

The Making Opportunity Affordable (MOA) planning grant will facilitate the development of innovative, replicable models to enhance access, retention, and achievement in Maryland. Building on efforts already underway, these models will improve effectiveness and efficiency in higher education to ensure a well-educated workforce.

The goal of the MOA planning grant is to design a plan to improve effectiveness and efficiency in higher education to ensure a well-educated workforce. The planning grant will catalyze the achievement of this long-term goal in a number of ways: by facilitating coalition building and communications among key players in higher education, analyzing critical issues facing higher education across the state, making informed recommendations, and influencing policies to ensure sustainability through systemic change.

Goals

The Steering Committee of the MOA project endorsed the following elements as part of the strategic planning for the MOA project while attending the Academy in North Carolina:

- Align higher education outcomes with the needs of the state;
- Provide a high-quality education for an increasing number of Maryland citizens;
- Close the gap in completion rates between diverse groups of students;
- Increase overall completion rates

During the planning year, we will test some of our assumptions, including the information we have already collected related to closing the achievement gap at the four-year public universities. The following list suggests some of the metrics being considered as potentially powerful incentive models:

- Debt-free students at graduation
- Effectiveness of financial incentives for students to transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions
- Effectiveness of rewarding institutions for retention and completion
- Effectiveness of trial incentive funding for certain certificate or degree areas
- Effectiveness of rewarding institutions for increased degree attainment among students of diverse backgrounds

Policy Audit

The most important policy levers in Maryland at this time are the Funding Commission and the scheduled update of the MHEC State Plan. Beyond those two levers, the P-20 Council provides an important forum for developing and communicating strategies for effecting change. In all of these cases, we anticipate expanded opportunities to effect meaningful policy change by getting the groups to think critically about their recommendations, using these vehicles to advance the larger Lumina and state-wide goals for higher education. Below is a preliminary list of areas for policy audit drawn from the Steering Committee discussions in North Carolina in June:

Finance systems

- Financial incentives for increased completion rates overall, and for specific student populations and/or degree areas.
- Higher education funding fluctuates with state revenue fluctuation. Develop state multi-year funding strategies to stabilize funds.
- Incentives for graduation rates.

Administrative operations

- Drawing on experience at the USM with the Board of Regents' Effectiveness and Efficiency Initiative efforts, explore the expansion of this approach with the Community Colleges in Maryland and offer these best practice models to private institutions for consideration

Academic programming

- Bring in consultants to explore ways to expedite time to degree; developmental education, and dual enrollment
- Consider all options including increased tuition for those who stay too long as well as accelerating time to degree through dual enrollment and early college access.

Institutional alignment

- Develop a PR campaign with high school students to help them understand the changing world and the need for higher education.
- Consider a default curriculum at the high school level – look at work in Indiana and Maine
- Ensure two-year/four year articulation agreements are not deterring completion.