



**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Daria J. Willis, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Howard Community College to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding HCC's Operating Budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Daria J. Willis

Signature:

Date: 4/19/2022

Organization: Howard Community College

Organization Address: 10901 Little Patuxent Parkway Columbia, MD 21044

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Number of Members: 21,000 students and 2,500 employees

Name of Chair/President: Daria J. Willis

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the Public Hearing.



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. Daria J. Willis

President, Howard Community College

April 25, 2022– 6:00 p.m.

County Council Operating Budget Hearing

Good evening, Chair Jones, Vice Chair Rigby, and Councilmembers. I'm Dr.

Daria Willis, president of Howard Community College.

It is my pleasure to be here surrounded by the talented and hardworking employees of HCC. They deserve your support in the fiscal year 2023 operating budget, so tonight, I ask you to pass the County Executive's budget proposal.

When I first set foot on the HCC campus, I was struck by the student-first focus of the employees. In all my years working at community colleges, I never before experienced one where the student-centric mission of providing pathways to success is imbued within the work of every employee.

Now, having been at the college for nearly four months, I see evidence of this fact daily. At HCC, 52% of our students fall at or below the poverty line. This means that they earn \$29,000 or less. Some have children at home or are caring for family or loved ones.

Our staff do everything in their power to support our students when they need it the most. Our staff run the college's food pantry, supplying approximately 3,800 pounds of food monthly to students and their families; they run programming at the wellness center to assist students with stress relief such as yoga classes and acupuncture, and a very popular relaxation room with a massage chair.

As for faculty, a day doesn't go by when I do not hear students speak about professors rekindling their love of learning, encouraging them to stay the course, or even inspiring their future career. Faculty are instrumental in helping students believe in themselves and find their passion.

Our faculty and staff support students in incredible ways. They were there for student Jazmeira Smothers, who shared her story about the loss of her toddler with the County Executive and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges this year. HCC's mental health counselors support students like Jazmeira as well as students who strive to balance the challenges of academics and work.

In all these instances, faculty and staff are key to mentoring, coaching, and guiding students through their educational journey, all while managing their

own hectic and stressful lives.

Councilmembers, I ask you to think of these faculty and staff when making critical decisions about the Howard County operating budget for fiscal year 2023. The County Executive has recommended a \$2.9 million increase in the operating budget over last year. This increase will result in college employees being honored for the work that they do. With your support, Howard Community College will be able to provide budgeted employees with a much-needed 7% salary increase.

Remember, HCC provides only merit increases; there are no step and no cost-of-living increases. This has meant that, since fiscal year 2015, the average merit increase has been just 1.93%. That is why the 7% increase proposed for this year is essential. Employees deserve this recognition of the challenges they faced and overcame to serve students throughout the global pandemic.

The budget recommendation also supports adjunct faculty through a pay increase, which will move HCC closer to Prince George's Community College, our partner at the Laurel College Center.

On behalf of Howard Community College, thank you for your support. As you work on the FY23 budget, please make a strong investment in HCC employees. Their work transforms the lives of students and builds a stronger economy for Howard County.



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Testimony of Christopher Marasco

Chair, Howard Community College Board of Trustees

April 25, 2022– 6:00 p.m.

County Executive Budget Hearing

Good evening, Chair Jones, Vice Chair Rigby, and Councilmembers. I am Chris Marasco, an alumnus of Howard Community College (HCC) and the chair of the board of trustees. I appreciate this opportunity to speak on behalf of the trustees.

Reflecting on the past two years, HCC has responded to the upheaval in higher education and the world by embracing the spirit of innovation. Faculty have created diverse modes of learning, allowing HCC to reach students both in-person and online. Staff added creative ways to connect with students that would work with their schedules and their lives.

As we look to fiscal year 2023, HCC asks for your support of County Executive Ball's proposed operating budget so we can retain talented employees who are passionate about the mission of providing pathways to success. With his recommended \$2.9 million increase in county funding over last year, it will be possible to provide our budgeted employees with a 7% merit increase, which would be the largest increase in 22 years.

Additionally, the recommended budget will support our dedicated adjunct faculty with a pay increase, moving HCC closer to Prince George's Community College, HCC's partner at the Laurel College Center.

In addition, the budget recommendation will allow for the addition of almost eight new positions to the HCC team. Of these positions, 5 and a half positions were funded by reallocating funds within the current budget. In particular, HCC will change a part-time position that supports our Career Links program for single parents to a full-time position. The college will also create its first-ever diversity, equity, and inclusion director to help continue its culture of care and belonging.

On behalf of the Howard Community College Board of Trustees, thank you for being such a strong supporter in the past. Tonight, I ask you to invest in Howard Community College and its students and employees. Together, we can make a difference in the future of Howard County.



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Testimony of Nico Jeffryes

Student, Howard Community College

April 25, 2022– 6:00 p.m.

County Council Operating Budget Hearing

Good evening, Chair Jones, Vice Chair Rigby, and Councilmembers. My name is Nico Jeffryes, and I am a resident of Ellicott City (I live down the street, actually). I am a Korean, genderfluid veteran, and most importantly, a student at Howard Community College.

After serving in the United States Air Force, I earned my bachelor's degree in mathematics and taught high school math for over six years in Baltimore City. The changes in my profession brought on by the global pandemic drove me to explore other career opportunities. I loved teaching, but I was ready for a change, and a career in accounting appealed to me. Howard Community College offers a CPA candidacy certificate for people who already have a bachelor's degree, but do not have the required coursework to sit for the Certified Public Accountant exams. Other universities have similar offerings but taking my first accounting class at HCC

was an affordable, low-risk way to determine whether accounting was right for me.

I met with Accounting Professor Lima e Silva to learn about the program. As a former engineer turned accountant, he could relate to what I was experiencing, and assured me that my background in math would serve me well as an accountant and that the profession could benefit from someone with my unique skill sets.

After taking my first accounting class during the summer of 2020, I was ready to commit wholeheartedly to this new career path. I am currently taking my final course, which is governmental accounting, so this budget hearing is highly relevant right now as we are analyzing Howard County's financial statements. I am scheduling the CPA exams for this summer and fall and am seeking employment in auditing.

During my time at HCC, I have received incredible support and mentorship from the accounting department and wouldn't feel so hopeful about my future if not for the dedication of HCC's faculty and staff.

Howard Community College serves a diverse community of students, providing services that facilitate personal growth, career success, skill development, and community building. HCC's faculty and staff deserve competitive pay and benefits, and such a student-centered college ought to be fully funded. HCC offers unparalleled educational services to Howard County, and it's wise for the county to invest in its residents – just like me – through this school.

Thank you.