

**Maryland Higher Education Commission**  
Meeting Minutes

May 25, 2022  
1:00 p.m.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) met on Wednesday, May 25, 2022 via video teleconference (Google Meet).

**Commission members present:**

Mary Pat Seurkamp, Ph.D., Chair	Charles McDaniels, Jr.
Senchal D. Barrolle, Esq. (arrived at 1:10 PM)	Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
Vivian S. Boyd, Ph.D.	Ray Serrano, Ph.D.
James E. Coleman	Craig A. Williams, Ph.D.
Judge Barbara Kerr Howe (arrived at 1:10 PM)	

**Commissions members absent:**

Lewis R. Brown, Ed.D.	Haleemat Y. Adekoya, Student Commissioner
James B. Sellinger, Sr.	

**Staff members present:**

James D. Fielder, Ph.D.	Emily A. A. Dow, Ph.D.
Rhonda Wardlaw	Jennifer Katz
Soma Kedia	Trish Gordon McCown
Lelia Kimbrough	LaTasha Williams
Geoffrey Newman	Kaitlyn Johnson
Barbara Schmertz, Ph.D.	Yuxin Lin, Ph.D.
Carla Price	Lanny Ross
Selina Madufo	

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Seurkamp** at approximately 1:02 p.m. A meeting quorum was established with nine (9) out of twelve (12) members present.

**Chair's Remarks**

**Chair Seurkamp** thanked everyone for attending today's meeting. She welcomed new Commissioners, Dr. Karen Salmon (former State Superintendent of Schools) and Judge Barbara Kerr Howe (retired Associate Judge for the Circuit Court for Baltimore County). Both

Commissioners Salmon and Howe made brief remarks, sharing that they were looking forward to serving on the Commission. **Chair Seurkamp** gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

### **Secretary's Remarks**

**Secretary Fielder** remarked that he was pleased with the addition of the new Commissioners. He also appreciated the dedication and the work of all of the current Commissioners.

### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

### **Commission Minutes Approval**

**Commissioner Coleman** motioned to approve the March 23, 2022 meeting minutes. **Commissioner Williams** seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Commissioner Committee Updates**

**Education Policy Committee: Commissioner Boyd** did not have an update to share, as the Committee has not met recently.

**Outreach, Grants, and Financial Assistance Committee: Commissioner Coleman** reported that there have been virtual outreach efforts to various counties in the state on financial aid opportunities. Additionally, website updates are ongoing with new information posted regularly on state scholarships and other financial aid programs.

**Finance and Operations Committee:** Mr. Geoffrey Newman (Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration) reported that there are 5-6 weeks remaining in the current fiscal year. They are working now to close out the fiscal year financially and open the new fiscal year. Additionally, they have filled a number of vacancies in the agency, though a few remain.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee: Commissioner McDaniels** reported that the Committee met in May to develop a framework for their mission statement. They will meet with Secretary Fielder in June to establish goals for the remainder of the year. Additionally, they will reach out to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) staff at some of the institutions to hear about their work. They will also work to inform the institutions of their efforts.

### **Department of Academic Affairs – 2021-2022 Student Advisory Council Annual Report – Information Item**

**Chair Seurkamp** recognized Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs, who asked Ms. Julea Seliavski (Chair of the Student Advisory Council and student at the Maryland Institute College of Art) to present this item. Ms. Seliavski presented the Council's accomplishments during the 2021-2022 academic year, which included discussions on the following topics: campus initiatives and student experiences related to COVID, the student

complaint process, initiatives related to the incarcerated population, the transfer of college credit, and the opioid epidemic in Maryland. They also came up with a list of recommendations for the next Student Advisory Council to consider. These recommendations were related to COVID, as well as the special topics they discussed during the year. Several of the Commissioners commented on the report's thoroughness and the importance of the topics covered. Clarifying questions were also asked about the report and the Council.

### **Department of Academic Affairs – Final Adoption of Amendment to COMAR – Denial of Application for Religious Exemption – Action Item**

**Chair Seurkamp** recognized Dr. Dow who presented this item. On January 26, 2022, the Commission approved for publication in the Maryland Register a proposed amendment to the regulations governing exemptions for religious educational institutions from the requirement to obtain a Certificate of Approval from the Commission. The purpose of the amendment was to add a deadline of 20 days to request a hearing after an application for exemption is denied.

The proposed amendment was published in the Maryland Register on March 11, 2022. The public comment period for the proposal ended on April 11, 2022, and no public comments were received. The amendment became eligible for final adoption on April 26, 2022.

The proposed amendment is ready for the Commission's final adoption. The amendment will become effective 10 days after notice of the final adoption is published in the Maryland Register.

Dr. Dow recommended that the Commission approves for final adoption the enclosed amendment to the procedures for denial of a religious exemption. **Commissioner Boyd** made a motion for approval and **Commissioner McDaniels** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Overview of the 2022 Maryland State Plan for Higher Education – Information Item**

**Chair Seurkamp** recognized Dr. Dow who presented this item. She gave an overview of the State Plan, which the Maryland Higher Education Commission is required by state law to update periodically. Dr. Dow also reviewed the process by which it was drafted. The State Plan has three goals:

- 1) Ensure equitable access to affordable and high-quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents.
- 2) Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success.
- 3) Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success.

Within each goal, there are multiple priorities, and each priority has various action items. A draft will be circulated to the Commissioners in about a week's time with the hope of final adoption of the State Plan at the June meeting.

**Commissioner Williams** asked if, when drafting the State Plan, MHEC looked at other states' initiatives. How are they similar to Maryland's State Plan, and how are they different? Dr. Dow replied that, though the writers did not officially and systematically survey other states' plans, workgroup members did consider and note in the State Plan certain successful initiatives of other states. **Commissioner Serrano** asked if the State Plan integrates the plans of the individual institutions? Dr. Dow answered that the State Plan actually informs the plans of public institutions. After final adoption, they are given a certain amount of time to ensure that their plans are aligned with the State Plan. Other clarifying questions were asked.

### **Office of Research and Policy Analysis – 2022-2031 Enrollment Projections for Maryland Public Colleges and Universities – Action Item**

**Chair Seurkamp** recognized Dr. Barbara Schmertz, Director of the Office of Research and Policy Analysis, who asked Dr. Yuxin Lin, Associate Director, to present this item. Enrollment projections are mandated by COMAR (Code of Maryland Regulations), and the Maryland Higher Education Commission has prepared enrollment projections for Maryland public colleges and universities through Fall 2031. The projections include headcount projections for each institution, with separate analyses for full- and part-time undergraduates and, as applicable, full- and part-time graduate/professional students.

These projections provide perspective to higher education policy discussions at the state level, including facilities planning, tuition and fees issues, articulation, and funding priorities. The Department of Budget and Management and the General Assembly use the Commission's forecasts as the State's official enrollment projections.

The figures from the 2022-2031 projections conducted this year are relatively lower than the enrollment projections of 2020-2029 and 2021-2030. This year's lowered projections remedy the possible overestimation of the projections that existed in the past years. Additionally, Dr. Lin gave an overview of the methodology that was used. The Maryland population projections serve as the base of the MHEC enrollment projections.

Dr. Lin recommended that the Maryland Higher Education Commission accept the 2022-2031 enrollment projections and approve their distribution to the public, the campuses, and interested state agencies.

**Commissioner Howe** expressed concern regarding the decrease in community college enrollment and how that will affect the amount of funding these institutions will receive. Dr. Schmertz spoke about the model that was used to make these projections, explaining that it was created when conditions were different. Mr. Newman added that the model does not affect the amount of funding they receive; the model informs the capital budget. He reminded the Commissioners that the projections are updated every year. **Commissioner Serrano** asked how accurate are the numbers when comparing the different sets of projections. Dr. Lin responded that the projections overestimate the enrollment for community colleges, which is due to the lagged response of the projection model to the persisting decline in the number of community college students. However, the projections for the public 4-year institutions are more accurate because the in-state enrollments of public 4-year institutions are less volatile. **Commissioner**

**Serrano** further asked how often the model is changed. Dr. Lin answered that the model does not change. Dr. Schmertz added that the overall numbers are accurate. However, the projections regarding where the numbers will be distributed are less accurate. **Commissioner Serrano** inquired if institutions perform their own projections and, if so, how they compare. Dr. Schmertz responded that some of them do. However, the variables that they use are different, depending upon their specific needs.

**Commissioner Serrano** made a motion for approval, and **Commissioner Coleman** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:03 p.m.