

**Maryland Higher Education Commission**  
Meeting Minutes

September 22, 2021  
10:00 a.m.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) met on Wednesday, September 22, 2021 via video teleconference (GoToMeeting).

**Commission members present:**

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Mary Pat Seurkamp, Ph.D., Chair | Charles McDaniels, Jr.                               |
| Senchal D. Barrolle, Esq.       | James B. Sellinger, Sr.<br>(left mtg. at 12:00 p.m.) |
| Vivian S. Boyd, Ph.D.           | Ray Serrano, Ph.D.                                   |
| Lewis R. Brown, Ed.D.           | Craig A. Williams, Ph.D.                             |
| James E. Coleman                | Haleemat Y. Adekoya,<br>Student Commissioner         |
| Vera R. Jackson, Ph.D.          |  |

**Staff members present:**

|                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| James D. Fielder, Jr., Ph.D. | Emily A. A. Dow, Ph.D. |
| Geoffrey Newman              | Jennifer Katz          |
| Anthony Reiner               | Trish Gordon McCown    |
| Priscilla Hicks              | Rhonda Wardlaw         |
| Daniel Schuster              | Karen King-Sheridan    |
| Yuxin Lin, Ph.D.             | Glenda Abney           |
| Lee Towers                   | Jennifer Fischetti     |
| Everette Jackson             | Bryson Barksdale       |
| Aubrey Bascombe              |                        |

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Seurkamp** at approximately 10:01 a.m. A meeting quorum was established with all eleven members present.

**Chair's Remarks**

**Chair Seurkamp** thanked everyone for joining today's meeting to hear presentations from Maryland's higher education segments.

**Secretary's Remarks**

**Secretary Fielder** thanked the higher education representatives present for their leadership and the Commissioners for their attention to the very important matter at today's meeting. He then

welcomed Dr. Emily Dow, MHEC's Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs, who introduced two new employees in her department. Ms. Priscilla Hicks is the new administrative support for the Veterans Affairs unit. Dr. Yuxin Lin is the new Associate Director of the Office of Research and Policy Analysis. Both offered brief remarks.

### **Election of Commission Vice Chair**

**Chair Seurkamp** reported that Commissioner Vera Jackson volunteered to serve as Vice Chair. She asked if there were other volunteers or nominees. There were none. **Chair Seurkamp** motioned to support Commissioner Jackson's nomination as Vice Chair. **Commissioner Coleman** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

### **Approval of Minutes – Action Item**

There was a motion by **Vice Chair Jackson** and a second by **Commissioner McDaniels** for the approval of the August 25, 2021 meeting minutes. **Chair Seurkamp** asked if there were any amendments to the minutes. **Commissioner Coleman** remarked that he was erroneously marked absent, though he joined 45 minutes into the meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously as amended (noting Commissioner Coleman's presence and arrival time).

### **Commissioner Committee Updates**

**Education Policy Committee: Commissioner Boyd** reported that the Committee met on Monday, September 20 and heard a presentation on the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center by Dr. Ann Kellogg, Director of Reporting Services. Additionally, Chair Seurkamp will be stepping down from her role as a Committee member, and Commissioners Brown and Adekoya have volunteered to serve on this Committee. Commissioner Barrolle is also a current member.

**Outreach, Grants, and Financial Assistance Committee: Vice Chair Jackson** reported that the Committee met on September 10 for the purpose of introducing new Student Commissioner Adekoya to the Committee's goals and updating her on prior meetings. (The other Committee member is Commissioner Coleman.) The Committee has several goals: to study MHEC's grants and financial aid programs, to recommend changes to better serve those programs, and to recommend strategies to increase public awareness of MHEC's services and programs. They hope to meet again in October with MHEC staff. **Vice Chair Jackson** also expressed the hope that Commissioner Coleman would step up to serve as Chair of the Committee. She would continue to serve as a member of this Committee, and perhaps another.

**Finance and Operations Committee:** There is currently no Chair of the Committee. Commissioners Brown, Williams and Sellinger have agreed to serve on this Committee. MHEC's Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration Geoffrey Newman reported that,

aside from the vacancies he mentioned at the last meeting, they are currently preparing the FY 2023 budget.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee:** Commissioner McDaniels has agreed to serve as the Chair of this Committee. Other members include Commissioners Coleman and Serrano. **Secretary Fielder** reported that the staff liaison will be Dr. Barbara Schmertz, Director of the Office of Research and Policy Analysis.

### **Department of Finance and Administration – Operating and Capital Budget Presentations – Information Items**

**Chair Seurkamp** recognized Mr. Newman who welcomed all the representatives from the various segments of higher education who are here today to present their plans for the fiscal year 2022-2023 budgets. Mr. Newman then gave an overview to the Commission regarding their responsibility to review the budgets of all higher education segments. Commissioners ask how institutions' priorities and budgets align with the current State Plan.

#### **University System of Maryland**

Ms. Ellen Herbst, Vice Chancellor for Administration & Finance, presented the USM Operating and Capital Budget to the Commission. The presentation is available for review.

#### **St. Mary's College of Maryland**

Dr. Jeffrey Byrd, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, presented the St. Mary's College of Maryland Operating and Capital Budget to the Commission. The presentation is available for review.

#### **Morgan State University**

Dr. David Wilson, President, presented the Morgan State University Operating and Capital Budget to the Commission. The presentation is available for review.

#### **Maryland Independent College and University Association**

Ms. Sara Fidler, President, presented the Maryland Independent College and University Association Operating and Capital Budget to the Commission. The presentation is available for review.

#### **Maryland Association of Community Colleges**

Dr. Brad Phillips, Executive Director, presented the Maryland Association of Community Colleges Operating and Capital Budget to the Commission. The presentation is available for review.

#### **Baltimore City Community College**

Dr. Debra McCurdy, President, presented the Baltimore City Community College Operating and Capital Budget to the Commission. The presentation is available for review.

### **Regional Higher Education Centers**

Mr. Geoffrey Newman, MHEC's Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration, presented the Regional Higher Education Centers' Operating and Capital Budget to the Commission. The presentation is available for review.

**Break 12:55 – 1:05 PM.**

### **Office of Student Financial Assistance – Financial Assistance Advisory Council (FAAC) Update - Informational Item**

**Chair Seurkamp** recognized Ms. Donna Thomas, Director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance, who introduced Ms. Janice Doyle, Chair of the Financial Assistance Advisory Council (FAAC). Ms. Doyle reported on FAAC's key accomplishments in 2020-2021, as well their 2021-2022 work plan.

In 2020-2021, a primary area of focus included the review and recommendations for COMAR Financial Aid Regulations for the EEA (Educational Excellence Awards) program relating to institutional verification for GA (Guaranteed Access) awards. The FAAC also discussed ways to modify the GA renewal income requirements to limit the impact on GA award amounts for small, temporary increases in family income, known as the "GA cliff".

In 2021-2022, their primary areas of focus include:

- 1) GA Cliff – The Council is continuing discussion of options to address the GA cliff.
- 2) Senate Bill 664 Education – Student Financial Aid – Outreach Plan and Reporting – The bill requires that FAAC identify best practice strategies for FAFSA outreach, including relevant materials and tool kits, and will submit a report to MHEC for review. A final report is required to be submitted to the Maryland General Assembly by April 1, 2022.
- 3) Senate Bill 308 Higher Education – Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship – Eligibility – FAAC established a sub-committee to discuss possible ways to implement changes required by the bill which removes the high school GPA requirement for individuals who graduated five or more years prior to application.

### **Office of Student Financial Assistance – Final Adoption of COMAR Amendments – Richard W. Collins III Leadership with Honor Scholarship Program – Action Item**

**Chair Seurkamp** recognized Ms. Thomas who presented this item. On May 26, 2021, the Commission approved for publication in the Maryland Register proposed amendments to the regulations for the Richard W. Collins III Leadership with Honor Scholarship Program, which awards scholarships to ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) students at the state's four HBCUs. The purpose of these amendments is to incorporate changes to the funding allocation that were passed during the 2021 Session (HB 1124/SB 40), alter the application deadline to

facilitate earlier awarding, and delete an obsolete provision. The proposed amendments were published in the Maryland Register on July 16, 2021. The public comment period for the amendments ended on August 16, 2021, and no public comments were received. The regulatory amendments became eligible for final adoption on August 31, 2021.

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

Ms. Thomas recommended that the Commission approves for final adoption the attached amendments to the regulations for the Richard W. Collins III Leadership with Honor Scholarship Program. **Commissioner Boyd** made a motion for approval and **Commissioner Coleman** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Office of Student Financial Assistance – Approval of Amendments to the Bylaws of the Financial Assistance Advisory Council (FAAC) – Action Item**

**Chair Seurkamp** recognized Ms. Thomas who presented this item. FAAC was established by statute in 1988 and currently meets monthly to review matters regarding the administration of State financial aid programs and financial aid outreach to Maryland high school students.

During the 2021 Session, the legislature passed SB 664 to improve financial aid outreach to high school students. Among other provisions, the law requires that the FAAC bylaws be updated to add to the council a student services director member, appointed by the Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland.

FAAC adopted the bylaws amendments, reflecting the change required by the legislature, on July 15, 2021. Amendments to the bylaws of any of MHEC's advisory councils require final approval by the Commission.

Ms. Thomas recommended that the Commission approves the proposed amendments to the Financial Assistance Advisory Council bylaws. **Commissioner McDaniels** made a motion for approval and **Commissioner Boyd** seconded the approval. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

**Commissioner Adekoya** made a motion for approval and **Commissioner Coleman** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:20 p.m.