

TESTIMONY

Ways and Means Committee

HB 1403 – Next Generation Scholars of Maryland

Tina Bjarekull, President

March 9, 2016

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Washington College

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On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 63,000 students they serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of *House Bill 1403, Next Generation Scholars of Maryland*. If enacted, this bill will significantly improve college access for Maryland's low-income students.

HB 1403 transforms Maryland's College Readiness and Outreach program into the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program. The bill substantially improves upon and enhances the prior program by creating a competitive process to identify nonprofit organizations capable of administering outreach programs targeted to seventh and eighth grade students who prequalify for a Guaranteed Access (GA) Grant on the basis of financial need as established by the Commission. The nonprofit organization must provide students with high school graduation plans, summer work or internship experiences, mentorship opportunities, visits to college campuses, and other college preparation and intervention services.

Maryland's independent colleges and universities are eager to participate in the Next Generation Scholars Program and committed to providing college access for low-income Marylanders. Recently, MICUA and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) launched an innovative public/private partnership, known as the Guaranteed Access Partnership Program (GAPP), to reduce college costs and moderate student debt for Maryland high school graduates who lack the financial resources to afford an independent institution. This program was designed to supplement the State GA Grant.

GAPP requires participating institutions to match the State GA Grant, thereby closing the affordability gap for low-income Marylanders who want to attend an independent college or university. On February 11, the presidents and senior leaders from all MICUA member institutions pledged to participate in the program.

This year, State GA Grant maximum award is \$17,500. Students who receive a GA Grant and a matching GAPP award may receive up to \$35,000 annually to cover the costs of higher education. In addition, MICUA and the participating institutions agreed to launch a campaign to notify students and families about the GA and GAPP grants and the opportunities available to students. The Next Generation Scholars Program is a natural complement to these efforts.

In addition to launching the GAPP program, MICUA institutions are actively engaged in other college readiness and outreach programs, including extended day and summer enhancement programs, mentoring services, campus tours, assistance with college applications, and help in applying for student financial aid. Many MICUA institutions work with community-based organizations and elementary and secondary schools to target these services to at-risk students. Listed below are several examples of existing activities targeted to middle-school students:

- Since 1998, Goucher College has operated the Barclay Middle School Mentoring Project, which brings a small group of seventh-grade students to the College each week for an afternoon of mentoring. The Project has become an integral part of Goucher's Community Service offerings. Goucher students serve as mentors and design activities to address topics such as character building, civic engagement, and conflict resolution.
- Washington College hosts several on-campus pre-college preparation workshops for students in pre-kindergarten through eleventh grade. The College has a partnership with the Bayside HOYAS that provides tutoring to young students in the Kent County Community. This year, the College was the official host for the middle school component of Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's, the nonprofit that provides low-income children from pre-kindergarten to eighth grade with a summer program of academic and cultural enrichment.
- Capitol Technology University launched its first Do-it-Yourself Satellite Workshop in 2014, open to middle and high school students. The camp is free of charge to students and includes science presentations, games, and a trip to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. One group of students set up shop in Capitol's chemistry lab to blend potassium with sugar and mix the blend with de-ionized water. What remained was a flammable compound that could be used as rocket fuel when the water boiled off. Another team of students experimented with a model created using 3-D printers at the Astronautical Research Lab.
- Mount St. Mary's University recently hosted more than 180 eighth-grade students from the Crestwood Middle School. Participating students rotated through a series of activities that explained college life and steps students should take now to prepare for college. University faculty, staff, and students from admissions; athletics; dining services; student life; and various departments, including information technology, education, science, and philosophy, participated in the event.
- Washington Adventist University sponsors a day on campus for eighth graders from a number of schools in the community, including Montgomery County Village School and the Takoma Park International Middle School. Last year, more than 200 students,

primarily students of color, were given an introduction to college life and the college application process.

- McDaniel College has established a seven-year community outreach strategy to bring diverse students to campus. The College partners with organizations such as College Bound (Baltimore City), College Tracks (Montgomery County), First Generation College Bound (Prince George's County), College Directions, Inc., Advancement Via Individual Determination, and other partners to expand its reach.

MICUA members are fully supportive of HB 1403 and thank Delegate McIntosh for her leadership.

For these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable report of HB 1403.