April 1, 2013

Delegate Aisha Braveboy, Chairman
Legislative Black Caucus
300 HOB
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Members of the Legislative Black Caucus:

I am writing to follow up on our recent meeting concerning Maryland’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and the Caucus’s request for additional funding for the campuses in FY 2014. I believe our meeting was a productive one, and we emerged from it with a better understanding of our shared goals for the future success and vitality of the HBCUs.

I am pleased to tell you that the FY 2014 supplemental budget I submitted to the General Assembly includes several key enhancements for the HBCUs and other priority areas identified by the Caucus. These items total $6.2 million, of which $4.1 million will go directly to the HBCUs or their students. This allocation includes:

- $2 million in additional Educational Excellence Awards (EEA), the State’s primary need-based student financial aid program administered by the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Students at the HBCUs receive about 18% of EEA awards, so an estimated $360,000 of this total will support students attending the HBCUs.

- $1.8 million in additional institutional need-based financial aid, to be allocated among the HBCUs.

- $1.5 million to convert contractual faculty to full-time faculty positions, to be allocated among the HBCUs.

- $512,000 to address staffing and information technology needs at the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

- $400,000 toward the 1890 Land Grant match for the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.
In response to issues raised in our meeting, the supplemental budget also includes language requiring MHEC, in consultation with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), to undertake a study that will serve as the basis for development of a plan to ensure the long-term stability and success of the HBCUs. The study will examine resource needs, affordability, college readiness, degree completion, duplication of programs, leadership, and faculty, and other relevant topics deemed appropriate. A preliminary report is due by December 31, 2013 and a final report by December 31, 2014.

Thank you again for meeting with me and for your continued efforts to improve opportunities for all Marylanders.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Governor