

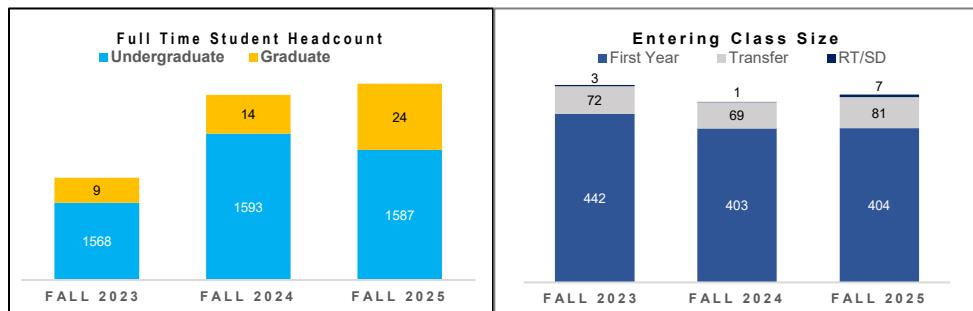
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
 ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID  
 SEPTEMBER 22, 2025**

**REPORT**

The Division of Enrollment Management is pleased to submit its September 2025 report to the Board of Trustees Admission and Financial Aid Committee. Enrollment Management oversees the recruitment and enrollment of new students, the administration of federal, state, and institutional financial aid resources, and the delivery of student academic support services which contribute to the College's retention goals.

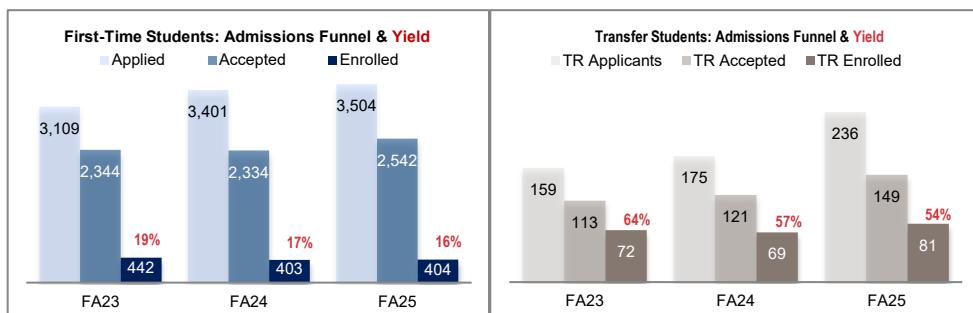
**Enrollment**

The College's full time headcount enrollment has increased by four students compared to the Fall 2024 semester at the same point in time. The increase can be attributed to ten additional graduate students (N=24) compared to Fall 2024 which offset a slight decrease of six undergraduate students (N=1587).



Preliminary enrollment (headcount) for the Fall 2025 semester includes 1646 undergraduate students, (1587 full-time plus 35 part-time), and 24 Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) graduate students. This is an increase of three students compared to Fall 2024. The MAT program which has historically enrolled between 25 and 30 students, has made significant progress toward returning to that benchmark.

**New Students**



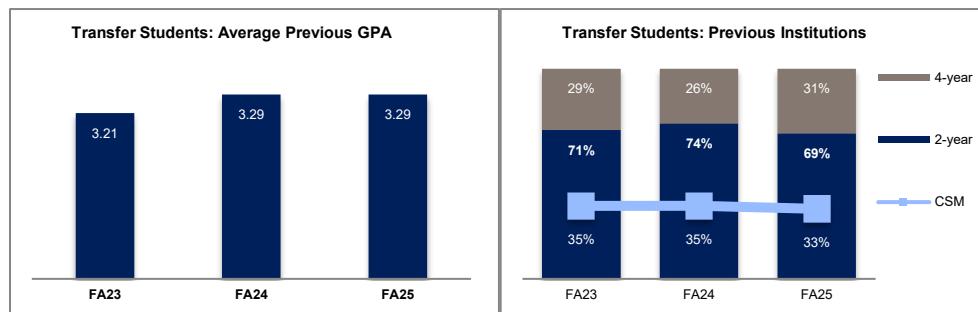
For the Fall 2025 entering class, the College received 3504 (+3%) first-time, first-year (FTFY) applications for admission. This is the fifth consecutive year of a record number of applications. In order to offset cycle indicators that indicated there may be a decrease in yield including continuing increases in the number of Common Applications being submitted by individual students and a decrease in the number of applicants who had visited campus compare to the previous year, 208 additional applicants were offered admission. The yield

rate for admitted students declined by 1.4% compared to the previous fall FTFY entering class. Four hundred and five students have enrolled compared to 404 students in Fall 2024. The decline in yield was consistent across all FTFY application plans.

A signal of enrolling student affinity is the summer melt rate of students who withdraw after submitting an enrollment deposit. The lower the melt rate, the stronger the affinity. The summer melt rate of FTFY students who withdrew after submitting an enrollment deposit was 6.2%. This is an increase of .04% over Fall 2024 and .09% over Fall 2023. While the increase in the melt rate in the last two years needs to be monitored, the College's melt rate falls at the low end of the range of 5% to 12% for four-year public institutions. The College's melt rate aligns with the data from our Fall 2024 admitted student survey that indicates 99% of enrolling students are very certain (76%) or very generally comfortable (23%) about their decision to attend the College.

With the expansion of the Pathway to Honors program (p2H) to include all Maryland community colleges, 225 FTFY applicants were offered the opportunity to participate in the program. Thirty seven students (16.4% yield) are participating in the program for the 2025-2026 academic year. Eight are in the 15-credit program preparing to transfer to the College for the Spring 2026 entry term, and 29 are in the 24-credit program preparing to transfer for the Fall 2026 entry term. These students are attending nine Maryland community colleges. The largest number (11) are attending CSM, followed by Prince George's Community College (7) and Howard Community College (5).

As part of the p2H program, the College's Assistant Director of Transfer Evaluation Services has been working with these students over the summer to provide advising on the appropriate course selection at the Maryland community college of their choosing so that the student will have transfer credit that will help them persist in their chosen major once they transfer to the College. Throughout the fall semester, the Transfer Services team will continue to engage with these students. On September 17, the Office of Student Success Services is hosting a webinar for p2H students to provide them tips and tricks on setting themselves up for success while at their community college. The Transfer team will also check in with these students virtually and while visiting their campuses for Transfer Fairs throughout the academic year.



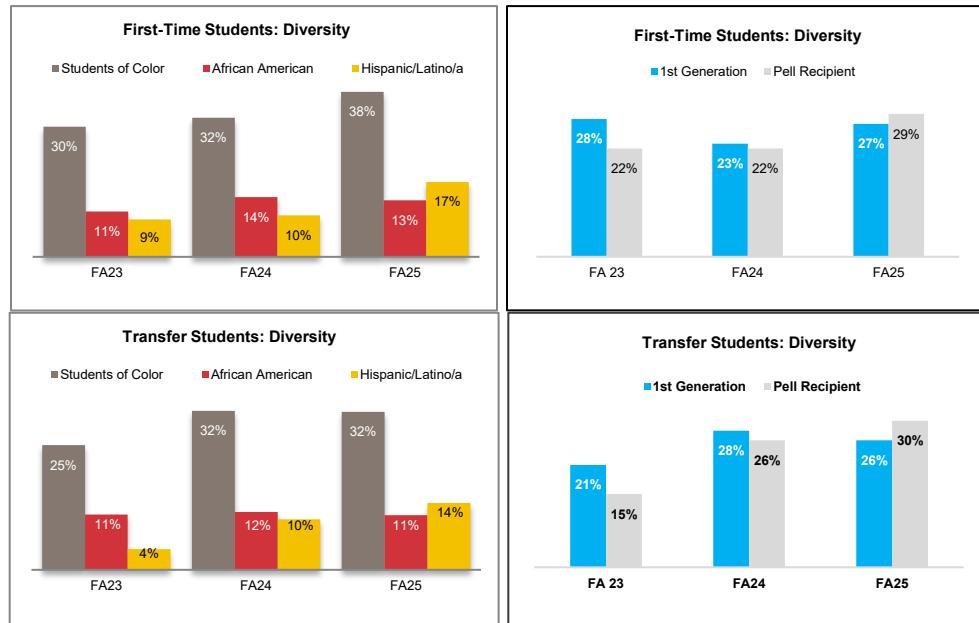
The College received 236 (+33%) transfer applications for Fall 2025. Admission was offered to 28 more students for an admit rate of 63% which is comparable to the admit rate at the University of Maryland College Park. The College has enrolled 81 (+17%) new transfer students compared to 69 in Fall 2024 and 72 in Fall 2023. Fifty-five students (69%) were last enrolled at a community college, with 27 (33%) coming from the College of Southern Maryland.

The increase in the number of enrolled transfer students can be attributed to increases from certain community colleges, students who had originally applied as FTFY students, and the p2H program. Increases from community colleges include Frederick Community College (+5), College of Southern Maryland (+4) and Anne Arundel Community College (+3). Fifteen students (+10), including three p2H program participants, had previously applied as an FTFY applicant.

Two on-campus Instant Transfer Decision Days also contributed to the increase in enrollment. During the program students received their admission decision, merit scholarship, transcript evaluations, and had the

opportunity to meet with the Office of Student Financial Assistance and the Office of Student Success Services. There were 9 participants at the April event with 8 of them matriculating and 5 participants at the August event with 4 of them matriculating. Overall, 85.7% of the students who participated in the event matriculated for Fall 2025.

The Transfer Recruitment, Admission and Services team is also responsible for the processing of returning student and second-degree student applications and transfer credit evaluations. There are five enrolling second-degree students. Two of whom had graduated from the College. There are three returning students who had previously withdrawn from the College.



The Fall 2025 entering class is among the most diverse classes in the College's history. Twenty-nine percent of the FTFY class and 30% of the transfer class are Pell Grant-eligible, an increase of 7% for FTFY students and 10% for transfer students; 27% and 26%, respectively, are first generation students; and, 38% FTFY and 32% of transfer students are from historically underrepresented communities meeting the target in Pillar 3 of the *"The Rising Tide"* Strategic Plan. Maryland residents account for 87% of FTFY students and 94% of new transfer students. While this is comparable with the percent of out-of-state students in the Fall 2024 entering class, the goal was to increase the percent of out-of-state students by three percent.

The College's signature programs are integral in supporting the recruitment and retention of our students as we strive to reach our enrollment goals in *"The Rising Tide"* Strategic Plan. The Fall 2025 entering class includes 46 students who are members of the DeSousa Brent Scholars Program (DB), 34 who are participating in the Sum primus (SP) Program for first generation students and seven Landers Scholars. Recruitment initiatives for both the DB and SP programs were enhanced by the Office of Admission this past spring semester. The DB program has enrolled 10 additional students and the SP program cohort has doubled in size over the Fall 2024 cohort size.

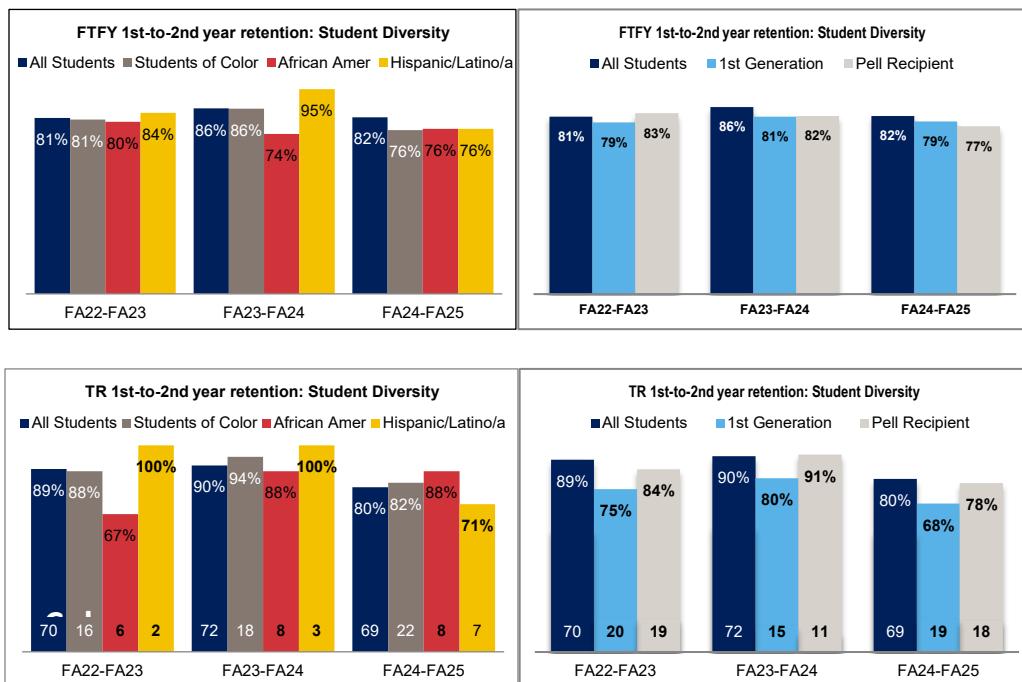
The College also welcomed our second cohort of Monument Scholars who were selected from among the top 10% of the admitted class based on their academic record and contributions to their school and community. During the first year of the program, the program was limited to FTFY students. Transfer students were added to the Monument Scholars cohort beginning with the Fall 2025 entry term. There are 25 Monument Scholars in the Fall 2025 cohort. The Office of Student Success in partnership with campus colleagues coordinates the program.

The academic profile of the FTFY class remains strong with an average unweighted GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and a weighted GPA of 3.80. With 18% providing scores, the average SAT is 1212 for the Fall 2025 FTFY entering class. This is the lowest percent of students providing standardized test scores since the College adopted a test optional policy in the admission process. This is despite about 70% of Maryland high school graduates having taken the SAT. Even though the College has a test optional policy in the admission process, it does not mean that we do not want to receive scores. Standardized testing is an additional academic datapoint, has predictive value when combined with the student's grade point average and contributes to the College's rankings. In order to be considered in the College rankings, at least 50% of enrolling students would need to provide standardized test scores. Moving forward, the Office of Admission will more strongly encourage the submission of standardized test scores. The average GPA of our new transfer students is a 3.29.

As we assess the Fall 2025 cycle, the annual Admitted Student Questionnaire and analysis of our financial aid optimization strategy will be disaggregated by application type, among other characteristics, to determine what we can learn from the responses and the data. This will inform further planning for the Fall 2026 recruitment cycle and looking toward the Fall 2027 cycle.

## Retention

The College's Integrated Retention Strategic Plan (IRSP) was formally launched on August 15 at a campus-wide town hall meeting. The meeting included divisional break-out sessions to ensure cross-campus alignment on the plan. A Retention Implementation Team (RIT), consisting of representatives from all five executive divisions is tasked with implementing the strategies is chaired by Joanne Goldwater, Associate Dean for Retention and Student Success and Patrice Darby, Associate Director of the Office of Student Success Service. The RIT will meet six times during the academic year to ensure that progress to being made share updates on the strategies. Following a soft launch last academic year, the Seahawk Success Network which is a strategy of the IRSP and includes the academic advisor, an advisor in the Office of Student Success Services, a financial aid counselor and a student life advisor were provided training during the summer in preparation for the arrival of our Fall 2025 new students.



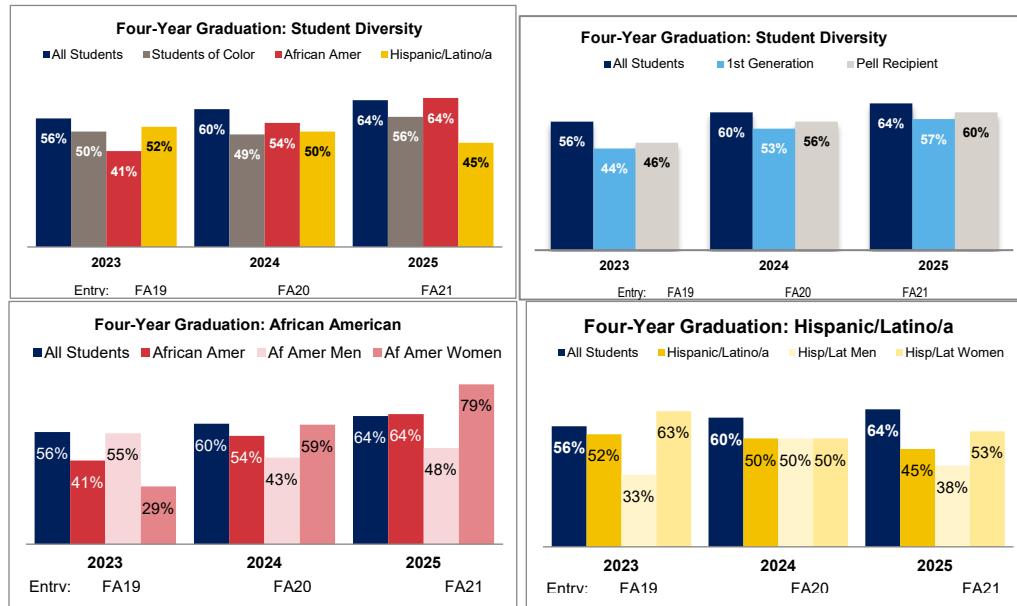
As the above charts show, preliminary data indicate that the first- to second-year retention of the Fall 2024 FTFY entering class is 82%. This is compared to the 86% and 81% retention of the previous two entering classes. The first- to second-year retention of the Fall 2024 transfer entering class is 80%. This is compared to the 90% and 89% retention of the previous two entering classes.

The retention of FTFY African American students increased by 2% compared to an overall decline in FTFY retention. This included decreases for Hispanic/Latino/a American students (-19%), first-generation students (-2%), Pell grant-eligible students and White students (-1%). The retention of DeSousa Brent Scholars (DB) was 76% compared to 95% for the previous year and the retention of students in the Sum primus program for first generation students (SP) was 63% compared to 85% for the previous year. The retention of these students is typically above the mean for the class. A likely factor in the decrease in the retention of the College's DB and SP students was the staffing transitions in the Office of Equity Programs and the resulting inconsistency in support and decline in programming. The retention of our fully-funded Landers Scholars has remained at 100%.

The first to second year retention of our Fall 2024 transfer students decreased to 80% from 90% and 89% for the previous two entering classes, respectively. As was the case for the Fall 2023 entering class, students of color (N=22) retained at a greater rate than the overall cohort. African American student retention rate was 88% which was comparable to the retention for the previous year. The retention of Hispanic/Latina/o, first generation, and Pell-grant eligible, students decreased compared to the Fall 2023 entering class. The retention rate and size of each cohort are noted on the above charts. The Fall 2024 transfer entering class had a number of military-related students and the retention decrease was centered on these students. The Transfer Recruitment, Admission and Services unit has identified the need to provide stronger support for military-related students.

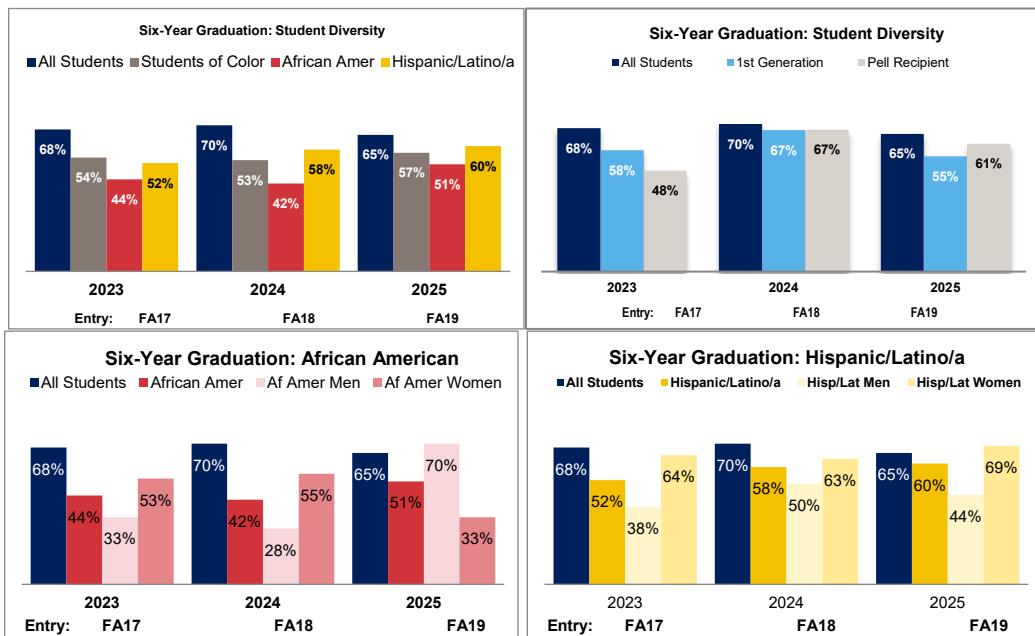
The decrease in the retention of our Fall 2024 students is a significant concern after an improvement in the retention of our Fall 2023 FTFY students and two years of very positive retention of our new transfer students. With the Integrated Retention Strategic Plan implementation underway and as a plan that reflects best-practices, the IRSP is designed to improve the retention of our students. The College is also planning to engage an external consultant, in addition to the possible services provided by DataKind, to conduct further research and assessment to ensure that we have a full understanding of the factors impacting retention and that nothing has been missed in the development of the IRSP.

## Graduation



The College's four-year graduation rate for the entering class of 2021 of 64% is 4% above the graduation rate for the entering class of 2020 and represents an upward trend. The four-year graduation rate for students of color increased by 6%. The graduation rate for African American students increased by 10% with African American women increasing by 20% and Black men increasing by 5% when compared with the previous year. The graduation rate for American students decreased by 5% to 45%. The 3% increase in the graduation rate of Hispanic/Latino women did not offset the 12% decline in the graduation rate of Hispanic/Latino men. The

four-year graduation rate increase of 4% for first generation students and Pell grant-eligible students mirrored the increase of all students.



The six-year graduation rate for the FTFY entering class of 2019 declined by 5% after increasing to 70% for the entering class of 2018. This is despite increases in the six-year graduation rate for students of color including a 42% increase in the graduation rate African American men and a 6% increase in the graduation rate of Hispanic/Latina women. The six-year graduation rate of first generation students, Pell-grant eligible students African American women and Hispanic/Latino men decreased compared to the six-year graduation rate of the entering class of 2018. With the upward trend of the four-year graduation rate, the six-year graduation rate, which are a factor in the College's rankings, should subsequently increase.

## Financial Aid

In support of the College's mission of providing access to an exceptional honors education, the College invests significant institutional funds for merit and need-based financial assistance with 86% of undergraduate students receiving institutional merit and/or need-based aid this fall.

For the 2025-2026 academic year, preliminary projections before the fall census indicate an estimated \$8.8M of unfunded institutional funds (33% discount rate). In addition, about \$723K of St. Mary's College Foundation funds, including waivers for Tuition Exchange, Resident Assistants, and Tuition Remission and \$342K for the Landers Scholars Program will also be used for merit and need-based financial assistance. The estimated \$8.8M unfunded financial aid budget is slightly above the original SRI budget of \$8.75M at this time because of an increase in the number of FTFY (+6.6%) Pell- grant eligible students which added additional demand for need-based financial aid.

The total unfunded institutional discount is 32.69% which is slightly lower than the unfunded institutional discount of 32.75% for Fall 2024. Per student net tuition and fee revenue increased by 2.2% to \$11,509 compared to Fall 2024. Because of the 6.6% increase in the number of FTFY Pell-grant eligible students, the FTFY discount increased from 36.7% to 38.8% and the per student net tuition and fee revenue decreased by 2.4% to \$10,489. The transfer student discount, which is more volatile due to the composition of the smaller entering class, declined to 20.1% from 26.7% for Fall 2024 and the per student net tuition and fee revenue increased by 15.8% to \$12,968.

Since Fall 2023, the new student discount rate has ranged between 35% and 36% after ranging between 37% and 38% between Fall 2019 and 2022. Enrollment management, along with our external partners, will continue

to work to strategically reduce the College's unfunded discount rate to further optimize our financial resources while also meeting institutional enrollment goals.

### **Office of Student Success Services**

Over the summer, the Office of Student Success Services (OS3) supports the advising of all new students and completes an array of preparations for the upcoming academic year. With the sunsetting of the College's Early Alert System (Beacon), they worked closely with Bhargavi Bandi, Director of Enrollment Operations, and Liam Ross, Data Management Administrator, as they built out an early alert module in Slate, the system used by the Office of Admission. This followed a successful pilot program using Slate during the 2024-2025 academic year. The new system is appropriately branded SEAS for the Slate Early Alert System. Over the summer Slate was used to support new student advising and is now being used to support the advising process of all students for the academic year.

OS3 also developed and coordinated the College's first "Meet Us Before You Need Us" program designed to introduce the College's administrative programs and services to our new students to support their awareness of how to "get things done." Eighteen programs and services participated in the program on Friday, September 12 with 192 students participating in the raffle and 874 visits to the tables. OS3 is also organizing the annual "Majors/Minors Fair" will be on Friday, September 19.

With the increase in the number of students from families whose primary language is Spanish, OS3 is working with Marketing and Communication to create Spanish language or bilingual materials for families. They are also investigating options for supporting these families at in-person events. Family members are an important part of the student support system and the College needs to be sure that Spanish speaking families are well served especially as the number of Hispanic/Latino/a students increases at the College.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE  
SEPTEMBER 22, 2025**

**OPEN SESSION  
AGENDA**

**I. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- A. Enrollment Update**
- B. Looking Toward Fall 2026 – Trends, Opportunities, Challenges**

**II. ACTION ITEMS**

- A. None**

**III. INFORMATION ITEMS**

- A. None**

**IV. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

*The Committee does not expect to close a portion of this meeting.*



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

**OPEN SESSION**

**Date Of Meeting: April 29, 2025**

**Status of Minutes: Approved**

**Committee Members Present:** Committee Chair Ray Wernecke, Carlos Alcazar, Judith Fillius '79, President Tuajuanda Jordan, Kim Kelley, Jesse Price '92

**Committee Members Absent:** Anirban Basu, John Bell '95 Board Chair

**Staff Member:** David L. Hautanen, Jr.

**Others Present:** Bhargavi Bandi, Betsy Barreto, Mary Broadwater, Carolyn Curry, Katherine Gantz, Joanne Goldwater, Jerri Howland, Samantha Katz, Robert Maddox '07, Amir Mohammadi, William Roberts, Jacquelyn Rogers-Frere, Caleb Shankle '22, Chuck Steenburgh, David Taylor

**Executive Summary**

Committee Chair Ray Wernecke called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. He noted the robust on-and off-campus recruitment efforts by the Enrollment Management Team during a time of significant change. This was also acknowledged by President Jordan.

Vice President David L. Hautanen Jr. provided an update to the committee on Spring 2025 enrollment and retention.

First-year deposits have increased by 10.6% compared to last year (332 deposits vs. 300 last year, 395 the year before). While May 1, the National Candidate's Reply Date, remains a significant milestone, since the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2024 FAFSA rollout debacle, students' and families' adherence to the deadline has become less rigid. Even though first-year enrollment was tracking ahead of 2024, it was lagging behind 2023, so the Office of Admission began identifying and admitting students from the waitlist in mid-April.

Spring admitted student events included two Admitted Seahawk Days. Four hundred and five admitted students attended the events, and there has been a 4% increase in yield from attendees. There were three off-campus Admitted Student Celebration yield events, and a new "Shadow a Seahawk" program. The Spring Open House event received positive feedback and had 243 prospective students. Additionally, the College is launching a collaboration with other COPLAC institutions for joint recruitment events.

Transfer applications are up 30% (138 this year compared to 107 for Fall 2024 and 95 for Fall 2023), with a 27% increase in transfer deposits compared to last year.

Approximately 800 of the 3,455 applications are from out-of-state applicants, with 48 out-of-state students already enrolled, ten more than last year at this point in time. These students are from California, New Jersey, New England, and Delaware. The Pathway to Honors Program has seen growth, particularly among students from Howard Community College and Prince George's Community College. The program, which was launched in partnership with the College of Southern Maryland, is now open to all Maryland community colleges for the 2025–26 academic year. Future plans include possible expansion to select out-of-state markets. Transfer and counselor outreach events included a campus visit by the Montgomery College Honors Program, the second annual Counselor Voyage (which included ten counselors from various states), and the Transfer Professionals Day with staff from multiple community colleges.

The College's retention initiatives encompass a range of activities, including student engagement, equity programs, academic support, and financial aid. While these strategies were recently commended in the Middle States assessment, specific challenges faced by the DeSousa-Brent Scholars program were noted. Discussion of these challenges was deferred to a future closed session.

Vice President Hautanen concluded his update with Federal Policy and Financial Aid concerns, which include potential federal job losses and economic policies that may impact enrollment and retention. Proposed federal legislation could reduce student loan options, particularly concerning Parent PLUS loans and subsidized loans, while changes to Pell Grant eligibility and the introduction of workforce Pell Grants could alter financial aid distribution. During this legislative session, there has been talk about the implementation of a 2% flat interest rate for all student loans. The college is closely monitoring these potential impacts and will be adjusting its admission and aid strategies as more is known. Currently, only 15% of families use Parent PLUS loans, and the default rate for students on student loans is 0%. The College's average student loan debt of \$21,000 is below federal limits, positioning the College well for the proposed risk-sharing frameworks.

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## **ACTION ITEM II. A RECOMMENDATION TO REVISE THE COLLEGE POLICY ON STUDENT CLASSIFICATION FOR ADMISSION AND TUITION PURPOSES**

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The Admission and Financial Aid Committee recommends approval of the revised policy on Student Residency Classification for Admission, Tuition Charge, and Differential Purposes to the St. Mary's College of Maryland Policy on Student Classification for Admission and Tuition Purposes.

**RATIONALE:**

The current policy on Student Residency Classification for Admission, Tuition Charge, and Differential Purposes was revised to clarify the residency appeals process.

On a motion by Trustee Kelley and a second by Trustee Alcazar, a vote was taken, and the action item was unanimously approved by all committee members present.

No additional information items or discussions were raised. Following a motion and a second, Chair Wernecke concluded the session at 3:48 p.m.