For almost 240 years, Maryland’s independent colleges and universities have been part of the State’s system of postsecondary education. Today, Maryland’s 13 State-aided independent institutions serve more than 65,600 students, 38% of whom are students of color, in 180 geographic locations and offer 1,600 approved academic programs, including more than 900 post-baccalaureate and graduate programs. These advanced-level academic programs are essential to Maryland’s knowledge-based economy. Last year, the MICUA institutions awarded more than 15,200 degrees and achieved remarkable outcomes as measured by high retention rates and graduation rates, shorter time-to-degree, low student loan default rates, and top-ranked mid-career salary earnings. Johns Hopkins University, MICUA’s only doctoral research university, spent $2.6 billion on research and development activities, issued 150 patents, fueled 24 new start-up companies, and created 1,000 new jobs in 2019. With just 3% of the State’s appropriation for higher education, the MICUA institutions produce remarkable benefits.

As the facts demonstrate, the State’s investment in its independent institutions is a wise and efficient use of taxpayer dollars. Therefore, we are extremely disappointed that the 2020 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA) reduces the Sellinger Program appropriation by over $32 million and eliminates the link between the Sellinger Program and the other segments of higher education, disregarding the long-standing funding relationship between the State and the other segments of higher education. Further, the BRFA perpetuates the long-delayed promise to return the funding of independent institutions to an amount that was first intended as early as the 1970’s. Maryland is best served by a system of higher education with public and private, two- and four-year institutions working collaboratively to meet the State’s goals for postsecondary education.

We agree wholeheartedly with the BRFA recommended action in the Maryland Higher Education Commission budget analysis prepared by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS). DLS asserts that the link between the Sellinger Program and the other segments of higher education should be restored. Further, DLS recommends that the percentage of the State’s per full time equivalent funding for selected public four-year institutions of higher education that informs the Sellinger Program should be stable beginning with this year’s funding. This
is consistent with current law and we respectfully request that you set this level at the level that is in the current statute – 15.5%.

In Fiscal 2019, of the $56.3 million received through the Sellinger Program:

- $50 million (89%) was awarded as financial aid to increase access to quality higher education for Maryland residents;
- $3.4 million (6%) was used to foster student success through programs to enhance teaching effectiveness, improve learning environments, and increase campus diversity; and
- $2.6 million (5%) was used to spur and nurture innovative strategies in academic research and pedagogy.

In addition to financial aid awarded under the Sellinger Program, our institutions offered over $700 million in institutional-based aid in fiscal 2019. We are proud to report that undergraduate enrollment of underrepresented minority students (African-American, Hispanic, and Native American) grew by 77% from 2008 to 2018 and during this same period the enrollment of Pell students grew by 103%. Several of our campuses include both on and off-campus programming to target these populations. For example, Goucher College specifically connects with the SEED School of Baltimore and Bard Early College High School to identify underrepresented students, and partners with community-based organizations such as the Baltimore Urban League to do the same. The Washington Scholars Program at Washington College recruits high-achieving students with high financial need from various metropolitan areas across the U.S. St. John’s College hosts an annual fully-funded summer program coordinated with UNCF and AEU to provide underrepresented minority students with leadership and critical thinking programs. To improve retention, McDaniel College assigns peer mentors to every new student and trains these emissaries in the unique needs of diverse populations. At Mount St. Mary’s University, the Mount Cares Committee assigns a contact person to all students who are identified as “at-risk” and at Notre Dame of Maryland University, the Trailblazers Program supports first generation college students via personalized meetings, workshops, collaborations with other on-campus services and departments, and guest speakers.

The Sellinger funds that are used for purposes other than financial aid are the true beauty of the Sellinger Program itself. It is not enough to get the student through the front door of the institution in order to succeed. Students also need, and our favorable retention and graduation rates support, programs and services throughout the student’s academic career. Some of the programs and services that have been made possible through the use of Sellinger funds include: improving online content delivery at Capitol Technology University; summer bridge, career advising, social justice opportunities, and health counseling services at Goucher College; expanding various programmatic opportunities at Johns Hopkins University including STEM initiatives, early childhood special education, and public safety leadership; exposing students to community-based redevelopment to emphasize living, working, and learning all in one place at Loyola University Maryland; offering multicultural and diversity training as it relates to the arts at Maryland Institute College of Art; career readiness advising and internship opportunities at McDaniel College; career advising at Mount St. Mary’s University; expanded nursing education and teacher preparation at Stevenson University; and improving English competency at Washington Adventist University.
Copies of reports describing the use of Sellinger funds at each of the MICUA campuses are available on our website: www.MICUA.org.

In preparation for testifying on this issue, we asked some of our students to provide feedback regarding their postsecondary experiences as impacted by Sellinger funding. The following are some of the responses that we received:

- “My father took out a loan for my older sister’s college tuition so I knew I had to find scholarships to cover the cost of my education including on-campus housing. I take classes and am a work-study student … so I needed easy access … without having a car. This scholarship allowed me to pay for my on-campus housing which meant I could continue working and taking classes… and focus on my future.” – A student at Capitol Technology University.

- “My major is biochemistry and molecular biology, with a French Transnational Studies minor, and a premedicine concentration, and this opportunity…would be impossible without the Sellinger grant. I am trying to obtain my undergraduate degree with as little student loans as possible, as I am looking at the cost of med school, and this grant has allowed me to do so, without sacrificing the quality of my education.” – A junior at Goucher College.

- “I am …majoring in Global Studies and minoring in Business Administration. I plan to graduate spring 2023 and pursue a profession in the Peace Corps…By having these funds available, it allows my financial burden to lighten… Recently I was afforded the opportunity to give back to the Frederick community by creating blankets for the homeless. I hope in the future I am able to help others as much as you have helped me.” – A sophomore at Hood College.

In the 1970’s, the Pear Committee concluded that the State should provide modest public financial support to preserve and strengthen a dual system of higher education. The panel wrote that “the savings to the State in tax dollars due to the existence of these institutions has contributed substantially to the welfare and well-being of all of the citizens in Maryland.” Further the panel noted that “continued and increased participation of the private institutions of higher education in Maryland is essential for the optimum use of public funds for the support of higher education...” We believe that this holds true today as much as it did back then.

The MICUA institutions are so very appreciative for our longstanding partnership with both the State and the other segments of higher education. Among other things, we know that this partnership requires us to embrace our passion and commitment to financial aid. We are proud of the efforts that we have made to ensure that low-income students are able to access and afford their choice in higher education. In particular, our Guaranteed Access Partnership Program (GAPP) matches 100% of the State-awarded Guaranteed Access Grants so that the low-income high-achieving students may receive up to $38,200 per year towards their pursuit of higher education at our institutions.

In closing, we vow to continue to put every single dollar that we receive in Sellinger funding towards financial aid for Maryland students, programs, and services that ensure that we provide
the stellar return on investment to Maryland’s workforce, economy, and communities that has come to be expected of us. We rise to this challenge and we look forward to better outcomes for years to come. Hold us accountable, and we promise to overperform. **We respectfully ask that you fully fund the Sellinger Program this year, restoring the $32 million that was cut by the BRFA, so that we will be in the best position to serve our students, our employees, our communities, and the great state of Maryland.**
On behalf of MICA and our Board of Trustees, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present our case for support for the Sellinger Program for Maryland’s State-aided independent colleges and universities. As President of Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and a member of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA), I would like to express our gratitude for the State of Maryland’s past support of the Sellinger program and underscore how these investments have been critical to providing access to Maryland students, advancing higher education in our State, and positioning our leadership nationally.

Through the Sellinger Program, the State of Maryland allocates funding to provide modest grants to eligible independent colleges and universities, which are used to support Maryland’s goals for higher education. Today, the independent colleges and universities use the vast majority of the Sellinger funds (89%) to provide need-based grants and scholarships to Maryland residents. Funds are also used to support students once they are enrolled as undergraduates, helping ensure their success and degree completion. This results in providing Marylanders with greater access to enroll in college of their choice and pursue and achieve their dreams.

To this end, MICUA institutions are asking the State of Maryland to restore full funding for the Sellinger Program as established by the General Assembly more than a decade ago. This year, the Sellinger Program requires an additional commitment of $32 million from the legislature to restore funding as defined by the statutory formula.
At MICA, we are committed to provide an equitable pathway for all students, throughout the State, to attend a top-ranked college of art and design regardless of their financial capacity. In order to fill the gap in what a family can afford and the cost of attendance, MICA relies on need-based scholarships, including Sellinger funding. Though MICA attracts students nationally and internationally, more than 22% of our students hail from Maryland. 95% of our students require financial aid to attend MICA. In 2019, more than 470 Maryland residents accessed over $8 million in financial aid, of which $2.5 million was Sellinger funding. Without Sellinger support, many of these students would not have had the opportunity to enroll and pursue their degree at the college of their choice.

As an anchor institution, MICA has a responsibility to the State of Maryland to thrive locally. The College is committed to leveraging support to improve college access and outcomes for aspiring artists and designers. There is an undeniable need to create an equitable pipeline for local students to gain a top-ranked college degree. Removing key barriers to attaining this objective is part of MICA’s comprehensive and formalized community-based strategy to serve Maryland.

The Sellinger funding provides a return on investment to the State through helping develop a viable workforce. With increased demand for growth in new industries and cutting-edge technologies, MICA’s students and alumni are poised to play a key role in Maryland’s future. From their first year of undergraduate study, MICA students are immersed in creative practice in emerging and interdisciplinary fields. Adequate and focused support from the Sellinger Program provides access and prepares talented students, from all backgrounds, who will both feed and inspire economic activity.

Currently, more than 50% of our students stay for at least three years in Maryland after graduation and contribute to the local economy as members of the workforce, consumers, homeowners and entrepreneurs. Many of our graduates have engaged in community-based learning as students and continue to participate as volunteers, staff, advocates and supporters at many community organizations serving Marylanders. Our Center for Creative Entrepreneurship and Baltimore Creatives Acceleration Network initiatives are generating aspiring business owners who are developing new products, services and technology to contribute to the economy.

MICA has been preparing students for careers in art and design for over 190 years. To maintain this standing as one of the nation’s preeminent colleges of art, and only institution of its kind in Maryland, MICA must provide access to our best and brightest students regardless of their financial limitations and support their progress while in College. Sellinger support is critical for MICA and other MICUA institutions
to meet the needs of Marylanders who will seed innovation in the State for years to come.
On behalf of Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU), I want to express my gratitude for your continued support of independent higher education in the State of Maryland. The General Assembly’s past funding of the Sellinger program has significantly contributed to NDMU’s and the other independent colleges and universities’ mission to increase access and affordability for Maryland students. We were disappointed that the Governor’s FY2021 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act cut the Sellinger appropriation by $32 million and severed the link between the Sellinger program and the other segments of higher education. **We urge that this link be restored, and that Sellinger program be fully funded as intended under current law.**

NDMU is a private, Catholic university established in 1895 in Baltimore City with the mission to educate leaders to transform the world. NDMU is home to Maryland's only women's college, and offers a wide variety of full- and part-time undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and certificate programs for women and men. The University enrolls approximately 2,300 students and has Schools of Arts, Sciences, and Business; Education; Nursing; and Pharmacy. NDMU’s School of Education is the largest private provider and second/third overall of new teacher certifications in the State.

The Sellinger program provides NDMU essential funding to support Maryland students with scholarships and need-based grants, as well as increased access to disability and student support services which drive student retention and, most importantly, completion. Each year Notre Dame finds our student population requiring a growing amount of financial aid, and we have stepped up to the plate increasing our allotment of institutional aid to allow more students to pursue and ultimately complete their education at Notre Dame.

As a result of your generosity and support, in FY2019, NDMU provided Sellinger grants to 508 Maryland students. Notre Dame serves a unique and diverse population of students. In the traditional undergraduate Women’s College, 92% of our students are Maryland residents and 63% are individuals of color, including a growing 15% Hispanic population. Many of these students are first generation (31%) and participate in our recognized Trailblazer Scholar Program. Further, 51% of Women’s College students are Pell Grant eligible and rely on a combination of federal, state, and institutional financial aid to support their educational pursuits.

NDMU and the other MICUA institutions have seen a return on investment for Sellinger funding that is noteworthy not only in the State of Maryland, but nationally. Restoring the $32 million reduction will position us to best serve our students, employees, and local communities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to follow up with me, or Greg FitzGerald, Chief of Staff, at (410) 532-5109 or gfitzgerald@ndm.edu. Thank you for your continued support.

Marylou Yam, Ph.D., President