



February 28, 2020

MARYLAND TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE GETS ATTENTION

Today in the House Ways & Means Committee several members of the university community testified in favor of both House Bills 343 and 1239. Collectively, the bills establish the Maryland Technology Infrastructure Program in the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) to facilitate strategic planning, manage a Maryland Technology Infrastructure Fund, and coordinate economic development service delivery

The USM plays a major role in providing the talent and developing the new technology and innovation fueling advanced industries. Annually, USM institutions graduate more than 11,000 STEM professionals and conduct \$1.4 billion in sponsored research. More than half of the new STEM professionals that the USM produces each year remain in Maryland to pursue their promising careers. More than 90% of this research activity USM institutions conduct is tied to supporting the objectives of the many federal, installations, laboratories and research missions throughout our great state. While these facts are great sources of pride, they also point to areas of tremendous opportunity going forward.

From a research perspective, USM collaborations with the federal government are strategically vital—however, according to the United Nations global R&D reports, more than 65% of all sponsored research conducted in the United States today is funded by industry.

Both bills are crucial in the pursuit of a focused and strategic growth strategy. Passage of this legislation will provide an investment mechanism or “Fund” within TEDCO that will enable the USM and its higher education partners to leverage and scale federal government and private industry resources for maximum impact and economic gain— fostering new investment and the creation of joint laboratories, research facilities and physical environments where our students, researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs and investors can nurture grow and scale new ventures.

USM SUBMITS TESTIMONY ON POSSIBLE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE CHANGES

Yesterday in Senate Finance Committee, the USM offered testimony regarding Senate Bill 539. This bill would require the USM institutions to participate in a Family & Medical Leave Insurance Program that provides job protection and wage replacement at a certain level for employees who need to be absent for up to twelve weeks due to reasons generally set forth in the federal Family & Medical Leave Act.

The USM argued that complies substantially with the requirements and underlying principles expressed in Senate Bill 539. On that basis, the USM urges a favorable report with an amendment that would exempt the USM on the basis of the benefits our employees currently receive. USM employees are guaranteed 12 weeks of paid parental leave and may use the various other forms of accrued leave while they are absent for their own or their family member's health condition or military-related absences as set forth in the federal law.

If the USM **is not** exempted, there are several problems with applying the language of the bill in the context of employee work schedules and the employment categories of most higher education institutions, not just the USM. It appears the bill would apply not just to regular faculty and staff, but also to those more temporary categories of employees, such as Contingent I and Contingent II employees, "contractual" faculty, adjunct faculty, and student employees. Those employees are typically short-term employees who often do not work regular schedules. USM institutions regularly employ adjunct faculty and certain staff employees on an "if and when needed" basis and for periods of six months or less.

The bill states that employees would be eligible for benefits if they worked 680 hours during the preceding calendar year. This could mean that a full-time Contingent I employee on a six month contract during the fall 2019 semester, who took another job in the interim but returned to the university on another six month contract for the fall 2020 semester, could be eligible for a twelve week paid leave the day they begin another contract six months later. They would then be absent for most of the semester and the university would need to scramble to provide coverage for a class or other necessary operation at the last minute.

The USM is supportive of the underlying tenets of Senate Bill 539 and believes an exemption works best for the continued benefit of faculty and staff systemwide.

BILL TO CHANGE TRANSFER STUDENT RULES HEARD IN HOUSE COMMITTEE

On Tuesday, the USM urged the House Appropriations Committee to issue an "unfavorable report" on House Bill 719. The bill requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to establish procedures and standards for transfer articulation agreements between the 2-year and 4-year public higher education institutions. With two-thirds of incoming students now coming to USM with at least some community college coursework, the USM actively supports the development and maintenance of articulation agreements and the maintenance of a platform that ensure the most effective and efficient transfer pathways possible. Because of the availability of these articulation pathways, the number of transfer students admitted to USM institutions continues to rise steadily –over the 5-year period from Fall 2014 to 2019 transfer enrollments have grown from 23,355 to 38,449.

Officials expressed concern that House Bill 719, which requires that at least 60 credits earned at any community college transfer and automatically be applied to a degree at any public four-year university is; (a) not the best solution to set students up for success, (b) is duplicative in some ways of what is being done in a more streamlined fashion, and; (c) will require serious resources to implement in ways that do not support our existing articulation system.

House Bill 719 also requires four-year institutions to identify any community college course that does not transfer and compensate the student by offering a substitute courses at no cost. Requiring four-year institutions to compensate students for non-equivalent courses that do not transfer will be costly both in terms of tuition reimbursements as well as administrative costs to implement. Those resources may improve our methods for being proactive about developing/maintaining articulations and making those transfer pathways clearer to Maryland students.

USM WORKS WITH SPONSOR TO STRENGTHEN DATA PRIVACY

House Bill 1122 expands security protocols that govern the collection, processing, sharing, and disposal of personally identifiable information (PII) by the USM. This bill establishes the requirement for the development and implementation of privacy programs systemwide. These programs give our community members and the public the ability to have greater transparency around the data USM collects and gives individuals greater control over the data in a university's possession. The bill also requires that the USM provide clear privacy policies and notice so that community members know about the programs and how to access them. House Bill 1122 is the result of several months of discussion by many experts and conforms to the direction other states and countries are taking related to privacy. The features in House Bill 1122 to enhance privacy across the higher education community include a broad definition of Personally Identifiable Information that should capture all the different forms of information that could relate to an individual.

In addition, the bill forms a condition that institutions create a privacy program that grants individuals several rights including the right to request: a listing of the information held about an individual, the correction of information that the individual feels is inaccurate, and the deletion of information about the individual that the university may have no reason to hold.

The bill also requires institutions have an information security and risk management program and that the program be periodically reviewed by a third party and that each university publish a privacy notice, on the university's website, that informs individuals of their rights.

The USM requests a favorable report on House Bill 1122.

UPCOMING BILL HEARINGS

HB 747 (SB 933)

State and Local Procurement - Payment Practices

Delegate Barnes, D.

In the House - Hearing 3/03 at 1:00 p.m.

Health and Government Operations

HB 1174

Financial Aid - Guaranteed Access Grants - Verification and Administration by Institutions of Higher Education

Delegate Solomon

In the House - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.

Appropriations

HB 1427

Higher Education - Tuition Exemption - Spouses and Dependents of Disabled Veterans

Delegate Cain

In the House - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.

Appropriations

HB 1428

Environment - Higher Education Facilities - Mold Hazards and Mold or Moisture Problems

Delegate Solomon

In the House - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.

Appropriations

HB 1504 (SB 1015)

Task Force to Study Access to Mental Health Care in Higher Education

Delegate Valentino-Smith

In the House - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.

Appropriations

HB 1052

University System of Maryland - Contaminants in Campus Buildings - Review, Monitoring, and Remediation

Delegate Lehman

In the House - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.

Appropriations

HB 1082

Higher Education – Denial of Transfer Credit – Notice and Report (Transfer with Success Act)

Delegate Solomon

In the House - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.

Appropriations

HB 1174

Financial Aid - Guaranteed Access Grants - Verification and Administration by Institutions of Higher Education

Delegate Solomon

In the House - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.

Appropriations

HB 1427

Higher Education - Tuition Exemption - Spouses and Dependents of Disabled Veterans

Delegate Cain

In the House - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.

Appropriations

HB 1113

State Finance and Procurement - Procurement Improvement Council - Required Use of eMaryland Marketplace

Delegate Charles

In the House - Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.

Health and Government Operations

HB 796

Higher Education - Freedom of Speech on Campus - Protection (Forming Open and Robust University Minds (FORUM) Act)

Delegate Grammer

In the House - Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.

Appropriations

HB 814

Higher Education - Transfer of Credits

Washington County Delegation

In the House - Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.

Appropriations