

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
***Senate Bill 501 (Elfreth) Maryland Higher Education Commission – Procedures -
Alterations***

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On behalf of the member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) and the 58,000 students we serve, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of [Senate Bill 501 Maryland Higher Education Commission – Procedures - Alterations](#). This bill requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to make Commission meetings available to the public through live video streaming. The bill also requires the MHEC Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) to send a notification no later than April 15th to each student who applied for a Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Award indicating whether the student is a recipient of an award and, if applicable, the amount awarded to the student.

Many MICUA institutions offer rolling admissions, accepting students to their schools as the applications are received and evaluated, rather than waiting for a specific decision date. Students must apply for the Educational Excellence awards by March 1st and May 1st is the award notification date. May 1st is also National Candidates’ Reply Date, the deadline whereby an applicant formally notifies a college that they will accept its offer of admission. This bill would require award notification to the students no later than April 15th, allowing sufficient time for students to make an informed decision before they commit to a school. Schools also need adequate time to respond to the award decision and modify a financial aid package for a student, if needed. According to the current timeline of the award, often schools learn of the award recipients within one to two days of the May 1st decision date. This does not allow sufficient planning time for students or schools.

Students at all thirteen state-aided MICUA schools are recipients of both Educational Assistance (EA) grants and Guaranteed Access (GA) grants. For the 2021-2022 academic year, over 2800 Educational Excellence awards valued at over \$16 million were awarded to MICUA schools.

EA and GA awards at MICUA schools 2021-2022 academic year*		
Type of Grant	# of awards	Amount of awards (\$)
EA	2224	5,478,600
GA	637	10,952,750
TOTAL	2861	16,431,350

* Source: OSFA

Every one of MICUA's thirteen State-aided institutions also participates in the Guaranteed Access Partnership Program (GAPP). GAPP is a public-private partnership that helps students close the affordability gap in order to attend a private nonprofit institution of higher education in the State. Students who receive a GA Grant from the State are eligible for a matching grant from a MICUA institution. Since 2017 when the program was established, GAPP has matched over \$45 million to nearly 2,400 Maryland students.

The MICUA colleges and universities are committed to helping students obtain the financial assistance they need to access their choice of institution of higher education. We use 85%-90% of our Sellinger funding for financial aid for Maryland students, and in Fiscal 2021, we awarded over \$300 million in institution-based financial aid. We have seen increased financial need in recent years, especially during the pandemic, and this bill will help alleviate some of the stress and uncertainty of the school selection for students.

We appreciate the effort that the sponsors have made to ensuring that students receive and retain the financial aid resources they need to pursue their undergraduate education. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Angela Sherman, Vice President for Academic Affairs, asherman@micua.org.

For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 501.