

**Open Work Session
Economic Impact Scholarship Program Annual Review
September 18, 2018**

Mr. Bryan Newton, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Services at Wor-Wic Community College, came before Council. He said he has some brief comments, and there are some documents making their way around to Council which are, actually, responses to something Council requested at their hearing last year. He said, first of all, he would like to thank Council for their support of Wor-Wic. He said Wor-Wic appreciates all they do for them, as well as the County Executive. He said he knows they do not always agree on the structure of this program, but he knows they are committed to Wor-Wic and what they do, and he appreciates that. He said they also believe this program played a role in convincing the State to pass the Maryland Community College Promise Program that was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor earlier this year, so they appreciate that this kind of jumpstarted that process. He said he will talk about that in a few moments because there were some questions that were forwarded to him in regard to that program.

Mr. Newton said, in terms of the 2017 year, Council has the annual report that was provided. He said applications for the Wicomico Economic Impact Scholarship (WEIS) Program increased from 131 to 183, but completed applications, which are those where the person stated an interest in the application, but also did all the financial aid work that needed to be done, fell from 118 to 81. He clarified, in the end, there were 70 eligible applicants, and out of those there were 18 who received some of the WEIS funding. He said, just as an aside so Council is aware, the numbers are not finalized yet, but the Fall 2018 cohort had 342 initial applications, but only 108 were completed. He said they had 91 in the end, and it appears there will be 16 who will receive some WEIS funding. He said the number receiving some of the WEIS funding is fairly low across all three cohorts.

Mr. Newton said, back to the 18 who received funding from Wicomico County in 2017 and 2018, there were 8 students out of those 18 who continued as fulltime students in the Spring 2018 semester, and 83.3 percent of those WEIS funded students that started with them completed some college credits. He said, in terms of how much it cost this year, they spent \$33,826 on this new class in 2017-2018, and that included the reimbursement of dual enrollment fees for those who completed those eligibility requirements at the end of the year. He said, after two years of the program, the total cost for 2016-2017 combined has been \$91,918.72, so in the allocation that was made of \$212,000, there remains \$120,081.28 at the Community Foundation for this program.

Mr. Newton said the charts Council has are in response to questions they asked him last year where they wanted the details in terms of the individuals' progress. He passed around a chart that shows the progress of the 2016 cohort and said they have completed two years, and the 2017 cohort has completed one year. He said, of course, they conceal the names because they have to by law, and they cannot provide any personally-identifiable information. He said, as Council can see, there are some students who have graduated from Wor-Wic, or are about to graduate, they have some students who have transferred, or are about to transfer, and they have some who are still enrolled but are not part of the program anymore because they have fallen below the 12 credit marker taking 9 or 7 credits. He said then they have some, of course, who have dropped out and not returned at this point. He said, if Council looks at that, and looks at both cohorts in terms of graduation, transfer, and still enrolled, whether they are enrolled in 12 credits or less, they have 16 out of 27 from the original 2016 cohort after two years,

so that is 59.3 percent of those students. He said, for 2017 they have 10 out of 18 who have had some success, and that percentage is 55.6 percent after the first year of the 2017 group.

Mr. Newton said the biggest challenges they have with the program continue, certainly, to be the income cap, which allows very few students to take advantage of the funding the County has provided, and that is why they have the large balance remaining. He said it also affects students who are continuing in the program if their parent's income goes above \$75,000 during the program because they are not allowed to continue in the program as it is structured at the moment. He said the other challenge they see is the 12 credit piece that is very difficult for their students, and they see it with students coming back and enrolling in 9 or 7 credits, or whatever it might be. He said they have some data that indicates that 60 percent of their students at Wor-Wic work more than 20 hours a week. He said they are working more than 20 hours a week, and going to school with 12 credits is a full load and indicates a fulltime student, so that, certainly, is an issue for the program as it is constructed now.

Mr. Newton said he has two more items, and then he will answer questions. He said Mrs. Hurley indicated some Councilmembers had asked for a plan to dissolve the WEIS program in light of the passage of the Community College Scholarship Program Statewide. He said they are not prepared to give Council a recommendation at this time, and the reason is that they do not know enough about the Promise Program Statewide to give Council a recommendation. He said they have a law that has been passed and signed by the Governor, but the Maryland Higher Education Commission has not given them any regulations about how the program is going to be administered, and how the funding is going to be allocated cross the State. He said the community colleges asked for \$35-\$45 million dollars for that program, but it was funded at \$15 million dollars. He said they believe that means that not everybody who is eligible for the community college scholarship program will be able to be funded in the coming year, so they would like to see the regulations come out first, and see what the application process is. He said their biggest concern, certainly, is that Wor-Wic is the lowest cost tuition community college in the State, but the level of need for their students, even though it is a lot for them, is going to be lower than the level of need for those students who are at colleges such as Montgomery, Prince George's, etc. He said, depending on how this is structured by the State, it is a very good possibility that their students could end up having the lowest need, and thereby end up with the lowest funding. He said then, when the funding runs out, there will be nothing there to take care of Wor-Wic students. He said they would like to see what happens with the regulations, and they would like to see what happens with the application process coming up this year. He clarified, they are not asking for any more funding at this point because they have a healthy balance of the original \$212,000 that was allocated.

Mr. Newton said, with the importance of this program and trying to make sure these students succeed, and with trying to make sure they give Council the data they need, as well as Wor-Wic getting the data they need to see how the students are doing, they have just created a new position at the college. He said the Director of Student Success is for all of their students, but, as part of that person's responsibility, they have asked her to manage the day-to-day activities of their free community college programs, including the Wicomico program, and they think that will help them, and help those students. He said Amanda Messatzzia, who has been a longtime employee with them, and is excellent in her work, will be the one who will be providing the day-to-day oversight going forward.

Mr. Kilmer said he thinks it makes sense to wait until the State figures out what they are doing with their program, but his concern is that the State said theirs would be last dollar funding, and the County's is supposed to be last dollar funding as well. He said, obviously, the State overrides the County, so he thinks they need to watch that carefully to figure out a way to, frankly, ensure the State can take as

much of the burden they can, but it does make sense to wait and see how the State structures it so the County knows how to adapt theirs to deal with that issue. He said they certainly do not want to be in a situation where they are duplicating the State program just because they have not changed it to adapt to the State, to which Mr. Newton responded, he thinks that is correct. He said he also thinks they do not want to be in a position where they end up worse off with what they are doing with the State program than they have been with the program the County has provided for these students in terms of educational attainment and economic development. He said that would be a shame for Wicomico County to end up in a worse position than it is now in terms of these students who need this funding. He said, in terms of usage of the dollars, he thinks their goal is, certainly, to maximize all funding out there, Federal, State, etc., and they might be looking at a last-last dollar funding as they look at this program. Mr. Kilmer said they will see what the State says.

Mr. Kilmer further said he saw that Mr. Newton has the numbers in his report, and he would like to clarify that in the 2017 cohort there were 18 students who received some sort of WEIS funding, to which Mr. Newton responded, that is correct. Mr. Kilmer said, after one year, 6 of them completed 12 credits and maintained a 2.0 or higher GPA, to which Mr. Newton responded, yes. Mr. Kilmer said that is a 33 percent persistence rate, basically, for the 2017 cohort after one year, to which Mr. Newton responded, yes, that is correct. He said, if Mr. Kilmer will recall, the regulations provide that students can come in at the end of the first year if they have completed 24 credits on their own, and he believes they have 2 students back in the program, which gets them to 8 students. Mr. Kilmer said he did not see anything for 2016 over two years, but just saw a lot of comparison about first semester versus second semester. He then asked what information Mr. Newton has about how the 2016 cohort persisted over two years, such as how many graduated, and how many transferred. He said there were a lot of numbers in the report, so he may have missed it, but he would like a report on the 2016 cohort, to which Mr. Newton responded, they know, based on what he passed out to Council on the 2016 cohort, that 16 out of the 27 are either graduated, transferred, or still enrolled. He clarified, some of them are enrolled below the 12 credits, and, again, he thinks they consider that a success that they are still in college even though they may not qualify for this program because they are not meeting the 12 credits. He said he does not have the number in terms of who is still remaining with 12 credits, but it is a pretty low number because, again, people have started to transfer or graduate. He explained, Council has to remember that some of these students are also coming in with dual enrollment credits, so they have a head start, and it is not taking them the whole two and a half years to graduate. He said, with some who are coming in with a head start, they are moving on because they have accomplished what they wanted to accomplish. Mr. Kilmer said it would be interesting to see the breakdown of whether they transferred, graduated, or if they had dual enrollment throughout the two years. Mr. Newton said the 2016 chart Council has shows all the students they started with in 2016, and they can see their resolution individually in the student progress notes at the end of that chart. He said it shows what their cumulative GPA was after the end of the first year, how many credits they accumulated, and the same for the 2017 year, and then progress notes as to where they are at in the chain. He said there is more information for 2016 than for 2017, of course, because they only have one year for the 2017 cohort. Mr. Kilmer said he appreciates the information.

Mr. Cannon asked, when Mr. Newton says they were WEIS-funded students completing some college credits, is he to assume they did not continue on to the next semester, to which Mr. Newton responded, there are some students who did not continue on. He said they look from the very beginning at how many completed some college credits, so when they talk about the 83 percent of this cohort that completed some college credits, they are talking about all of those who were with the program from the very beginning. He said, of course, some of those did not continue on into the spring semester because

maybe they decided to take fewer credits and continue on, or did not have the GPA requirement, so they could not continue on in the program, or whatever that might be. Mr. Cannon said, of the 18 who first entered, that number was reduced to 6, but now Mr. Newton is saying it is back up to 8, to which Mr. Newton responded, that is correct because they have the 2 coming back in. Mr. Cannon then asked if they know what the GPA was for the 18 students when they entered the program, to which Mr. Newton responded, he has their average GPA in the report. Mr. Cannon clarified, he is talking about trying to evaluate the restriction that was put on more recently as far as the GPA is concerned, and he is wondering whether or not that was justifiable, or if it could be that all 8 of these students had a 2.5 or greater. Mr. Newton said he has the individual GPAs for the students, to which Mr. Cannon responded, he would be interested in knowing what the GPAs were of all 18, and also the final 8 before they entered the program. Mr. Newton said he has broken out the cumulative GPA for Council on page 6 of the report showing what the average cumulative GPA after the fall term was for both cohorts, what it was for the WEIS-funded students, and what it was after the fall term for those who completed the 12 credits. Mr. Kilmer clarified, he thinks Mr. Cannon wants the GPA from when they entered the program, to which Mr. Newton responded, he can provide that.

Mr. Cannon asked, if someone does not get through this program completely, is there a requirement for that money to be returned, to which Mr. Newton responded, that was not part of the initial program. Mr. Cannon said, looking at the numbers, Council has to evaluate this very carefully because this is taxpayer-funded. He then asked, if he looks at 8 students getting through this program out of 18, is it too far-fetched to say it is costing the County almost twice the tuition to get these students through this program, to which Mr. Newton responded, he does not believe that is an accurate assessment. He said Mr. Cannon is taking the whole body of them versus those who are remaining or completed. Mr. Cannon clarified, in other words, the taxpayers paid for 18 to go into the program, and outside of that it turned out that only 8 of them got completely through, to which Mr. Newton responded, 8 of them are remaining. He said, again, they have students who have graduated of that 18, they have other students above those who are remaining and finishing up their Associates Degree, and those who have transferred out already to a four-year university, as well as those who are still working on their degree, but are working at it with a lower number than the 12 credits that are part of this program. He clarified, within the program, yes there are 8, but there are 8 remaining because some of them have gone on to other parts. He said it is how they look at success, meaning does one look at success as only those who go through the program and stay with it the entire time and complete the Associates Degree, or does one look at it as those who maybe stayed one or two semesters, then transferred onto their four-year university because they had the credits they needed, or possibly had credits from their dual enrollment time in high school. He said he would consider that a success even though they are not remaining in the program to the end. He said they are measured as a college for all their students on graduation and transfer rates together, and not everybody goes on to get their Associates Degree, though they would like to see that of those who start with Wor-Wic. He said, if he looks at the charts and looks at the rates of success he mentioned, there is a better number they are working with. He said, out of the 27 in 2016, 59.3 percent are completed, transferred, or still enrolled and working on it. He said, in 2017 there are 10 of the 18 after one year who are graduated, transferred, or working on it.

Mr. Dodd said he is looking at the numbers, and it looks like a total of 19 did not continue of both cohorts, and 4 transferred to another school. He said he thought the goal was to try to keep people in the County educated, and keep them here instead of transferring. He said he also looked at 13 students who had below a 2.0, and one was 0.3 to 0.5. Mr. Newton responded, in terms of transfers, certainly, their goal is to get them working here in the County, but that does not necessary mean they would stop at an Associate's Degree. He said their goal is for them to complete their Bachelor's Degree if that is

what their particular profession or desire wants. He said Governor Hogan has recently proposed that if those who are part of the Maryland Promise Scholarship complete what they are supposed to complete at the community college, they would then go on and continue to receive free college for a four-year degree because there are, certainly, some positions that will require a Bachelor's Degree. He said Wor-Wic is the start of that versus graduating and going directly out to work. He said, again, that comes back to the long-term nature of the program, and the longitudinal data they have to provide in terms of what happens to those students after they complete their Bachelor's Degree, or whatever that might be. Mr. Dodd said he encourages everyone to get a four-year degree, but they know that a lot of times when somebody transfers and goes out of State to another college, they, typically, do not come back to the area.

Mr. Dodd said there are a lot of low GPAs in the report. He then asked, when they continue this discussion further, how can they justify paying for these college credits when some of the students are not even passing, to which Mr. Newton responded, the question of whether they continue to pay for them certainly is up to Council. He said no college that he knows of, and certainly no community college, is going to graduate 100 percent of the individuals who start with it. He said they do everything they can to support them including providing orientation and biweekly coaching. He said they ask them to let them know that they are withdrawing if they leave Wor-Wic. He said, again, they have committed the staff resources this year to try to do even more intervention with these students, but, ultimately, the student has to do his or her part. He said Wor-Wic cannot do it for them, so they cannot guarantee a pass rate for these students of any amount. He said, when they get into the 50 percentile when looking at where these cohorts are at, that is not far off the mark from where their general student population will be in terms of their success, and that is, actually, better than many community colleges throughout the State, and throughout the Country. He said success, retention, and persistence are a challenge, so there are no guarantees in terms of funding these students. He said he thinks, from their perspective, if they look at it in terms of getting half or a third in, they are getting those students the education they need to get the employment they need, and come back and be taxpayers and citizens of this County, and they get the return on investment, but they get it in a delayed manner, certainly. Mr. Dodd said he just hates to say the County is wasting money.

Mr. Dodd said he counted 19 in the report who are not enrolled, and there may be more or less. He then asked if they have the opportunity to come back into the program, to which Mr. Newton responded, they do. Mr. Dodd asked if there is a deadline, to which Mr. Newton responded, there are deadlines that may affect whether they can continue with their major as it was when they entered because, as the curriculum changes, if they wait too long, they have to follow the new set of courses that are required, but they can come back in. Mr. Dodd asked if they can come back in under this program, to which Mr. Newton responded, not under this program, and not, certainly, under anything the County is paying for. Mr. Newton clarified, the only place where they can come back in is, if the student completed 12 credits or more in the first semester, but in the second semester, for whatever reason, ended up only taking 9, but then came back in the summer and took 3 credits. He explained, they would not have been funded in the spring for the 9 credits because they were not meeting the 12 credit criteria, but, if at the end of the summer they took 3 and paid for it themselves, and are back to 24 in 2 semesters, at that point, they would allow them to continue in the program. He said they do not allow them to continue after that, such as if they came back in the third semester and only took 9 credits, they could not come back into the program. Mr. Dodd asked if they get reimbursed, to which Mr. Newton responded, no, they would not. He said, in terms of County funding, they are not going to get that, but they do have the opportunity to get back into the program. He said the people who did not take advantage of it at the

start but end up going to Wor-Wic and complete 24 credits, and have a 2.0 can enter in that second year, but they cannot enter any later than that because that is the way it is set up.

Mr. Kilmer said this is very interesting information, and he thanked Mr. Newton for providing it. He said, as Mr. Cannon mentioned, he thinks it would be interesting to have their incoming GPA on the report, as well as if they were eligible for remedial courses, and whether they took them. He said he thinks there is some evidence that if students take those classes to help them get up to the college level, it helps with success. He said it would be interesting to see if they needed some sort of remedial help, or were not deemed college ready and took those classes whether there is a difference between those who persisted, and those who did not. Mr. Newton said he can provide that information. He said, certainly, many of their students end up taking developmental courses. He said over 70 percent of their students end up having to take some developmental course coming into the college, and he has that information on the students. Mr. Kilmer said it would be interesting to track them as individuals, to which Mr. Newton responded, he can certainly get that for him. Mr. Kilmer said, as they look at this, it is interesting to see how different people perform.

Mr. Dodd asked where they are at with what they discussed previously about adding or converting this to possibly a vo-tech type program, to which Mr. Newton responded, he does not think they have advanced any on that. He said he thinks last year there was some discussion about changes to the program, but he thinks, at the time, the Promise Scholarship was being talked about publically, and he thinks there may have been discussions outside of their formal get-togethers that there would just be a hold on that to see what the new Promise Scholarship looked like, and how the regulations were going to be implemented, and that would determine what would happen with this program going forward. Mr. Dodd said he thinks they already determined there is a need for those types of programs, to which Mr. Newton responded, absolutely.

Mrs. Hurley asked, to piggyback off of what Mr. Kilmer was talking about, do the remedial classes impact the GPA, to which Mr. Newton responded, it is not counted in the GPA. He explained, the way the program has been interpreted is that they can have those credits as part of their 12 credit threshold because, for some students, they have quite a few coming in, but those are not factored into the GPA. He said, actually, that is why they sometimes end up showing Council some low GPAs. He said, for example, if the student took three classes that were developmental and they took one class, such as psychology, that was a non-developmental class, the only GPA that is going to show up is for the psychology class. He said they may have done very well in the developmental courses, but not that well in the psychology, so, in terms of their GPA, they will see the GPA from that one course. There was no further discussion.

Signatures on next page

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John T. Cannon, President



Larry W. Dodd, Vice President, District 3




Ernest F. Davis, District 1



Marc Kilmer, District 2

absent

John B. Hall, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



Matt Holloway, At-Large



Laura Hurley, Council Administrator