



# **Students with Disabilities at Maryland Colleges and Universities**

**March 2020**

**(corrected June 2020)**

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.  
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford  
Lt. Governor

**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**  
6 North Liberty Street • Tenth Floor • Baltimore, MD 21201  
[www.mhec.maryland.gov](http://www.mhec.maryland.gov)

# Maryland Higher Education Commission

Ian D. MacFarlane, Chair

Sandra L. Jimenez, Vice-Chair

Senchal D. Barrolle, Esq.

Vivian S. Boyd, Ph.D.

James E. Coleman

Anwer J. Hasan

Vera R. Jackson, Ph.D.

Donna M. Mitchell

Jordan T. Troutman, Student Commissioner

John W. Yaeger, Ed.D.

**James D. Fielder, Jr., Ph.D.**  
**Secretary**

## **Introduction**

This annual report presents data on students who registered with disability services at Maryland colleges and universities and provides analysis on graduation and retention outcomes for those students. To better understand higher education outcomes for students with disabilities in Maryland, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Disabilities and in partnership with the state's higher education institutions, created a survey administered to colleges and universities<sup>1</sup> to collect retention and completion data on these students. The data may be used to inform policy that may be beneficial to this unique population.

The aggregated data collected reflect the number of students who registered with disability services<sup>2</sup> at their college or university and report on retention and graduation outcomes for those students.<sup>3</sup>

## **Maryland Statewide Results**

In fiscal year 2018, 15,362 undergraduate students and 1,181 graduate students were registered with their institutions' disability services office as students with disabilities<sup>4</sup>. This represents 3.6% of all students enrolled in fiscal year 2018. More specifically, this represents 4.2% of undergraduate students enrolled and 1.3% of graduate students enrolled.

---

<sup>1</sup> Surveys are administered annually to Maryland's 16 community colleges, 13 four-year public institutions, and 13 state-aided independent colleges and universities. As of April 2020, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) has specified inconsistent reporting regarding data on students seeking services through their Disabilities Office since this collection began. This report contains inaccurate data for UMES; these inaccuracies do not alter statewide figures significantly.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, the terms disability services and disability services office will be used throughout for consistency. It is important to note that the name of this office can vary from campus to campus.

<sup>3</sup> For detailed background information on students with disabilities in Maryland and the nation, please refer to the February 2018 and February 2019 *Students with Disabilities at Maryland Colleges and Universities* reports.

<sup>4</sup> Students registered with their institutions' disability services office in this report's analysis include those who have permanent or temporary disabilities.

### *Four-Year Institutions*

In fiscal year 2018, Maryland's four-year public and state-aided independent institutions reported that 8,734 students were registered as students with disabilities with disability services. Four-year public institutions reported 4,627 undergraduate students and 688 graduate students while state-aided independent institutions reported 2,926 undergraduate students and 493 graduate students.

Maryland's four-year public and state-aided independent institutions also reported on the first-time, full-time, degree- or certificate-seeking students who were registered with the disability services office and enrolled in Fall 2017. To obtain a retention rate on those students, institutions reported the number of these students who returned to the institution in Fall 2018. See Table 1 and Table 2 on the following page for a three-year trend of data which, includes undergraduate and graduate student 12-month enrollment, and a three-year trend of retention rates for students registered with the disability services office, respectively.

The trend data show that students attending Maryland's four-year public institutions and registered with their disabilities services office, on average, are under 3% of total undergraduate enrollment and have retention rates comparable to the total undergraduate population. Students registered with their disabilities services office at state-aided independent institutions also have retention rates comparable to the total undergraduate population and, on average, are approximately 9% of the total undergraduate enrollment population.

### *Community Colleges*

In fiscal year 2018, 7,809 undergraduate students registered with the disability services office of their campus. This represents 4.7% of the total undergraduate enrollment at Maryland's community colleges. The trend data show that the percentage of students registered with their disabilities services office increases slightly each year but remains under 5% of the total undergraduate enrollment at the community colleges from 2016 to 2018. Survey results also show that of these students, 985 (12.6%) graduated with an undergraduate degree or certificate by the end of the fiscal year.

In 2021, MHEC will report on retention, transfer, and completion data for community college students who register with their institution's disabilities services office. These data will reflect a cohort of students (beginning with the Fall 2015 cohort) and compare the outcomes of these students with the outcomes of all students.

Table 1: Students Registered with Disability Services at Maryland Colleges and Universities: 2016-2018 Enrollment Trends

	FY 2016: Undergraduate Students			FY 2017: Undergraduate Students			FY 2018: Undergraduate Students		
	12-month Total Undergraduate Enrollment	Undergraduate students registered with Disabilities Services Offices	% of Undergraduates registered with Disabilities	12-month Total Undergraduate Enrollment	Undergraduate students registered with Disabilities Services Offices	% of Undergraduates registered with Disabilities	12-month Total Undergraduate Enrollment	Undergraduate students registered with Disabilities Services Offices	% of Undergraduates registered with Disabilities
Four-Year Public Institutions	163,047	3,480	2.1%	173,555	4,363	2.5%	175,319	4,627	2.6%
State-Aided Independent Institutions	30,740	2,359	7.7%	29,277	2,692	9.2%	29,121	2,926	10%
Community Colleges	179,824	7,723	4.3%	172,695	7,837	4.5%	165,375	7,809	4.7%
	FY 2016: Graduate Students			FY 2017: Graduate Students			FY 2018: Graduate Students		
	12-month Total Graduate Enrollment	students registered with Disabilities Services Offices	% of Graduates registered with Disabilities	12-month Total Graduate Enrollment	Graduate students registered with Disabilities Services Offices	% of Graduates registered with Disabilities	12-month Total Graduate Enrollment	Graduate students registered with Disabilities Services Offices	% of Graduates registered with Disabilities
Four-Year Public Institutions	53,990	467	0.9%	53,111	707	1.3%	53,648	688	1.3%
State-Aided Independent Institutions	32,138	356	1.1%	34,224	447	1.3%	35,713	493	1.4%

Note: Data include counts of students registered with disability services office from the Maryland Survey in fiscal year 2018 and total 12-month enrollment from 2017-2018 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC. Retrieved 1/22/19 from <http://nces.ed.gov>

Table 2: Undergraduate Students Registered with Disability Services at Maryland Colleges and Universities: 2016-2018 Retention Trends

	2016 Retention Rate		2017 Retention Rate		2018 Retention Rate	
	Total Undergraduate Students	Undergraduate students registered with Disabilities Services Offices	Total Undergraduate Students	Undergraduate students registered with Disabilities Services Offices	Total Undergraduate Students	Undergraduate students registered with Disabilities Services Offices
Four-Year Public Institutions	84.2%	84.0%	84.8%	86.4%	84.1%	83.0%
State-Aided Independent Institutions	83.1%	82.0%	85.3%	85.1%	84.8%	82.8%

Note: Retention rates for the Fall 2017 cohort obtained from 2018 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC. Retrieved 1/7/20 from <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/login.aspx?gotoReportId=1>

## **Conclusions**

Data collected from Maryland's colleges and universities indicate that students are seeking services for their disabilities. Findings also show that students attending Maryland's four-year institutions (both public and state-aided independent) who were identified in the survey as registering for disability services had second-year retention rates that were comparable to the overall cohort. This suggests that students who seek disability services are obtaining the support and accommodations they need to successfully persist.

In coming years, the data collected by MHEC will allow for additional outcome measures to be analyzed, including six-year graduation rates for students enrolled in the state's four-year institutions, and retention, graduation, and transfer rates for all community college students. With these additional measures, Maryland's colleges and universities will be able to track the success of their students seeking disability services and Maryland will be able to report on statewide results. The information may give institutions greater insight into how these students compare to the larger student body and perhaps identify ways to ensure they have the support needed to succeed.