

Southern Maryland Higher Education Council

January 21, 2013

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
Governor of the State of Maryland

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
President of the Senate

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
Speaker of the House of Delegates

Gentlemen:

I write today to report on the activities of the Southern Maryland Higher Education Council (SMHEC). The council was established by Chapter 622 of 2011 to develop a strategy for improving access to higher education for the residents of Southern Maryland. An interim report with a short-term strategy was due by December 1, 2011, and a final report with a long-term strategy was due by December 1, 2012. This Act terminates on June 30, 2013.

The council held its first meeting on February 27, 2012, and met a total of six times during 2012. The minutes for those meetings are enclosed with this letter.

I am happy to report that we are well underway in completing our task in developing a strategy for improving higher education access for Southern Maryland residents. With the assistance of the University System of Maryland, the council is undertaking an extensive higher education needs assessment survey of Southern Maryland residents and businesses over the coming months, which will allow us to develop a long-term strategy for improving access to higher education in the region.

Because our work in surveying the residents and businesses of Southern Maryland is ongoing, the council was unable to submit a final report in 2012 as required by Chapter 622. Therefore, we respectfully request an extension of the termination date of the council by one year, with a final report due on December 1, 2013.

Governor Martin O'Malley
The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
The Honorable Michael E. Busch
January 21, 2013
Page 2

In addition to the extension of the termination date, the council requests two additional changes to Chapter 622. First, we request that an additional member be appointed to the council by the Governor who has extensive knowledge of higher education in Maryland. This change would allow me to officially serve as the chair of the council, if the Governor appointed me, as the chair must be appointed from among the council's members. Secondly, we respectfully request that the Maryland Higher Education Commission be named as the council's official staffing agency.

Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,



Patricia S. Florestano, Ph.D., Acting Chair
Southern Maryland Higher Education Council

PSF/JAW/mpc

Enclosure

cc: Chairman Joan Carter Conway
Chairman Norman Conway
Delegate John L. Bohanan, Jr.
Members, Southern Maryland Higher Education Council