



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE**

REPORT SUMMARY

Date of Meeting: January 31, 2020

Date of Next Meeting: May 15, 2020

Committee Chair: Ray Wernecke

Committee Members: John Bell '95, Board Chair Lex Birney, Judith Fillius '79, Sven Holmes, President Tuajuanda Jordan, Larry Leak '76, and Allan Wagaman '06

Staff Member: David L. Hautanen, Jr.

Dashboard Metrics:

N/A

Executive Summary:

The Office of Enrollment Management is pleased to submit its January 2020 report to the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid of the Board of Trustees. This report includes information about our Fall 2019 recruitment efforts, enrollment, admitted student yield initiatives, Fall 2021 recruitment, special initiatives, and staffing.

A. Fall 2019 Recruitment Efforts

With an emphasis on Maryland, the District of Columbia and contiguous states, the admission staff completed 430 total recruitment events during the Fall 2019 recruitment travel season. This included 405 first-year and 25 transfer recruitment events. First-year recruitment events included individual secondary school visits, college fairs hosted by individual schools, college fairs hosted by the National Association for College Admission Counselors or its affiliates, and regional college fairs hosted by sponsoring organizations or secondary school districts. Transfer recruitment events include transfer fairs and SMCM-specific visits at community colleges. In total, the admission staff completed recruitment events connected with almost 700 schools.

The Office of Admission hosted three Open House programs during the fall. As part of the strategy to increase the number of prospective students visiting campus, Creative Communications Associates (CCA), implemented new strategic initiatives, including radio, billboards and digital advertising, to promote our October and November Open House programs. These initiatives were in addition to the ongoing promotional efforts lead by the Offices of Admission and Marketing and Communications.

In total, 609 prospective students (+72% over the previous year) and 1056 family members (+104%) attended the three programs. Prospective student attendance at the October and

November programs was double the previous year and family member attendance was 141% over the previous year. This compares to an increase of 15% for prospective student and 32% for family member attendance at the September Open House.

B. Enrollment

Spring 2020:

Current Spring 2020 new student enrollment includes 34 students (two first year students, 29 transfer students, one second bachelor's degree student, and two students being readmitted into the college). This is on a goal of 28 new students. By comparison, in Spring 2019 the College enrolled 28 new students (one first year and 27 transfer students). The census date for Spring enrollment is on February 17, 2020. At that time, we will communicate the College's actual Spring 2020 and blended annual enrollment totals as well as updated financial aid expenditure figures.

Fall 2020:

As of January 27, 2020, the College has received 2415 first-year and 26 transfer applications for Fall 2020 admission. This compares to 1448 first year and 23 transfer applications on the same date for Fall 2019.

C. Admitted Student Yield Initiatives

Early Decision and Early Action applicants were notified of their admission decision and merit scholarship and financial aid awards in November and December, respectively. For the first time, applicants were notified online. This was made possible by the new admission customer relationship management system implemented beginning in July. The online notification was followed by hard-copy admitted student packets for those offered admission. The mailing of the admitted student packets initiates a comprehensive multi-channel communications campaign along with faculty, staff, and student outreach to our admitted students and their families. Regular Decision candidates will receive their admission decision no later than April 1, 2020.

We are hosting two on-campus Admitted Seahawk Days. The first is Saturday, February 29, 2020 and the second is Saturday, April 4, 2020. As part of the planning process for these programs, admission staff completed an assessment of our program and a review of competitor programs. Following this research, the program has been revised to offer our prospective students personalized schedules as well as allow for increased attendance. CCA will be supplementing Office of Admission promotional efforts to invite and encourage our admitted students to attend one of our Admitted Seahawk Days.

These events will be complimented by two off-campus Admitted Seahawk Welcome receptions. The Office of Admission is planning a reception in Bethesda and another in Baltimore. Specific dates will be announced in early February. Admission staff will also be hosting individual meetings with admitted students and their families as part of their spring recruitment travel.

E. Fall 2021 Recruitment

The recruitment cycle for an entering class begins more than two and a half years before the start of the entry term. Recruitment for the Fall 2021 entering class began in February 2019 when the College started recruiting students who had taken the PSAT test in the Fall of their sophomore year in high school. Recruitment for Fall 2021 continues and recruitment for the Fall 2022 entering

class has begun with the launch of the sophomore and junior search strategy as soon as PSAT data were available in early January. This is more than a month earlier than last year and two months earlier than in previous years. We are continuing to work with Waybetter Marketing in the execution of the search strategy. Initial results for the January launch are strong. Keeping our eye on the goal for Fall 2021 applications, these efforts will then be followed by increased communications, advertising, recruitment travel, and counselor engagement strategies. Our annual Spring Open House is Saturday, April 18, 2020.

F. Special Initiatives

2020 East Coast LDZ:

The campus will be hosting the National Hispanic Institute Lorenzo de Zavala (LDZ) Youth Legislative Program July 12 through July 19, 2020. The 2020 East Coast LDZ Program will bring up to 150 students and 30 volunteers from across the United States, as well as Central and South America, for this youth-leadership program.

Transfer Edge Program:

The Office of Admission is in the home stretch on the development of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Transfer Edge Program (STEP) with the College of Southern Maryland (CSM). Through this program, qualified CSM students will be able to take one course per semester, up to four total courses, at St. Mary's College of Maryland. STEP students will receive a partial scholarship for their SMCM courses, as well as support and programming to encourage their transfer to SMCM.

Severn School:

On November 12, Lex Birney, Board Chair, and David Hautanen, Jr., Vice President for Enrollment Management, met with the Co-Directors of College Counseling at the Severn School. The meeting was arranged by the Chair as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the schools and is a model for Trustee support of new student recruitment.

G. Staffing

The Office of Admission has two full-time professional position vacancies. One is an Assistant Director position that is being filled on a temporary basis by Roderick Lewis '19 as an Admission Counselor. The other is the Associate Director position. An updated job description and salary assessment are in process for the Associate Director position and it will be posted thereafter. The Assistant Director position will likely be posted in late Spring.

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

Action Item II.A. Approval of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Admission SAT/ACT Test-Optional Policy The proposed policy would make submission of SAT or ACT scores within the application process optional. St. Mary's College of Maryland is committed to a holistic review of our applicants, including a full review of submitted application materials. This policy would become go into effect beginning with the Fall 2021 entering class.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND
ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE
MEETING OF JANUARY 31, 2020**

**OPEN SESSION
AGENDA**

- I. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. Review Spring 2020 Enrollment
 - B. Report on Fall 2021 New Student Search

- II. ACTION ITEMS**
 - A. Approval of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Test-Optional Policy

- III. INFORMATION ITEMS (None)**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE
MEETING OF JANUARY 31, 2020
ACTION ITEM II.A.
APPROVAL OF THE ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND
ADMISSION SAT/ACT TEST-OPTIONAL POLICY**

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Admissions and Financial Aid Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the St. Mary's College of Maryland Admission SAT/ACT Test-Optional Policy to be part of the application process.

RATIONALE

The proposed policy would make submission of SAT or ACT scores in the application process optional. St. Mary's College of Maryland is committed to a holistic review of our applicants. This includes a comprehensive review of all submitted application materials, including the application, secondary school record, recommendations, essays, standardized test scores, and any other materials submitted as part of the application. Research supports – and many students believe – that SAT and ACT scores do not fully represent students' academic achievement, potential and college preparedness, and that the secondary school record is a stronger predictor of success than standardized testing. The policy would go into effect beginning with the Fall 2021 entering class. The policy follows:

St. Mary's College of Maryland Admission SAT/ACT Test-Optional Policy

St. Mary's College of Maryland recognizes that an applicant's secondary school record (their curriculum and grades) and standardized testing are the strongest predictors of success at the College. We also know that research supports – and many students believe – that SAT and ACT scores do not fully represent students' academic achievement, potential and college preparedness, and that the secondary school record is a stronger predictor of success than standardized testing. Beginning with the Fall 2021 entering class, the College will permit applicants (with some exceptions explained below) to choose whether they wish to submit SAT or ACT scores as part of the application for undergraduate admission.

Applicants with a traditional high school record (i.e., includes a defined curriculum and letter/numerical grades) may choose to submit SAT or ACT scores by supplying the College with either official or self-reported scores. Students who submit self-reported scores will not be required to submit official test score reports unless they are admitted and choose to enroll. Admitted applicants who choose to apply under the test-optional policy and enroll at the College will submit their official test scores for institutional research purposes.

There are some applicants, where absent review of their SAT or ACT scores, the College has concluded that it cannot fully assess their likelihood of success at St. Mary's College. Those applicants will be required to submit SAT or ACT scores for undergraduate admission consideration. They include applicants: (1) who have been home-schooled; (2) who were taught in a non-traditional academic setting (i.e. without course-specific grades, pass/fail only grading scales, or narrative transcripts); and/or (3) who must demonstrate English language proficiency (i.e., are required to take an English language proficiency examination).

St. Mary's College of Maryland is committed to a holistic review of our applicants. This includes a full review of submitted application materials, including: the application, secondary school record, recommendations, essays and any other materials submitted as part of the application. We encourage students who believe that their standardized test scores accurately reflect their academic abilities and might even give a more complete picture of achievement and potential, to submit their scores. Merit scholarships will be based on the entire submitted application information, whether the applicant has submitted standardized test scores, or not.