



# MARYLAND PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

**Distributed by the Maryland Higher Education Commission**

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September 1, 2014

## Blurring the Lines

Maryland private career schools (PCS) are approved to offer continuous comprehensive occupational training programs measured in clock hours. PCS programs can be made up of subject areas that contain skill sets specifically related to obtaining gainful employment in the intended occupation. Students enroll for the entire PCS program and attend continuously on a specific schedule, with program start and end dates identified on their contract.

College programs of study are comprised of individual, self-contained courses in which students enroll on a term, quarter or semester basis. Students must successfully complete a program's combination of required individual courses, measured in credit hours, in order to graduate. Except for a course, there is no "continuous" enrollment or attendance required.

PCS enroll students into one continuous training program. Colleges enroll students into individual courses that may eventually lead to the completion of a

program.

The lines between a PCS and a college become blurred when a PCS describes a program or its institutional policies with words like *credits*, *term*, *quarter*, *semester*, or even a phrase like "retake a failed course". These are terms that the general populace normally equates with colleges, institutions in which students may enroll for individual courses and portions of a program of study as money and time permits.

Not so for PCS.

A PCS student may only enroll for the entire continuous program, without being led to believe, whether intentional or not, that the program is broken up into segments between which they may jump in or out of the program.

Please be sure to review your school's materials so that the general populace is not led to believe that your school operates like a college.

## Words-to-the-Wise



### TAKE NOTE

MHEC staff request that you note the following:

1. 2014 Annual Reports are due no later than October 1, 2014. There are no exceptions and no extensions. Late is late.
2. One more help session is scheduled at MHEC for any school that has specific questions on completing the annual report: September 8th from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Let MHEC staff know if you plan to come. This is not a workshop with a presentation, but an

opportunity to ask questions that have resulted after you attempted to complete the report.

3. The 2015 Annual Report will be 100% online. The secure web portal is being developed right now. All PCS will be receiving a letter from MHEC by mid-September with information on what to expect with this new opportunity. Training on the new online Annual Report will also be offered throughout this coming year. Let MHEC staff know if your school has the capacity, and is willing, to host a training session for your school and other schools in your area.

4. Is your MHEC PCS staff liaison an analyst or consultant? The answer is that MHEC staff are analysts. An analyst is *somebody with specialist knowledge or skill who studies or examines something by separating it into its constituent parts and gives an assessment, description, or explanation of it.* A consultant is *an expert who charges a fee for providing advice or services in a particular field.* MHEC staff cannot act as consultants. In fact, it is a conflict of interest to do so. No person should be asked to provide expert advice on something, and then be expected to objectively evaluate their own work.

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