THE ST. MARY'S PROJECT
The Capstone Experience of the Honors Curriculum
at Maryland's Public Honors College

St. Mary's College of Maryland
St. Mary's City, Maryland

2013-2014

Purpose of the St. Mary's Project

Each St. Mary's Project is an independent, sustained endeavor supervised by a faculty mentor and presented in a public forum. Each project realizes several of the following goals of our honors college:

1. The maintenance of high academic standards
2. The creation of a sense of intellectual community in which academic disciplines are appreciated as both unique and interrelated
3. The development of each student's ability to think critically and creatively in order to foster curiosity and promote inquiry
4. The encouragement of each student's ability to identify personal educational goals and to select courses that will help to realize these goals
5. An emphasis on learning not only in the classroom, but between faculty and students and between students and their peers
6. Sponsorship of a project of quality as the culmination and means of assessing the whole of a student's education
7. High standards of intellectual and creative endeavor and a sense of responsibility and personal integrity that leads to meaningful performance in a world that is complex and interdependent.

Description of the St. Mary's Project

A St. Mary's Project may be a research project or a creative expression in the arts. It may include collaborative work and build upon components of internships, study-abroad programs, and other experiential formats, as well as reflect traditional research skills. Most students will enroll for the St. Mary's Project in the senior year, but some projects may involve junior-year experiences.

A St. Mary's Project is usually completed within the major; however, a project may be conducted within a single discipline or across disciplines, including established cross-disciplinary minors. The initiation of the project and its completion are the responsibility of the student. Projects must be approved by the department or departments in which the student is majoring.

The Requirement: St. Mary's Projects may be mandatory depending on the student's major. All students should check the College catalog to determine if their major requires them to complete a St. Mary's Project. Double majors are required to work closely with the department chairs in both majors to ensure that senior experience requirements are fulfilled in each major. Transfer students should consult with the chair of their department to determine if a St. Mary's Project is mandatory for them.

1. A St. Mary's Project requires 8 semester-hours of credit. All of these credits must be taken at St. Mary's College.

2. Approval must be sought from the major department or departments (in the case of double majors) if the project is to be undertaken across two disciplines or in a cross-disciplinary minor.

3. Each student may receive credit for only one 8-credit St. Mary's Project. Double majors may not do two SMPs; an alternative senior experience may be required in a major if the student does not complete an SMP in that major, check with the department chairs in each major.

Supervision: The project is supervised by a faculty mentor in the major or cross-disciplinary minor. The responsibilities of the mentor are to assist the student in the development of a plan for the project, to supervise the work of the project, and to evaluate the in-progress and finished work. Department chairs are responsible for the allocation of faculty mentors, taking into consideration student preference as well as faculty expertise and workload.

Design of the Project: All projects must have the following characteristics:

Student-initiated. Students are responsible for proposing a project that can gain the approval and support of the sponsoring department or cross-disciplinary minor.

Methodological Competence. The project must demonstrate methodological competence by identifying an area to be explored and proposing a method of inquiry appropriate for the topic.

Achievement, Synthesis, and Reflection. The project must draw on and extend knowledge, skills of analysis, and creative achievement developed through previous academic work. The project must include a reflection on the social context, the body of literature, or the conceptual framework to which the project is a contribution.

Public Presentation. A St. Mary's Project must be shared with the larger community through posters, presentations, or other means.

Planning for the Project: Because the St. Mary's Project is the culmination of studies at the College, it is important to plan for this work as early as possible. In this way, students can include specific courses, internships, study abroad, or other experiences as part of their curriculum. Prior to registration for the project, students should discuss potential projects with a faculty adviser and a project mentor. Each department has its own procedures and guidelines for assigning mentors, proposing projects, etc. Students should familiarize themselves with their major department's procedures and deadlines.

Registration Process for St. Mary's Project: Students will officially register for their SMP with an add form signed by their mentor.

The following must be included on the add form:
- Student's name and ID
- Semester for which the student is registering

- Discipline of the SMP
- SMP course number (493 for the 1st 4 credits and 494 for the 2nd 4 credits)
- Number of credits to be completed during the specified semester
- Mentor's name printed
- Mentor's signature and date
- Student's signature and date
- If adding the SMP results in an overload (over 19 credits), the student's advisor's signature is required. (see below about registering for an overload)

The deadline for registering for a SMP is the end of the fourth week of classes.

Students may pre-register for their SMP during their registration time. If the mentor is known, then a completed add form can be submitted to the front desk of Glendening Hall during the student's registration time. The student will be registered for the mentor's specific section.

For some departments, if the mentor has not been determined students who want to can pre-register for section .01, the "place-holder" SMP. When the signed add slip is received, the student will then be registered for their mentor's specific section. Please see list below for specific department requirements.

SMP Registration Process Per Major List

ANTH   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

ART   Beginning SMP students all complete the same single section of ART 493.01. However, students cannot register themselves for ART 493 because it requires approval of the Art department. ART 494.01 is also a single section for all students.

ARTH   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

BIOL   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

CHEM   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

COSC   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

ECON   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

EDUC   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

ENGL   Section .01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined. The ENGL department has a proposal submission/approval process to follow.

HIST   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

ILC   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined: Note: students are required to take ILCT393 (SMP workshop) before they begin their SMP.

MATH   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

MUSC   All students register for MUSC493.01 with the same mentors.

PHIL   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

PHYS   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

POSC   Students wishing to do a POSC SMP must get the prior approval of their mentor and the Department Chair before they can register for SMP credit. Students can register for POSC493 only with an add form signed by the mentor. Students cannot self-register for POSC493.01.

PPOL   Students wishing to do a PPOL SMP must get the prior approval of their mentor and the Department Chair before they can register for SMP credit. Students can register for PPOL493 only with an add form signed by the mentor. Students cannot self-register for PPOL493.01.

PSYC   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

RELG   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

SOCI   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

TFMS   Section 493.01 is a place-holder until mentor is determined.

When registering for the next semester, students cannot overload (take more than 19 credits). If adding a SMP would result in an overload, the student must wait until the semester begins and register for the SMP by submitting an add form. The advisor's authorization for the overload is required on the add form. (Reminder: there is a $185 per credit hour additional charge for any credits over 19)

Timing of the Project: Students will usually register for 4 credits of the project in both the fall and spring semesters of the senior year. However, other plans for distribution of credit are possible. For example, in one semester a student might register for 14 credits through a study abroad or internship experience and 2 credits for the St. Mary's Project. On returning to the College, the student will complete the remaining 6 credits for the St. Mary's Project.

Projects being completed in the fall semester are due to mentors on **November 22.** Those being completed in the spring semester are due on **April 14.** Archival material must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar on **the last day of classes** in the appropriate semester.

Funding for the Project: As for any course work, students are expected to plan for and to bear reasonable costs associated with St. Mary's Projects. These costs have been set at $200, comparable to costs associated with 8 credits of other academic work. Although departments may have somewhat different procedures for preparation of student budgets for projects, all

departments expect students to prepare an **SMP Budget Projection Form** outlining the anticipated costs of the entire project. Students should indicate on this form their anticipated $200 contribution to these costs. <u>Students need to collect and keep receipts for all of their expenditures</u>**.** When students seek reimbursement for costs over their $200 anticipated contribution, they fill out the **SMP Expenditure Reimbursement Form** and submit receipts for each item mentioned in the form to their mentor. Grants to support costs greater than the $200 student contribution are available after the student's $200 of expenses are incurred in most departments. Students should consult with their SMP mentor to determine how reimbursement is structured in that department. Applications for these grants should be discussed with the faculty mentor before they are submitted to the department chair, who must approve the application.

<u>**Evaluation of the Project**</u>: The faculty mentor may assign either a letter grade or a grade of IP (in progress) at the end of each semester. If an IP is assigned, then the mentor must replace it with a letter grade when 494 is completed. If a student is not making satisfactory progress toward completion of the project and is being assigned an IP, the faculty mentor should provide the student with feedback on their performance to that point.

<u>**Submitting the Final Project**</u>: In order to maintain a record of St. Mary's Projects, students are required by the deadline of **December 13** for the fall semester and **May 2** for the spring semester to submit to the Office of the Registrar (Glendening Hall Student Services Desk) a CD-R or DVD-R containing the final written project and/or, if appropriate, an artifact (for example, music on audio CD, film on DVD, or a collection of images). This archive copy must include two files: a) an **abstract** of no more than 250 words saved as a text or Microsoft Word file; and b) the written project itself in a single comprehensive document saved as a PDF or as a Microsoft Word file. Once submitted to the Office of the Registrar, students may not retrieve and re-submit their project. At the time of submission, students and their mentors will sign a **Release Form**. Please discuss with your mentor issues of proper citations and/or permission for use of others' materials in your SMP, as well as issues of providing access to your SMP by others.

<u>**Public Presentation**</u>: Students will give a public presentation at the completion of the project, and students should work with their mentor to ensure that a presentation is scheduled. In the spring semester this presentation generally will be made during the St. Mary's Project Presentation Days, **May 5 and 6**. Poster presentations will take place on Tuesday, **May 6** from 9 AM to noon. Each student will be required to present their poster for 1½ hours of the poster session. Posters may be put up at 8:30 AM on the day of the presentation and taken down at 1 PM. Fall presentations will be arranged at the end of that term by the student's mentor. Presentations to professional and community groups may also satisfy this requirement.

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