

Maryland Higher Education Commission
Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2023
10:00 a.m.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) met on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 in the 7th floor boardroom at the Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Building (200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201). The meeting was also livestreamed (and recorded), and some Commissioners joined virtually.

Commission members present:

Catherine J. “Cassie” Motz, Chair	Ray Serrano, Ph.D.
Chike Aguh, Vice Chair	Rebecca Taber Staehelin
Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.	Sheila D. Thompson, Ph.D.
Charlene Mickens Dukes, Ed.D.	Craig A. Williams, Ph.D.
Barbara Kerr Howe	Janet E. Wormack, Ed.D.

Commission member absent:

Cierra M. Robinson, Student Commissioner	
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Staff members present:

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.	Emily A. A. Dow, Ph.D.
Geoffrey Newman	Soma Kedia
Anthony Reiner	Kimberly Smith Ward
Derrick Coley	Rhonda Wardlaw
Parris Jackson	Deborah Ing
Al Dorsett	

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Motz** at approximately 10:05 a.m. A meeting quorum was established with ten (10) out of eleven (11) members present.

Chair’s Remarks

Chair Motz welcomed everyone to today’s meeting. She commended Acting Secretary Rai and his team, particularly Mr. Al Dorsett (Director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance), for an excellent job hosting a virtual financial aid open house on November 10. The event featured recent changes made to the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and answered pre-submitted questions from students. It was the first of its kind, and 180 people watched it live that day. To date, there have been 829 views. **Chair Motz** also welcomed MHEC’s new

Principal Counsel, Ms. Kimberly Smith Ward, to the agency, and thanked Ms. Soma Kedia, Assistant Attorney General, for her continued support and hard work.

Acting Secretary's Remarks

Acting Secretary Rai reported that there is good news regarding enrollment. There has been growth in all higher education segments recently. However, MHEC's goal continues to be providing access to all students. For every Maryland student who stays in-state, there are two who leave the state to study. Maryland's postsecondary institutions offer a high-quality, affordable education. On December 4, MHEC will partner with USM (University System of Maryland) to host a campus safety summit in Baltimore City. He also welcomed Ms. Ward to the agency and thanked Ms. Kedia for her dedicated service.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Discussion: Feedback for Program Approval Process Workgroup

Chair Motz noted that this item, though of great interest to the Commission, is being tabled at this time to a future meeting.

Update on Blueprint for Maryland's Future

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs, to present this item. The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) was created in 2016. It makes policy recommendations to enable Maryland's education system to perform at the level of the world's best systems. The Commission issued its final report in 2020, and legislation has been passed annually from 2018 through 2021 based on the Kirwan Commission's recommendations. The Accountability Implementation Board (AIB) was formed, as a result. The Board assesses how well the many components of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future are working to achieve the desired outcome of equal access to a high-quality education. The AIB developed a Comprehensive Implementation Plan for the Blueprint and may even withhold funding to any agency without an approved implementation plan.

The Blueprint Comprehensive Plan has 5 pillars:

- 1) Early Childhood Education
- 2) High-Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders
- 3) College and Career Readiness
- 4) More Resources for Students to be Successful
- 5) Governance and Accountability

Highlights from MHEC's Implementation Plan include the administration of the Teacher Fellows Scholarship, Loan Assistance Repayment Program for public school teachers, and the Teacher Quality Diversity Program. Coordinated initiatives with other entities include defining college readiness standards and collaborative reports, among others. A few examples of

MHEC's current work include participation in an outcomes workgroup to determine the measures for success and to study relevant data, renewing discussions with MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education) regarding dual enrollment and the transfer of credit, and administering an internship stipend. The Commissioners asked questions about Dr. Dow's presentation.

Overview of Student Transfer in Maryland

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Dow to present this item. Transfer from 2-year to 4-year institutions is very active in Maryland. Montgomery College sends the most students, followed by CCBC. On the other end, UMCP receives the most students, followed by Towson University.

The Transfer with Success Act was passed in 2021. The legislation created a new requirement for public institutions to jointly review credits or courses that are denied when a student transfers from one public institution to another. It also created a new annual reporting requirement.

The evaluation and review process (which lasts 60-90 days) includes 5 steps:

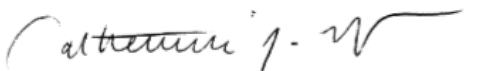
- 1) The student submits a transfer evaluation request.
- 2) There is an evaluation of course or credit.
- 3) A transfer evaluation report is generated, explaining what is transferable and what is denied.
- 4) If there is a denial, the sending institution conducts an analysis or review, indicating if it agrees or not with the decision of the receiving institution.
- 5) A final determination is made by the receiving institution, which takes place after both institutions meet to discuss the analysis or review (by the sending institution).

Ideally, the process takes place before the student enrolls. The Commissioners asked questions about Dr. Dow's presentation.

Adjournment

Commissioner Burnim made a motion to adjourn the meeting and **Vice Chair Aguh** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:20 PM.

Approved by the Commission:



Catherine J. "Cassie" Motz, Chair