

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

MEETING BOOKLET

Time: 10:00 AM
Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Place: Maryland Higher Education Commission
Nancy S. Grasmick Education Building
7th Floor Boardroom

Maryland Higher Education Commission

Catherine J. “Cassie” Motz, Chair

Chike Aguh, Vice Chair

Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.

Charlene Mickens Dukes, Ed.D.

Barbara Kerr Howe

Ray Serrano, Ph.D.

Rebecca Taber Staehelin

Sheila D. Thompson, Ph.D.

Craig A. Williams, Ph.D.

Janet E. Wormack, Ed.D.

Cierra M. Robinson, Student Commissioner

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.
Acting Secretary

Wes Moore
Governor

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor



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Cassie Motz
Chair

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Maryland Higher Education Commission
Meeting Agenda**

TIME: 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday
March 20, 2024

PLACE: 7th Floor Boardroom
Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Bldg.
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

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Call to Order		
Chair’s and Secretary’s Remarks		
Public Comments		
Commission Minutes Approval	1	*
• December 6, 2023		
Department of Finance and Administration – Mr. Geoffrey Newman		
Office of Student Financial Assistance – Mr. Al Dorsett		
Financial Aid Update – Mr. Al Dorsett		
Department of Academic Affairs – Dr. Emily Dow		
• Faith Theological Seminary of Catonsville, Approval of Stage One Application – Ms. Trish Gordon McCown.....	5	
Office of Research and Policy Analysis – Dr. Barbara Schmertz		
Background for 2024 Performance Accountability Report – Dr. Barbara Schmertz.....	7	
SHEEO Non-Credit Academy and Steering Committee – Dr. Emily Dow		
MDRC-Supported Advising Initiative with Community Colleges – Secretary Sanjay Rai		
Planning for Statewide Success Summit – Fall 2024 – Chair Cassie Motz		
Adjournment		

**The next Commission meeting is on Wednesday, April 24, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.*

Maryland Higher Education Commission
Meeting Minutes

December 6, 2023
10:00 a.m.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) met on Wednesday, December 6, 2023 via video teleconference (Google Meet).

Commission members present:

Catherine J. “Cassie” Motz, Chair	Rebecca Taber Staehelin
Chike Aguh, Vice Chair	Sheila D. Thompson, Ph.D.
Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D.	Craig A. Williams, Ph.D.
Charlene Mickens Dukes, Ed.D.	Janet E. Wormack, Ed.D.
Barbara Kerr Howe	Cierra M. Robinson, Student Commissioner
Ray Serrano, Ph.D.	

Staff members present:

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.	Emily A. A. Dow, Ph.D.
Geoffrey Newman	Soma Kedia
Lyndsay Silva, D.P.A.	Kimberly Smith Ward
Derrick Coley	Rhonda Wardlaw
Allie Edelstein	Barbara Schmertz, Ph.D.
Al Dorsett	Bryson Barksdale
Eliza Kritz	Rose Robinson
Frances Turner	Samuel Durai Pandian
Yuxin Lin, Ph.D.	Victoria Johnson
Glenda Abney	Trish Gordon McCown

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Motz** at approximately 10:02 a.m. A meeting quorum was established with all eleven (11) members present.

Chair’s Remarks

Chair Motz asked for a motion to amend the agenda, adding recommendations from the Student Advisory Council who met and voted on them the day after our agenda was posted. **Vice Chair Aguh** motioned to add this item, and **Commissioner Taber Staehelin** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Motz thanked the institutions for their work during this busy time of year. She also thanked the staff of the Commission for their efforts, and noted that MHEC had two very

successful events recently, a virtual financial aid open house in November and a campus safety summit.

Acting Secretary's Remarks

Acting Secretary Rai thanked the faculty and staff of all postsecondary institutions for their work with students. MHEC partnered with USM (University System of Maryland) early this week to host a campus safety summit in Baltimore City. On the following day, a team from MHEC, along with Vice Chair Aguh, participated in a Peer Learning Opportunity in DC, sponsored by the Lumina Foundation, during which participants learned best practices from other states. Additionally, our Office of Student Financial Assistance has been rather active, in anticipation of changes to the FAFSA. Lastly, **Acting Secretary Rai** gave an overview of the agenda items.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Commission Minutes Approval

There was a motion by **Commissioner Burnim** and a second by **Commissioner Howe** for the approval of the August 9, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

There was a motion by **Commissioner Howe** and a second by **Vice Chair Aguh** for the approval of the September 7, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Student Advisory Council – Recommendations Regarding 2024 Elections and Student Participation

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs, who asked the Chair of the Student Advisory Council, Ms. Alexis Faison, to present this item. In light of the upcoming 2024 elections, the Student Advisory Council recommends that Maryland institutions make a sustained effort to empower students to be active participants in the civic process of elections, including removing barriers that obstruct students from voting, such as:

- Reducing barriers, such as attendance requirements for the 2024-25 academic year and lack of guidance in the voting process;
- Providing resources and supports to students to participate as election judges;
- Providing accommodations and resources to out-of-state students; and,
- Generally encourage students to participate in our democratic process.

The Student Advisory Council shared some specific, actionable items for campuses to implement to support the initiatives above on a chronological timeline. These included holding voter pledge drives, increasing resources on voter education, and supporting out-of-state students in their ability to vote, among others.

In providing these actionable items and recommendations, the Council encourages institutions to create a campus culture that embraces democratic civic engagement, while acknowledging the different organizational structures and scheduling processes on campuses around Maryland. The Council would also like to see these opportunities be extended to faculty and staff, as they will be supporting the facilitation.

The Commissioners asked questions about the presentation. In summary, the Commissioners appreciate the work and the intent of the Student Advisory Council, but they do not wish to burden the institutions with additional requests, nor do they wish to duplicate the existing outreach efforts of various groups. The Commissioners request that the Student Advisory Council conduct research on the work that these other groups are already doing, whether governmental or non-profit, and attempt to collaborate and align efforts with them. The Student Advisory Council should return and present their findings at a future meeting.

Department of Finance and Administration – Office of Student Financial Assistance – FAFSA Changes: Overview and Discussion

Chair Motz recognized Mr. Geoffrey Newman, Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration, who asked Mr. Al Dorsett, Director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance, to present this item. Mr. Dorsett shared a PowerPoint presentation, giving an overview of the FAFSA's (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) history, efforts to simplify the FAFSA, and what the new changes are. Consequently, the improved FAFSA form will be available to students and parents by December 31, 2023, much later than usual. He also gave a preview of the new online application. The Commissioners asked questions about the presentation. They also asked the agency to share a communications plan regarding these new changes.

Vice Chair Aguh made a motion to extend the Maryland deadline for the FAFSA from March 1, 2024 to June 1, 2024 and to give the agency the discretion to extend it beyond June 1, if they deem it to be appropriate. **Commissioner Burnim** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Department of Academic Affairs – Office of Research and Policy Analysis – Opening Fall Enrollment Dashboard

Chair Motz recognized Dr. Dow who asked Dr. Barbara Schmertz, Director of the Office of Research and Policy Analysis, to present this item. Dr. Schmertz gave an overview of the dashboards on our website, their features, how to find them, and their functions. The Opening Fall Enrollment Dashboard shows a recent overall increase in enrollment. Public, 4-year institutions and community colleges have seen growth. State-aided, private, independent institutions have experienced a slight decrease, however. Dr. Schmertz also shared a new dashboard that features data on students completing workforce training. The Commissioners asked questions about the presentation. **Vice Chair Aguh** expressed interest in setting up a special meeting early next year to learn about the work of the research unit.

Department of External Relations – Report on Campus Safety Summit

Chair Motz recognized Mr. Derrick Coley, Executive Director of External Relations, to present this item. Mr. Coley shared that the Campus Safety Summit, held on Monday, December 4, was a joint effort with USM (University System of Maryland). There were about 125 attendees and 34 institutions represented. Topics included best practices, the application of data and intelligence to campus safety, and student mental health, among others. The Commissioners asked questions about the Summit.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Aguh made a motion to adjourn the meeting and **Commissioner Taber Staehelin** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:10 PM.

Approved by the Commission:

Catherine J. "Cassie" Motz, Chair



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Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor

Cassie Motz
Chair

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.
Acting Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 20, 2024

TO: Maryland Higher Education Commission

FROM: Trish Gordon McCown, Director, Academic Affairs

Staff: Alexandra Chaillou, Associate Director, Institution Review
Melissa Leuschel, Education Policy Analyst, Institution Review

SUBJECT: Faith Theological Seminary of Catonsville, Approval of Stage One Application

In accordance with the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13B.02.02., the Maryland Higher Education Commission has reviewed a Stage One initial application for a Certificate of Approval as an in-state degree-granting institution submitted by Faith Theological Seminary of Catonsville (“FTSC”), located at 1518 Rolling Rd, Catonsville, MD 21228. The application includes a proposal to offer the following degree programs:

1. **Associate of Arts (A.A.) in Biblical Studies**
2. **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Biblical Studies**
3. **Master of Arts (M.A.) in Biblical Studies**
4. **Master of Divinity (M.Div)**
5. **Doctor of Ministry (D.Min)**
6. **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Biblical Studies**

FTSC serves adults in the greater Baltimore-Washington community and teaches the Protestant theology. The programs offered at FTSC would address the needs of providing diversity in religious education that is affordable with flexible course options for students (both in-person and online).

Pastor Jerry Harmon, President, was informed on January 3, 2024, that FTSC is approved to proceed to Stage Two of the application process. This decision was based on an analysis of the application in conjunction with the Maryland Higher Education Commission’s Minimum Requirements for In-state Degree Granting Institutions (COMAR 13B.02.02), the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education, and a 30-day review by the Maryland higher education community. No comments or objections were received during the 30-day circulation period.

FTSC is expected to submit a Stage 2 Application in the coming months. If the Secretary is satisfied with the documentation submitted by FTSC, an Evaluation Team will conduct an on-site visit to ensure that the institution complies with regulatory standards. The Evaluation Team will include at least 1 member affiliated with an out-of-State institution.

If, based on the Evaluation Team report and other available information, the Secretary is satisfied that FTSC is in compliance with COMAR 13B.02.02 and the minimum requirements are met, the Secretary shall grant approval to operate, which may include specific conditions. If the Secretary is not satisfied that a prospective in-state institution is in compliance with this chapter, the Secretary shall issue a notice of deficiencies and deny approval. If approved, a 2nd Evaluation Team will conduct an on-site visit at the end of FTSC's first instructional year to ensure that the institution is in compliance with COMAR 13B.02.02 and any other conditions for FTSC's approval to operate.

Background

Faith Theological Seminary-Catonsville is currently authorized to operate under a religious exemption. In accordance with §11-202.1¹ of the Education Article, this designation allows the entity to grant religious discipline degrees without a certificate of approval from the Commission.

Faith Theological Seminary-Catonsville is a separate entity from Faith Theological Seminary (FTS; located at 529 Walker Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland). FTS ceased operations in 2020 due to loss of accreditation from Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS); MHEC withdrew FTS's authority to operate in Maryland on May 21, 2020. There was interest from Grace Bible Baptist Church to continue the FTS educational offerings. FTSC applied for and was granted authority to operate under a religious exemption in July 2021. Per the regulatory process, FTSC is now seeking to operate as a degree-granting institution.

RECOMMENDATION: This item is for informational purposes only.

¹ Maryland Education Article §11-202.1(a) - A private nonprofit institution of higher education operating under a charter granted by the General Assembly may operate without a certificate of approval from the Commission.



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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 20, 2024
TO: Maryland Higher Education Commission
FROM: Barbara Schmertz, Director of Research and Policy Analysis
SUBJECT: Background for 2024 Performance Accountability Report

This memo is intended to provide background information to the Commissioners regarding the reporting requirements for the Performance Accountability Report.

GENERAL TIMELINE – ANNUAL EXPECTATIONS

- April: Annual Performance Accountability Report Guidelines circulated to public institutions (with any MHEC-specific prompts)
- June: Supplemental data for institutions distributed by MHEC staff
- October 1: Institutional Performance Accountability Reports submitted to MHEC
- January: Statewide Report presented to the Commission for approval and submitted to the General Assembly

BACKGROUND: STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Sections §11–304 to §11–308¹ of the Maryland Education Article mandate the institution’s and the Maryland Higher Education Commission’s (MHEC) responsibilities regarding the Performance Accountability Report processes (i.e., accountability plans and accountability reports).

Performance Accountability Report Requirements

- Every year, the president of each public institution shall submit to its governing board a written report on the attainment by the institution of the objectives in the performance accountability plan (see note about the Plan) of the institution.
- The governing board shall submit the report to MHEC and hold each president accountable for meeting the objectives in the performance accountability plan.

Note: Performance Accountability Plans - Per statute, public institutions establish performance accountability plans that are reviewed and approved by their governing bodies. For the public

¹ <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=ged§ion=11-304&enactments=false>

four-year institutions, their performance accountability plans are the Managing for Results (MFR) goals, objectives, and performance measures. The MFR is a strategic planning, performance measurement, and budgeting process that emphasizes use of resources to achieve measurable results, accountability, efficiency, and continuous improvement in State government programs.² MFR is overseen by the Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Each public four-year institution has a unique set of MFR goals, objectives, and performance measures tailored to the institution. Under the current Performance Accountability Reporting framework, progress on MFR goals, measures and benchmarks is reported dually to the DBM and MHEC annually each fall.³

Community colleges in Maryland do not participate in MFR (with the exception of the Baltimore City Community College, the community colleges' budget processes are not overseen by DBM and, therefore, the community colleges do not participate in the MFR process). For the community colleges, they collectively identify segment-wide metrics (their Performance Accountability Indicators) for their performance accountability plan. The indicators are aligned with the Maryland State Plan for Higher Education and are updated in five-year cycles, with the next update in 2026. The indicators are reviewed and approved by institutional governing boards and MHEC.

MHEC Requirements

- MHEC compiles and reviews the reports of the institutions
- MHEC presents the reports, together with the comments and recommendations of the Commission, to the Governor and to the General Assembly

Each year, the agency issues annual guidelines no later than the end of April. Year to year, much of the content of the guidelines stays the same due to the nature of the statute and reporting requirements. However, in recent years, the agency has specified reporting prompts 1) to ensure institutions are held accountable to maintain performance standards and 2) to gather information from the institutions tied to the agency and Commissioners' interests. The responses provided to these prompts are limited to one to two pages of the institution's 10 to 12 pages submission. The majority of the institutional reports are dedicated to their reporting of performance on their indicators and benchmarks.

BACKGROUND: REPORTING PROMPTS FROM PAST YEARS

² <https://dbm.maryland.gov/pages/managingresultsmaryland.aspx>

³ Per the annual guidelines from MHEC to the public four-year institutions, each institution's report narrative should discuss progress made toward the goals, objectives, and performance measures that align to the goals of the current Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education.

The section below outlines prompts used in past reporting cycles. These examples are to be used as guides as to the types of and extent of questions asked.

2023

The Commissioners require that your institutional submission include responses to BOTH of the following two prompts (please ensure answers are provided to all questions).

- Identifying Long-term Equity Gaps:
 - What are the largest long-term equity gaps that exist in student access, success, and innovation in your institution? Please note the long-term equity gaps refers to the inequities that existed long before the COVID-19 pandemic and persisted over the years.
 - How are these equity gaps uncovered/discovered/identified at your institution and how are they shared with your community?
 - What interventions have been implemented to eliminate these gaps?
- Measuring Equity Gaps:
 - How has your institution used disaggregated data to identify equity gaps in students' educational opportunities and outcomes?
 - What stakeholder engagement (students, faculty, staff, etc.) is used to collect and review this data?
 - Does your institution set goals/benchmarks in regard to the elimination of equity gaps? If so, what steps does your institution take to ensure accountability in meeting the established goals/benchmarks of equity?

2022

The Commission requests that you respond to BOTH of the following two prompts for the institutional response:

- What is the biggest challenge your institution faces as it attempts to equitably meet the goals, objectives, and performance measures in the 2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education?
- Has your institution used disaggregated data to identify equity issues in students' educational opportunities and outcomes? If so, how has this disaggregation of data provided insight into your institution's educational equities and inequities? If not, what data has been used to understand student outcomes?

2021

The Commission requests that you respond to one of the following three prompts for the institutional response:

- Please specify how your institution utilized CARES funding over the past year. What are some ways your institution was able to leverage those funds for student access and success?

- What are three of the biggest challenges your institution faced due to the COVID pandemic?
- What are three COVID-related initiatives/programs your institution implemented that your institution will be adopting permanently?

PAST STATEWIDE REPORTS SUBMITTED TO THE LEGISLATURE

2023:

<https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/AnnualReports/2023PerfAccountability.pdf>

2022: https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MHEC/ED11-307_2022.pdf

2021: https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MHEC/ED11-307_2021.pdf

2020: https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MHEC/ED11-307_2020.pdf

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Maryland Higher Education Commission 2024 Meeting Dates

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) is Maryland's higher education coordinating board responsible for the management of statewide financial aid programs and the establishment of statewide policies for public and private colleges and career schools to support students' postsecondary pursuits.

Commission meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., with certain exceptions, as noted below. Meetings in 2024 will be in-person in the 7th Floor Boardroom at the Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Building, 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. Meetings will also be livestreamed.

Scheduled Meeting Dates for 2024

January 24, 2024

February 28, 2024

March 20, 2024
(3rd Wednesday)

April 24, 2024

May 22, 2024

June 26, 2024

July 24, 2024

August 28, 2024

September 18, 2024
(3rd Wednesday)

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

October 23, 2024

November 20, 2024
(3rd Wednesday)

December 11, 2024
(2nd Wednesday)

Dates, times, and locations are subject to change.

Please check this website for livestream links and the most up-to-date information:

<http://www.mhec.maryland.gov/About/Pages/Meetings.aspx>

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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