

MICUA — MATTERS —

The Newsletter of the Maryland Independent College and University Association



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LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

2025

The 2025 legislative session began alongside the second term of the Trump Administration, a period characterized by shifting federal priorities and heightened budgetary uncertainty. Among all states, Maryland's economy and tax base are particularly sensitive to federal policy changes. Reductions in federal funding—affecting research institutions, inclusive programming, and financial aid—posed additional challenges for State budget deliberations. Throughout this period, the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) remained steadfast in its commitment to protecting the Sellinger Program and securing continued State investment in MICUA capital projects.

Following a recommendation to eliminate the Sellinger statutory formula in favor of a need-based grant program, MICUA launched a coordinated grassroots advocacy campaign. In collaboration with its member institutions, MICUA mobilized students, parents, employees, and other key stakeholders to underscore the long-standing public-private partnership between the State and its independent colleges, as well as the essential role these institutions play in cultivating Maryland's future workforce.

The General Assembly heard directly from this engaged community and recognized the critical importance of State funding to Maryland's students and families. Over the course of the session, MICUA tracked approximately 140 bills, maintained ongoing engagement with university presidents and members of the General Assembly, and participated in weekly strategy discussions with other higher education sectors and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce. MICUA submitted testimony, coordinated joint testimony with public institutions, monitored legislative proceedings, and evaluated the implications of reduced federal support for college campuses.

Due to the sustained and strategic advocacy of MICUA presidents, the General Assembly ultimately approved funding for the Sellinger Program at the level proposed in the Governor's FY 2025 budget—approximately \$73 million. In addition, MICUA successfully preserved \$8 million included in the Governor's FY 2026 Capital Improvement Plan, despite significant budgetary contention.

Highlights of Key Legislation to MICUA Members from the 2025 Legislative Session:

- **Hunger-Free Campus Designations ([HB 774](#) | [SB 789](#))** — This bill expands eligibility for the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program to include additional institutions and students. MICUA institutions are now eligible to be designated as hunger-free campuses. For the past several years, MICUA has provided testimony to be included in the program, and with persistence, we were granted eligibility.
- **Non-resident Maryland Students Eligible for Out-of-State Counseling ([HB 1474](#))** — This bill authorizes an “out-of-state licensed professional counselor” to provide telehealth counseling services to an out-of-state student attending an institution of higher education in the State. MICUA proposed an amendment to increase the number of sessions for students in a calendar year, and the final bill allows for unlimited therapy sessions.
- **Appellate Court Sessions held at Educational Institutions ([HB 786](#))** — This bill authorizes the Appellate Court of Maryland to work in conjunction with the administrators of secondary and postsecondary education to hold sessions at those institutions in the State.
- **Certification of Employees of Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program ([HB 795](#))** — The bill establishes requirements for employers to certify the employment of public service employees under the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. Nonprofit higher education institutions are considered qualified employers, and certain employees at MICUA institutions would be eligible for certification under the Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.
- **Initial Teacher Certification Qualifications Expanded ([HB 888](#))** — This bill alters the qualification for an initial teacher certificate to include passing a portfolio-based assessment of a nationally accredited teacher preparation program.

Please click [here](#) for a comprehensive review of all the bills MICUA engaged with this session. We greatly appreciate your contribution and dedication to the advancement of independent higher education in Maryland.

Celebrating Student Achievements and New Partnerships in Space Engineering



Capitol Technology University proudly celebrates the achievements of Jeffrey Jebakumar, a sophomore studying Astronautical Engineering.

Jebakumar was honored to participate in the Astro Scholars program hosted by the Space Telescope Science Institute, The Johns Hopkins University, and NASA. His research during the program focused on young star formation and gas density in galaxies through simulations and real-world observations.

“Through this project, I gained valuable insights into cosmological simulations and their applications, the properties of galaxies and stars, and even some aspects of dark matter,” said Jeffrey.

As a core part of its mission, Capitol Technology University continues to empower the next generation of STEM leaders like Jeffrey by exploring strategic partnerships in support of student opportunities. These collaborations not only elevate student learning but also connect them to key industry players, positioning them for success in competitive fields like space engineering.

Recent expansions include partnerships with local organizations, such as Fire Rockets, and development of collaborative initiatives with agencies like the U.S. Space Command—all aimed at helping Capitol promote educational opportunities in space engineering.

Through these strategic collaborations, Capitol continues to expand hands-on learning opportunities, equipping students with the skills and experience necessary to lead in the ever-evolving field of space engineering. By fostering innovation and industry connections, the University remains at the forefront of preparing STEM leaders for the industry’s challenges.



Jeffrey Jebakumar stands in front of the NASA and Webb Space Telescope logos after his completion of the Astro Scholars program, an intensive week-long exploration of astrophysics, research, and programming.



In addition to telescope work, Capitol Technology University students hone their spacecraft operation skills in the Space Flight Operations Training Center (SFOTC), an industry-standard virtual environment.

Goucher College Launches Students Toward Success

This spring, the first cohort of Goucher College’s LAUNCH Scholars Network will graduate. Developed to offer support to Goucher’s first-generation and Pell Grant-eligible students, the LAUNCH Scholars Network provides four years of support services, skills development, and community-building.

Program director Melissa Alexander, who has been with them, guiding the program since the beginning, couldn’t be happier. After four years, she says it’s surreal to see this first group ready to walk the stage this spring.

The first exposure to Goucher for many LAUNCH scholars is the Summer LAUNCH Program, held in early August just prior to the start of the Fall semester. During Summer LAUNCH, students have the opportunity to get acclimated to campus and start building friendships with fellow first-year students. In addition to the bonding, there are mini-courses, skill-building workshops, and one-on-one mentorship from a LAUNCH crew peer mentor.

“When I talk to LAUNCH students, Summer LAUNCH is one of the things they talk most about,” Alexander says. “It’s just so significant in terms of them learning about our resources and making connections early on to set them up for success.”

While Summer LAUNCH is an impactful part of the program, it’s just the beginning. There is specific support provided for each academic year, be it conquering the sophomore slump, applying to internships and figuring out a study abroad experience for junior year, or preparing to leave Goucher with a job lined up. In addition to support, there are also community-building activities throughout the four years, from craft nights to the elaborate rope courses of their sophomore retreat.

“We see such positive and promising retention numbers for students who participate in this program that we want to expand the number of students who participate in LAUNCH,” Alexander says.



Goucher College’s LAUNCH Scholars Network begins with summer LAUNCH, which is designed to provide students an opportunity to come to Goucher early and establish connections with classmates, faculty, staff, and support systems.

Hood College to Host New Entrepreneurship Pitch Competition and Conference



New event to feature entrepreneurship pitch competition and academic research conference with cash awards totaling \$4,000.

The Delaplaine School of Business at Hood College hosted the Entrepreneurship Pitch Competition and Conference (EPCC@Hood) on Friday, April 18, 2025.

The one-day event is designed to showcase entrepreneurial mindset and innovative thinking among Hood students, celebrating the relationship between academic research and the practice of entrepreneurship across the Mid-Atlantic region. A total of \$4,000 in awards and prizes was up for grabs.

EPCC@Hood featured a business pitch competition including recent Hood alumni as well as current undergraduate and graduate students. Each team had eight minutes to impress the judges, including five minutes for their presentation and three minutes for Q&A.

The event also provided a collaborative platform for authors and researchers to present extended abstracts and “works in progress” of their academic research that promotes entrepreneurship, innovation management and/or business leadership.



A Hood College student in the Delaplaine School of Business presents to their peers during class.

Johns Hopkins Medical Students Provide Comfort Through Company

SOOTHE (Students Offering Optimism to Help) sends Johns Hopkins University medical students to more than six areas of Johns Hopkins Hospital to talk with patients at their bedsides. The benefits are twofold: Patients get comfort, company, and distraction from medical concerns, while student volunteers experience medicine's human side.

Third-year medical student Shreya Sriram founded SOOTHE in spring 2023 and has since recruited more than 120 volunteers from the School of Medicine who have worked with more than 500 patients after undergoing a three-part training. The program has also taken off at the Mayo Clinic, Harvard, and the University of Arizona, and SOOTHE is pursuing telemedicine ventures as well.

One inspiration for SOOTHE was Sriram's experience as a volunteer caller for a senior center during the pandemic, when she formed a special bond with one woman. A pain management course at Johns Hopkins further resonated with Sriram. "We learned that with enough emotional support, enough socialization, the burden of pain can actually be lessened," she says.

Nurses on various units help identify patients who would benefit from visits, especially those who rarely get visitors. A patient's verbal consent is required before a drop-in.

Volunteer Allison Chen says one woman wanted company but didn't feel chatty, so Chen simply watched her play video games. Another time, with a non-verbal patient, Chen used a whiteboard to communicate. "What I always take forward," Chen says, "is how rich these patients' lives are and how many things matter to them outside their current treatment."

To contact SOOTHE, email SOOTHEOrg@jh.edu.



Johns Hopkins Medical School students have formed a group called SOOTHE (Students Offering Optimism to Help), which sends them to more than six areas of Johns Hopkins Hospital to talk with patients at their bedsides.

Loyola Students Travel to Puerto Rico to Install Solar Panels on a Home



LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY MARYLAND

While snow blanketed the Evergreen campus in North Baltimore in early January, five Loyola students traveled to Puerto Rico over the winter break for a service-learning experience installing solar panels on the mountainside home of a woman with electrical medical devices.

The trip, which was entirely student-inspired and student-led, took a Jesuit approach to education by integrating academic concepts with real-world applications and a humanitarian purpose.

Seniors Peter and Hannah Graham and Misgana Yossief, along with sophomore Alexandra Artiga and first-year student Adrien Lee, partnered with a nonprofit organization, a U.S. solar developer, and a local solar energy company to install the solar panels. Suzanne Keilson, Ph.D., associate professor of engineering, chaperoned the trip.

The beneficiary was a woman named Rosa, who suffers from chronic respiratory issues and diabetes, and requires 24/7 supplemental oxygen through a machine, as well as refrigeration for her diabetes medication. Rosa and her daughter, who is also living with disabilities, rely on access to power and electricity for their medical devices. When there is no power, electronic medical devices will not work. This has led to Rosa being hospitalized multiple times due to power outages in Adjuntas.

“The ability to give this woman solar so she no longer needs to worry about going to the hospital because her oxygen machine does not have power to work—words cannot even describe what it meant,” said Peter Graham, ’25, who spearheaded the trip.



*Loyola students work with ISO Solar to install solar panels on a house in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico.
Photo Credit: Lucas Barreto*



*Loyola students pose for a photo after installing solar panels on a house in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico.
Photo Credit: Lucas Barreto*



MICA's Center for Creative Impact: Promoting Innovation and Equipping the Next Generation of Creative Changemakers

MICA's Center for Creative Impact is redefining the role of art and design in addressing critical social and environmental challenges by leading interdisciplinary projects that involve collaboration between artists, designers, and external partners from the public, private, and social sectors.

By integrating experiential learning into curricula and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, the Center empowers faculty and students to utilize creativity as a catalyst for real-world impact. "Imagine artists and designers working alongside doctors and nurses to improve the patient experience, or collaborating with community organizations to tackle vacant housing and increase homeownership," says Mike Weikert, co-executive director of the Center.

Under the joint leadership of Weikert and co-executive director Lee Davis, the Center builds upon a decade of pioneering work from MICA's Center for Social Design. Through partnerships with public, private, and nonprofit organizations, the Center is currently leveraging the creative power of art and design on two initial, signature initiatives – one focused on reducing food waste and building sustainable food systems, and a second on generating awareness of, inspiration for, and investment in the Jones Falls Watershed.

"The Center is a way we can truly incentivize faculty to do more inventive, meaningful, and externally funded work," says MICA President Cecilia M. McCormick. "We need art- and design-centric methods now more than ever to address these pressing challenges."

Learn more at mica.edu/creativeimpact or email creativeimpact@mica.edu.



The Center for Creative Impact is a dynamic, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation hub located at 1200 W. Mount Royal Avenue.



The multi-purpose studio space fosters creativity alongside MICA's architectural, product, social, and bio-design programs.

McDaniel College Moves to Develop New Master's Degree in Speech-Language Pathology

MCDANIEL
COLLEGE

McDaniel College is continuing to grow its graduate programs, while expanding the College's academic offerings in health care, with the development of a new Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology.

The program has received approval from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and is expected to launch in spring 2027, pending approval by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

D'Jaris Coles-White, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, a speech-language pathology researcher and practitioner who has joined McDaniel to serve as the inaugural program director, said, "I am genuinely excited for the opportunity to shape McDaniel's new Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology. I believe my rich background in both higher education and clinical practice will be beneficial in this new role and am eager to contribute to the program's growth and success."



*D'Jaris Coles-White, Ph.D., CCC-SLP,
inaugural program director of Master of
Science in Speech-Language Pathology*

McDaniel's program will be campus-based with some courses available in a hybrid format in the second year to allow for flexible scheduling during the required clinical externship placement experiences. The program will be the fourth in Maryland and only the second program of its kind at one of Maryland's independent institutions to prepare students for entry level into the profession.

Other health profession programs at McDaniel include a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) and a bachelor's degree in Health Sciences. McDaniel also currently offers a Master of Science in Counseling - Clinical Mental Health Counseling and is developing a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy.



McDaniel College campus



MSMU's Blue Peak Center Offers Children With Autism Compassionate, Research-Driven Care

Mount St. Mary's University has opened the Blue Peak Center for Applied Behavior Analysis. The Center provides support and care for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities using evidence-based therapy to help children develop the skills needed to thrive in society.

"Emmitsburg and the surrounding communities have very few services available to them," said Alexa Mochan, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA, clinical director of the Blue Peak Center. "Our goal is to provide a local place where families can trust that their children are getting the best, personalized services."

The Blue Peak Center, which is affiliated with the University's Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program, also provides experiential learning opportunities for students who are pursuing either graduate or undergraduate degrees at the Mount. "By providing learning opportunities for Mount students that expand their skill sets, we help meet the need for skilled ABA practitioners that will enter the workforce," Mochan noted.

With each child having a dedicated staff member to guide their learning process, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) provide early intensive behavior intervention (EIBI) to young pre-kindergarten children, from infancy to age six, with autism. EIBI services provide opportunities for children to develop social, communication and daily living skills in support of their overall independence.

The 4,500-square-foot center, located in the University's School of Health Professions near downtown Emmitsburg, Maryland, includes a sensory room that offers a space for children to regulate; a group learning space for circle time, work at a sensory table and group play such as art and movement activities; a playroom that encourages both structured and unstructured play; and space for one-on-one learning and assessments. Group activities that are like those in a preschool setting will support children in making a smoother transition to a school setting.



The Blue Peak Center for Applied Behavior Analysis

NDMU Board of Trustees Receives National Leadership Award



NOTRE DAME
OF MARYLAND
UNIVERSITY

Notre Dame of Maryland University's Board of Trustees was honored with a prestigious John W. Nason Award for Board Leadership recognizing exceptional higher education governing boards from around the nation.

"Notre Dame's Board of Trustees is accelerating the University's strategic goals to provide an inclusive transformational education for our students," said President Marylou Yam, Ph.D. "Indeed, with the Board's strategic thought leadership, Notre Dame has achieved historic new student enrollment, fundraising, and endowment records."

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges selected five recipients from a national pool of nominations representing four-year public and private institutions, two-year institutions, and institutionally related foundations.

Guided by the Going Beyond: Vision 2025 strategic plan approved by the Board, Notre Dame launched academic programs that included the first doctorate in occupational therapy to be offered by a private university in Maryland (and only the second in the State) and Maryland's first master's degree in physician assistant studies offered by a private university. The University engaged in an innovative partnership with Brightview Senior Living that will establish a senior living community on NDMU's property. Additionally, NDMU acquired the Maryland University of Integrative Health which, when approved, will become a new School of Integrative Health at NDMU.

"The Board of Trustees worked in partnership with the president to deliver on the goals of the Going Beyond: Vision 2025 strategic plan, truly going above and beyond to support the University's mission," said NDMU Board of Trustees chair Patricia McLaughlin, SSND. "That collaboration has taken the University to new heights, and the entire Notre Dame community – the faculty, students, administrators, and alumni – is our constant inspiration as we deliver on our mission to educate leaders to transform the world."



Notre Dame of Maryland University campus



ST JOHN'S
College

St. John's College Launches Career Pathways Program to Bridge the Gap Between Liberal Arts and Professional Success

St. John's College recently announced the launch of its new Career Pathways program, a comprehensive initiative designed to connect the College's rigorous Great Books curriculum with tangible career opportunities.

St. John's has long bucked norms in higher education by rejecting narrow majors. This continues to be the case, and Career Pathways provides students with confidence regarding career outcomes alongside the intellectual depth and disciplinary breadth of a St. John's education.

"Career Pathways reflects our commitment that Johnnies will leave the College prepared to lead a meaningful life—and this includes securing meaningful and remunerative work in their chosen field," says St. John's College President Nora Demleitner.

Career Pathways adds to the College's already robust slate of career supports and organizes them into nine distinct career areas in which Johnnies often excel. A website provides visual maps connecting Program coursework to these fields and details the College's resources within each: graduate partnerships with top schools as well as credentialing partnerships with eCornell and paid internships, fellowships, and study abroad opportunities. Current and prospective students can browse this site and use it to schedule consultations with the College's career or admissions offices.



Students network with St. John's College alumni at the 2024 Homecoming festivities in Annapolis.



Recipients of College-funded Hodson internship pose with certificates of merit awarded by St. John's College in May 2024.

Celebrating the Arts at Stevenson University



Even as work continues on Stevenson's new Sandra and Malcolm Berman Family Performing Arts Center—set to open in Summer 2026—arts programming at Stevenson University is in full swing.

Stevenson's Arts Alive! initiative highlights the creativity and artistic talents of students and faculty, as well local and nationally-renowned artists. Under the initiative, the University hosts dozens of arts and cultural events every academic year—from theatrical and musical performances to film festivals, art exhibits, discussions with artists-in-residence, and more.

"Stevenson University's Arts Alive program is a vital initiative that enriches the campus and surrounding community by promoting artistic expression, cultural engagement, and inclusivity," said Amanda Hostalka, Vice Provost for Outreach and Dean of the School of Design, Arts, and Communication. "The program serves as a platform for students, faculty, and visiting artists to showcase their talents while fostering a deeper appreciation for the arts."

This spring's events include a video installation by filmmaker and faculty member Dina Fiasconaro, an exhibit of paintings by artist Peter Bruun, performances of Federico García Lorca's play *The House of Bernarda Alba*, the Stevenson music program's Spring Concert, the Film and Moving Image program's Senior Film Showcase, and the Fashion Design program's Annual Fashion Show.



Students in Stevenson University's Theatre and Media Performance program perform in multiple theatrical productions every year as part of the Arts Alive! Initiative.



Students attend an exhibition opening in Stevenson University's School of Design, Arts, and Communication lobby gallery.

WAU's Monthly Business Forum Equips Students for Success

Washington Adventist University (WAU) hosted its Monthly Business Forum, bringing together industry leaders, students, and faculty for insightful discussions on entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and career advancement.

The event opened with an invocation and a welcome from organizers, highlighting the role of faith, vision, and perseverance in business. Many community members, students, faculty and staff were in attendance, including WAU President Dr. Weymouth Spence.

This month's panelists included former NFL wide receiver and entrepreneur Gary Clark, Vice President and store manager for TD Bank Jean (Jay) Laraque, Founder and CEO of Bold Vision Enterprise and co-founder of Investing Education Academy Brent Simpson, sports and real estate professional Lance Hawkins, and nationally recognized real estate investor and entrepreneur Randy Louis, who also served as the event host.

A diverse panel of speakers shared personal success stories and practical strategies for wealth-building. Among the featured speakers, Gary Clark emphasized the importance of resilience and discipline in both sports and business.

Panelists underscored three primary pathways to financial success: real estate, entrepreneurship, and investments. Discussions covered financial planning, credit management, and the power of banking relationships in building long-term wealth.

The forum also addressed key student concerns, such as managing student loans, securing funding for business ventures, and leveraging networking opportunities. Speakers encouraged students to seek mentorship, stay informed about financial opportunities, and develop strategic business plans. With a focus on financial empowerment and business leadership, the University remains committed to fostering an environment where students can thrive academically and professionally.



From left to right: CEO of BlockShoppers Randy Louis, Former Commanders Wide Receiver Gary Clark, CEO Elite Access Lance Hawkins, TD Bank Vice president and store manager Jean (Jay) Laraque, and CEO of Bold Vision Enterprise and co-founder of Investing Education Academy Brent Simpson



President of WAU Dr. Spence, Gary Clark, Randy Louis and Chad Morton greeting students

The Next Big Idea at Washington College's Presidential Leadership Summit



Student proposals gain momentum at the annual Presidential Leadership Summit aimed at broadening campus connections and developing professional skills.

Just before the start of the spring semester, 54 students came back to campus early to grow their skills in collaboration, networking, and public speaking at this year's Presidential Leadership Summit. Themed "Change-Making," the Summit featured presentations from eight student groups who developed ideas for improving various aspects of life on campus.

Open to students from all majors and class years, the three-day event is an engaging and dynamic conference blending team-building activities, professional development exercises, and collaborative projects.

The conference culminates with a formal presentation, known as WAC Tank, where students pitch ideas to their peers, administrators, and alumni, with the hopes of gaining access to resources, connections, and support for their projects. An idea for a campus pub was championed at last year's summit and, after gaining broad support, The Golden Goose opened on campus for operation earlier this spring.

A new interactive voting mechanism introduced this year led to the WAC Tank Voter's Choice Award. The first-place group, with a presentation titled "Cultivating Connections: First-Year Common Rooms," proposed ways to revive common room areas in dorm buildings, citing the importance of these shared spaces in building student community. The group suggested replacing furniture, repainting walls, and providing students with materials to personalize the space using sustainable, renewable decorations. While the WAC Tank is the main event of the conference, days' worth of teamwork, idea-generating, and skill-building take place to make the final presentation possible.

Tiyaba Jamal '27, who attended last year's summit as a first-year student, has since become a peer mentor and a significant student leader on campus. Jamal believes that "every presentation, bonding activity, icebreaker, and workshop...provide[s] the attendees with the resources they need to develop their ideas."



Washington College Students at the Presidential Leadership Summit

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