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Office of the President

**House Appropriations Committee
HB 814 Higher Education – Transfer Credits**

**Testimony Submitted by Dr. James Klauber, President
Hagerstown Community College**

Position: Support

I am submitting the following written testimony in support of house Bill 814. I strongly support passage of any legislation that will enable community college graduates to more easily transfer courses to Maryland universities. The system we currently have is a patchwork quilt of transfer agreements that do not afford students, their parents, or the state justice or efficiency.

Universities state that they do not see transfer problems in Maryland. Nothing could be further from the truth. Students losing earned credits and being forced to re-take classes already earned at their community college is unacceptable. This is especially true in the age of Kirwan, where we are trying to speed students into careers through educational pathways in dual credit and advanced placement. Listed below are two salient examples of students losing credit already awarded.

A high school student takes the Advanced Placement exam in English. They score a 3 of 5 on the exam. Maryland community colleges will award the student credit for English 101 on their transcript. The student then comes to Hagerstown Community College and completes an associate degree with intent to transfer to University of Maryland – College Park. The university will credit the student for the fulfillment of the English requirement, but not grant them the 3 credit hours. Under this scenario, the university representative can come before you and truthfully tell you that they fulfilled the English class requirement. They are only telling half of the story. The student will still need an additional 3 credit class in order to graduate from UMD – College Park.

Perhaps one of the fastest growing career fields in Maryland are the computer sciences. It is also the area where the University of Maryland – College Park treats community college graduates poorly. If a student attempts to transfer a successful completion of CSC132 – Intro to C/C++ Programming, the student is only given lower level elective credit. That credit is *only* granted upon completion of a placement examination. The student took the class, made a satisfactory grade, but the University of Maryland – College Park will not take it without first

completing a placement exam. Worse yet, the class is only accepted as an elective, not as part of a program requirement. This is absurd.

As the General Assembly passes the Kirwan legislation, many more students will enter dual credit and advanced placement pathways. If we are to open up the pathways for increased participating in Advanced Placement and dual credit, then why not open the pathways for a bachelors degree? Why stop at the associates degree? Why not level the playing field for those students who seek to obtain a degree from a university in Maryland?

Excepting the university, everyone loses under the current process. The student loses time and money. The community college loses reputation because their credits, even though they are recognized by the same accrediting body, are not seen as equal to those offered by the university. The State of Maryland probably loses most of all. The State loses the tax revenue from someone entering the workforce in a rapid seamless manner. The State also has to pay the FTE twice: once for the class taken at the community college and then again for the same class taken at the university.

This cannot be remedied by the Maryland Higher Education Commission or the colleges and universities. The principal reason that we cannot resolve it is that university presidents and provosts do not see a problem. If one party is in denial, then there is no hope for a solution. As has occurred in many other states, the General Assembly is going to have to take legislative action to bring the universities to bear on this issue.

With the cost of higher education today, this is no longer an education issue, it is a consumer issue. I would ask that you take action today to protect the consumers of higher education in Maryland. Ensure that their higher education experience is seamless, and they receive university credit for the courses they took at their local community college the first time.