February 15, 2013

BREIFING ON COLLEGE READINESS KICKS OFF THE WEEK

On Monday, members of the budget-writing committees heard from several people with knowledge of postsecondary education in a briefing entitled: The Status of College Readiness in Maryland. The Department of Legislative Services presented an overview, which can be found here: http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/BudgetFiscal/2013-Policy-Briefing-College-Readiness.pdf

Among those who offered their perspectives and insights included: Dave Spence, President, Southern Regional Education Board, MHEC Secretary, Dr. Danette Howard, and Morgan State University President, Dr. David Wilson.

HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY SEeks REPEAL OF FEE AUTHORITY

On Wednesday, USM testified along with community college and independent college representatives in support of Senate Bill 341 sponsored by Senator Madaleno. SB 341 repeals the authority of the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to charge an application fee for the approval of academic programs.

In 2011, the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act authorized MHEC to collect an application fee from institutions of postsecondary education that are seeking certification to operate in Maryland. The fee is charged for conducting academic program reviews for institutions of postsecondary education (with the exception of reviews of actions relating to regional higher education centers). This includes both out-of-state institutions and new institutions seeking to operate in Maryland. The argument was that MHEC incurred expenses of $5,000 - $10,000 to process each application from an institution and that the fee would allow the State to recoup its costs and would deter institutions from abusing
their right to reapply. At that time, these institutional fees were anticipated to increase general fund revenues by more than $250,000 per year.

USM asserted that since MHEC approves all applications to offer academic programs statewide, the approval process is a core function that should not be subject to the “fee-for-service” approach. In addition, the latest figures available to USM show that the fee requirement had fallen well below its estimated revenue. Today, MHEC reports that the volume of program approval requests has decreased significantly (45% compared to the same period in 2010) since the fees were implemented on July 1, 2011. In the first seven months of fiscal 2013, MHEC has received $39,000.

In a May 2011 meeting, MHEC commissioners convened and according to their published minutes they expressed “concerns about the practicality of imposing these fees on in-state institutions…” and to “…urge the Governor and Department of Budget and Management and the Legislature to work with us to consider other means to fund Program and Institutional Approval Fees.” The Commission subsequently passed a motion stating: “The Legislature should reconsider the legislation, which authorized the imposition of these fees on in-state institutions, in future fiscal years.”

The University System of Maryland agrees wholeheartedly with the Commission’s past desire to reconsider the authorization of academic program fees.

**LEGISLATIVE & BUDGET HEARINGS (FEBRUARY 18 – MARCH 13)**

**HB 508; Local Stormwater Management Charges - State Property**
House Environmental Matters
February 13
1pm

**HB 527; Frederick Regional Higher Education Advisory Board**
House Appropriations
February 19
1pm

**HB 553; Academic Program Proposals - Reviews and Objections**
House Appropriations
February 19
1pm

**HB 557; Student Notification - Financial Information (College Cost Sheet)**
House Appropriations
February 19
1pm
SB 431; University System of Maryland - Quasi-Endowments
Senate Budget & Taxation
February 20
1:00pm

SB 538; Public-Private Partnerships
Senate Budget & Taxation
February 20
2:00pm

HB 526; Maryland First Scholarship - Creation and Funding
House Ways & Means
February 20
1pm

HB 740; Exemption from Paying Non-Resident Graduate Tuition - Servicemembers
House Appropriations
February 26
1pm

HB 833; College Readiness and Completion Act of 2013
Ways and Means
February 26
1pm

HB 1280; State Labor Relations Board & Higher Education Labor Relations Board - Enforcement Authority
Ways & Means
February 26
1pm

SB 543; Foster Care Recipients - Waiver of Tuition and Other Charges
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
March 6
1pm

SB 607; Student Notification - Financial Information (College Cost Sheet)
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
March 6
1pm

SB 510; Fully On-Line Distance Education Programs - Regulation
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
March 6
1pm
SB 705; Exemption from Paying Non-Resident Graduate Tuition - Servicemembers
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
March 6
1pm

SB 740; College Readiness and Completion Act of 2013
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
March 6
1pm

SB 808; Institution Management - Admissions Requirements
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
March 6
1pm

SB 677; SLRB & HELRB - Enforcement Authority
Senate Finance
March 7
1pm

HB 871; Dually Enrolled Students - In State & In-County
Ways & Means
March 13
1pm

HB 1288; Accountability in Education Act
Ways & Means
March 13
1pm

NEW BILLS
HB 1272/SB 964; Maryland College Sports Fans and Athletes Bill of Rights
HB 1332; Personal Electronic Accounts - Privacy Protections
HB 1342; Longitudinal Data System - Governing Board and Data Transfers
HB 1412; Public Senior Higher Education Institutions – Mandatory Fees- Limit on Increases

Full Operating Budget Schedule
Towson University, University of Maryland Baltimore County, Salisbury University
February 21, 2013
1:00 p.m.
House Appropriations
University of Maryland Eastern Shore, University of Maryland University College
February 27, 2013
1:00 p.m.
House Appropriations

Salisbury University, Towson University, University of Maryland University College
February 28, 2013
1:00 p.m.
Senate Budget and Taxation

University of Maryland Baltimore County, University of Maryland Eastern Shore
March 4, 2013
1:00 p.m.
Senate Budget and Taxation