



## Letter of Information

### Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

#### *HB 762 – Higher Education Goals - Revisions*

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On behalf of the member institutions of the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) and the nearly 55,000 students we serve, I thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter of information on [HB 762 - Maryland Higher Education Commission - Higher Education Goals - Revisions](#).

MICUA institutions have been an integral part of the State of Maryland's degree completion goal since 2013 and agree with MHEC's desire to revisit the 2025 goal. Despite the State's best efforts, we have yet to attain the 55% goal in large part due to the changes in Maryland's demographics and population. As a result, even if the original degree production goals were met, it was likely that the percentage goal would not be met. Maryland is a highly educated State that needs to maintain a highly educated workforce. Maryland ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in bachelors degree attainment and 3<sup>rd</sup> in graduate degree attainment. Having a State degree goal is important to Maryland, its residents, and its economy. In 2024, 30% of all degrees conferred by four-year institutions in the State were conferred by MICUA institutions. Additionally, MICUA institutions awarded 47% of the graduate degrees in Maryland.

While degree production is critical, we also acknowledge that there are many excellent jobs in the State that might require some postsecondary education but not necessarily a bachelor's degree. Maryland should both track and set goals for certificates and other credentials that add to the economy and the talent of our workforce. However, it is important that these goals are set separately and not co-mingled with baccalaureate and graduate degrees. MICUA recommends amendments that set one goal for degree completion and a separate goal for credentials of value.

MICUA institutions support research and innovation at all of their campuses, but particularly at our only R1 research university, Johns Hopkins. Their national and international reputation helps them secure more research dollars than any other institution in the country for the 44<sup>th</sup> consecutive year in 2024. Since so much research is federally or faculty driven, MICUA has concerns about a State research goal that might inhibit research rather than stimulate it. MICUA supports the House deletion of goal #3 until it can be further evaluated and the recent impacts of federal reductions to institutional research is fully understood.

Lastly, the fourth goal (which is now Goal #3 in the amended version of HB 762) seems extremely broad and a "catch all" for any goal or policy. Such a sweeping mandate might result in unintentional consequences in future administrations and should be deleted. Most of the benefits in the fourth goal can be achieved by collaboration between the segments and MHEC in the State Plan process.

Thank you for accepting our letter of information. If the committee determines that the bill be amended striking the original goal #4, MICUA could support the bill as amended.