Welcome back to one of the most beautiful campuses in the country – a place with some of the healthiest and happiest students around! I am happy to see you here as we commence writing a new chapter in the history of our great institution. I am beginning my second year as president of St. Mary’s College and this is my third state of the college address. At this juncture I can say confidently that we are in a good place. If I were to sum up in a simple phrase what the current state of the college is, I would say, “doing good and getting better!”

We are going to have a very busy year that goes beyond business as usual. We will be engaged in activities that will require the entire campus community to be active and thoughtful participants if we are to succeed. And, I have no doubt we will succeed.

This semester we have a calendar filled with activities that celebrate our rich history. The celebration will culminate the week of November 16 – 20, 2015, and will include spoken word by Clint Smith, a play based on a wonderful short-course developed by professor emerita Meredith Taylor, Race Monologues coordinated by professor Joann Klein, fireworks, and a special award bestowed upon the past president responsible for the transformation of a good public college into the state’s honor college that is recognized as one of the best public liberal arts colleges in the nation. We hope that you will make the time to participate in as many of these events as possible as we acknowledge this once-in-a-lifetime milestone.
The theme for the College’s 175th Anniversary is “Celebrating the Past, Forging the Future, St. Mary’s College of Maryland 175 Years Proud”. My remarks today complement that progression: celebrating and acknowledging some of that which occurred on this campus in spring and summer 2015 followed by a discussion of the plans we are making to put things in place that will secure our future.

To begin, I want to thank every member of this community for all you continue to do that contributes to the long-term success of our students and to the success of this institution. Our success depends on everyone. It is important that we all realize that each of us has a voice and each of us has a right to be heard. At the same time, I want us all to be mindful that the thoughtful exchange of different ideas and viewpoints only enhance our environment when done in a respectful and civil manner. This year will be very busy – at times intense. It will be during those times of high intensity that it will be especially important for us to remain steadfast and true to our guiding principle, the St. Mary’s Way. We will all be the better for it if we do.

We live and work in a vibrant, dynamic scholarly community. At this time, I will acknowledge some of the significant achievements of a few individuals and/or departments.

Congratulations to the Environmental Studies steering committee for their dedicated work on the Environmental Studies major, which was approved by MHEC this summer. This is important as we constantly examine our curricular offerings and provide a liberal education that is rigorous, relevant, and engaging. Over the summer, several groups of
faculty worked on developing or refining academic programs that will do just that. I look forward to continuing to support such collaborative and innovative activities going forward and to the days when we can announce their implementation.

As most of you have heard, I frequently say that, “we must diversify our revenue streams and be more entrepreneurial.” Faculty and staff across the campus continue to work to do just that. Thank you and congratulations are extended to all faculty and staff who have succeeded in acquiring extramural support from the NSF, NIH, NEH and a host of other agencies. I want to especially acknowledge Sabine Dillingham. Dr. Dillingham works tirelessly to both inform faculty of funding opportunities and to support them in their grant-writing efforts. Sabine herself is the recipient of the largest grant we’ve received thus far this year. She received $435K from the NIH to build our grant-support infrastructure. Well, done!

Speaking of fundraising, thank all of you who have contributed to the $2.5M campaign and to the staff in Development who has worked hard to friend-raise and fundraise. 61% of the faculty and staff contributed to this effort. In July we hit the $1M mark and that deserves a significant round of applause. I ask that you continue to contribute to this effort that will benefit the entire campus as well as SoMD. We have $1.5M yet to go so please continue to contribute. Our colleagues in Advancement are aiming for a 70% participation rate this year. Under the expert leadership of Carolyn Curry, our new vice president for Advancement, I am confident that they will meet, if not exceed, all of their goals.
We have had some members of our campus community who have garnered significant national attention for their work. Congratulations: Barrett Emerick—40 under 40—Professors who Inspire; Laraine Glidden, 2015 Career Scientific Contributions Edgar A. Doll Award in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities from the American Psychological Association; Andy Koch, the 2015 Braude Award from the Maryland American Chemical Society for conducting outstanding research involving students; and Meng Su, gold medal-winner of the 2015 Parkening International Guitar Competition, the world’s preeminent guitar competition.

We are constantly working to provide the best resources and infrastructure we can to facilitate the fulfillment of our mission. As you walk around campus, you will see that from the spring semester’s hole in the ground has sprung a building complex, that Rt. 5 through campus looks better, and that Public Safety has a much better facility. You might also notice that some of the restrooms across campus have been/are being converted to “All-gender” facilities. This effort is in response to recently passed state legislation. At the end, every campus building with restrooms will have at least one all-gender facility. On the technology front, we are working hard to improve and build an IT infrastructure that will support our initiatives and enhance the transformational experiences we want to provide our students. This will be a multi-year, multi-million dollar effort that will be lead by a new CIO who will be onboard hopefully within the next few months.
St. Mary’s College is one of the most socially conscious and civic-minded institutions in the state. If you hang out in Annapolis or keep up on local politics, you will recognize that we had a very successful year in the state capital and our funding has been secured for yet another year! We will continue to work with our state legislators, the Governor, and local politicians to get the resources we need to continue our good works. Equally important, we will work harder to help them be more aware of our expertise and that we are a largely untapped resource ready and able to help find solutions to the challenges faced by the citizens of our region and across the state.

Everything we do, we do with our students in mind. And, this year, the student body is looking good indeed. Residence hall occupancy has increased 2% over last year and overall enrollment is up a bit with 1719 full- and part-time degree seeking undergraduate students. When you include our graduate students and non-degree seeking students, we are more than 1750 students strong. The new students number 506, hailing from 15 different states with 112 new student-athletes. Among the new students, there are 112 transfer students of which 46 are either a freshman or sophomore and 32 hold an associates degree. Of the first-time freshmen, this year’s class is the 2nd most ethnically diverse in the history of the College at 27%. Welcome, new Seahawks!

Now, let me turn our attention to forging the future.

In a few minutes I will discuss strategic planning, a major process that should occur every three to five years. Even when undertaking this major effort, every year the president should have some strategic
priorities that position the institution for bigger things down the road and/or present some “low-hanging fruit” that can foster goodwill, garner new opportunities and resources, and/or enhance the community’s collective mental/emotional health in the near term. This year I have three strategic priorities. They are:

1. Increase out-of-state enrollment to diversify our campus and as a means of continual institutional growth and sustainability. Out-of-state includes both national and international students. To facilitate this priority, we now have a dedicated out-of-state national recruiter in Admissions and we have just signed an MOU that will re-establish our pipeline to Chinese students.

2. Enhance career development *programming* to better prepare our students and recent alumni for their careers. This requires the development and implementation of stage-appropriate activities that build upon the expertise of both student affairs and academic affairs.

3. Continue to develop a community that is inclusive, embraces diversity in all its forms, and works towards equity (the IDEs initiative). This is congruent with our mission and necessary for long-term sustainability and institutional viability.

As most of you should recall, there were a series of events in Fall 2014 that led to my charging several committees to develop programming, activities and events, as well as policies that move us towards living up to our ethos, the St. Mary’s Way. I want to thank the chairs of those committees for working throughout the spring and during the summer to help concretize what I am calling the IDEs initiative: Sybol Anderson, chair of the Campus Culture,
Policies & Programming Work Group; Robin Bates who chaired the Civility Work Group; Antonio Ungues, who has graciously volunteered to lead the IDEs Education Work Group after the departure of Dean Rushing; and VP of Student Affairs Leonard Brown, who is leading the Work Groups focused on equity and inclusivity. Throughout the year there will be programs and events sponsored by each work group, separately, together and in collaboration with others, e.g., the 175th Committee. Please be on the lookout for these events and participate. On the immediate horizon you should know that the Campus Culture, Policies & Programming Work Group is facilitating several upcoming focus groups designed to assess how well students are thriving (flourishing) at St. Mary's and what we can do to enhance their success. Thanks to the 30 faculty and staff who have volunteered to facilitate these small group discussions in which students can discuss candidly their feelings about their experiences at St. Mary's. The work group is seeking 50 students representing the rich diversity of our campus to participate in these discussions, to be held throughout the month of October. Interested students can be on the lookout for fliers, invitations, and tabling events with information about how to sign up. The contact person is Chelsea Cesaro (Se-ZAIR-oh), in Glendening 220.

Last year I indicated that we would turn our attention to strategic planning this year. Prior to being able to completely focus our attention on that task, we must attend to the Middle States reaccreditation site visit in which a team will be on campus in October to assess how well we have lived up to our mission. I want to thank all
who worked on the committees to get information for the report with a special “Thank You” to Mark Heidrich and Cynthia Koenig, the two individuals who have shepherded the development of the report. I very strongly encourage every member of our community to read and become familiar with the document prior to the site visit. We must each be able to articulate the value and importance of our institution, its impact on student learning and success, what it means to be a member of a public honors college steeped in the traditions of the liberal arts, the challenges we have and may continue to face, our successes, and the prospect for our future to the site visit team. Please read the report.

I now want to discuss strategic planning. When I arrived on campus in the summer of 2014, the Board was clear that they wanted a strategic plan done as soon as possible. I’ve been at the helm for a year. Now is the time. This academic year, we will embark on developing a three-year strategic plan that will position SMCM for continued success but at a pace that we have not experienced in over a decade. The last strategic plan, implemented in 2000, was a 10-year planning document. Due to a series of unanticipated events, the College has been unable to develop and implement a College wide strategic plan since that time and a lot has changed since then. Thanks to the faculty and staff who have remained true to SMCM’s mission and sustained our student-centered learning environment during the periods of executive- and cabinet-level transitions during the intervening years.

In anticipation of the strategic planning process occurring this academic year, the Board of Trustees and I participated in a one-day retreat this
summer that was facilitated by someone who has served as vice chancellor and chancellor in two systems and has been a governance and strategic planning consultant for the last 20 years. The purpose of the retreat was to understand our respective roles in the strategic planning process and to develop the draft documents that would provide the framework for our strategic plan. We did precisely that.

Additionally, the Board of Trustees quite strongly recommended that we have a strategic plan completed and submitted to them for final approval by the May 2016 trustee meeting. For the faint of heart, this might appear to be an impossible timeline. However, I don’t believe I have ever been described as “faint of heart”. As the president of this college and as the one the Board has entrusted with leading the strategic planning process, I welcome the challenge. I know that to get this done, we, the entire SMCM community, must work together in a focused, collaborative, and collegial manner. I have no doubt we will get this done.

SLIDE: The timeline for strategic planning requires that we hit certain milestones by set dates during this academic year.

1. The documents the Board and I drafted during the retreat must be refined and submitted to the Board for approval at the October 3, 2015 Board meeting. The documents in question are the updated mission, an aspirational vision, a revised draft list of the College’s core values, and the themes to be addressed in the strategic plan. Note that items can be added to these documents, not deleted.
2. For each theme, a prioritized list of two to three goals, preliminary evaluation metrics, and budget must be submitted to the Board by their January 2016 meeting.

3. The final 3-year strategic plan must be submitted by the third week in April for Board approval at its May 2016 meeting.

This timeline might seem impossible, especially in light of the fact that we cannot devote a significant portion of our time to it until after the re-accreditation site visit but it’s not. Why? Because the draft documents that came out of the retreat provide an excellent starting point for an expedited strategic planning process. Nonetheless, having very good draft documents for the foundation of the strategic planning process is only part of the challenge. The other challenge is related to people. For a successful plan, we must have our stakeholders – internal and external – support the plan. In order to do that, our stakeholders must have opportunities to help shape the plan. Thus, the planning process must be both collaborative and transparent.

How is this going to work?

Upon return from the retreat, I knew I needed to establish a group comprised of faculty, staff, and a student to serve as the strategic planning steering committee. SLIDE: The criteria for membership in this group were that the individuals had to be thought leaders, respected by their colleagues, committed to the institution, able to focus and work under pressure. SLIDE: This committee would report directly to me and they would be charged with refining the draft documents, soliciting feedback on the refined documents from the
stakeholders, chair the subcommittees that would be necessary to address the strategic planning themes, garner stakeholder support and buy-in, and write the strategic plan. **SLIDE:** I asked the members of the executive council, the faculty senate president, and trusted internal stakeholders for nominees from which I would choose.

**SLIDE:** The members of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee are

Sarah Crumling  
Kevin Emerson  
Iris Ford  
Laraine Glidden  
Angela Johnson  
Arminta Plater  
Larry Vote  
Libby Nutt Williams  
Derek Young

As a group, ably assisted by Ledesa Eddins, the steering committee has met twice - Friday, 8/28/15 and Thursday, 9/3/2015. The result has been a thoughtful and intentional discussion of the documents that were drafted at the Board retreat. I now ask **Larry Vote** to read to you these documents before I proceed with describing the method we propose to engage you, our stakeholders, in the strategic planning process.

**SLIDE:**  
Mission –
St. Mary’s College of Maryland is Maryland’s Honors College, a selective, residential, public liberal arts college. We promote: a rigorous and innovative curriculum; scholarship and creativity; intellectual and mentoring relationships with faculty, students and staff; and experiential learning. We are committed to diversity, access, and affordability. Our students have opportunities to understand and serve local, national, and global communities and to accomplish constructive social change.

**SLIDE:**

Vision –
St. Mary’s College of Maryland will increasingly serve as the liberal arts college of choice for high quality students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds, attracted by: a rigorous, innovative and distinctive curriculum that integrates theory and practice; a talented faculty; a student-centered staff; and a strong infrastructure. Students will be part of a residential learning community that embraces intellectual curiosity, the power of diversity, and the College’s unique environment. Our graduates will continue to be thoughtful leaders and successful global citizens.

**SLIDE:**

Themes (Framework) for the Strategic Plan –
St. Mary’s College of Maryland will be a nationally recognized liberal arts college that will:
- Attract high quality students who will thrive in and respect a diverse, residential learning community.
• Engage students in a rigorous, experiential, flexible, innovative academic environment that capitalizes on our unique geographical location.
• Attract and retain faculty and staff who embrace both the theory and practice of their discipline.
• Create and maintain state of the art, modern facilities, systems, and infrastructure.
• Produce successful and thoughtful global citizens able to lead in a knowledge-based economy.

SLIDE:
Core Values –
• Advancement of the College mission and vision
• Creative, intellectual, and scholarly exploration
• Innovation in academic and administrative enterprises
• Integration of theory and practice both within and outside the classroom
• The power of a diverse community
• Local, national, and global engagement
• Environmental stewardship
• Student-centered ethos
• Social responsibility and civic-mindedness

Thank you, Larry.

Now what? It is important for us to get your feedback on these documents and to engage you throughout the process.
How? We know there are some in our community who do not read emails and/or are not comfortable using computers. We are also sensitive to the fact that some individuals like to provide anonymous feedback whereas others prefer face-to-face interactions. As the planning process progresses, we will employ every means at our disposal to engage every member of our community in the process and to solicit their feedback.

SLIDE: The refined MVTV must be sent to the Board by Friday, September 25, 2015. This evening at 6:00, the website www.smcm.edu/strategicplan, will go live where you can read the documents, and provide feedback. For those who do not use computers, we will ensure that you will receive paper copies of the documents and be given the opportunity to provide written feedback. For those who’d rather speak with some of the steering committee members to provide your feedback, an open forum will be held on Thursday, Sept. 10, 2015, in Cole Cinema at 9:00 am. All feedback for this phase will be due by Friday, September 11, 2015.

The steering committee will meet the following week to finalize the documents before sending them to the Board. Final documents will be posted on the website. SLIDE: On the website – www.smcm.edu/strategicplan - you will be able to find the strategic planning documents, the timeline, and milestones to keep you informed on progress and who is working on what.
The steering committee members will be chairing the theme-specific subcommittees. **SLIDE:** The subcommittees will be charged with developing 2 – 3 prioritized goals for their theme, the evaluation metrics, budget, and getting feedback from the stakeholders. We need to have students, faculty, and staff, on each of these committees. Thus, we seek volunteers to serve on the five committees.

**SLIDE:** We would like to have up to five individuals on each committee. If interested, please send your name to Andrew Wilhelm, SGA president if you are a student; Mary Grube, staff senate president for staff; or Laraine Glidden for faculty. Andrew, Mary, and Laraine will work with their colleagues to vet the names before submitting up to two names per committee to each committee chair. Please submit your name by COB on Friday, 9/11/15 because they will be sent to the steering committee on September 14th for consideration at the 9/15/15 meeting.

As a public institution, we must be cognizant of the need to get feedback and ultimately support from **all** our stakeholders for the strategic plan. We propose the following feedback timeline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Refined statements</th>
<th>Goals, metrics, budget 1st draft</th>
<th>Goals, metrics, budget 2nd draft</th>
<th>Goals, metrics, budget 3rd draft</th>
<th>Final strategic plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholder</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students, staff, faculty</td>
<td>Board approval</td>
<td>Students, staff, faculty</td>
<td>Board approval</td>
<td>Students, staff, faculty, and alumni</td>
<td>Students, staff, faculty, alumni, external community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target date</strong></td>
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<td>10/3/15</td>
<td>01/08/16</td>
<td>01/28/16</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
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As you can see, there is much to do but it is definitely doable.

Whew!
During the midst of all the planning, and site visits, studying, working, and living, don't forget to take part in, and enjoy, the activities associated with the 175th anniversary. To kick off the festivities, please join us at the Club Sports Field (or Guam Hill) to participate in the 175th photo shoot that will be taken by a drone.

Thank you. If there is time, I am happy to take questions.