# MICUA MATTERS

The Newsletter of the Maryland Independent College and University Association


WINTER 2026

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# MICUA Capital Project Requests for Fiscal Year 2027

During the 2026 Legislative Session, MICUA is requesting $10 million in State capital grants to support campus construction and renovation projects totaling $57.5 million at Johns Hopkins University, St. John's College, and Washington College. These three capital projects are directly related to the mission of each institution, and they support new construction and renovation of buildings to be used for innovative and high-demand academic programs and strategic initiatives of the institutions. The projects will be designed to maximize opportunities for student and faculty collaboration, and to promote and facilitate teaching, learning, and research. The State's $10 million investment in fiscal 2027 will leverage over $47 million in private resources and support 400 new construction jobs.

**Johns Hopkins University** requests a $2 million State capital projects grant for fiscal year 2027 to repurpose approximately 30,025 gross square feet of former residence hall space on Peabody's historic Mount Vernon campus to support academic growth. This project will modernize critical infrastructure and upgrade facilities to meet the needs of Peabody's expanding programs and enhance the student learning experience. Renovations will convert residential areas into academic spaces, including performance venues, teaching, rehearsal, and practice rooms, and collaborative gathering areas that encourage interaction among students and faculty. These improvements will sustain Peabody's leadership in performing arts education while addressing urgent infrastructure needs and positioning the institution for future growth. The estimated total project cost is $27 million.

*Johns Hopkins University's Peabody Music Classroom*

**St. John's College** requests a $4 million State grant to support construction of a 12,000 gross square foot Arts and Academic Hall, the first new academic building on campus since Mellon Hall was completed in 1959. The project will provide improved, accessible spaces for arts programming and general instruction. It will relocate current art studios from Mellon Hall and consolidate them in a more suitable, purpose-built facility. The new building may also expand opportunities for community engagement in partnership with the Mitchell Museum, an accredited art museum located in Mellon Hall. The estimated total project cost is $12.5 million.

*St. John's College's Arts and Academic Hall*

Washington College requests a $4 million State grant for construction of The Warehime School of Global Business, Economics, and Social Impact, a 13,250 gross square foot interdisciplinary business school. The Warehime School will integrate business management, economics, world languages, international studies, and liberal arts to provide students with a global approach to business education. The curriculum will emphasize real-world application, social impact, and collaboration across disciplines. Partnerships with businesses, non-profits, and international organizations will offer hands-on learning opportunities and prepare students to serve as leaders and ambassadors for Maryland, the nation, and the global community. The estimated total project cost is $18 million.

*Washington College's Warehime School of Global Business, Economics, and Social Impact*

# Capitol Tech Student Project Selected for NASA Rocket Launch

**Capitol Technology University students have reached a major milestone in hands-on aerospace innovation: a student-designed payload has been competitively selected by NASA for launching aboard a sounding rocket.**

The project, known as ODIN (Observation & Detection Interpreted by Neural-networks), is an AI-powered payload designed, built, and tested entirely by Capitol Tech students as part of the University's rigorous, project-based curriculum. Selected through NASA's highly competitive RockSat program, ODIN will fly aboard a rocket launched from Wallops Flight Facility in 2026.

ODIN is designed to collect and process data during flight using artificial intelligence, demonstrating how emerging technologies can be integrated into aerospace systems. From initial concept and engineering design to testing and mission readiness reviews, students led every stage of development, mirroring the workflows used in industry and government space programs.

"There is a lot of work ahead to complete the design and finish the flight test and flight build," said Professor Jeff Volosin, a professor of astronautical engineering at Capitol Tech. "But ODIN's strong design was graded highly by NASA."

The ODIN payload exemplifies Capitol Tech's commitment to experiential learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and workforce readiness. By participating in nationally recognized programs like RockSat, students gain invaluable experience working under real-world constraints, deadlines, and performance requirements. As ODIN prepares for launch, Capitol Tech continues to demonstrate how applied education can propel students from the classroom to the launchpad—and into the future of aerospace and advanced technology.


*Capitol Tech's ODIN Team*

# Goucher Prison Education Partnership Opens First College Classrooms in Maryland Prison

**In October 2025, the Goucher Prison Education Partnership (GPEP), a division of Goucher College, unveiled the State's first prison classrooms created solely for college use at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (Jessup, MD).**

GPEP is a national leader for college in prison, and this project marks a significant milestone toward allowing students to become full-time students and providing a faster path to a completed bachelor's degree. GPEP is one of 38 programs nationally offering access to a BA to incarcerated students and is one of the very few college prison programs to include women students.

The new classrooms support efforts to increase degree completion, which in turn increases a student's likelihood of securing meaningful employment upon returning home. College in prison has been proven to reduce recidivism by more than 70% and every $1 spent on education in prison saves taxpayers $5. The annual cost of imprisoning a person in Maryland is $60,000, but the cost to educate a GPEP student is only $9,000.

GPEP ensures that students who have been systematically and historically excluded from quality education are afforded access to one. Students are 77% people of color and 67% first generation.

Since its inception in 2012, GPEP has been a national model for college in prison and currently provides an excellent college education to 130 women and men incarcerated in Maryland prisons. The courses offered are the same as those on Goucher College's main campus, and students earn a Goucher College bachelor's degree.


*The Goucher Prison Education Partnership (GPEP) celebrated the opening of the first-ever dedicated college classrooms in a Maryland prison. The new spaces will host an average of five classes each day for approximately 60 students, and allow students to transition from part-time to full-time, reducing the time to degree from nine to four and a half years.*

# Hood College Receives NSF Grant for Biotechnology Program

**Biotechnology Training Program to Be Held in Hood's Bioscience Research and Education Center Through National Science Foundation Grant**

Hood College has been awarded a $999,850 grant from the National Science Foundation's Experiential Learning for Emerging and Novel Technologies (ExLENT) program to launch the Innovative, Immersive Training Program in Synthetic Biology and Biomanufacturing.

Led by Rana Khan, Ph.D., director for the Bioscience Research and Education Center (BREC), the three-year project will prepare undergraduate and community college transfer students for high-demand careers in the biotechnology workforce.

A total of 51 students, 17 annually, will participate in a year-long immersive experience, including specialized coursework, paid summer internships, site visits, site-specific mini-courses at partner sites, and hands-on training aligned, supported by local industry partners such as the Maryland Tech Council, AstraZeneca, Kite Pharma, Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research, and Texcell.

*Rana Khan, Ph.D., inaugural director of Hood College's Bioscience Research and Education Center*

"Focused on cutting-edge technologies in gene therapy and biomanufacturing, this funding will provide hands-on training and paid internships for our students while strengthening industry partnerships and transfer pathways with local community colleges," said Rana Khan, inaugural director of BREC. "It supports BREC's mission to help grow the bioscience industry in Frederick County and beyond."

*A Hood College faculty member lectures during a lab course in the Hodson Science and Technology Center.*

*A Hood College undergraduate student takes careful measurements during a lab course in the Hodson Science and Technology Center.*

# Johns Hopkins Delivers $40B Impact for Maryland, Analysis Shows

**Johns Hopkins—the largest private employer in Maryland—delivered a $40 billion economic impact across the State last year, including supporting 149,000 jobs, according to a new analysis.**

In Baltimore, Johns Hopkins' annual economic impact was estimated at $19.4 billion—including University and Health System operations that supported one in every five jobs in the city, according to an independent analysis by Econsult Solutions Inc.

“Johns Hopkins is a vital engine of economic growth and regional vitality in every community it serves,” the report states.

The HopkinsLocal program launched a decade ago has powered a significant portion of those economic benefits. Since 2015, Johns Hopkins University and Johns Hopkins Health System have combined to spend more than $1 billion with local businesses, achieved by prioritizing inclusive hiring of city residents, extensive procurement with local companies, and investments in neighborhoods and community organizations.

“Johns Hopkins goes out of its way to make sure that local companies participate in their projects," said Jeffrey Hargrave, president of Mahogany Inc., a Baltimore-based commercial construction firm. "They really support local businesses.”

Such local inclusion has been the University's vision for more than a decade. “Our success as an institution is inextricably tied to that of the city that we call home," Johns Hopkins University President Ron Daniels said. "Johns Hopkins has a unique obligation and opportunity as an anchor institution in Baltimore and Maryland to ensure our spending decisions help our communities flourish, and we are working with our neighbors and partners to make a meaningful impact in our city and State.”


*Jeff Hargrave (second from right) credits construction work he has received from Johns Hopkins for helping his company grow from a subcontractor to a prime contractor.*

*The Johns Hopkins Health System provided $597 million in community benefits throughout Maryland and Washington, D.C., in 2024.*

# Loyola Celebrates Two Historic $10 Million Gifts to Advance the University's Strategic Vision

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND

**Loyola University Maryland has received the University's first two eight-figure gifts in history—two $10 million commitments. The contributions—one from Patricia and John R. Cochran, III, '73, and the other from Ellen and H. Edward Hanway, '74—reflect the continued momentum of implementation of the University's strategic plan, Together We Rise: Loyola University Maryland's Strategic Plan for 2030.**

The Cochrans' gift will create the Cochran Family Center for Faculty Excellence, advance the Cochran Family Scholarship Fund, and establish the Cochran Faculty Fund. The Hanway's gift will support the renovation and expansion of Donnelly Science Center, create the Loyola Nursing Leadership Scholars for the University's new Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, and establish the Hanway Endowed Professorship in Risk Management and the Hanway Risk Management Experiential Learning Fund.

The Cochrans and Hanways both have a long history of impactful giving and leadership involvement with Loyola, with John Cochran and Ed Hanway both having served as chair of the Board of Trustees. The University announced these gifts in December 2025.

"These historic commitments from the Cochrans and Hanways will help to boldly shape the future of the University by expanding access to a Loyola education, elevating health and STEM, and investing in our talented faculty," said Terrence M. Sawyer, J.D. "I am truly grateful to them for their unwavering commitment to our students and faculty, and for their dedication to strengthening the Loyola community."

*John and Patricia Cochran*

*Ed and Ellen Hanway*

# MICA Marks 200 Years of Creative Education in Maryland

**In honor of its Bicentennial, The Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) launched new strategic initiatives designed to accelerate innovation and strengthen Baltimore's creative economy. The Bicentennial Opening Celebration, held January 21, marked the first public event for the 200-year anniversary. MICA is the nation's oldest independent, continuous degree-granting college of art and design.**

"Two hundred years ago, MICA was founded on a bold belief that creativity matters. That singular belief is what has carried MICA through generations of change," said MICA President Cecilia M. McCormick, JD. "As I look ahead, I am proud to say that MICA is ready and moving forward with purpose. We are building a new future."

The celebration brought together leaders such as First Lady Dawn Moore, Notre Dame of Maryland University President Marylou Yam and other MICUA presidents, elected officials, partners, alumni, faculty, staff, students, and the community.

At the event, MICA President McCormick shared several key initiatives that reflect evolving workforce needs and the growing role of creativity:

- Flexible, Creative Learning at the School of Creative and Professional Studies. The relaunch of MICA's Master of Professional Studies (MPS), career, and continuing education programs.
- Expanded Momentum with the Ratcliffe Center for Creative Entrepreneurship. MICA and the Phillip E. and Carole R. Ratcliffe Foundation will now offer a brand-new alumni bridge program for graduates to continue to grow their own ventures at MICA post-graduation.
- Design + Innovation Hub. MICA also unveiled plans for a Design + Innovation Hub—a "third space" where students, faculty, and partners from business, nonprofit, and public sectors come together to leverage MICA labs and studios to transform creative ideas into cutting-edge solutions.

The launch of these initiatives is supported by significant public and private investments aligned with MICA's long-term vision. For Bicentennial event remarks by President McCormick, visit mica.ly/200remarks. For more information about MICA's bicentennial and upcoming events, visit mica.edu/200.

*President McCormick, far right, with guests (from left to right) Artist Derrick Adams H'23, Maryland First Lady Dawn Moore, and Cara Ober '05 (MFA, Studio Art), prior to the start of the opening celebration's event.*

# McDaniel College Expands Guaranteed Legacy Scholarships

McDANIEL COLLEGE

**McDaniel College has expanded its suite of guaranteed Legacy Scholarships. There is no limit to the number of Legacy Scholarships awarded by McDaniel. Legacy Scholarships are valued at up to $132,000 over four years, or $33,000 annually for residential students ($22,000 annually for commuters).**

McDaniel's Legacy Scholarships are renewable each year to students who maintain continuous enrollment and satisfactory academic progress.

The new scholarships include:

- First Responder Legacy Scholarship for children whose parent or guardian is an active law enforcement officer, career firefighter, licensed EMT or paramedic, or 911 dispatcher. This includes children of first responders who died in the line of duty, regardless of years of service.
- Health Professional Legacy Scholarship for children of full-time health professionals working in hospitals, health systems, public or community health or counseling clinics, long-term care and rehabilitation facilities, and home health, hospice, or public health agencies.
- Public Servant Legacy Scholarship for children of full-time, benefits-eligible government employees at the local, State, tribal, and federal levels.

McDaniel also recognizes the contributions of pre-K-12 and community college educators with the Educator Legacy Scholarship and past and present military service members with the Military Legacy Scholarship.

"These are among the largest scholarships that we offer incoming students, and we are grateful to our donors who have allowed us to continue to give back by making McDaniel an affordable option to these families who dedicate and sacrifice so much," according to McDaniel President Jasken.

Learn more about McDaniel's Legacy Scholarships at www.mcdaniel.edu/legacy.

*President Jasken speaking during Green Terror Battalion ROTC Commissioning Ceremony*


*Ward Memorial Arch*

# MSMU Alumni Release ELOS Heated Insoles to Amazon's Marketplace

**A pair of Mount St. Mary's alumni have turned a campus-born idea into a patented product now sold on Amazon, marking a major milestone for the University's entrepreneurship program.**

Mount St. Mary's University alumni Thunlwyn Garcia, C'23, and Anthony Milazzo, C'24, have officially brought their patented innovation, Temperature Regulated Insoles, to the Amazon marketplace through their company ELOS Thermal, marking another milestone success story born from the Palmieri Center for Entrepreneurship (PCE).

In August 2023, the founders were granted their first U.S. patent for their temperature regulating insole technology, a design concept that originated and grew in the Palmieri Center for Entrepreneurship during their time as students. In December 2024, they were granted their second patent. During their undergraduate years, the team developed and tested multiple prototypes, leveraging mentorship, feedback and resources from the PCE.

ELOS Thermal continued optimization and product development to deliver the product to market. The insole activates quickly, can fit into almost any footwear and heats for at least eight hours. The company's debut product, the ELOS Heated Insoles Starter Trim Kit, is offered on Amazon, through elosthermal.com and in select retail outlets.

"From our first conversation, I knew I wanted to use what they were developing, like for many, my feet often hurt when it is cold. Perhaps more importantly, I thought the process of conceiving the idea and trying to execute would be an exceptional learning opportunity, and it was," said Garth Patterson, Ph.D., director of the Palmieri Center for Entrepreneurship. "But to see it now as a fully released product, I cannot convey how proud I am of the team. They were not only able to be creative, but they also executed their plan and have brought a product to market that will absolutely benefit people."


*Mount St. Mary's University alumni Thunlwyn Garcia, C'23, and Anthony Milazzo, C'24*

# NDMU Students Help Decode How the Nation's Hidden Soil Bacteria Affect Human Health

**Eleven undergraduate students and two faculty at Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU) are playing a hands-on role in one of the largest soil microbiome studies ever attempted through the BioDiversity and Informatics for Genomics Scholars (BioDIGS) Project.**

NDMU faculty and students from the Biology Department are contributing directly to this nationwide research initiative that spans across 40 sites with more than 150 team members in the United States run by the BioDIGS Consortium. NDMU faculty Dr. Jennifer Kerr and Dr. Sayumi York lead a team of student researchers: Jefferson Da Silva '27, Grace D. Ekalle '26, Namoi Ewhe'27, Rachel Johnson '26, Kritika Kc '25, Disomi Okie '26, Tolulope Olowookorun '27, Nisttha Ray '26, Ariana Rodriguez '27, Loraye Smith '25, and Nwanneka Udolisa '25. The NDMU faculty and students were co-authors of a December 2025 article on the BioDIGS research in Nature Genetics, a leading peer-reviewed journal for high-impact research on how genetics impact human disease, biological function, and evolution.

The team's first goal is to recover soil microbial genomes and catalog soil biodiversity. Scientists studying soil bacteria use advanced methods like DNA sequencing instead of growing cultures in a lab because an estimated 99 percent of soil microorganisms have never been genetically characterized – a vast biological unknown often referred to as microbial "dark matter."

What sets BioDIGS apart, according to NDMU Professor Jennifer Kerr, is not only the scale of the science, but who is involved in doing it. "This project is bringing together undergraduate scientists, researchers, and educators from across the country in what is potentially the largest project ever done at this level," Dr. Kerr said. "Undergraduates are typically not involved in research on this scale —but BioDIGS includes them from the very beginning and all the way through."

Soil microorganisms play essential roles in ecosystems in ways scientists are still working to understand. These analyses will help researchers better understand how human activity shapes soil ecosystems—and how changes underground may signal broader environmental or health risks.

As researchers work to illuminate the soil's hidden biodiversity, NDMU students are helping uncover what has long remained unseen demonstrating that meaningful scientific discovery can begin at the undergraduate level—one soil sample at a time.

*NDMU Students Presenting Research*

# St. John's Discussion-Based Application Increasingly Embraced by Applicants

*By Helen Wagner (A26)*

**In August 2023, St. John's College announced a new addition to its undergraduate admissions process: the Discussion-Based Application, or DBA.**

Now entering its third year of use, the DBA serves as an alternative to the traditional written college application by providing prospective students with the opportunity to showcase their in-person conversation skills—an integral aspect of the school's curriculum. This way, St. John's can evaluate future Johnnies' enthusiasm for the Program while giving them a taste of its signature experience.

The DBA has three main components: an interview with an admissions counselor, a separate interview with a tutor, and participation in a St. John's seminar. The seminar requirement can either be fulfilled via a virtual seminar discussing preassigned readings with other prospective Johnnies or through participation in Summer Academy, the College's seasonal program for high school students.

As of Fall 2025, 25 percent of the entering first-year class had applied to St. John's using the DBA. "While the Discussion-Based Application may not suit every student, it offers an unparalleled opportunity for those who thrive in conversational contexts to authentically showcase their thinking," says Ben Baum, Vice President of Enrollment. "In that respect, I think this new application will serve as a tool to promote access among students of diverse backgrounds and learning styles. Instead of simply submitting their application over a computer screen, students will engage deeply with St. John's through the application process itself, allowing them to get to know the College better."

*Mathilda Neidinger (A28) applied—and was accepted—to St. John's in Annapolis through the Discussion-Based Application after participating in Summer Academy as a high school student in 2023.*

# Stevenson University Scholars Share Expertise at Fifth Annual Symposium

STEVENSON UNIVERSITY

**More than 50 students from Stevenson University's Scholars programs presented research and projects at the Fall 2025 Scholars Symposium.**

Students shared their work through oral presentations, breakout sessions, gallery exhibits, posters, and roundtable discussions. The topics and projects were as varied as the students, and included: analyzing racing data with AI; the effectiveness of multi-lingual learning strategies; managers' and workers' perspectives on burnout and retention in the healthcare industry; social and emotional learning in the classroom; and a visual approach to biochemistry education.

Stevenson's three Scholars programs—Leadership Scholars, Service Scholars, and the Honors Program—offer opportunities for students to challenge and develop themselves through leadership education, community engagement, and independent scholarship and research.

Students in Stevenson's Scholars programs participate in unique on- and off-campus activities. All three programs foster a strong community of peers and faculty mentors while helping students develop the skills needed to succeed in the classroom and in the workforce.


*Stevenson University's Leadership Scholars, Service Scholars, and Honors Program students presented research and projects at the Fall 2025 Scholars Symposium.*

# WAU is Top Ranked Adventist University in 2025 Washington Monthly Rankings

**According to the 2025 Washington Monthly university rankings, , Washington Adventist University (WAU) is the top-ranked Adventist University thanks to lower net cost and higher earnings for graduates, as well as top 100 marks nationally for Student Outcomes (83) and Service (81).**

The *Washington Monthly* rankings aim to highlight schools that focus on student success at a more economical cost, with higher median earnings for graduates. WAU's ranking confirms the value represented by the mission-driven education that it provides to students.

Out of the 1422 four year colleges and universities ranked by *Washington Monthly*, WAU is number 342. Andrews University is the next Adventist university on the list at number 1043, followed by La Sierra University (1171), Union Adventist University (1195), Walla Walla University (1250), Southern Adventist University (1275), Pacific Union University (1289), Oakwood University (1340), and Southwestern Adventist University (1389). (Loma Linda University was not ranked).

The *Washington Monthly* ranking was only the most recent external recognition received by WAU. In April, 2025, WAU was one of only 476 four year colleges and universities to be recognized as an "Opportunity College or University" in the Carnegie classifications of universities. This is the new, highest accolade given by Carnegie to recognize schools where there is high student access to education with above average median incomes. WAU was the only four year Adventist school to receive this designation (Pacific Union University and AdventHealth University received the designation for specialized programs).

The fact that WAU has received these external validations stands in contrast to its capital resources, whereas schools with far greater endowments and grander campuses rank far lower. "We know the value of the education we offer to students," says WAU President, Dr. Weymouth Spence. "Imagine what we could do with additional resources. That's why we are working to revitalize our campus for the 21st century to provide diverse revenue streams to support our students. We are looking for partners to help us sustain our mission of serving students for another 120 years."


*WAU Logo*

# Psychology of Gaming Class Teaches Key College Skills

Washington College

*By MacKenzie Brady '21*

**The class is one of more than a dozen options in the Washington College First Year Seminar (FYS) program, which introduces students to writing, research, presentation, and other important skills needed throughout their collegiate careers through unique course offerings that explore faculty interests.**

"Are you feeling any toxic impulses right now?" That jokey question was a huge part of Dan Kochli's course, Mindsets and Multikills, focused on the psychology of gaming, one of a dozen unique offerings this semester as part of the First-Year Seminar (FYS) program. Kochli, assistant professor of psychology, is a behavioral neuroscientist whose primary research focuses on learning processes and complex disordered behaviors like post-traumatic stress disorder and addiction.

The FYS program immerses first-year students in the academic program at Washington. Taken in their first semester on campus, FYS introduces students to the process of inquiry, research, idea generation, questioning, writing, and other academic skills that will serve them throughout their time at the College. Through the seminar, students learn how to present their ideas and engage with those of their classmates through a small, collaborative experience.

"Every seminar has its own topic, but they all share the same central mission: teaching students to engage critically with complex ideas and begin building the research and communication skills that will support their success," said Martín Ponti, first year seminar director and associate professor of Hispanic studies.

Kochli designed his course to be collaborative, asking students to play different kinds of video games together to better understand game design (user experience and perception of design elements), social dynamics (good versus bad frustration and motivations to play games), and the positive and negative effects of gaming on individuals and society.

For Casey Johnson '29, the new perspective on gaming gave her tools to evaluate games in a more in-depth way. "The coolest thing for me about this class was learning the inside scoop about how developers make games addicting so they can make money," Johnson said. "Now that I've learned some of the things game developers do, I feel like I'm critiquing games because I know what's healthy versus unhealthy."

*Students in Mindsets and Multikills course*

*MICUA Matters is published by the Maryland Independent College and University Association*

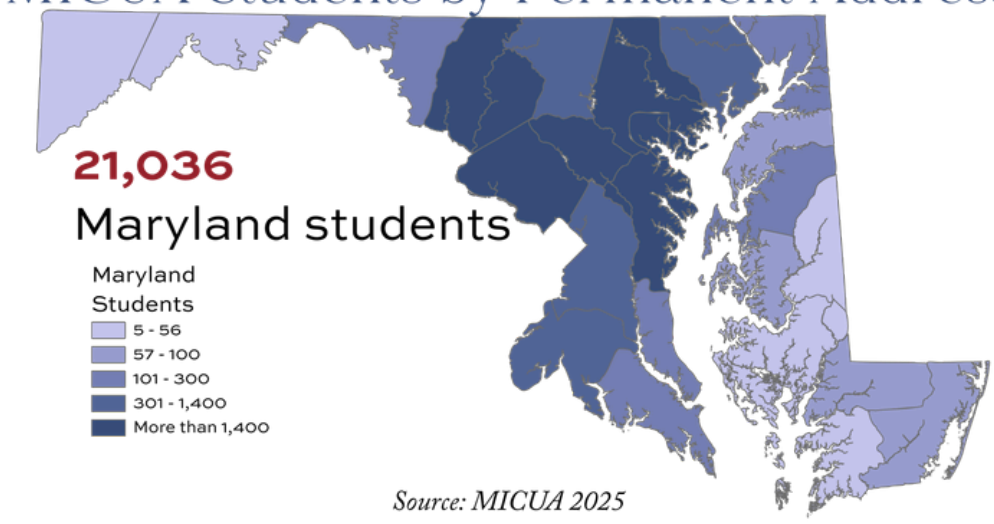
## MICUA Members

- Capitol Technology University
- Goucher College
- Hood College
- Johns Hopkins University
- Loyola University Maryland
- MICA Maryland Institute College of Art
- McDaniel College
- Mount St. Mary's University
- Notre Dame of Maryland University 1895
- St John's College
- Stevenson University
- Washington Adventist University
- Washington College

## *Affiliate Members*

- Ner Israel Rabbinical College
- St. Mary's Seminary & University

## MICUA Students by Permanent Address




*Source: MICUA 2025*