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MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 26, 2026

TO: Dr. Jay Perman, University System of Maryland
Dr. Brad Phillips, Maryland Association of Community Colleges
Dr. Rhonda G. Phillips, Saint Mary's College of Maryland
Dr. David Wilson, Morgan State University

FROM: Sanjay Rai, Ph.D., Secretary *SUR*

SUBJECT: §11-406 – Plan for a Program of Cultural Diversity (Guidelines)

This memo is designed to provide guidance regarding the requirements for the annual Cultural Diversity report¹. Please read this memo carefully, as clarifications have been made about the statutory requirements.

In accordance with §11-406 of the Education Article (attached), the governing body of each Maryland public college and university is required to develop and implement a plan for a program of cultural diversity. These plans must be submitted to each institution's board by July 1 of each year (e.g., July 1, 2026).

Further, statute requires that each institution submit, by September 1 of each year, a report to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) summarizing institutional progress toward the implementation of its plan for a program of cultural diversity. According to statute, the Commission must monitor each institution's progress toward achieving the goals outlined in its plan and ensure compliance with the State's goals for higher education.

Additionally, the Commission is required to report its findings to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee; the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee; the House Appropriations Committee; and the House Committee on Ways and Means by December 1 of each year.

This year's reporting guidance ensures compliance with the law. Each institutional submission should follow the bullets below:

- A copy of the plan for a program of cultural diversity in place during the reporting year (Academic Year 2025-2026). This should be the plan approved by the institution's Board on or before July 1, 2025. Those institutions that operate under a multi-year plan should provide the plan approved on or before July 1,

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2025. Note that the required elements of this plan are defined in §11-406 of the Education Article and footnoted. Upload as a separate attachment in the submission form.

- A progress report regarding the institution’s implementation of its plan to the Commissionⁱⁱ as required by Education Article §11-406 (page limit 2 pages). **Note: the progress report is different than the plan for a program of cultural diversity (see bulleted item above); therefore, prepare and submit the report as a distinct document from the plan.**

Along with a narrative summary report provided by MHEC, the Commission will include, unedited, these institutional reports and plans for a program of cultural diversity in the 2026 Report on Institutional Programs of Cultural Diversity.

Please prepare your progress report and 2025-2026 plans in separate documents and ensure they are in searchable PDF format; submit them as well as the completed cover sheet certifying Board approval (attached) using the Google form linked here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScrzBRouc-YgG3ehkmFOd2S8qnSpnta6vINBWvgYyExbMESGA/viewform?usp=header>. Any submissions not including the required cover sheet will be returned to the institution for revision.

Electronic copies of these documents must be submitted to MHEC on or before September 1, 2026, in accordance with statutory requirements. Please note that MHEC does not have the statutory authority to grant exceptions to this deadline. If your governing board does not meet during the summer months, please ensure you provide sufficient time for approval prior to this statutory deadline for submission to the Commission. Additionally, please note that any necessary revisions may require additional board approval; if there are questions regarding the required elements of the submission, please ensure that you contact the Commission as soon as possible for clarification to ensure that you will remain compliant with the September 1 statutory deadline for submission to MHEC.

If you have any further questions about this report, please feel free to contact the Commission directly. Thank you for your cooperation.

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Matthew Power, Maryland Independent College and University Association

ⁱ Education Article §11-406 defines cultural diversity as the “inclusion of those racial and ethnic groups and individuals that are or have been underrepresented in higher education.”

ⁱⁱ The plan shall include: (a) A description of the way the institution addresses cultural diversity among its student, faculty, and staff populations; (b) A description of how the institution plans to enhance cultural diversity, if improvement is needed; (c) A process for reporting campus-based hate crimes, as defined under Title 10, Subtitle 3 of the Criminal Law Article and consistent with federal requirements under 20 U.S.C. 1092(f), known as the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act; and (d) A summary of any resources, including State grants, needed by the institution to effectively recruit and retain a culturally diverse student body. Additionally:

- The plan shall enhance cultural diversity programming and sensitivity to cultural diversity through instruction and training of the student body, faculty, and staff at the institution of higher education.
- The plan shall include an implementation strategy and a time line for meeting goals within the plan.
- The plan shall be submitted to the governing body of the institution for the governing body’s review, on or before July 1 every year.