St. Mary's College of Maryland

The Public Honors College

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Open Session
January 27, 2017
9:00 a.m.
Blackistone Room, Anne Arundel Hall

St. Mary's

COLLEGE of MARYLAND

The Public Honors College

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

OPEN SESSION
REPORT SUMMARY
(See appendix for supporting materials)
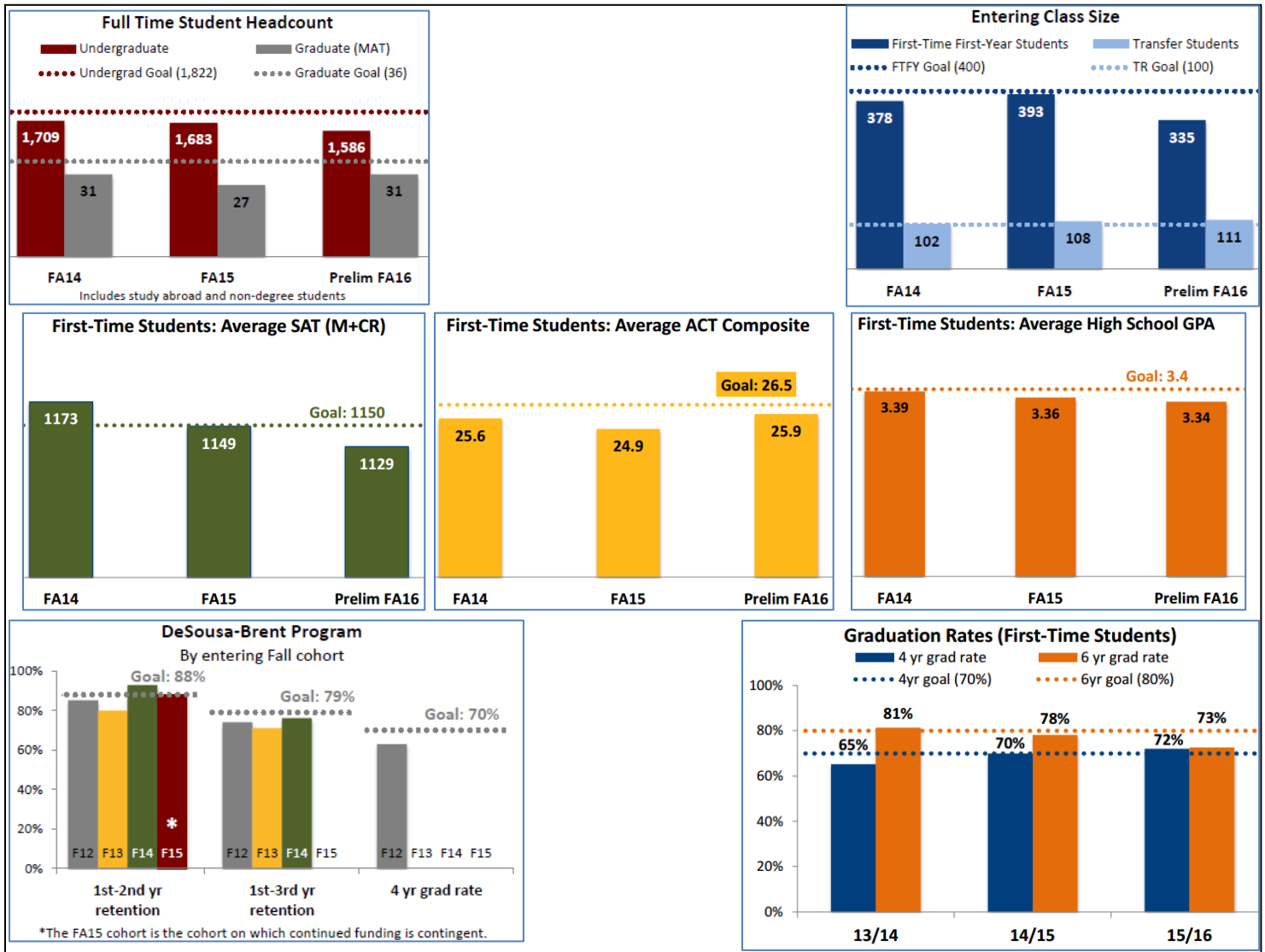
Date of Meeting: January 27, 2017   **Date of Next Meeting:** May 11, 2017

Committee Chair: Peter Bruns
Committee Members: Tim Heely, Sven Holmes, Glen Ives, Larry Leak '76, Ann McDaniel, Tuajuanda Jordan
Staff Member: Michael Wick

Dashboard Metrics:

Full Time Student Headcount
- Undergraduate
- Graduate (MAT)
- Undergrad Goal (1,822)
- Graduate Goal (36)

	FA14	FA15	Prelim FA16
Undergraduate	1,709	1,683	1,586
Graduate	31	27	31

Includes study abroad and non-degree students

Entering Class Size
- First-Time First-Year Students
- Transfer Students
- FTFY Goal (400)
- TR Goal (100)

	FA14	FA15	Prelim FA16
First-Time First-Year	378	393	335
Transfer	102	108	111

First-Time Students: Average SAT (M+CR) — Goal: 1150

FA14	FA15	Prelim FA16
1173	1149	1129

First-Time Students: Average ACT Composite — Goal: 26.5

FA14	FA15	Prelim FA16
25.6	24.9	25.9

First-Time Students: Average High School GPA — Goal: 3.4

FA14	FA15	Prelim FA16
3.39	3.36	3.34

DeSousa-Brent Program — By entering Fall cohort

1st-2nd yr retention — Goal: 88%
1st-3rd yr retention — Goal: 79%
4 yr grad rate — Goal: 70%

*The FA15 cohort is the cohort on which continued funding is contingent.

Graduation Rates (First-Time Students)
- 4 yr grad rate
- 6 yr grad rate
- 4yr goal (70%)
- 6yr goal (80%)

	13/14	14/15	15/16
4 yr grad rate	65%	70%	72%
6 yr grad rate	81%	78%	73%

Executive Summary:

DISCUSSION ITEMS
Faculty Senate Report
An update on faculty activities and issues will be presented.

DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program Report
Discussion and update of performance measures, retention and student success efforts and recruitment for the 2017 DeSousa-Brent cohort.

Dean of Faculty Report
Middle States Accreditation Response Report: Discussion of the draft Monitoring Report due to Middle States on March 1, 2017. Middle States' recommendations/requirements for affiliation are addressed item-by-item.

Curricular Efficiency: Continued discussion on the status of the St. Mary's curriculum. "Curricular efficiency" is explained and an analysis provided for section size and seat utilization.

Institution-Wide Assessment: Minimal update available due to focus on student learning assessment. Brief discussion of thoughts on a system of integrated institution-wide assessment.

Action Item(s) related to specific strategic plan goals as appropriate:

Committee Action Taken/Action in Progress:

Recommendation to the Board:

ST. MARY'S
COLLEGE of MARYLAND
The Public Honors College

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF JANUARY 27, 2017

OPEN SESSION
AGENDA

I.   CALL TO ORDER

II.   DISCUSSION ITEMS

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

The Committee expects to close a portion of the meeting.

Faculty Senate Report – Academic Affairs Committee
January 19, 2017 – submitted by Karen Crawford, Faculty Senate President

October 2016 – January 2017: The faculty has been involved in several important College-wide activities including: assessment, the development of two new curricular initiatives, and for the Senate, the development of the first of a two-phase Faculty Merit Compensation Plan, discussions and evaluation of a campus solidarity statement, clarification of the history and implementation of criminal background checks for faculty and staff, and continuing work on the Faculty By-Laws.

Assessment – moving along on schedule: Update from October's report: Last spring and throughout the summer, the campus was involved and committed to developing a formalized, standardized and lasting assessment program. This important initiative resulted in the development of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) for all curriculum across the campus, in concert with the establishment of a three–year cycle for course assessment as it relates to institutional-level outcomes. Last fall and continuing this spring semester, all course syllabi now include CLOs that complement our assessment matrix. Faculty teaching courses selected for review this year are involved in data collection and reporting. Assessment has impacted the work of all faculty on campus as we develop CLOs, collect or plan to collect meaningful assessment data, and especially that of Department Chairs and Program Coordinators who are responsible for facilitating our assessment objectives, verifying the presence of CLOs in course syllabi, and helping to develop them in course offerings and capstone experiences.

Faculty Issues Committee Report: Compensation for Chairs. The FIC has recently submitted a report to the Senate regarding their work examining the need for additional compensation for chairs. Chair responsibilities have grown and may likely continue to grow, it is important that we examine chair compensation in comparison to our peer and peer aspirants in concert with their expanding responsibilities. The Senate is taking up this report with the start of the spring semester.

Curriculum development: A new major in **Global Studies Major** was passed through the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC), the Senate, and came before the faculty for review on October 25th. After discussion, and especially in regard to the need to incorporate the opportunity for students pursuing any of the possible three paths to complete an eight-credit St. Mary's Project, the proposal was returned for additional work. The revised proposal came back to the Senate and was then forwarded to the faculty prior to our November 15th faculty meeting for discussion and review. After a unanimous vote of support, that proposal is now at the administrative level for review before moving forward to MHEC. The **Entrepreneurship minor** proposal although passed through the CRC has been reviewed, modified and reviewed again at the Senate level and is still a work in progress.

Annual Faculty Merit Compensation Phase I completed, Phase II on the horizon: In response to the charge from the Board of Trustees to create a Faculty Merit Compensation System by 15 October 2016, the Faculty Senate chose to engage this important challenge in two phases. Phase I was completed on time with the creation of a short form 5-page Merit Report that was distributed to the faculty before the 15th of October. Those reports were due to the Provost for review by November 7th. The results of that review were communicated to Human Resources in early December. Outcome and rationale for decisions were recently sent to faculty by mail (decision and new salary statement in letter form) and email (rationale). Questions and comments from faculty regarding that first phase of merit compensation review are only starting to come in. With the onset of the spring semester, the Ad Hoc Faculty Merit Compensation Committee will soon begin its work on Phase II. That group, consisting of senators, chairs and faculty members, will first meet with Provost Wick to discuss the process, forms, issues and questions that came from completing Phase I, and from that foundation we will set to work on Phase II. Documents and examples from Peer and Peer Aspirant Colleges are being gathered by the committee as we begin to create a system that will best serve St. Mary's College of Maryland. Our expectation is that the second phase of this plan will be presented for review and approval early this spring to the Senate, the faculty, and ultimately to the administration and members of the Board of Trustees in anticipation of BOT meetings in May.

Faculty By-laws: This continues to be a work in progress; we are gaining. In November, Provost Wick, past Senate President, Wes Jordan and current Senate President, Karen Crawford met to discuss streamlining some of the language in several sections of the By-laws that were sent to the Board of Trustees for approval last January. At that meeting it was agreed that Wes would finalize those changes and distribute them for review. Scheduling challenges in Psychology slowed that work, however, over winter break WJ and KC met to review our current document. That document along with supporting documents and a memo reflecting on the elements that still need attention was recently forwarded to Provost Wick for review. We are currently scheduling a time to meet to discuss the By-laws. Once that version is reviewed, I will forward it to the Board of Trustees. Working with the Provost, we will establish a plan and time table to address the sections that still need attention and whether they might best live within the Faculty By-laws or the Faculty Handbook.

Solidarity Statement: Following the Presidential Election and in response to a nationwide movement of sorts, the faculty, in consultation with some staff members, chose to create a statement of solidarity in support of our campus. That statement initially crafted from versions that appeared on the web from Amherst and Mount Holyoke College was modified to best suit our community at St. Mary's College of Maryland. After several meetings and revisions, in consultation with the Senate along with Provost Wick, that statement was extensively discussed and endorsed by the Senate who then shared it with the campus community including: faculty, staff, and students.

Review of our policies on Criminal Background Checks: Due to some confusion regarding our current polices as they pertain to the standardization and implementation of Criminal Background Checks on campus, at our November Faculty Meeting, the faculty petitioned the Senate to investigate our process, practice and procedures. From that petition, the FIC has been charged to review our policies and practices. Standardization and clarification of our policies will be important as the College moves forward.

SeahawkLIFE program: Kathy Koch and Katie Arnett met with the Faculty in November to begin discussions regarding the incorporation of a program that would provide residential learning opportunities for students with learning challenges at St. Mary's College.

Performance Measures

Mandatory performance measures focus on year to year retention and on graduation rate for the cohort that entered in 2015. This cohort must meet the following goals:

(1) 88% of the cohort must be retained from the first-to-second-year.
(2) 79% of the cohort must be retained from the first-to third year.
(3) 70% of the cohort must graduate in four years.

Current performance measures are displayed in the following retention/graduation table.

DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program Retention and Graduation														
Last updated: 1-18-17														
		First to Second Semester		First to Second Year Retention		First to Third Year Retention		First to Fourth Year Retention		Four-year Graduation		Six-year Graduation	
Cohort year	Cohort Size	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2007	25	23	92.0	20	80.0	17	68.0	16	64.0	8	32.0	14	56.0
2008	30	29	96.7	28	93.3	26	86.7	25	83.3	13	43.3	23	76.7
2009	24	24	100.0	23	95.8	20	83.3	20	83.3	10	41.7	20	83.3
2010	30	30	100.0	27	90.0	22	73.3	22	73.3	15	50.0	20	66.7
2011	31	30	96.8	24	77.4	19	61.3	18	58.1	15	48.4		
2012	27	25	92.6	23	85.2	19	70.4	19	70.4	17	63.0		
2013	45	44	97.8	36	80.0	32	71.1	32	71.1				
2014	42	40	95.2	39	92.9	32	76.2						
2015	41	40	97.6	36	87.8								
2016	35	*35*	*100.0*										
Total	330	320		256		187		153		79		77	
Weighted Mean			97.0%		77.6%		73.6%		72.2%		47.3%		70.6%
Targets for FA15 cohort					88%		79%				70%		

The size for the 2015 cohort is now at 35. Two students left St. Mary's at the end of the Fall Semester: one was academically dismissed, and the second transferred to a college in Vermont to get more basketball playing time. However, one student who had a leave of absence for Fall 2016 is returning for Spring, 2017.

Retention and Student Success Efforts

DeSousa-Brent Success Action Plans

Meetings were conducted with several members of the 2015 cohort to determine what support or structure will support their success at St Mary's. These meetings led to several initiatives, including: offering tutoring services for several courses, among these, Organic Chemistry, Physics, Micro and Macro Economics, Comparative Politics, Vector Calculus, and Lifespan Development. We also set up more intense one-on-one meetings with students and used data from these meetings to develop additional programs and interventions for them.

Sophomore Passport

The Sophomore Passport program was instituted in Fall 2016 in order to keep sophomores more engaged with the DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program. The sophomore passport included several social and

educational programs, such as working on a degree audit, one-on-one meetings with the DB Program director, and participating in a Faculty Friday program. Twenty students picked up passports for the Fall semester, with seven completing them and attending the pizza and wing party. One of them, Justyce Bennett, won the drawing to have her books purchased by DeSousa-Brent for the Spring 2017 semester. A Junior Passport is being implemented for Spring 2017.

Early Alert and Midterm Deficiency Interventions

Early Alert provides another structured opportunity to intervene when students are in trouble. Early Alert is not employed as routinely as Midterm Deficiency, perhaps because some student concerns don't arise very early in the semester.

Thirty-nine DeSousa-Brent Scholars had fifty-six academic deficiencies during Fall 2016. One of these students was dismissed, and 5 are on probation. All scholars on probation and all those who earned less than a 2.0 GPA for the Fall are being contacted to follow-up and help them develop their Academic Success Action Plans supporting their future academic success.

DeSousa-Brent Educational and Social Programs

DeSousa-Brent sponsored six social/ community development programs, along with seven educational programs. The DBConnect mentors also implemented social and educational programs aimed at first year students. Examples of education programs include: "Degree Audit -- Are You on Track?" "Preparing for your SMP," and "How to Survive Finals Week." Social programs included a field trip to the St. Mary's County Fair and a Halloween Party as well as a "Paint and Chill Night," sponsored by the DBConnect Mentors.

Study Groups

Study Groups were implemented for DB First-Year Students in Biology 105, Math 151, Psychology 101, English 101 and 106, Chemistry 103, and Philosophy 101. Each of these study groups is supported by an undergraduate DeSousa-Brent mentors

DeSousa-Brent Recruitment for 2017 Cohort

The program staff attended five college fairs along with SMCM Admissions staff to advertise the DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program and assist in overall student recruitment.

The staff also set up information tables at Open House and Campus Visit Days along with Admissions.

We are in the process of contacting those students identified by Admissions as being good matches for DeSousa-Brent. This list contains 120 students. We will receive lists of all admitted students on a regular basis as they are being revised by Admissions.

Summer Tuition at Community Colleges

The program staff met with the Provost and Vice President for Business and Finance to discuss President's Jordan's proposal that DeSousa-Brent offer summer tuition assistance for their local community colleges. Chip Jackson believes the program can do this, but we still need to determine how. Our plan is to implement this for Summer 2017. There is also heightened interest in DB's support on summer courses on campus.

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ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

DEAN OF FACULTY REPORT

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MIDDLE STATES MONITORING REPORT

The draft Monitoring Report to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) is attached to this report. The 16-page report (without appendices), is the result of a cumulative effort of the Office of the Provost and Dean of Faculty, the Office of Institutional Research, and the Assessment Implementation Team. The report documents the College's response to all MSCHE requirements for affiliation and all applicable recommendations and requirements stated in the Evaluation Team's report. Additional details will be provided during the Academic Affairs open session.

CURRICULAR EFFICIENCY

As part of the continuing reflection of the St. Mary's curriculum, we have performed an analysis of course section sizes and seat capacity to help us understand the efficiency with which our existing curriculum is delivered.

CLASS SCHEDULE DELIVERY

To assess the efficiency of our course scheduling, each section from Fall 2016 was analyzed for available seat capacity (i.e., the difference between the official class size and the actual enrollment). In an ideal world, every seat would be occupied resulting in a 100% efficiency level. This ideal is virtually impossible to obtain with an open enrollment system in which students build their schedules by selecting available sections. National data suggests that appropriate scheduling flexibility for students leads to roughly 67% of allocated seats being filled. In our analysis, therefore, we have concentrated on sections that have fewer than 67% of allocated seats filled (called *under-enrolled sections*).

Enrollment data from Fall 2016 shows that 29% of sections were under-enrolled with a total of 553 empty seats. With an average of 15 seats per section, this represents the equivalent of 37 lost sections (sections included in faculty workload calculations but not generating tuition revenue). With 371 total sections on the Fall 2016 schedule, this translates to 90% efficiency in the delivery of the class schedule. It is important to note, however, that this efficiency rating *does not* mean that the cost of delivering the class schedule could be reduced by 10% with more effective scheduling. Recall that not all sections are equivalent in the role they play in the curriculum. Some sections count toward major requirements, others fulfill specific core curriculum requirements, and so forth. One cannot simply merge any two under-enrolled sections into one section to create savings. That said, some sections can be merged. For example, two sections of the same course that are under-enrolled can be merged into a single section saving the costs of one section. The real efficiency of the class schedule is determined by how many of the "equivalent" course sections could be saved with improved scheduling. When Fall 2016 courses are placed into appropriate equivalent categories, a total of 9 sections were found as possible savings. Again, with 371 total sections offered, this translates into a 98% efficiency rating. While national benchmarks are not available for this measure, there appears to be very little inefficiency in the delivery of the St. Mary's class schedule.

40 **SECTION SIZE**

41 Another important consideration in curricular efficiency is that of course section size. In general, the
42 larger the section sizes, the fewer empty seats. As a result, increased section size is often presented as an
43 answer for increasing curricular efficiency. However, one must be careful.

44 Much research has been conducted on the relationship between section size and student learning. While
45 falling short of a clear consensus, most experts believe a strong inverse correlation exists between section
46 size and the quality of student learning. For this reason, and others, most national benchmarks of
47 institutional quality include some function of section size as a significant factor. The annual U.S. News &
48 World Reports' college rankings, for instance, use two metrics related to section size: 1) the percentage of
49 sections with 20 or fewer students and 2) the percentage of sections 50 or more students. As we all know,
50 national rankings like these are increasingly important to parents and students as they select colleges.
51 Increasing section size to gain curricular efficiency must be balanced with the costs of potentially lower
52 student interest in attending the institution.

53 Figure 1 presents the number of distribution of section sizes from Fall 2016. The average section size
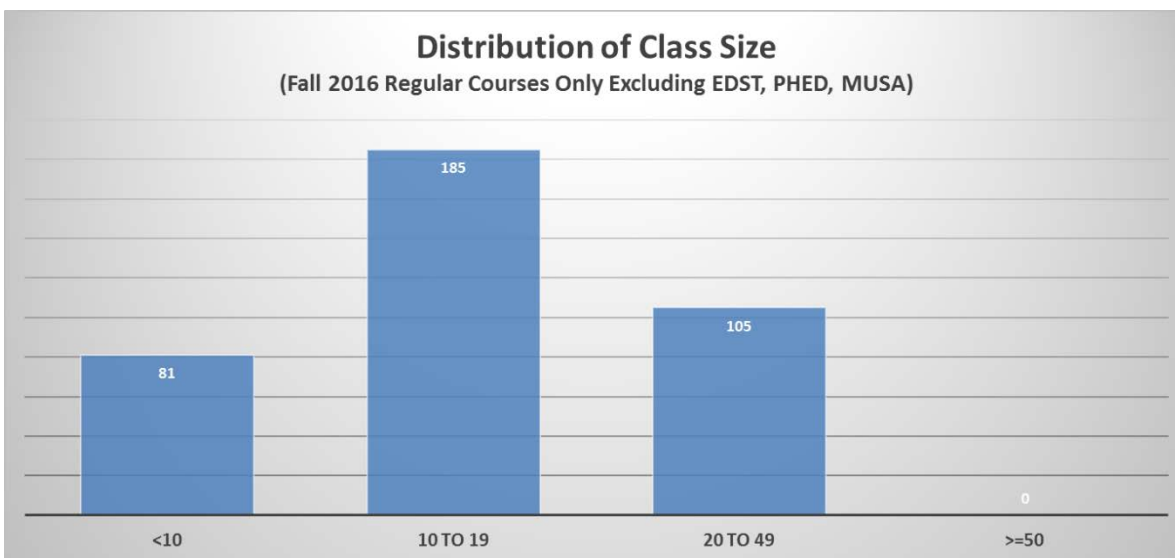54 was roughly 15 students.

Figure 1:Distribution of Section Sizes in Fall 2016

55 The data indicates that half of course sections enroll at least 10 students but less than important U.S.
56 News & World Reports' metric of 20 with all sections falling below the metric of 50 enrolled students.
57 Of the 81 sections enrolling fewer than 10 students, nearly half of those (45%) are courses that require
58 intense faculty-student interaction (studio art, theater, languages, etc.).

59 So, how do these numbers compare to other institutions? Figure 2 shows the key U.S. News & World
60 Reports' metrics for our peer and peer aspirant institutions. With only a couple of exceptions, St. Mary's
61 section size distribution appropriately mirrors that of these other institutions.
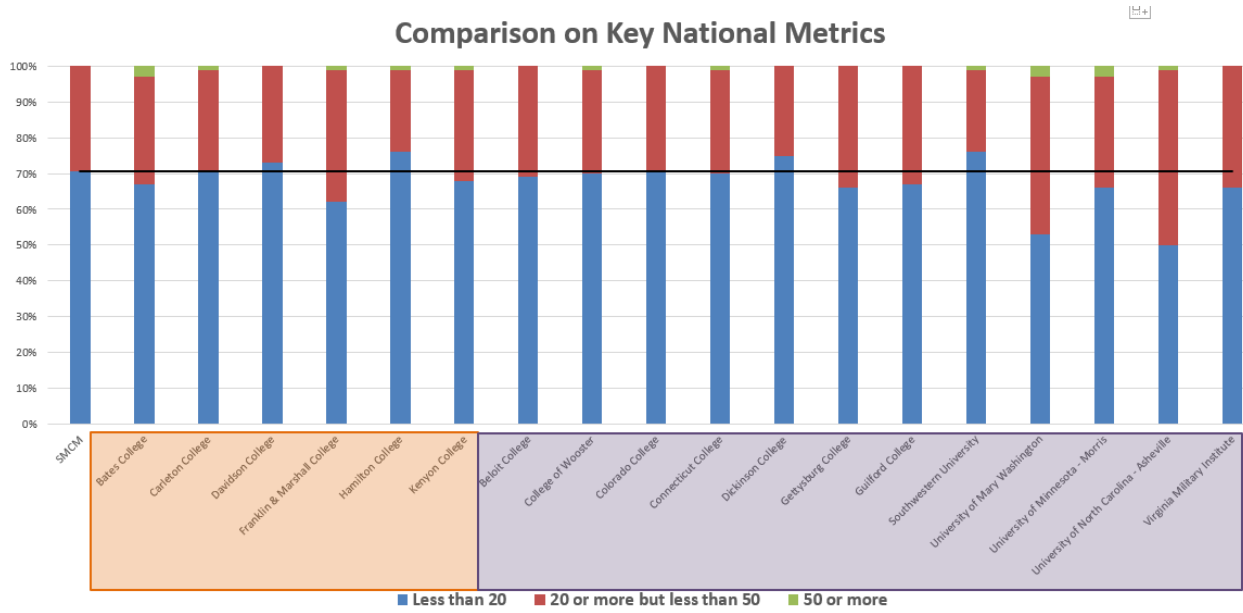
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Figure 2: Class Size Comparison across Peer (purple) and Peer Aspirant Institutions (orange)

64 **INSTITUTION-WIDE ASSESSMENT**

65 To date, our efforts have focused on the assessment of student learning, the primary focus of the MSCHE
66 accreditation warning. While the Executive Council has had preliminary conversations on systematic
67 approaches to institutional assessment, those conversations have neither reached consensus nor come to
68 fruition.

Monitoring Report to the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

From

St Mary's
COLLEGE *of* MARYLAND

The Public Honors College

Dr. Tuajuanda C. Jordan
President

March 1, 2017

Subject of the Follow-Up Report

To request a monitoring report, due March 1, 2017, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain compliance with Standard 14, including but not limited to a documented, organized and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning that (1) maximizes the use of existing data and information; (2) involves the support and collaboration of faculty and administration in assessing student learning and responding to assessment results; and (3) provides evidence that student learning assessment information is shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and is used to improve teaching and learning. To request that the monitoring report also document (4) goals and objectives or strategies, both institution-wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, are linked to mission and goal achievement, and are used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unit levels (Standard 2); and (5) steps taken to assure continuity and stability of institutional administration (Standard 5).

Date of the Evaluation Team's Visit
October 25-28, 2015

Date of the Small Team's Visit
March 26-28, 2017

Contents

Letter from the Provost

Dear Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Small Team Visit Members,

This monitoring report serves as a starting point for your exploration of the College's response to the accreditation warning issued by the Commission. The breadth, depth, richness, and texture of the College's response cannot be captured merely in the written word. Nonetheless, I believe that this monitoring report provides a skeletal blueprint that contextualizes and guides the team's in-person exploration.

I began as Provost and Dean of Faculty at St. Mary's College of Maryland July 1, 2016. Joining an institution under the shadow of an accreditation warning was not something I did without serious thought and investigation. Even after being offered the position, I visited the campus multiple times attempting to assess the institution's readiness for and commitment to the kind of fundamental re-awakening needed to effectively respond to the Commission's concerns. Perhaps needless to say, I found an institution whose faculty, staff, and administration understood the severity of its situation and stood poised to assist in every way possible.

Since arriving at St. Mary's College of Maryland, I have been privileged to witness the collective will of the institution as it addresses MSCHE's warning with sincerity, integrity, and incredible thoughtfulness. I write this letter to you humbled by my colleagues and filled with pride of their accomplishments.

Faculty members, as seasoned critical thinkers and scholars, have had their share of questions, concerns, and skepticisms. As they should, such feelings led to deep and meaningful conversations on intentionality, accountability, and our collective priorities, goals, and objectives in educating our students. In the end, we have emerged stronger for the conversations and more dedicated than ever to our mission as a public liberal arts honors college.

I look forward to the team's visit, fully confident that you will find what I have found – an institution improved by MSCHE's warning and the subsequent process of responding.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Wick
Provost and Dean of Faculty
St. Mary's College of Maryland

I. Introduction

Located in historic St. Mary's City, the original state capital of Maryland, adjacent to the St. Mary's River in Southern Maryland, St. Mary's College of Maryland is the only residential four-year institution of higher education in Southern Maryland.   St. Mary's College was founded in 1840 as the St. Mary's Female Seminary, with the explicit mission of educating young women as civic leaders and productive members of Maryland's citizenry.   In 1949, the Maryland Commission on Higher Education renamed the institution the St. Mary's Seminary Junior College and began admitting both male and female students. In 1967, the College became a four-year baccalaureate college. Most notably, in 1992, the Maryland legislature designated St. Mary's College of Maryland as the state's only public liberal arts honors college, still independent from the University System of Maryland. St. Mary's College has been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education since 1959.

In May 2016, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved revision of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Mission Statement as shown in Figure 1.

St. Mary's College of Maryland is Maryland's honors college, a selective, public liberal arts college—a vibrant community of scholars and learners. We foster a rigorous and innovative curriculum; experiential learning; scholarship and creativity; close mentoring relationships; and a community dedicated to honesty, civility, and integrity. We are committed to diversity, access, and affordability. Our students, faculty and staff serve local, national, and global communities and cultivate and promote social responsibility.

Figure 1: St. Mary's College of Maryland Mission Statement

St. Mary's College of Maryland is authorized by the Maryland Higher Education Commission to offer academic programs leading to the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Master of Arts in Teaching degrees. The College offers 24 undergraduate academic majors, 27 undergraduate minors, and a single graduate degree in education.

Enrollment at St. Mary's College of Maryland is intentionally controlled to foster a close-knit community of faculty and students that embraces intellectual curiosity and innovation. Students enjoy a student-to-faculty ratio of 11:1, rivaling most elite private liberal arts colleges. Fall 2016 enrollment stands at 1,647 full-time equivalent undergraduate students and 27 graduate students.

St. Mary's College of Maryland faculty represents a community of teacher-scholars dedicated to hands-on student learning. Over 99% of full-time faculty members have terminal degrees. Full-time faculty account for 89% of all undergraduate student-credit-hour instruction.

St. Mary's College of Maryland is organized into five divisions: Division of Student Affairs, Division of Enrollment Management, Division of Business and Finance, Division of Institutional Advancement, and the Division of Academic Affairs. Each of the former divisions is led by a Vice President reporting directly to the President. Academic Affairs is led by the Provost and Dean of Faculty also reporting directly to the President. The administrative organizational chart is shown in Figure 2.
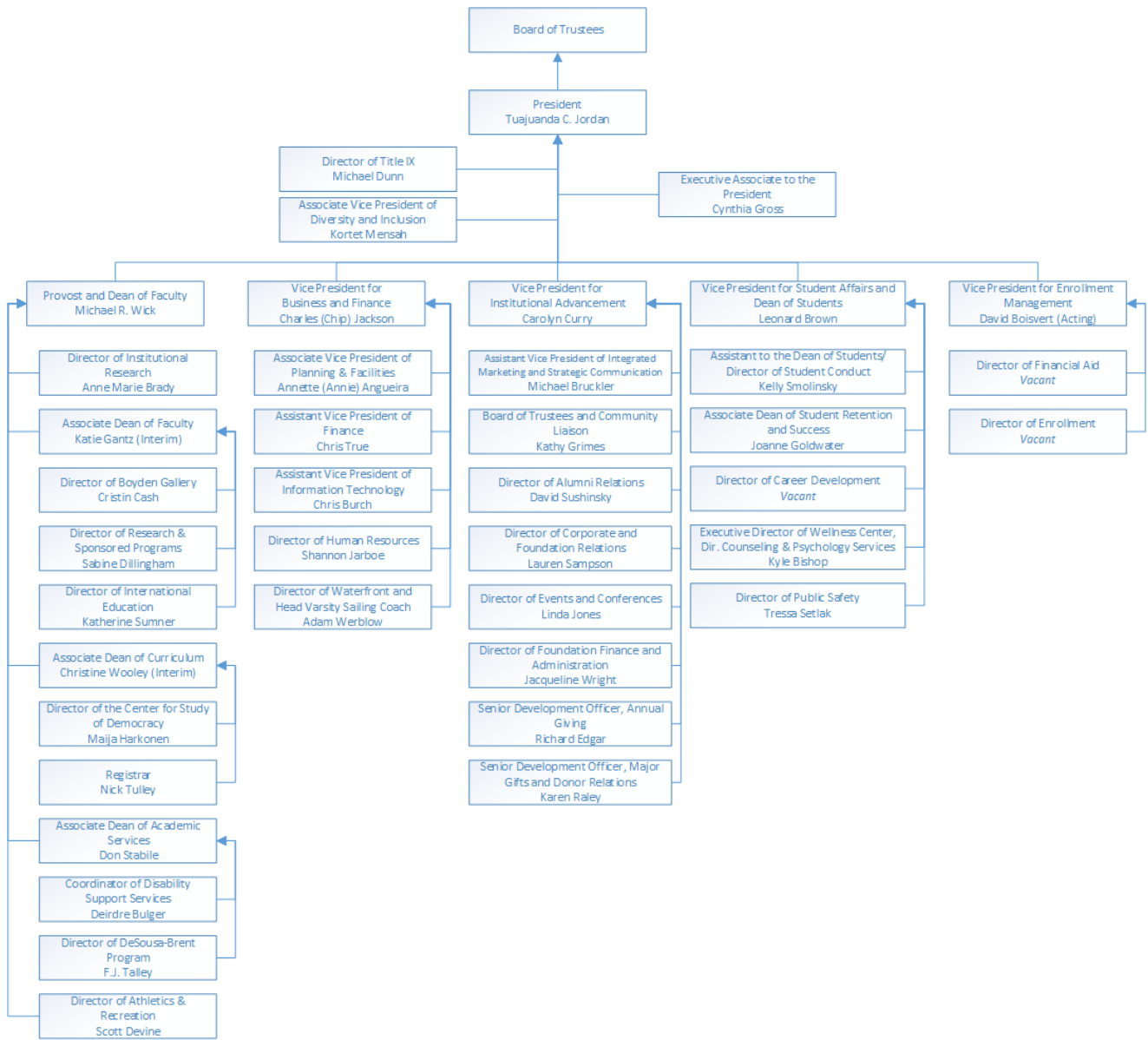
Figure 2: St. Mary's College of Maryland Administrative Organizational Chart

The most recent Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) periodic review occurred in 2010 and the decennial periodic review report was prepared in 2015. Following the decennial review site visit in October 2015, St. Mary's College of Maryland was placed on warning due to insufficient evidence of compliance with Standard 14. In addition, the action requested targeted follow-up specifically related to Standards 2 and 5. As a condition of the warning status, St. Mary's College of Maryland has prepared this monitoring report.

St. Mary's College of Maryland is confident that this monitoring report and the accompanying exhibits demonstrate that the College has addressed all matters and is fully compliant with all standards

II.   Substantive Narrative and Analysis

A. Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

At the time of the MSCHE periodic review site visit, St. Mary's College of Maryland lacked a documented and systemic approach to the assessment of student learning. Despite this shortcoming, pockets of excellence in student learning assessment existed in several programs at the College. In the absence of a documented holistic approach, these pockets of excellence each developed and followed distinct processes specifically tailored to their disciplinary perspectives. While effective for the needs of these individual units, the siloed approach did not serve well the needs of the overall curriculum and, over time, fostered a lack of institutional academic cohesion and accountability. The College has addressed this situation head on, taking the best of existing assessment structures at the College, incorporating them into a nationally-vetted umbrella framework for student learning assessment, instantiating that framework consistently across the College, and using the resulting system to drive the infusion of student learning assessment into College culture.

1) Connecting the Past to the Future

The intentionality of the College's current curriculum dates back to the installation of the honors college curriculum in 1996. The original goals of the Honors Curriculum, shown in Figure 3, were explicitly and directly aligned to the College's mission statement.

The College has the following goals for its curriculum:
- ✓ *To maintain high academic standards*
- ✓ *To create a sense of intellectual community in which the academic disciplines are appreciated as unique and as interrelated*
- ✓ *To develop our students' ability to think critically and creatively, to foster curiosity and promote inquiry*
- ✓ *To encourage student choice of educational goals and courses*
- ✓ *To emphasize learning between faculty and students and between students and their peers*
- ✓ *To sponsor a culminating project of quality and originality*
- ✓ *To hold all community members to high standards for intellectual and creative endeavors, and to forge a sense of community responsibility and personal integrity in its members so that they will be able to function successfully and meaningfully in a world that is increasingly complex and interdependent.*

Figure 3: Principles and Goals of An Honors College Curriculum, 1996

While these goals were a mixture of student learning outcomes, institutional values and goals, the basic tenants of today's institutional learning outcomes are evident: disciplinary knowledge, breadth, critical and creative thinking, inquiry, and social engagement.

Beginning in 2004, the College engaged in the systematic assessment of student learning. All academic majors developed individual assessment plans. The approach followed many best practices of the time but fell short in two significant ways:

- The development of assessment plans was undertaken as a bottom-up process. Programs developed their plans in isolation from one another, articulating course-level learning objectives without connection to shared institutional learning outcomes.

- Indirect evidence of student learning served as foundation of assessment plans. While direct assessment was encouraged, it was not required leading to a proliferation of an "assessment as self-report" culture.

In 2005, the College engaged in the intentional redefinition of its curriculum as an honors college. An ad hoc committee, called the *Core Curriculum Implementation Committee*, established explicit, measurable student learning outcomes articulating the knowledge, skills, and values to be gained by students. The honors curriculum was approved in 2006, put into place in 2008, and remains in place today.   Figure 4 presents an excerpt from the Core Curriculum Implementation Committee Report finished in 2007 (the full report is available from the Office of the Provost and Dean of Faculty).
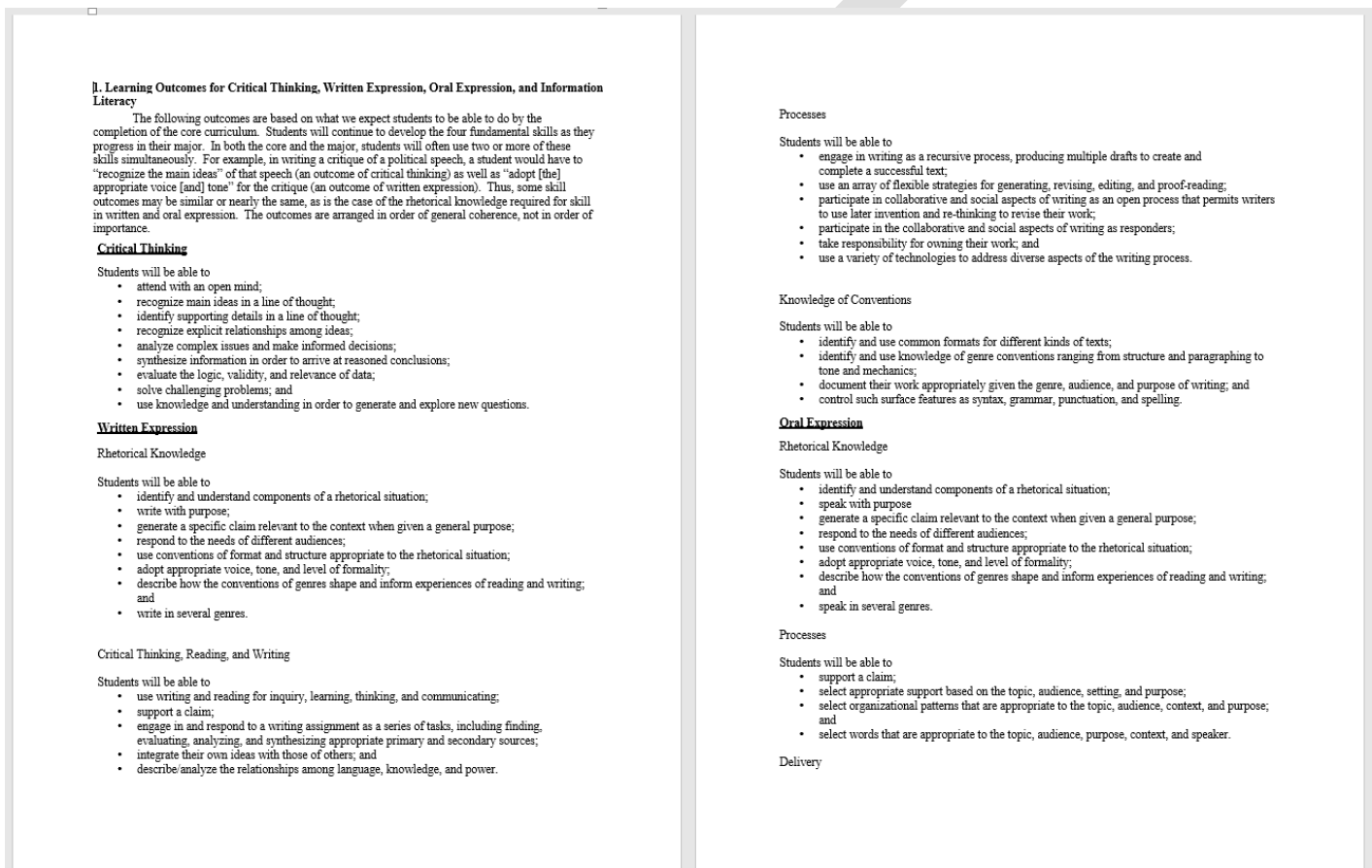

I. Learning Outcomes for Critical Thinking, Written Expression, Oral Expression, and Information Literacy
The following outcomes are based on what we expect students to be able to do by the completion of the core curriculum. Students will continue to develop the four fundamental skills as they progress in their major. In both the core and the major, students will often use two or more of these skills simultaneously. For example, in writing a critique of a political speech, a student would have to "recognize the main ideas" of that speech (an outcome of critical thinking) as well as "adopt [the] appropriate voice [and] tone" for the critique (an outcome of written expression). Thus, some skill outcomes may be similar or nearly the same, as is the case of the rhetorical knowledge required for skill in written and oral expression. The outcomes are arranged in order of general coherence, not in order of importance.

Critical Thinking

Students will be able to
- attend with an open mind;
- recognize main ideas in a line of thought;
- identify supporting details in a line of thought;
- recognize explicit relationships among ideas;
- analyze complex issues and make informed decisions;
- synthesize information in order to arrive at reasoned conclusions;
- evaluate the logic, validity, and relevance of data;
- solve challenging problems; and
- use knowledge and understanding in order to generate and explore new questions.

Written Expression

Rhetorical Knowledge

Students will be able to
- identify and understand components of a rhetorical situation;
- write with purpose;
- generate a specific claim relevant to the context when given a general purpose;
- respond to the needs of different audiences;
- use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation;
- adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality;
- describe how the conventions of genres shape and inform experiences of reading and writing; and
- write in several genres.

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

Students will be able to
- use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating;
- support a claim;
- engage in and respond to a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources;
- integrate their own ideas with those of others; and
- describe/analyze the relationships among language, knowledge, and power.

Processes

Students will be able to
- engage in writing as a recursive process, producing multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text;
- use an array of flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading;
- participate in collaborative and social aspects of writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work;
- participate in the collaborative and social aspects of writing as responders;
- take responsibility for owning their work; and
- use a variety of technologies to address diverse aspects of the writing process.

Knowledge of Conventions

Students will be able to
- identify and use common formats for different kinds of texts;
- identify and use knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics;
- document their work appropriately given the genre, audience, and purpose of writing; and
- control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Oral Expression

Rhetorical Knowledge

Students will be able to
- identify and understand components of a rhetorical situation;
- speak with purpose
- generate a specific claim relevant to the context when given a general purpose;
- respond to the needs of different audiences;
- use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation;
- adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality;
- describe how the conventions of genres shape and inform experiences of reading and writing; and
- speak in several genres.

Processes

Students will be able to
- support a claim;
- select appropriate support based on the topic, audience, setting, and purpose;
- select organizational patterns that are appropriate to the topic, audience, context, and purpose; and
- select words that are appropriate to the topic, audience, purpose, context, and speaker.

Delivery

Figure 4: Core Curriculum Implementation Report, 2007

The 2007 report established student learning outcomes and put into place the practice of assessment using tools like the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE) and custom survey instruments based on the VALUE rubrics of the *AAC&U Liberal Education and America's Promise* initiative. Relating back to the 2004 assessment activity, all assessment instruments were expressed as indirect measures of student learning.

The new St. Mary's Assessment Framework is an outgrowth of this earlier work that uses direct assessment instruments to measure, analyze, evaluate, and improve student learning.

2) The St. Mary's College of Maryland Student Learning Assessment Framework

This section provides a _brief_ overview of the St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) student learning assessment framework. A complete and thorough description of the framework is found in the _Student Learning Assessment Handbook_ [EXHIBIT I].

The assessment framework represents a merger of two well-known approaches to understanding student learning: 1) the essential learning outcomes put forth by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), and 2) the work of Benjamin Bloom et al. for categorizing educational goals. Figure 5 illustrates the synergy between the College's learning goals and Bloom's revised taxonomy.
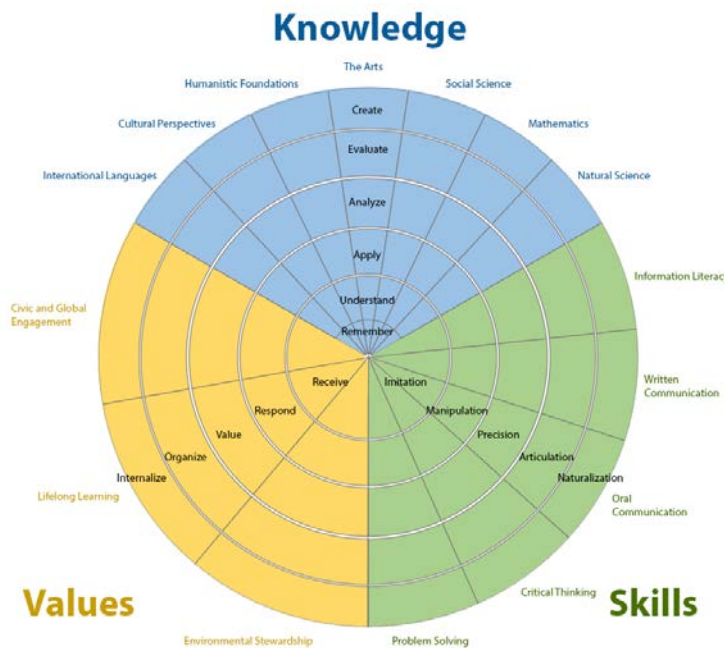
Figure 5: The St. Mary's Student Learning Assessment Framework

All student learning goals at St. Mary's College of Maryland are expressed within the lexicon defined by Figure 5. At the most abstract level, each cell in the circle represents a potential institutional learning outcome. For example, "_students will be able to apply mathematics_" or "_students will be able to manipulate oral communication_." These abstract outcomes are refined through more-specific program-level student learning outcomes (e.g., "_students will be able to apply calculus_"). At the lowest-level of abstraction, course-level student learning outcomes provide the most concrete detail (e.g., "_students will be able to apply first-order integrals_"). Figure 6 illustrates the hierarchical relationship between course-level, program-level, and institutional-level learning outcomes.
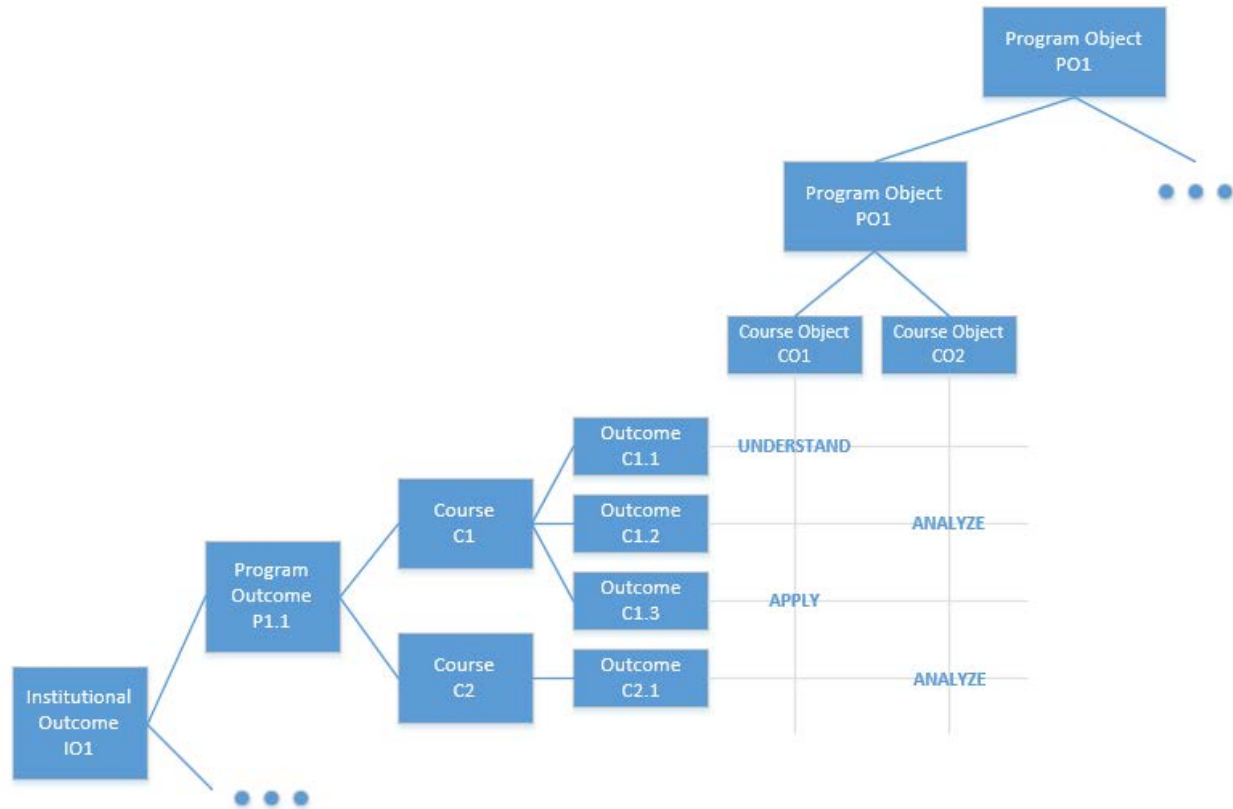
Figure 6: The Hierarchical Expression and Categorization of Student Learning Outcomes

The hierarchy nature of a curriculum directly lends itself to expressing learning outcomes in this hierarchical fashion. Degrees are built from programs and programs are built from courses (or, more generally, "experiences" which allows for formal recognition of learning outside the classroom).

At St. Mary's College of Maryland, all courses have explicit course-level student learning outcomes expressed within the lexicon of the framework (Figure 5). Course-level outcomes map to program-level outcomes (expressed using the same lexicon); program-level outcomes map to institutional outcomes (again using the same lexicon). Evidence of student learning is collected at the course level using <u>direct</u> assessment instruments. Faculty evaluate the performance, typically using a rubric documented as part of the assessment instrument, and conclude whether each student has satisfied the stated learning outcome. Using the *Campus Labs Outcomes®* module and based on the curriculum maps, outcome satisfaction data is aggregated from the course level to the program level and then to the institutional level.

The Office of Institutional Research uses reporting tools within the *Campus Labs Outcomes®* module along with custom reports to provide evidence of student learning to stakeholders. The reports allow aggregation and disaggregation of evidence to support analysis at all levels of outcomes. Faculty reflect on the reported information to inform curricular, pedagogical, and assessment changes all aligned to improve student learning. Documentation of assessment-informed revisions is kept centrally by the Office of Institutional Research.

3) Specific Actions Taken to Address MSCHE Accreditation Warning

Faculty, staff, and administrators at the College have been actively and collaboratively engaged in responding to the Middle States' accreditation warning. Table 1 provides a summary of the College's responses to each of the *Requirements of Affiliation* stated in the Middle States Commission on Higher Education *Statement of Accreditation Status*.

Requirements for Affiliation: Standard 14	Response
A documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning that…	✓ Overarching assessment framework established [EXHIBIT I]. ✓ Institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) articulated within framework [EXHIBIT I – Section 3]. ✓ Learning outcomes defined for all undergraduate programs[1] and all courses and mapped to ILOs [EXHIBIT A, EXHIBIT C, EXHIBIT D]. ✓ All outcomes entered into *Campus Labs Outcomes®* software module. ✓ Assessment instruments, evidence of student learning, and analysis of student learning documented within *Campus Labs Outcomes®* module. ✓ Three-year student learning assessment cycles developed for the institution and all academic programs [EXHIBIT I – Section 5.2, EXHIBIT X]. The 2016-2017 academic year represents implementation of the first year of the assessment cycles.
…maximizes the use of existing data and information;	✓ Institutional learning outcomes derived from existing learning outcomes and mission statement (see Section II.A.1). ✓ Existing software system, *Campus Labs®*, expanded with *Outcomes®* module to support assessment.
…involves the support and collaboration of faculty and administration in assessing student learning and responding to assessment results;	✓ Rapid Action Taskforce on Assessment comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators developed assessment framework [EXHIBIT K]. ✓ Assessment Implementation Team (AIT) comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators carried out implementation of assessment framework [EXHIBIT L]. The AIT is a standing committee moving forward. ✓ Provost Office, Office of Institutional Research, and the AIT jointly prepared a student learning outcomes template [EXHIBIT M]. The template was used by AIT to draft student learning outcomes for each program. The faculty of each program revised draft outcomes and submitted (to what entity?) as official learning outcomes. ✓ Faculty Senate unanimously passed resolution endorsing assessment system [EXHIBIT U].
…provides evidence that student learning assessment information is shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and is used to improve teaching and learning.	✓ Assessment analysis packets prepared by AIT and shared with all faculty and all programs [EXHIBIT H]. ✓ Department/Program retreats used to discuss assessment results [EXHIBIT V].

[1] The sole graduate program, leading to the Master of Arts in Teaching degree, and its associated undergraduate minor have unique assessment systems aligned with the requirements of the Maryland State Department of Education.

Requirements for Affiliation: Standard 2	Response
	✓ *Campus Labs Outcomes®* holds documentation of use of assessment results to inform curricular, pedagogical, and/or assessment changes.
…document goals and objectives or strategies, both institution-wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, are linked to the mission and goal achievement, and are used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unit levels.	✓ President Jordan assembled a team of faculty, staff, and students that oversaw the development of the College's new strategic plan [EXHIBIT P]. ✓ President Jordan assembled a committee of faculty, staff, and students (a.k.a. SPIT Fire) to provide oversight of the implementation of the strategic plan. ✓ SPIT Fire has worked with stakeholders from around the College to create actionable tasks and milestone timelines to keep the College on-task in pushing forward the strategic plan [EXHIBIT Y]. ✓ SPIT Fire has created a working document that is being used to track progress of each tactic and their associated metrics [EXHIBIT Z].
Requirements for Affiliation: Standard 5	**Response**
...document steps taken to assure continuity and stability of institutional administration.	✓ Key interim appointments replaced by permanent hires [EXHIBIT R]. ✓ Board of Trustees ongoing support for President Jordan [EXHIBIT S]. ✓ Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) under development in all divisions [EXHIBIT T].

Table 1: Summary of Requirements for Affiliation and St. Mary's College Responses

In addition, Table 2 provides a summary of the responses to each of the applicable requirements and recommendations articulated in the *Evaluation Team Final Report*.

Evaluation Team Requirements: Standard 14	Response
The College must use assessment results to inform improvement in teaching and learning. Results of its student learning outcomes assessment must be shared with internal and external publics to provide information and clarity regarding the benefits of a liberal arts education in a public honors college.	✓ Assessment process includes documentation of the analysis and evaluation of student learning results and any curricular or pedagogical changes undertaken in response [EXHIBIT I– Section 4]. ✓ Assessment results are reported annually by the Provost to departments and programs, the President, the Executive Council, and the Board of Trustees as per the assessment procedure [EXHIBIT I– Section 4]. ✓ Assessment information is shared annually with the Maryland Higher Education Commission for distribution as part of state-wide accountability reporting.
The College must provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff regarding the assessment of student learning outcomes in order to carry out meaningful assessments of its curricular and co-curricular offerings.	✓ Multiple professional development workshops have been provided for both faculty and staff [EXHIBIT O]. ✓ The AIT held "open office hours" to assist individual faculty and staff with assessment needs [EXHIBIT O]. ✓ Discipline-specific professional development workshops have been conducted within umbrella categories such as natural science, social science, humanities, and so forth [EXHIBIT O]. ✓ Annual "Teaching Excellence Workshops" that occur at the beginning of each academic year include professional development on student learning assessment as informed by faculty and staff needs [EXHIBIT O]. ✓ Members of the AIT have participated in national professional development workshops on student learning assessment [EXHIBIT O].

Faculty must include student learning outcomes in all syllabi; staff must also provide student learning outcomes in all assessment plans for programs and services. These student learning outcomes must be mapped to departmental, divisional and institutional mission statements.	✓ Department chairs complete syllabi checklists each semester to ensure all course syllabi include the applicable student learning outcomes [EXHIBIT E]. ✓ Student Affairs professionals have developed "signature co-curricular programs" with explicit student learning outcomes [EXHIBIT W]. ✓ All student learning outcomes are aligned with the institutional student learning outcomes which are derived from the College's mission statement (see Section II.A.1).
A cycle of assessment must be established for all programs, administrative and academic, so that assessment results can be used to improve student learning.	✓ The College has an overarching three-year assessment cycle during which all institutional student learning outcomes are assessed at least once [EXHIBIT I – Section 5.2]. ✓ All academic departments and signature co-curricular programs have three-year assessment cycles that dovetail with the College assessment cycle and during which all program-level student learning outcomes are assessed [EXHIBIT X].
Evaluation Team Recommendations: Standard 2	**Response**
Move forward expeditiously with current efforts to develop and implement a new comprehensive institutional strategic plan that links long-range planning to decision-making;	✓ In May 2016, the Board of Trustees approved "A Time for Rebirth," a three-year strategic plan as a foundational plan [EXHIBIT P]. ✓ A Strategic Plan Implementation Team (known as SPIT Fire) worked over the summer to assess the viability of the proposed metrics and tactics, and to identify individuals and/or campus units that will be primarily responsible for overseeing the implementation of specific tasks (Primaries) [EXHIBIT Y]. ✓ Since August 2016, SPIT Fire has worked with Primaries from around the College to shepherd and monitor progress [EXHIBIT Z].
require all divisions to develop strategic plans with goals and objectives clearly linked to the institutional plan;	✓ All divisions are actively engaged as Primaries in the implementation of the three-year strategic plan [EXHIBIT Y].
link budget allocation to the plan;	✓ A Presidential Strategic Implementation Fund of $400,000 has been established to support implementation of the strategic plan [EXHIBIT AA].
and clearly demonstrate how institutional planning is being used in systematic and sustained ways to improve and maintain institutional quality.	*See response for Standard 2 from Requirements for Affiliation above.*

Table 2: High-Level Summary of Evaluation Team Requirements/Recommendations and St. Mary's College Responses

Finally, Table 3 provides a chronological timeline of the major activities undertaken by the College in response to the MSCHE accreditation findings. The dates shown are approximate but reflective of the overall scope and progression of the College's response. The previously-referenced Student Learning Assessment Handbook details the annual assessment process that has emerged from the College's experiences summarized below.

Begin	End	Activity
	01/10/2016	President Jordan hires higher education consultant to assist in formulating College response to accreditation concerns.
	01/19/2016	President Jordan calls a special Meeting of the Faculty as a call to action in addressing the MSCHE accreditation findings.
01/26/2016	01/29/2016	College hosts visit team from Wabash Center of Inquiry. The visit team meets with representatives from across the College and performs an analysis of existing assessment processes.

02/08/2016	02/26/2016	Newly-hired Provost Wick leads a 10-person Rapid Action Taskforce in developing a consistent and coherent framework for assessment at the College.
	03/01/2016	Rapid Action Taskforce presents the assessment framework to the faculty for endorsement.
	03/20/2016	College receives analysis report from Wabash Center of Inquiry. Provost Wick incorporates report into the College's assessment framework.
	04/15/2016	Professional development workshop on assessment framework and the writing effective student learning outcomes hosted by Provost Wick and Consultant. Nearly 70 faculty and staff attend.
03/20/2016	04/20/2016	Provost's Office develops assessment toolkit including templates for writing student learning outcomes within the overall assessment framework.
	04/20/2016	Initial assessment toolkit released to College community.
	04/22/2016	Provost Wick holds inaugural meeting of the Assessment Implementation Team (AIT). The team is comprised of faculty, staff, and students dedicated to oversight of the framework implementation.
04/22/2016	04/28/2016	AIT develops and writes institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) within the framework. ILOs are written based on prior work conducted at the College between 1996 and 2007.
	04/28/2016	ILOs shared with faculty for endorsement.
	04/29/2016	The VALUE rubrics are shared with the faculty as the first iteration of rubrics for assessing the ILOs.
04/22/2016	04/30/3016	AIT develops draft program-level learning outcomes (PLOs) for each academic major based on published learning goals for each program. PLOs are submitted to each department for review and revision.
	05/02/2016	Provost Wick requests that faculty assess student learning of oral communication by using the VALUE rubric to assess all appropriate senior St. Mary's Project presentations.
	05/03/2016	Middle States Commission on Higher Education officially places St. Mary's College of Maryland on warning that their accreditation status may be in jeopardy.
05/04/2016	05/05/2016	AIT holds series of "Open Office Hours" to assist faculty in writing course-level learning outcomes (CLOs).
	05/06/2016	All academic programs submit revised and approved PLOs.
	05/13/2016	Faculty submit assessment data on oral communication as collected from St. Mary's Project presentations.
	05/20/2016	Representatives from AIT attend MSCHE "Creating and Selecting Assessment Tools" in Philadelphia, PA.
	06/03/2016	Faculty submit draft course-level learning outcomes (CLOs) for all courses to be offered in AY 2016-2017.
	08/01/2016	Provost Wick requests that all course syllabi explicitly list CLOs of the course to inform students of intended learning.
06/01/2016	08/14/2016	Provost's Office, in collaboration with AIT, develops Assessment Analysis Packets for each academic program. Each packet includes a draft curriculum map for the program and a detailed analysis of student learning data on oral communication from within the program and across the College. Assessment processes are codified in an Student Learning Assessment Handbook.
	08/15/2016	Each program receives an Assessment Analysis Packet with instructions to review and revise as appropriate.
	08/15/2016	Provost Wick shares three-year institutional assessment cycle with all faculty. Faculty are requested to devise program-specific assessment cycles within the larger college cycle.
08/16/2016	08/19/2016	College hosts "Teaching Excellence Workshops" for faculty on best practices in assessment and on transparent teaching in general.
	08/18/2016	Draft Student Learning Assessment Handbook shared with higher education consultant for review and feedback.
	08/19/2016	Provost Wick releases to department chairs and program directors the tentative timeline for AY 2016-2017 assessment activities including specific submission deadlines.

	08/22/2016	Student Learning Assessment Handbook updated based on consultant review.
08/19/2016	08/26/2016	Departments host program retreats to consider Assessment Analysis Packets. Departments are instructed to document use of the packets.
	08/26/2016	Provost Wick hosts department chair/program director retreat including a discussion of assessment timelines.
	08/29/2016	CLOs are submitted by new faculty, faculty returning from sabbatical, and other faculty not able to participate in the original CLO submission process.
	09/15/2016	Department chairs submit syllabus checklists verifying the inclusion of CLOs on all course syllabi.
	09/26/2016	Documentation submitted on how departments and programs have used the Assessment Analysis Packets to improve student learning.
	09/26/2016	CLOs are due for all active courses in the catalog (not just AY 2016-2017).
	09/26/2016	Faculty submit outcomes response pages.
	10/05/2016	Programs submit assessment instrument and data-collection plans for Fall 2016.
	10/28/2016	Programs submit object-level course-to-major curricular maps.
	12/16/2016	Programs submit full assessment cycles with data-collection plans for Spring 2017 and beyond.
	12/21/2016	Data collection complete for Fall 2016 assessment cycle.
	01/10/2017	Proposed program learning outcomes for minors distributed to departments.
	01/15/2017	Draft monitoring report due to Board of Trustees.
	01/20/2017	Revised draft of monitoring report due to Board of Trustees.
The following activities are planned for Spring 2017 at the time of this writing.		
	01/30/2017	Assessment instruments and data collection plans for Spring 2017 due.
	01/30/2017	Revisions to proposed PLOs for minors due.
	01/30/2017	Course-level learning outcomes due for any missing courses in minors.
	02/14/2017	Outcomes Response Pages and Curricular Response Pages due.
	03/01/2017	Final monitoring report due to Middle States Commission on Higher Education
	03/01/2017	Course instrument plans for courses taught but not assessed in 2016-2017 due.
	03/01/2017	Draft course-to-minor curricular maps given to departments and programs.
	03/27/2017	Revised course-to-minor curricular maps for minors due.
03/26/2017	03/28/2017	Middle States Small Team Campus Visit
	04/24/2017	Feedback on minor curricular maps given to departments/programs
	05/22/2017	Minor program assessment cycles due.
	05/22/2017	Data from 2016-2017 assessed courses (per institutional cycle) due.

Table 3: College Response Timeline

4) MSCHE Fundamental Elements of Assessment of Student Learning

St. Mary's College of Maryland, at this time, appears to be in compliance with Standard 14 as described in *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*.

The College has adopted institutional-level student learning outcomes that align with the institution's mission as a public liberal arts honors college [EXHIBIT I – Section 3]. All academic programs (Core Curriculum, majors, and minors) have articulated program-level student learning outcomes appropriate to the discipline [EXHIBIT A] and have aligned those outcomes with the institutional-level student learning outcomes [EXHIBIT B]. All courses have documented student learning outcomes [EXHIBIT C] that align with program-level and institutional-level student learning outcomes [EXHIBIT D]. All course syllabi list the applicable student learning outcomes [EXHIBIT E].

All student learning outcomes are assessed using direct measurement of student learning [EXHIBIT F]. All student learning assessment instruments are stored within the *Campus Labs Outcomes®* software

module which serves as an assessment warehouse. The warehouse relates measurements to one another, documents methods of analysis and evaluation, and permanently records the use of assessment data for improving student learning. The warehouse also provides reporting capacity that enables faculty and administration collaboration in the evaluation of assessment results [EXHIBIT H]. The College's *Student Learning Assessment Handbook* [EXHIBIT I] articulates a comprehensive system of student learning assessment in sufficient detail to codify the system and enable ownership by current and future faculty and administration. The *Handbook* includes annual reconsideration and evaluation of the institution's student learning assessment process [EXHIBIT I– Section 4.5].

Assessment results, in the form of direct evidence of student learning, provide sufficient and convincing evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes [EXHIBIT H]. Assessment data on student learning is shared and discussed with faculty, staff, administration, and the Board of Trustees [EXHIBIT J, EXHIBIT H,EXHIBIT V]. The assessment warehouse documents the use of student learning assessment data to improve teaching and learning [EXHIBIT G]. The assessment system involves the collaboration of faculty and administration and is fully supported by the faculty as evidence by a Faculty Senate resolution passed without dissention [EXHIBIT U].

Finally, use of student learning assessment information is documented as part of institutional assessment processes [EXHIBIT N, EXHIBIT Q, EXHIBIT BB] and informs the allocation of professional development resources in support of teaching and learning [EXHIBIT O].

While not required under *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*, St. Mary's College of Maryland offers additional analysis and evidence in support of its fulfillment of Standard 14. Evaluations of faculty for annual merit salary adjustments explicitly includes expectations for assessment of student learning [EXHIBIT N]. Professional development opportunities and resources are available for faculty to learn how to assess and improve student learning [EXHIBIT O]. Student learning assessment is used to plan, conduct, and support professional development activities [EXHIBIT O]. Consideration of student learning assessment evidence and the assessment process itself (i.e., assessing assessment) are included in policies and procedures for the periodic review of academic departments/programs [EXHIBIT Q]. The College's *Student Learning Assessment Handbook* articulates a holistic three-year assessment cycle that explicitly includes a regularized, collaborative institutional protocol for the dissemination, analysis, discussion, and use of assessment results [EXHIBIT I – Section 5.2].

B. Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

MSCHE has requested that St. Mary's College of Maryland document goals and objectives or strategies, both institution-wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, are linked to mission and goal achievement, and are used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unit levels (Standard 2).

At the request of the Board of Trustees in August 2015, President Jordan assembled a team of faculty, staff, and students to a Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) that oversaw the development of a new strategic plan for the College. The SPSC was made up of five faculty members, four administrative staff, two staff, and one student. This committee was tasked with the responsibility of refining the Mission, Values, and Core Documents draft produced by the Board of Trustees in the summer of 2015, developing the timeline and milestones for the strategic planning process, chairing the subcommittees that would be formed to develop the strategic plan, and writing the strategic plan – all with input from

the campus stakeholders. The strategic plan was to be developed on the assumption of no new revenue and with the expectation of measurable metrics to allow for the assessment of the progress towards the goals of the strategic plan.

The SPSC began by developing and finalizing, with feedback from all campus stakeholders, the official Mission, Values and Core Values of the College. Once the Mission, Vision, Core Values, and goals were established for the strategic plan, the SPSC then established five working groups, each one tasked with the development of the specific details for the respective goals of the strategic plan. These subcommittees were also made up of a diverse group of staff, faculty, and students, and each subcommittee was chaired by a member of the SPSC. The membership of these committees can be seen in the *Time for rebirth* document [EXHIBIT P].

The subcommittees spent the academic year of 2015-2016 writing, gathering data, developing assessable tactics and metrics, and drafting the goals. After all of the goals, tactics, and metrics were agreed upon by the SPSC, another period of campus-wide comment was opened. This included the distribution of the draft document, several open forums, and direct outreach to stakeholders and several members of the off-campus community. All feedback was considered and the final document was then approved by the SPSC, President Jordan, and the members of the Board of Trustees.

All subcommittees and the SPSC were focused on all-campus buy-in for the strategic plan, and as such, a great deal of effort was placed on getting feedback from all members of campus at several points throughout the year. For instance, when the SPSC finalized a draft of the Mission, Vision, and Core Values, these were distributed campus-wide with a period for comment. All comments were deeply considered by the SPSC before final approval of the wording. Each subcommittee worked closely with the relevant stakeholders on campus to develop a set of tactics and metrics that were aspirational yet achievable in a three-year period.

Upon the completion of the Strategic Plan President Jordan assembled a committee (Strategic Plan Implementation Team; SPIT Fire) to assist in the oversight of the implementation of the plan. This committee was comprised of four faculty, three administrative staff, four staff, and one student. Two members of the SPSC, one faculty and one staff member, are also members of the SPIT Fire.

The implementation committee began its work in June of 2016 by reviewing the strategic plan and the associated goals, tactics, and metrics. As with the Strategic Planning committee, the implementation committee established five working groups, each one tasked with overseeing the implementation of one goal of the strategic plan. Stakeholders who would be responsible for each tactic were identified by the committee. Working groups have been in touch with these stakeholders throughout the fall 2016 semester to help create actionable tasks and milestone timelines that will act to keep the college on-task in pushing forward the strategic plan [EXHIBIT Y]. SPIT Fire has also created a working document that will be used to track the progress of each tactic and their associated metrics [EXHIBIT Z].

Throughout the next several years, SPIT Fire will be in regular contact with the parties responsible for the various tactics of the plan and will keep track of and report progress to the President, the Board of Trustees, and the campus community.

C. Standard 5: Administration: Continuity and Stability of Institutional Administration

MSCHE has requested that St. Mary's College of Maryland document steps taken to assure continuity and stability of institutional administration (Standard 5).

Dr. Tuajuanda Jordan became the College's seventh president on July 1, 2014 and immediately began building her leadership team. At the time of the MSCHE periodic review visit, several key leadership positions were filled on an interim or acting basis including that of Provost and Dean of Faculty, Director of Institutional Research, and the Director of the Library. Since the visit, permanent hires have been made in all three positions [EXHIBIT R]. The Board of Trustees has voiced its confidence in President Jordan as an effective and stabilizing presence for the College [EXHIBIT S].

President Jordan realizes that such stability and continuity in administration of the College do not automatically follow from a series of successful hires; turnover in leadership and administration is a natural and important part of an institution's continued growth and evolution. Stability and continuity in administration stem from the codification of procedures, policies, and values so that no matter where in the administration a vacancy occurs, the successor has clearly articulated blueprints of operation that guide administration of the enterprise. While an ongoing process, each division of the College is developing codified standards of operations, like the *Student Learning Assessment Handbook*, to ensure a smooth and continuous trajectory for the College [EXHIBIT T].

III.   Conclusion

St. Mary's College of Maryland has responded with integrity and assiduity to the issues identified through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education periodic review. Based on this monitoring report, as supported by the evidence provided, St. Mary's College of Maryland appears to have satisfied the *Requirements of Affiliation* stated in the Middle States Commission on Higher Education *Statement of Accreditation Status* as well as all applicable requirements and recommendations articulated in the *Evaluation Team Final Report*.

Looking forward, St. Mary's College of Maryland is well-positioned to sustain the activities undertaken to ensure compliance with Standard 14.   The assessment of student learning is codified in a *Student Learning Assessment Handbook* [EXHIBIT I], which guides and directs the ongoing and systematic assessment of student learning. Student learning assessment is integrated with key ongoing institutional processes including program review [EXHIBIT Q], faculty performance evaluation for merit compensation adjustments [EXHIBIT N], and curricular revision [EXHIBIT BB]. Key ongoing co-curricular programs, called *Signature Programs*, include student learning outcomes assessment [EXHIBIT W]. Importantly, the complete student learning assessment system has been supported and endorsed by the Faculty Senate as representatives of the full faculty [EXHIBIT U]. One hundred percent of continuing faculty have participated in the assessment process [EXHIBIT E, EXHIBIT O].

Likewise, the College has appropriate procedures in-place to sustain compliance with Standard 2. Through a campus-wide inclusive process led by President Jordan, a three-year foundational strategic plan is in place [EXHIBIT P]. Funding has been allocated to fulfill the strategic plan [EXHIBIT AA]. Faculty and staff from across the College are engaged in the realization of the strategic plan objectives at all levels of the institution [EXHIBIT Y,EXHIBIT Z].

Finally, the College has the personnel and infrastructure to sustain compliance with Standard 5. Interim appointments of concern identified by the Evaluation Team have been replaced by permanent hires [EXHIBIT R]. The College president, Dr. Tuajuanda C. Jordan, is well regarded by the faculty, staff, and has been endorsed by the Board of Trustees as a valued leader with likely long-running tenure at the College [EXHIBIT S]. Under President Jordan's leadership, all divisions are codifying standard operating procedures to ensure continuity and stability of operations regardless of personnel changes within the College administration [EXHIBIT T].

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
OPEN SESSION

MINUTES

Date of Meeting: October 14, 2016   **Status of Minutes:** Approved January 17, 2017

Committee Members Present: Chair Peter Bruns, Tim Heely, Sven Holmes, Glen Ives, Larry Leak '76, Ann McDaniel
Committee Members Absent: none
Others Present: Lex Birney, Allison Boyle, Leonard Brown, Cindy Broyles '79, Jim Cranmer, Karen Crawford, Carolyn Curry, Vera Damanka, Peg Duchesne '77, Kathy Grimes, Cynthia Gross, Gail Harmon, Chip Jackson, Tuajuanda Jordan, Michael O'Brien, Joan Pickett, Danielle Troyan '92, Allan Wagaman '06, Anna Yates

Executive Summary:
Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Committee Chair Peter Bruns.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Program Updates:
The Faculty Senate President Karen Crawford reported on college-wide activities that faculty have been working on including assessments, curriculum development, international education and a two-phase faculty merit compensation plan.

A new major in Global Studies and an Entrepreneurship minor proposal will be brought to the faculty after approval by the Senate. A Faculty Senate statement of support for new assessment program development was read by the Prof. Crawford and will be presented to the faculty for approval at the next faculty meeting.

Two new study abroad programs in the Republic of South Africa have been passed through Senate and are currently under review by Provost Wick. They include: SMCM-CIS Abroad Stellenbosch Program – Stellenbosch, Republic of South Africa, and SMCM-ISA University of Cape Town or University of Western Cape Semester – Cape Town, Republic of South Africa.

Faculty Merit Compensation System:
Prof. Crawford described the progress made in developing a Faculty Merit Compensation System by October 15th. Faculty will submit a short form (Phase 1) to the Provost for review in time for annual merit pay disbursements in January. Phase 2, which will involve a more

extensive merit pay system, should be ready in early spring for review and approval by the Senate, faculty, administration and Board of Trustees.

Faculty Bylaws:
Provost Wick, former Faculty Senate President Wes Jordan, and Faculty Senate President Crawford are working on a final version that could be presented to this Committee in January.

DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program:
The Director of the DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program, Dr. FJ Talley, provided an update on retention and student success of the 2015 cohort. New activities have been put in place this year to focus on the DeSousa-Brent second-year experience. *Sophomore Passport* includes educational programs and social activities to keep students engaged in the College and in the DeSousa-Brent program. The *Sophomore Retreat* was developed to continue the bonds formed during the first year by maintaining connections with peers and program staff members.

Degree audits and early alert and mid-term deficiency interventions are in place to monitor whether students are on target to graduate in four years. Many students take courses over the summer at community colleges to stay on track. The Committee discussed the importance of knowing whether those who left the College went on to graduate elsewhere.

Middle State Accreditation:
Provost Wick provided an update regarding the College's Middle States Accreditation Response Report, and shared the following:
- A draft *Student Learning Assessment Handbook* has been created and contains details for the annual assessment activities to be conducted and process to be followed.
- A Rapid Action Taskforce and Student Learning Assessment Implementation Team were created, consisting of faculty, staff, students and administrators. Program data were collected from all departments and a consistent assessment framework was developed. Both program-level and course -level student learning outcomes have been defined for all courses (about 600 courses). All course syllabi have been updated and mapped to a learning outcome. During the fall semester the faculty will reflect on, revise as appropriate, and document any changes to student learning outcomes.
- A draft report will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the January meeting.

A monitoring report is due March 1, 2017, to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The Middle States Team visit is scheduled for March 26-28, 2017. The College has contacted two consultants to assist with the report.

Program/Enrollment Assessment:
Provost Wick presented a Program Array Report to the Committee. The analysis provided information on the effectiveness of the programs offered at St. Mary's College of Maryland in meeting the institution's mission. The data do not show a correlation between our program array

and low enrollment. Our strengths to build on are: small class size, close-knit community, dedicated faculty and staff, faculty as teacher-scholars, and liberal arts and sciences.

ACTION ITEMS:
Action Item III.A. Endorsement of 2016 Performance Accountability Report.
The Performance Accountability Report (PAR) is a report required by the State of Maryland that assesses the College's progress on a variety of performance goals and objectives.

Committee Action Taken/Action in Progress:
The proposed action item was approved by the Academic Affairs Committee at its meeting on October 14, 2016.

Recommendation to the Board:
The Academic Affairs Committee recommended approval of this action item by the Board of Trustees at its meeting on October 15, 2016.

Meeting adjourned at 6:32p.m.