.
- **Financial Aid Update and Regulations**
  - Director of Student Financial Assistance Dorsett, provided an update on the FY26 budget for scholarship and grant programs, noting \$221 million allocated.
  - FAFSA imports into MHEC's system increased, with over 16,700 imports from FY25 to FY26.
  - For the Howard P. Rawlings program, 15,616 students were awarded a total of \$155.1 million. The Guaranteed Access Grant has awarded 8,369 students for \$104 million.
  - Declined or canceled awards for the Guaranteed Access Grant were 3,424, totaling \$41.4 million.
  - Mr. Dorsett clarified that House Bill 923 expanded eligibility for the Guaranteed Access Grant by removing the GPA requirement and allowing up to six years post-high school to apply, leading to increased cancellations due to students attending out-of-state institutions or not enrolling.
  - The waitlist for student aid currently includes 6,470 students requiring \$22.8 million.
  - The Teaching Fellows program budget was reduced from \$18 million to \$14 million for FY25 and FY26, with 572 awards totaling \$13.99 million. There is a waitlist of 85 students for \$2 million.
  - The Cybersecurity program has awarded 61 students with a budget of \$1 million. A total of \$3.46 million is needed for the waitlist.
  - A legislative request has been submitted to postpone the decentralization of the Guaranteed Access Grant until the 2029-2030 award year.
  - The MHEC One application will open on November 1st.

- Commissioner Burnim inquired about additional funds for the Teaching Fellows and Cybersecurity programs; MHEC can request transfers from the need-based student financial assistance fund.
- Commissioner Williams asked about tracking longitudinal data on awards and acceptances, which Mr. Dorsett confirmed is tracked, showing a decrease in overall accepted awards since the program's expansion.
- Director of Budget Administration Pandian reported an appropriation of \$844.7 million for MHEC's FY26 operating budget, a 6% increase, with 63% supporting community colleges and non-public institutions.
- Vice Chair Aguh noted that MHEC has 89 full-time equivalent employees (FTEEs) with approximately six vacant positions.
- Vice Chair Aguh moved to approve the FY27 operating budget recommendations, seconded by Commissioner Thompson. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **B. Approval of Proposed Amendments to COMAR 13B.08.22 – Teaching Fellows for Maryland Scholarship Program**

- Mr. Dorsett presented proposed amendments to COMAR 13B.08.22 to align regulations with statutory provisions. These revisions clarify program definitions, participation requirements, and eligibility criteria, including the removal of GPA, standardized test scores, and essay requirements.
- New eligibility requirements include a valid social security or taxpayer identification number, and the minimum service application for recipients has been adjusted to two years.
- Commissioner Burnim moved to approve the recommendations for publication in the Maryland register and to authorize the assistant attorney general to make non-substantive edits. Commissioner Howe seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **C. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Presentation and FY 2027 Capital Budget Recommendations**

- Capital Finance Analyst Schuster presented recommendations for the FY27 capital budget, emphasizing adherence to the existing five-year CIP.
- The Community College Construction Grant Program plans \$80 million for FY27 to advance 17 projects focused on technology and workforce trades.
- For Baltimore City Community College, the CIP includes a \$45 million Learning Commons renovation starting in FY27 and a \$52 million Nursing Building renovation beginning design in FY27.

- The Zupnik Hall project, a new engineering building at the University of Maryland, College Park, is estimated to cost over \$240 million, with the state funding approximately \$185 million.
- A vital \$180 million project at Morgan State University to replace and expand an electrical substation was also highlighted.
- Commissioner Howe inquired about competitive bidding, which Mr. Schuster confirmed all state-funded projects undergo.
- Commissioner Howe also asked if approving the motion locks in future projects, to which Mr. Schuster clarified that planned amounts in the CIP are not final and projects can be modified.
- Vice Chair Aguh questioned historical cost overruns and project oversight. Mr. Schuster explained that institutions manage their projects, and delays can occur due to unforeseen issues.
- Vice Chair Aguh asked who bears the cost of overruns. Mr. Schuster stated that institutions may cover differences with their own funds, or request additional state funds if justified.
- Mr. Schuster formally presented the recommendations for the FY27 capital budget, including:
  - \$80 million for the community college construction grant program.
  - \$4 million for the community college facilities renewal grant.
  - FY27 funding for projects at Baltimore City Community College, the University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College of Maryland.
  - \$8 million for the MICUA FY27 capital budget.
- The commission unanimously approved these recommendations.

#### **D. Bi-Annual Reports**

- Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs Dow presented four biannual reports summarizing approvals delegated to the Secretary for January to June 2025.
- Dr. Natasha Cornell, the new Director of Academic Affairs, was introduced.
- Four new applications were noted for degree-granting institutions along with two institutional closures. Approximately 42,000 Maryland residents are enrolled in online programs at out-of-state institutions, and 40,000 out-of-state students are enrolled in Maryland institutions via reciprocity agreements.
- There was a significant increase in training provider questionnaires for private career schools. Five new schools were approved, and MHEC works with licensing boards to ensure curricula lead to licensure.
- Vice Chair Aguh asked if the approval process for private career schools assesses alignment with workforce needs. Dr. Dow confirmed that proposals often target high-demand occupations and require evidence from business partners.



- Academic program review saw increases in new bachelor's proposals and areas of concentration. Over the last two years, 996 out of more than 1,000 proposals were approved within the 60-day timeframe.
- New program developments included 15 in artificial intelligence, 9 in computer science, 28 nursing-related, 27 teaching-related, 8 STEM-related, and 71 related to Maryland's Lighthouse Industries.
- Commissioner Thompson suggested highlighting new academic areas and publicizing these cutting-edge programs.
- Chair Motz appreciated the summary slides and comparative data for understanding trends.
- The Veterans Affairs team processed nearly 1,700 program-related actions and approved 23 new facilities.

#### **E. Unreasonable/Unnecessary Duplication - Draft Regulations**

- Dr. Dow discussed draft regulations for unreasonable and unnecessary duplication, providing historical context from the 2021 coalition case settlement.
- House Bill 1244 mandated new standards for program review to prevent future duplication that violates constitutional obligations.
- The draft regulations define criteria for "unreasonable duplication" and "unnecessary duplication" to provide transparent standards, align with workforce priorities, and prioritize collaboration while ensuring equal educational opportunity.
- Unreasonable duplication considers harm to the state through inefficient resource use and interference with HBCU responsibilities, as well as harm to students (e.g., limited experiential opportunities, increased costs).
- Unnecessary duplication applies only to public senior institutions and aims to prevent traditionally white institutions from duplicating programs offered by historically black institutions.
- A summary slide differentiating the two types of duplication was provided.
- Commissioner Sheila Thompson suggested incorporating scenarios into the draft regulations.
- Vice Chair Aguh emphasized the importance of clear definitions while acknowledging the need for discretion.
- Commissioner Howe inquired about the standard of proof for commission decisions, which Assistant Attorney General Ward clarified would likely be "preponderance of the evidence."
- Next steps include presenting the draft to the program review process advisory council and other relevant agencies.

#### **F. Update on the Maryland State Plan for Higher Education**

- Vice Chair Aguh provided an update on the Maryland state plan, emphasizing its role in shaping the state's higher education system.

#### **G. Measuring Performance: Data Assets and Remedial Education**

- Deputy Secretary Quiroz-Livanis announced that the data dashboard presentation would be tabled until November to allow more time for the state plan discussion.
- Surveys will be sent to gather detailed commissioner feedback on the plan's vision, principles, and goals, as well as the framework for measuring public and private returns on investment.

#### **H. Update on 2025 Student Success Summit**

- Dr. Dow provided an update on the Student Success Summit, scheduled for November 13th and November 14th in the greater Baltimore area.
- The summit will feature discussions on contemporary issues like leveraging AI and student support.
- Registration links will be circulated soon, and campus teams, philanthropic partners, and industry organizations are encouraged to attend.

#### **IV. Public Comment**

- There were no public comments.

#### **V. Announcements**

- The next Commission Meeting is in November.

#### **VI. Adjournment**

- The meeting adjourned.

Approved by the Commission:

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Catherine J. "Cassie" Motz, Chair

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 19, 2025

**TO:** Maryland Higher Education Commissioners

**FROM:** Kimberly Smith Ward, Assistant Attorney General

**SUBJECT:** Final Adoption of Regulatory Amendments –  
Amendments to COMAR 13B.08.22.02 –Teaching  
Fellows for Maryland Scholarship Program

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In order for proposed regulations to have legal effect, after initial publication in the Maryland Register and a public comment period, a State entity must formally adopt the regulations and publish notice of the adoption in the Maryland Register. The following proposed regulations are ready for final adoption.

Amendments to Teaching Fellows for Maryland Scholarship Program (COMAR  
13B.08.22.02)

On January 22, 2025, the Commission approved for publication amendments to the Teaching Fellows for Maryland Scholarship Program regarding definition of “full-time” and “part-time.” Under the amended regulations, the definitions of full-time and part-time enrollment for graduate students would be based on the institution’s own internal policy for classifying graduate students as full-time and part-time. Additionally, the definition for part-time enrollment for undergraduate students would be expanded to include those students enrolled in in less than 6 credits. These changes would increase the number of students able to utilize the available scholarship funds.

The proposed regulatory amendments were published in the Maryland Register on May 16, 2025 (enclosed). The public comment period for the amendments ended on June 15, 2025, and no public comments were received. The regulatory amendments became eligible for final adoption on June 30, 2025.

The new regulations will become effective 10 days after notice of the final adoption is published in the Maryland Register.

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended that the Commission approves for final adoption the enclosed regulatory proposal amending the definitions of full-time and part-time within the Teaching Fellows for Maryland Scholarship Program.

10/30/25, 1:33 PM

**Title 13B**  
**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**  
**Subtitle 08 FINANCIAL AID**

13B.08.22 Teaching Fellows for Maryland Scholarship Program

Authority: Education Article, §§11-105 and 18-204 and Title 18, Subtitle 22, Annotated Code of Maryland

**Notice of Proposed Action**

[25-066-P]

The Maryland Higher Education Commission proposes to amend Regulation .02 under COMAR 13B.08.22.02 Teaching Fellows for Maryland Scholarship Program. This action was considered at an open meeting of the Commission on January 22, 2025.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this action is to change the definitions of full-time and part-time for this scholarship so as to expand eligibility.

**Estimate of Economic Impact**

The proposed action has no economic impact.

**Economic Impact on Small Businesses**

The proposed action has minimal or no economic impact on small businesses.

**Impact on Individuals with Disabilities**

The proposed action has no impact on individuals with disabilities.

**Opportunity for Public Comment**

Comments may be sent to Geoff Newman, Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration, Maryland Higher Education Commission, 201 E. Redwood St., Suite 2100, Baltimore, MD 21202, or call 410-767-3041, or email to [geoff.newman@maryland.gov](mailto:geoff.newman@maryland.gov). Comments will be accepted through June 16, 2025. A public hearing has not been scheduled.

**.02 Definitions.**

A. (text unchanged)

B. Terms Defined.

(1) —(4) (text unchanged)

(5) "Full-time" means enrollment in:

(a) [At least 12 credits per semester in] *For an undergraduate certificate or degree program, at least 12 credits per semester; or*

(b) [At least 9 credits per semester in] *For a graduate certificate or degree program, the number of credits needed for the institution to classify the graduate student as full-time based on the institution's policy.*

(6) —(9) (text unchanged)

(10) "Part-time" means enrollment in:

(a) [At least 6 credits, but fewer than 12 credits, per semester in] *For an undergraduate certificate or degree program, at least 1 credit, but fewer than 12 credits; or*

(b) [At least 6 credits, but fewer than 9 credits, per semester in] *For a graduate certificate or degree program, the number of credits needed for the institution to classify the graduate student as part-time based on the institution's policy.*

(11) —(14) (text unchanged)

## **Maryland Higher Education Commission**

### **2025 Meeting Dates**

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) is Maryland's higher education coordinating board responsible for managing statewide financial aid programs and establishing statewide policies for public and private colleges and career schools to support students' postsecondary pursuits.

Commission meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., with certain exceptions noted below.

### **Scheduled Meeting Dates for 2025**

- January 22
- February 26
- March 26
- April 23
- May 28
- June 26
- July 23
- August 27
- September 17
  - (3rd Wednesday)
  - 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
  - Hybrid
- October 22
- November 19
  - (3rd Wednesday)
- December 10
  - 2nd Wednesday

Dates, times, and meeting modality are subject to change. Please check the website for the most up-to-date information:

<http://www.mhec.maryland.gov/About/Pages/Meetings.aspx>