

Oct. 15, 2025

A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION FROM SMCM PRESIDENT RHONDA PHILLIPS



Dear **Parents & Families**,

It's hard to believe, but fall is already upon us in Southern Maryland. Temperatures are cooler, leaves are beginning to turn, and excitement on campus is mounting as we look forward to Hawktoberfest this weekend.

I look forward to the chance to meet many of you during [Hawktoberfest](#). We are trending toward a record attendance this year, with over 2,000 people pre-registered. And while pre-registration has closed, we have many events and activities that do not require registration – so even if you missed the chance to sign up for some activities, know there is still plenty to do to make this weekend a fun-filled **family** adventure.

This past week also brought a close to my first 100 days as president of St. Mary's College of Maryland. During this "listening tour," I have heard from hundreds of students, faculty, staff and other members of this community, including many of you. Through dozens of events, I have been able to gain a clearer understanding of the College and what makes SMCM truly special. While the formal listening tour has ended, know that you will always be able to provide feedback directly to me via the [SMCM website](#). I look forward to a continuing dialog with our Seahawk community.

We hope you will find this issue of the newsletter informative. Feel free to share your feedback with our team at communication@smcm.edu or through the [Seahawk Parent & Family Liaison](#).

Sincerely,

Rhonda G. Phillips, Ph.D, FAICP
President
St. Mary's College of Maryland

MAKING THE MOST OF **FAMILY** WEEKEND



You're ready for Hawktoberfest, SMCM's combined homecoming and **family** weekend. You've circled October 17-18 on the calendar. You're excited to explore campus with your Seahawk. But do you know what to expect?

Family Weekend is an important opportunity to reconnect with your student. This may even be your first time seeing them since drop-off in August.

Make the most of Hawktoberfest (and maximize your **family** fun) with these [seven tips for supporting your student](#) during **Family** Weekend.

FAFSA NOW OPEN

The Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) is now open for the 2026-2027 academic year.

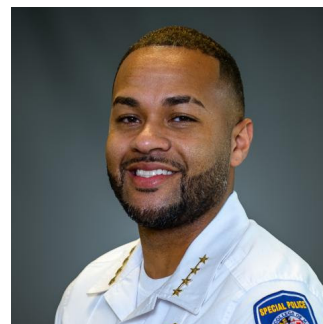
Your student should fill out a FAFSA form every year they wish to receive federal and/or state aid, including scholarships, grants, and loans. (Returning students do not need to reapply for SMCM merit-based scholarships, which are automatically renewable for up to eight semesters).

Visit the [FAFSA website](#) to start a 2026-2027 application, or check out the [SMCM Office of Student Financial Assistance website](#) for more financial aid information. While SMCM does not have an institutional deadline for FAFSA applications, students are encouraged to complete their FAFSA as soon as possible.

OCTOBER **FAMILY** WEBINAR (FREE)

On Tuesday, October 21 at 7 pm, join Chief of Public Safety Felix Martinez, Ed.D. for SMCM's October **family** webinar, "Your Student's Safety Net: Inside SMCM's Public Safety Team."

Chief Martinez will introduce you to the Office of Public Safety, highlight the services provided, and share a behind-the-scenes look at the officers and



initiatives that keep your Seahawk safe and supported.

Visit [Upcoming Parent and Family Webinars](#) to grab the Zoom link for this free virtual resource. While you're there, snag a sneak peek at our November webinar, "From Pathway to Purpose," featuring the Center for Career and Professional Development.

THE ANSWER IS...

As [parents](#) and [family](#) members of SMCM students, we guarantee that your student will ask you some challenging questions.

Check out our newest [Parent & Family Resource article](#) to help you prepare for potential questions your student may ask. Our suggested responses may alleviate some pressure as you field your student's concerns about college life.

Events [view online](#) [search](#)

Important Dates & Deadlines

Oct. 20 | [Fall 2025 LAST DAY to register for a half-semester course beginning at mid-semester](#)

 All Day

Oct. 20 | [Fall 2025 Half-semester courses begin.](#)

 All Day

Nov. 4 | [Fall 2025 Advising Day: NO CLASSES.](#)

 All Day

Nov. 5 | [Fall 2025 Wellness Day: NO CLASSES.](#)

 All Day

Nov. 7 | [Fall 2025 Withdraw with a grade of "W" until the end of the 10th academic week](#)

 All Day

Nov. 14 | [Fall 2025 Registration for degree students.](#)

 All Day

Nov. 20 | [Fall 2025 LAST DAY to withdraw, with a grade of "W", from a half-semester course which began at mid-semester](#)

 All Day

Upcoming Featured Events

Oct. 17 – 18 | [Hawktoberfest Homecoming & Family Weekend, Oct. 17-18](#)

 All Day |  Teddy Turner Waterfront - Campus

Oct. 31 | [SMCM Orchestra Concert, Oct. 31](#)

 7 – 8:30 p.m. |  Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center - Concert Hall

Nov. 4 | [Native American Heritage Month with the Piscataway Nation—Stories, Tradition and Powwow-Style Dance, Nov. 4](#)

 7 – 8:30 p.m. |  Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center - Concert Hall

Nov. 7 | [SMCM Jazz Ensemble Concert, Nov. 7](#)

 7 – 9 p.m. |  Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center - Concert Hall

Nov. 14 | [The Sacred Journey: The Beloved Community, Nov. 14](#)

 4:45 – 6:15 p.m. |  The Commemorative to Enslaved Peoples of Southern Maryland - Then continuing to Waterfront

Nov. 15 | [The String Queens](#)

 7 – 9 p.m. |  Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center - Concert Hall

News [view online](#) [search](#)



[SMCM Board of Trustees Approves Immigration Enforcement Policy.](#)

Oct. 13, 2025

[St. Mary's College Once Again Earns High Marks from U.S. News & World Report](#)

Sept. 23, 2025



[St. Mary's College Garners Additional Accolades from The Princeton Review](#)

Sept. 10, 2025



[St. Mary's College of Maryland Hosts Send Silence Packing® Exhibit October 15](#)

Oct. 7, 2025



[Sharing Our Common Humanity from Common Ground](#)

Sept. 22, 2025



[Southern Maryland Folklife Center Awarded Grant](#)

Oct. 3, 2025



[St. Mary's College of Maryland and St. Mary's County Human Relations Commission Celebrate Successful Volunteer Expo](#)

Sept. 19, 2025

If you'd like to sign someone else up for the **parent & family** newsletter, we have a sign-up form on our [InsideSMCM for Families page](#), so check it out today for quick links, events, news, and other information to help you support your student.

The **NATIONAL PUBLIC HONORS** *College*

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