

Maryland Independent College
and University Association

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TESTIMONY

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

SB 464 – Higher Education – College Admissions Outreach Program for High-Achieving Students – Establishment

MEMBERS

Tina Bjarekull, President

February 24, 2016

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of SB 464: Higher Education – College Admissions Outreach Program for High-Achieving Students – Establishment. This bill will make it possible for more high-achieving students in Maryland to attain a college education, and will also complement existing outreach efforts at MICUA campuses. MICUA members work hard to recruit underrepresented students through innovative outreach and financial assistance programs. Currently, one in every four undergraduates attending a MICUA institution is a Pell Grant recipient, meaning that their annual family income is \$36,000 or less.

On February 11, 2016, MICUA announced the launch of an innovative public/private partnership, known as the Guaranteed Access Partnership Program (GAPP), to help reduce college costs and moderate student debt for Maryland high school graduates who lack the financial resources to afford an independent institution. Through GAPP, all 13 MICUA institutions will provide a matching grant to eligible recipients of a State Guaranteed Access (GA) Grant, for a total award up to \$35,000 per year.

In addition to GAPP, MICUA campuses are engaged in numerous partnerships and strategies to create more racially and economically diverse campuses. For example:

- Capitol Technology University partners with groups such as the College Bound Foundation, First Generation Bound, Hispanic Youth Bound, and DC Achievers to help increase the enrollment of underrepresented groups on campus;

- Stevenson University has hired a Multicultural Recruitment Coordinator to reach out to and support underrepresented students;

- Mount St. Mary's University administers the Third Century Scholars program, which targets high-ability African American and Hispanic students;
- Notre Dame of Maryland University works with numerous programs to reach out to underrepresented populations including Upward Bound, College Summit, and My Sister's Circle, a local mentoring program for young women of color in the Baltimore area; and
- McDaniel College helped create the France-Merrick Scholars Program to provide scholarships for financially deserving students from Baltimore City.

These are only a handful of examples that demonstrate the commitment of MICUA institutions toward meeting the needs of students. SB 464 will build on the work of our member institutions, in collaboration with the Maryland Higher Education Commission and Maryland State Department of Education, and will cross-promote programs that serve the State's high achieving students with financial need.

For these reasons, MICUA urges a favorable report for SB 464.