

**Sayers, Margery**

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**From:** Homan, Elizabeth <ehoman@howardcc.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 6, 2020 6:58 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Subject:** Howard Community College Testimony: Operating Budget Hearing May 6, 2020  
**Attachments:** Testimony\_KateHetherington\_CountyCouncilVIRTUAlOperatingBudgetHearing\_05062020\_edits.docx; Testimony\_FeliSolaCarter\_CountyCouncilVIRTUAlHearing\_05062020.docx

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Dear Howard County Councilmembers,

On behalf of Howard Community College, I am sending you the written versions of the testimony presented tonight by Dr. Kate Hetherington, president, and Feli Solá-Carter, board chair.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Thank you,

**Elizabeth S. Homan**

Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing  
office: 443-518-4073  
cell: 443-537-8227  
[howardcc.edu](http://howardcc.edu)





10901 Little Patuxent Parkway  
Columbia, MD 21044-3197  
443-518-1000  
MD Relay 711  
howardcc.edu

*You Can Get There From Here.*

**Testimony of Dr. Kate Hetherington**

President, Howard Community College

May 6, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.

County Executive Budget Hearing

Good evening, Council Chair Jung and Councilmembers. I am Dr. Kate Hetherington, president of Howard Community College (HCC), and a resident of Columbia.

Thank you for your leadership during these challenging times. You have the tough job of funding the county's operating needs during a pandemic, and I appreciate your support of the County Executive's proposed budget for Howard Community College for this coming fiscal year.

HCC has been providing remote classes and services since March 30, and this "new normal" will continue through the summer session. I am grateful to HCC faculty and staff who pivoted quickly to remote operations and have continued to provide students with the highest level of instruction and support.

As you can imagine, working remotely is straining HCC's fiscal year (FY) 2020 operating budget and causing the college to make difficult decisions about the future.

While the college will receive funding from the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act, half of the allocation will be disbursed to students, and the remaining institutional funding comes with strict recommendations for use. HCC is still awaiting Department of Education guidance on what will and will not be covered.

At the state level, the General Assembly voted to restore full Cade funding to the community colleges, which is based on prior years' enrollment levels and amounts to an increase over last fiscal year. However, this funding can only

be received if the county maintains our current level of funding. Based on the maintenance of effort requirement for community colleges, if the county does not provide the same level of funding, we would lose the Cade increase that the legislature proposed.

It should also be noted that the Governor can cut HCC funding by 25% if there is a shortfall in state revenues. If this were to occur, HCC's FY2021 state funding could be cut by as much as \$5.2 million.

The college had originally requested Howard County provide an operating budget increase of \$3.2 million or 9% over this year's budget. The pandemic has had a devastating impact on the economy, so I appreciate the County Executive's recommended increase of \$716,860, which amounts to 2% more than last year. Tonight, I respectfully ask for your support.

The college board of trustees approved a very lean FY2021 operating budget on April 23, 2020. The following decisions by the college's board of trustees were made with the information we have at this time. If the state cuts our budget, more drastic action will need to be taken.

- In order to keep tuition affordable to our students, there will be a minimal increase of only \$2 per credit hour. We realize the challenges students and their families are facing now and limited putting another financial burden on our students.
- While the decision to delay merit for our faculty and staff was done after much deliberation, we are uncertain about revenues, especially related to enrollments in the year ahead. Once we have a better picture of our financial situation, we would look at a possible mid-year increase.
- We added only two positions to the budget for the upcoming year, with one salary being covered by a reallocation of funds and the second one

for a financial aid officer, who is desperately needed to serve our students who have lost jobs and are barely getting by.

I appreciate the support of the board of trustees in making these difficult decisions about the college's operating budget. Tonight, I urge you to do your part and fund the proposed operating budget increase that the County Executive has proposed.

Even in this challenging time, I know HCC will persevere because of the dedicated and caring community of trustees, faculty, staff, and students who believe in our mission. With your support, HCC will emerge a stronger, more resilient community college.



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**Testimony of Feli Solá-Carter**

Chair, Howard Community College Board of Trustees

May 6, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.

County Executive Budget Hearing

Good evening, Council Chair Jung and Councilmembers, thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight in support of Howard Community College (HCC).

I am Feli Solá-Carter, a resident of Ellicott City and chair of the college's board of trustees. This evening, I am speaking on behalf of the board.

HCC has had a long history of being on the forefront of innovation for tomorrow's workforce needs. At no time has this been more evident than today. The college is delivering all of its classes and services remotely, with students learning everything from math to nursing to construction management online. They're also receiving services such as financial aid assistance, academic advising, and career counseling to plan for job searches in this challenging time.

The college pivoted quickly to remote operations because of its focus on the success of our students. With the college's focus on continuous quality improvement, it was able to accelerate the shift from face-to-face to remote learning and services. The college is known for its focus on performance excellence and received the nation's highest honor with the 2019 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award last fall.

To continue supporting this award-winning college, I ask the Howard County Council to support the Howard County Executive's proposal for a 2% increase in next fiscal year's operating budget. This funding is essential to HCC's financial stability. There is already a projected loss in this fiscal year, and next year does not look any better. The college has yet to learn if the state will make budget cuts. The hope is that our enrollments will grow because parents will see the value of sending their high school seniors to Howard Community College rather than having them move away to go to a university in the midst of a pandemic, but our enrollment picture is uncertain at this time.

Please support HCC's operating budget request to ensure Howard County families benefit from a quality college education for years to come.

On behalf of HCC's trustees, thank you for your past support. I look forward to your continued investment in the students, faculty, and staff of Howard Community College.