



Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

Mary Pat Seurkamp, Ph.D.
Chair

James D. Fielder, Jr., Ph. D.
Secretary

July 29, 2021

Darryll J. Pines, Ph.D.
President
Office of the President
University of Maryland, College Park
1101 Main Administration Building
College Park, Maryland 20742

Dear President Pines:

The Maryland Higher Education Commission has reviewed a request from the University of Maryland, College Park (“College Park”) to offer a Bachelor of Science in Mechatronics.

I am writing to inform you that the proposed program is denied. This decision is based on an analysis of the program proposal in conjunction with the law and regulations governing academic program approval, in particular Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13B.02.03. As required by COMAR, the Commission circulated the proposal to the Maryland higher education community for comment and objection. As you are aware, we received an objection from Morgan State University (“Morgan”). We shared that objection with you, and you responded. I appreciate the time your team spent with my staff and me to discuss the proposal.

Based upon a careful review of the proposal and the objection and response, we find that the proposed undergraduate program in mechatronics would unreasonably duplicate Morgan’s program. The elimination and prevention of unreasonable program duplication is a high priority to the Maryland Higher Education Commission. The program at Morgan is a unique undergraduate program at a Historically Black Institution (HBI); Capitol Technology University is the only other college or university in Maryland that offers a bachelor-level degree in mechatronics. The two programs are designed to have similar outcomes in robotic and automation systems and are designed to meet specific accreditation requirements set forth by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

College Park’s proposed program is intended to be offered at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG), a regional higher education center overseen by the University System of Maryland (USM). Additionally, the proposed program is designed to attract transfer students from Montgomery College primarily. While College Park’s proposal has been created to meet the needs of a specific student population (transfer students from Montgomery College), Morgan’s mechatronic program has the potential to meet the needs of engineering transfer students by providing course offerings at another non-USM regional higher education center, the Laurel College Center.

If, by April 30, 2022, Morgan cannot expand the undergraduate mechatronics program to meet the needs of engineering transfer students from community colleges (evidenced by signed articulation agreements and course offerings at the Laurel College Center), College Park is welcome to resubmit the proposed program for reconsideration.

Should College Park wish to appeal this decision to the full Commission in accordance with COMAR 13B.02.03.28, it may do so by notifying Chair Mary Pat Seurkamp in writing within 10 days of the date of this letter. Notice should be sent in care of Jennifer Katz, Principal Counsel to MHEC, jennifer.katz@maryland.gov. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you for your commitment to higher education in the State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James D. Fielder, Jr." in a cursive script.

Dr. James D. Fielder, Jr.
Secretary

C: Dr. David K. Wilson, President, Morgan State University

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