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To: Maryland College and University Institutional Research Directors

From: Barbara Schmertz, Ph.D., Director of Research and Policy Analysis

Subject: FY 2022 Guidance on classifying “HyFlex” classes and enrollments in MHEC surveys and collections

Date: May 4, 2021

Please share with appropriate campus staff, including fellow institutional research staff and academic administrators.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission is aware that, due to the pandemic, campuses have had to adapt their instructional models to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff while also providing high quality postsecondary education. To do so, we understand that campuses have implemented what some are calling “HyFlex” courses.

For the purposes of this memo, a hybrid flexible, or HyFlex, course format is an instructional approach that combines in-person and remote learning in a way that students can choose the learning format at their discretion throughout the semester. Each class session and learning activity is offered in-person, synchronously online, and asynchronously online, and students can decide how to participate and alter their participation in that course throughout the term; students can change their mode of attendance weekly or by topic, according to need or preference.

A HyFlex course is distinct from a “hybrid” course in that a hybrid course typically has a predetermined schedule of synchronous and asynchronous instruction specified at the beginning of the semester; all students in a hybrid course are expected to undergo the same combination of online and in-person activities throughout the term. MHEC has learned that a number of institutions are implementing a HyFlex course model in the near future (summer and fall 2021 launches) or may be implementing this course instructional model currently.

At this time, MHEC does not distinguish a HyFlex course from other instructional modalities. This memo provides guidance on classifying HyFlex courses and the students who enroll in and complete them for the data collections that the agency administers each year.

For the upcoming 2021-2022 data collections (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022), HyFlex courses should be classified as face-to-face/traditional in-person courses. For course-level data, institutions should distinguish/classify these courses the same as face-to-face/traditional in-person instruction. If the course has a HyFlex section and a traditional/face-to-face section,

please default to categorizing the course as face-to-face. For student-level data, please follow the same pattern – treat the course the student is enrolled in as face-to-face and indicate the student appropriately for the Enrollment Information System (EIS collection). For the Distance Education Survey, which aggregates student and course data, both courses and enrollments should be reported as traditional.

By categorizing HyFlex courses as face-to-face/traditional in-person courses, the student and course records should follow the instructions outlined below.

For the Enrollment Information System (EIS) Collection

Who is required to submit: *All public and state-aided institutions in Maryland; private institutions will follow these instructions once fully participating in the EIS collection (beginning Fall 2021)*

Data Element: [DD 100](#) (Distance Education Enrollment)

- If all of the student’s courses are HyFlex, please use “not enrolled in any distance education.”
- If some of the student’s courses are traditional and some are HyFlex please use “not enrolled in any distance education.”
- If all of the student’s courses are distance education modalities (but NOT HyFlex, which should be treated as traditional courses) please use “enrolled exclusively in distance education”
- If some of the student’s courses are distance education and one or more is HyFlex, please classify the student as “enrolled in some but not all distance education.”

Data Element: [DD 101](#) (Distance Education Location)

- Treat any HyFlex courses as face-to-face/in-person and classify the student’s location accordingly.

For the Course Information System (CIS) Collection

Who is required to submit: *All public institutions in the state*

Data Element: [DD 125](#) (Instruction Type)

- If the course is HyFlex, select the instructional modality “traditional instruction, including web-enhanced.” Do not select blended hybrid or other; please treat the course as face-to-face/traditional in-person. If the course has a HyFlex section and another mode of delivery, default to either the other mode of delivery OR treat the course as face-to-face.

Data Element: [DD 126](#) (Instruction Location)

- Select the physical location of the course; do not select Distance Learning, as the course is not to be classified a distance education modality.

For the Distance Education (DE Survey) Survey

Who is required to submit: *All public and private colleges and universities in the state*

- For the Distance Education Courses/Sections/Enrollments tab, HyFlex courses should NOT be included in course and enrollment counts as they do not constitute distance education courses.
- For the Headcount Enrollments tab, students enrolled in HyFlex courses should be classified as “Traditional Only” unless they are enrolled in one or more other courses taught solely via distance education technologies. The instructions regarding DD100 (See EIS section earlier in memo) should also apply when classifying student enrollment type for the Distance Education Survey.
- For the Credit Hours tab, the course modality of HyFlex courses should be considered “On-Campus” or “Off-Campus” based upon the location from which face-to-face instruction occurs.

The agency will continue to monitor the use of HyFlex courses over the coming year and will provide additional guidance, if needed, on the means to capture these data in our collections. Until then, this guidance should be used. Discussions are also underway at MHEC regarding possible guidance from the Department of Finance and Administration on the definition of distance education as it pertains to finance reporting (e.g., the S-6, CC-6).

Please contact Barbara Schmertz, Director of Research and Policy Analysis, at barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov should you have questions or concerns.

cc: Segmental Advisory Council