



**House Appropriations Committee  
Education Subcommittee**

Aid to Community Colleges  
February 16, 2011

Maryland Association of Community Colleges  
Carol Eaton, President Frederick Community College

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the operating budget allowance for the fifteen locally supported community colleges. The support that the state and our local counties have invested in our colleges has changed the lives of thousands of Maryland residents over many years.

I would like to highlight just 3 topics in my time: the Completion Agenda, closing the minority student achievement gap and the impact of local funding on community college budgets.

This is an exciting time to be at a Community College because of national attention. It is our time to shine and step up to help prepare the future workforce for the jobs that are so important to the economic recovery of our State and the nation. But with this spotlight comes the recognition that the number of graduates at Community Colleges nationwide is unacceptably low. We can do better by having more students complete the academic work they start.

At Community Colleges, the focus needs to be on, not just the number of graduates, but on transfer and graduation because many of our students come to us knowing they will continue their education at a four year college or university. Students often transfer before they earn their associates degree. If they do not complete their bachelors degree, they have no degree at all. We are working with USM to make the transfer of course work back to the community college to be seamless to the student.

As you know, each of our colleges is governed by an appointed Board of Trustees. Each of our colleges, with the encouragement and support from our

It is the hands on weekly intervention of our staff that ensures that students can not fall through the cracks and become just another non-completer. The assessment data reveals: 73% of program participants concluded the semester with a grade point average above 2.0; and the fall to spring retention rate of MSS program participants averages 86% compared to a 70% college wide rate. We are being successful and need to expand these programs college wide.

Lastly, I would like to comment on how local funding can effect Community Colleges budgets. Since Exhibits 9, 10 and Exhibit 11 focus on local support and Frederick County was in the position of cutting my community college at the highest level of any other college, it is most appropriate that I speak to this issue.

As you know from the material you read, Frederick Community College had significant enrollment growth (8.5%), but at the same time we received a 14.3% decrease in local support per FTE. This drastic cut forced us to raise tuition over 10% in just one year. As a result, we saw our enrollment level off from Fall 2010 to 2011. The impact of increasing tuition and less support from our counties has a direct effect on many Maryland residents. I now see students who are having to choose to take less courses because they can not afford to pay tuition, buy books and travel to class. In the end this will work against our Completion Agenda. The \$5 million Keeping Maryland Affordable Grant will offset these drastic cuts from our Counties and allow us to continue with the most important pillar of our mission -- keeping accessible and affordable higher education opportunities available for all Maryland residents.