

Dear Colleague,

As we enter the Spring 2024 semester and the beginning of the third week of classes, I wanted to provide a few important College updates, especially as they relate to enrollment and the State of Maryland FY25 budget.

Enrollment:

While many colleges and universities across the nation are struggling with enrollment, ACM's enrollment for the Spring 2024 semester is strong and has exceeded our projections. Although not finalized, preliminary numbers for Spring 2024 credit enrollment, as of January 25th, include:

- A 13.2% increase in headcount and 11.7% in credit hours.
- A 12.5% increase in Under 20 headcount.
- An 18.4% increase in the number of male students.
- A 7.4% increase from Allegany County residents.
- A 45.3% increase in first-time students.
- Continuing Education/Workforce Development experienced record growth in FY23, including an increase in FTE of over 60% from the previous year. We anticipate continued growth through FY24.

We hope this is a trend that continues for semesters to come.

Maryland State Operational Budget for FY25

The Governor's original budget provided for a 10% increase to Allegany College of Maryland, based on enrollment following the CADE Formula. However, the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA), as introduced, would rebase the percentage to 26.5%. The easiest way to understand this rebase is to imagine that for every dollar the State provides to public four-year institutions, it currently provides 29 cents to Maryland Community Colleges. The BRFA reduces that to 26.5 cents, yet still provides a dollar to public four-year institutions. This reduction would decrease the funds provided to ACM from a 10% increase to a 2% increase. Many Maryland community colleges would experience a double digit percentage decrease.

I can assure you that the ACM leadership team and I are actively coordinating with the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) to oppose this BRFA and are in contact with the Western Maryland Delegation to request their support in opposing this reduction. The Maryland General Assembly has the authority to restore the reduction in state aid to community colleges. This issue will be heard in the House Appropriations Committee (HB0352) on February 1st and the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee (SB0362) on February 2nd.

Our message is simple: Maintain the 29% funding per FTE and reject all the language in the BRFA.

Our rationale follows:

- Due to the two prior years of fully funding the CADE Formula, enrollment is increasing, with community colleges leading higher education with an 8.3% increase. Public four-year enrollment increase is approximately 2%.
- Reducing CADE in a time of enrollment growth stretches funding even more with less support for all students.
- Community colleges have been asked to close the skills gap in workforce shortages.
- The actions that are included in the BRFA impact students who are the most vulnerable and are struggling financially to succeed.

As we prepare the preliminary FY25 budget, I can assure you that the Board of Trustees and ACM leadership are striving to increase the salary scales and are committed to significantly increasing the annual funding for salaries and benefits to be more competitive and further show that you are valued. The FY25 budget from the State of Maryland will be a key factor in determining if and how we implement our goals.

I will continue to keep the ACM community updated in the weeks and months ahead. As always, please reach out to your supervisor, VP, or my office if you have any questions.

Wishing you well,

Dr. Bambara