

March 2, 2026

Dear Parents & Families,

Welcome to 2026! I hope that you have had an opportunity to re-connect with your students over the holiday break and that the new year has brought with it many blessings.

There is much to look forward to in the spring semester. During this first week back on campus, students will have the opportunity to join in our community celebration of the Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. at the [MLK Day of Service](#).

Their cultural opportunities will continue to abound. Many have claimed their free tickets to the sold-out concert featuring 14-time Grammy winner [Dan Tyminski](#), and students will have opportunities to showcase their own talents in upcoming [Coffee House](#) and [Double-A Cabaret](#) performances. They'll also have the chance to hear from noted journalist and author [Rachel Swarns](#) in this year's Benjamin Bradlee Distinguished Lecture in Journalism. And don't forget about our [championship sports teams](#)! With 23 teams, there are many athletic events, and with SMCM earning the [Presidents' Cup](#) for our conference for three years running, both excellence and excitement are par for the course.

I've recently added a report on the input from our community I gathered through my [100-Day Listening Tour](#). Through more than 270 meetings and nearly 200 online comments, I received invaluable input. Over the spring, we'll apply what we've learned through the tour in building the College's next strategic plan. Stay tuned for more information on that!

Sincerely,

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



*The Women's Basketball team received championship rings during a ring ceremony in recognition of being named the 2024-2025 United East Conference regular season champions.*


## Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"We become a guiding light in all that we do in the spirit of helping those around us struggling in darkness. Let us take peaceful action, keep the faith and light the way with hope for a brighter future." - SMCM President Phillips

On Monday, Jan. 19, the SMCM community gathered for the 21st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Prayer Celebration.

"Lighting the Way: Faith, Hope & Action" featured a keynote address by Olympian Tanya Hughes, musical performances directed by SMCM alumni and remarks by Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-Md), College Trustee Donny Bryan '73 and SMCM President Rhonda Phillips.

You can [view photos from the MLK Prayer Celebration](#) on the College's Flickr account.

 **Graphic headshot  
of Dr. Martin Luther  
King Jr.**

## 2nd Annual MLK Day of Service



Students can still take part in honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by participating in the [2nd Annual MLK Day of Service](#). Taking place on Saturday, Jan. 24 at host sites across St. Mary's County, this day of service is a powerful chance to make a tangible difference.

Whether by supporting local families, uplifting community spaces, aiding nonprofits or contributing to historic preservation, your student's service will help illuminate the path forward as the SMCM community collectively lives out Dr. King's message of compassion, courage and action.

Encourage your student to [register for the MLK Day of Service](#) today!

## Two Skills for Student Success

As your student sets out on their college journey, there are two important skills they'll need to acquire: managing assignment due dates and following college course sequencing. Finding success in these two areas can make all the difference in their academic journey.

Check out our newest [Parent & Family Resource article](#) to learn how you can support your Seahawk in mastering these two critical skills!

## Graduate School Support



The Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) is pleased to offer resources and one-on-one counseling for SMCM students considering graduate school.

If your student is interested in graduate school, encourage them to visit the [CCPD Graduate School website](#) to learn about different types of graduate degrees, timelines for applications, grad school search tips and more!

Students may also [make an appointment with Darah Schillinger of the CCPD](#) for grad school counseling and education.

## February Family Webinar (Free)


On Tuesday, Feb. 10 from 7-8 p.m., SMCM will present “The Wellness Playbook: Navigating Health & Counseling Services at College.” This free virtual webinar for parents and family members of SMCM students will provide information on how your student can access medical care, mental health services, and preventive resources on campus. Whether your student is new to campus or looking to better understand what’s offered, this session will equip you to help your student thrive.

Visit [Upcoming Parent and Family Webinars](#) to obtain the Zoom link or to learn more about our other Spring 2026 webinars.

## SMCM Offering Professional Portraits

On Friday, Jan. 30, from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., students may have a professional portrait taken at the Glendening Hall Loft, free of charge.

[Send this link to your student](#) if they are in need of a headshot to bolster their job or internship search!

 **Graphic that says  
"Professional  
Headshots, Free for  
Students"**

## Navigator Leadership Program

In collaboration with Leslie Taylor Consulting Services and Leadership Southern Maryland (LSM), SMCM is pleased to launch the "SMCM Navigator Leadership Program - Preparing Students to Chart Their Own Course," a non-credit leadership development initiative.

This semester-long certificate program is designed to develop leadership skills, provide mentorship, facilitate engagement with industry experts and guide students through a community-based project involving design, development, implementation and sustainability.

The SMCM Navigator Leadership Program will launch this semester with 16 students. Encourage your student to [follow the CCPD on Instagram](#) for their chance to participate in the future!

## Seeking Alumni Volunteers



The Mentor-a-Seahawk Program is designed to help SMCM students prepare for life beyond college by connecting them with alumni for advice. This program is a key component of LEAD 112, "Career & Network Navigation II," a required course for all students to learn about career and professional development.

We are currently recruiting alumni mentors for the spring 2026 semester. If you are an alum of SMCM and wish to mentor a Seahawk, please [complete the mentor application](#) by Sunday, Jan. 25.

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

### Important Dates & Deadlines

March 9 – 13 | [Spring 2026 Half-semester courses begin.](#)

 All Day

March 13 | [Spring 2026 LAST DAY to register for a half-semester course beginning at mid-semester](#)



 All Day

March 16 | [Spring 2026 Mid-semester report deadline.](#)



 All Day

### Upcoming Featured Events

March 5 | [St. Mary's College of Maryland Orchestra Concert, March 5](#)

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

March 12 | [SMCM Jazz Ensemble Concert, March 12](#)

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

March 12 | [VOICES Reading: Eman Quotah, March 12](#)

March 16 | [Spring 2026 recess begins.](#)

🕒 All Day

March 23 | [Spring 2026 CLASSES RESUME.](#)

🕒 All Day

March 23 – 27 | [Spring 2026 Academic advising for all degree students currently enrolled.](#)

🕒 All Day

March 24 | [Spring 2026 Advising Day: NO CLASSES](#)

🕒 All Day

March 25 – April 3 | [Spring 2026 Registration for degree students.](#)

🕒 All Day

🕒 7:30 – 9 p.m. | 📍 Daugherty-Palmer Commons (DPC)

March 24 | [Career and Internship Fair](#)

🕒 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. | 📍 Michael P. O'Brien Athletics & Recreation Center (MPOBARC) - ARC Courts

March 25 – 26 | [The 26th Annual Colloquium on Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies: March 25–26](#)

🕒 All Day | 📍 Campus Center - Cole Cinema

March 29 | [Dance Club Showcase](#)

🕒 5:30 – 8 p.m. | 📍 Michael P. O'Brien Athletics & Recreation Center (MPOBARC) - Arena

## News

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



[Associate Professor Tickle and Alumna Publish Article in Eating Behaviors Journal](#)

Feb. 12, 2026



[Luke Schwenk '25 Lead Author on Research Published in Peer-Reviewed Journal](#)

Feb. 11, 2026



[Provost Gantz Discusses Value-based Collaborative Culture on AAC&U Panel](#)

Feb. 2, 2026



[Biology Faculty Received a Combined \\$1.4 M Through Three Independently Awarded National Science Foundation \(NSF\) Grants](#)

Feb. 1, 2026



[Professor of Anthropology Sarah Hlubik Awarded Prestigious Fellowship from the Leakey Foundation](#)

Jan. 28, 2026



[Lorena Torres-Martínez Publishes Invited Commentary in New Phytologist Journal](#)

Jan. 28, 2026



[Rachel Swarns to Deliver the 2026 Benjamin C. Bradlee Distinguished Lecture in Journalism](#)

Jan. 22, 2026

[Performing Arts Students Present at Region 2 ACTF Conference, Win Competition](#)



Jan. 21, 2026

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

## **NATIONAL PUBLIC HONORS**

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