

Support with Amendments**House Appropriations Committee*****House Bill 167: Higher Education - State Payments to Private Institutions - Unserved Student Populations***

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On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 65,600 students we serve, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on *HB 167: Higher Education - State Payments to Private Institutions - Unserved Student Populations*. **MICUA supports the bill as proposed to be amended by the sponsor.**

The intent of the original bill was to facilitate the successful completion of a baccalaureate degree by students who complete an associate's degree but live in an area that is underserved by a public institution that awards a baccalaureate degree. Based on MICUA's assessment of the bill as introduced, only four State-aided private nonprofit institutions of higher education would meet the geographic parameters specified in the original bill: Hood College (Frederick), McDaniel College (Westminster), Mount St. Mary's University (Emmitsburg), and Washington College (Chestertown). Instead, MICUA thanks the sponsor for offering the attached amendments which accomplish a similar intent by increasing the award amount of the existing 2+2 Transfer Scholarship instead of creating a new and parallel program.

The 2+2 Transfer Scholarship, established in 2014, awards students either \$1,000 or \$2,000 if the student is in a science, teaching, engineering, computer science, mathematics, or nursing program. Eligible students must be a State resident, be a student at a community college, maintain a 2.5 GPA while at the community college, have earned an associate's degree, be accepted for admission at a public or private four-year institution, intend to enroll in the four-year institution in order to complete a baccalaureate degree, enroll by the fall semester following completion of the associate's degree, comply with Selective Service registration requirements, have completed the FAFSA, have demonstrated financial need, and accept other conditions that the Maryland Higher Education Commission or the Office of Student Financial Assistance may impose. Funding for the scholarship program specifies that if the State budget does not include \$2 million in any fiscal year, then funds in an amount of at least \$2 million are required to be transferred from the Need Based Student Financial Assistance Fund for the purpose of implementing the program.

The amendments raise the award amount of the 2+2 to be up to the equivalent annual tuition and mandatory fees of an undergraduate program at the four-year public institution within the

University System of Maryland, other than the University of Maryland Global Campus or the University of Maryland Baltimore, with the highest annual expenses. The amendments do not change the total fiscal impact of the 2+2 to the State.

Each year, approximately 15% of new incoming undergraduate students at MICUA member campuses are transfer students from other institutions, the majority of whom transfer from Maryland community colleges. In Fall 2017, over 500 Maryland community college students transferred to a MICUA member campus. MICUA institutions currently have more than 140 articulation agreements with Maryland community colleges. In addition, nine of MICUA's thirteen member institutions participate in ARTSYS, the State's online course articulation system for transferring credits from one Maryland institution to another. MICUA institutions participate in statewide articulation programs along with the State's public two-year and four-year institutions, including the Associate of Arts in Teaching (A.A.T.) degree and the Associate of Science in Engineering (A.S.E.) degree. Some MICUA institutions offer general education block transfer, guaranteed admission for associate's degree holders, and/or concurrent enrollment models, whereby students can enroll at both a community college and at a MICUA institution as they pursue their degree requirements. In addition, some MICUA institutions offer accelerated 3:1 bachelor degree programs for students who hold an associate's degree in certain disciplines, such as the RN-to-BSN program in nursing.

Many MICUA institutions have established institutional grants and scholarships specifically for community college transfer students. Some offer scholarship programs for transfer students based on the student's admitting GPA, with additional funding for Phi Theta Kappa (community college academic honor society) members. Further, transfer students attending MICUA campuses are already eligible to receive the State's 2+2 Transfer Scholarship. In AY 2018, 16 students attending MICUA member institutions received this scholarship, with an average award amount of \$1,400. By aligning this scholarship with tuition and fees at four-year public institutions, HB 167 would significantly increase the award amount for the 2+2 Transfer Scholarship while continuing to incentivize the completion of the associate's degree prior to transfer.

For all of these reasons, MICUA respectfully urges a Favorable With Amendments Committee report.