

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND**

**AGENDA**

*(A portion of this meeting will be held in closed session.)*

February 20, 2026

9:00 a.m.

*Glendenning Hall Annex  
St. Mary's City, Maryland*

- |       |  |                             |
|-------|--|-----------------------------|
| I.    | Call to Order (9:00 a.m.)  | <i>John Bell '95</i>        |
| II.   | Approval of the Agenda   | <i>John Bell '95</i>        |
| III.  | Board Chair's Report   | <i>John Bell '95</i>        |
|       | A. Action Item 2526-10: Approval of October 2025 Minutes   |                             |
|       | B. Action Item 2526-11: Approval of December 2025 Minutes  |                             |
| IV.   | President's Report (9:05 a.m.)   | <i>President Phillips</i>   |
| V.    | Subcommittee on Athletics and Recreation (9:15 a.m.)   | <i>Elizabeth Graves '95</i> |
|       |  | <i>President Phillips</i>   |
| VI.   | Technology, Buildings, and Grounds Committee (9:25 a.m.)   | <i>Donny Bryan '73</i>      |
|       | A. Marine Vessel Construction Progress   |                             |
|       | B. Historic St. Mary's City Report   | <i>Tim Heely</i>            |
| VII.  | Finance, Investment, and Audit Committee (9:35 a.m.)   | <i>Nicolas Abrams '99</i>   |
|       | <i>(A portion of this meeting will be held in closed session)</i>                                |                             |
|       | A. Action Item 2526-12: Acceptance of the FY25 Auditor's Report and Audited Financial Statements |                             |
|       | B. Action Item 2526-13: Approval of the FY27 Plant Fund Budget                                   |                             |
|       | C. Action Item 2526-14: Approval of the FY27 Tuition, Fees, Room and Board                       |                             |
|       | D. Action Item 2526-15: Approval of Residence Hall Modernization                                 |                             |
|       | E. ERP and Student Information Systems Working Group   | <i>Eileen Petula</i>        |
| VIII. | Academic Affairs Committee (10:20 a.m.)  | <i>Kim Kelley</i>           |
|       | <i>(A portion of this meeting will be held in closed session)</i>                                |                             |
|       | A. Provost and Dean of Faculty Report  |                             |
|       | B. Action Item 2526-16: Approval of the Research and Sponsored Program Policy                    | <i>Kim Kelley</i>           |
|       | C. Faculty Senate President Report   | <i>Todd Eberly</i>          |

- IX. Admission and Financial Aid Committee (10:45 a.m.)  
A. Enrollment Update  
*Antoinette Coleman*  
*David Hautanen*
- X. Campus Life Committee (11:05 a.m.)  
A. Vice President for Student Affairs Report  
B. Student Trustee Report  
*Nick Abrams '99*  
*Jerri Howland*  
*Summer LaRocco '26*
- XI. Working Group on Housing and Campus Planning (11:25 a.m.) *Judy Fillius '79*
- XII. Government Affairs Update (11:45 a.m.) *Aaron Tomarchio '96*
- XIII. Tour of Caroline Residence Hall (12:00 p.m.)
- XIV. Break (12:25 p.m.)
- XV. Institutional Advancement Committee (1:35 p.m.)  
A. Foundation Board Update  
B. Alumni Council Report  
C. Inauguration Planning  
*Judy Fillius '79*  
*Dan Shiffman '91*  
*Kate Fritz '04*  
*Stephen McDaniel*
- XVI. Motion to Close the Meeting  
*John Bell '95*

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
TECHNOLOGY, BUILDINGS, AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

**HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY COMMISSION REPORT**

Projects Under Development or Requiring Initiation

- Education & Artisan Center (Part I and II): HSMC received \$75,000 in the Governor's FY2027 budget to retain a third-party consultant to facilitate preparation of Part II.
- Leonard Calvert House: Currently in an extensive archaeological phase.
- Collections and Maintenance Building: Included on the FY2028 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) docket.
- Liberty of Conscience Exhibit
- 1634 St. Mary's Fort
- Shuttle System (Design and Implementation)
- ADA Pathways and Wayfinding Signage: Actively underway in coordination with DGS.

Stalled Projects

- Farthings Ordinary Public Restrooms: Approved at the January 2, 2026 BPW meeting. The DGS Project Manager has advised that an additional three weeks are required to complete internal processing and documentation.
- State House Public Restrooms: Currently on hold due to insufficient funding to complete the project.

DGS-Led Infrastructure Remediation

Mold Remediation Projects (Target Completion: September 2026)

- Hammett House: Mold damage has proven significantly more extensive than initially estimated. The structure has been fully gutted. Substantial water intrusion, termite infestation, and pervasive mold contamination are being comprehensively addressed.
- Administration Building: Mold remediation and renovation commenced January 2026. Administrative personnel have been temporarily relocated to the Inn at Brome Howard. Early findings necessitate removal of the exterior brick façade and full replacement of subflooring throughout due to extensive mold deterioration.
- PR Building: Foundation stabilization and mold remediation are underway, with

anticipated completion in April 2026. The foundation has been reinforced and sealed to prevent further water intrusion. Windows and doors have been replaced, and a new roof installed. Remaining work includes replacement of the HVAC system and complete demolition and replacement of ductwork due to severe mold infestation.

- Inn at Brome Howard: Mold remediation and renovation were completed in December 2025.

#### Farthings Ordinary Renovation:

- Mold remediation and kitchen renovation for Angelika's Kitchen were completed February 13, 2026.
- Overall renovation, overseen by the DGS Project Management Team in coordination with HSMC Facilities, achieved substantial completion February 13, 2026, with occupancy by Angelika's Kitchen scheduled for March 1, 2026.
- Angelika's Kitchen will feature a microbrewery—Jubilee Farm—operating from Farthings Ordinary, offering handcrafted beer, wine, non-alcoholic and alcoholic selections, alongside artisanal cuisine.

#### Maryland Heritage Interpretive Center (MHIC)

The MHIC project is currently more than two years behind schedule. Delays have resulted from significant design deficiencies in foundation, mechanical, and electrical plans; contractor workforce limitations; supply chain disruptions; inconsistent procurement practices; and construction errors requiring corrective rework.

Substantial construction completion is now projected for January 25, 2026. Exhibit fabrication and multimedia production are anticipated to be substantially complete by July 2026, with a targeted public opening in late July 2026.

#### Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) Collaboration

- The Maryland Stadium Authority has retained HANBURY for a \$250,000 feasibility study assessing the viability of a hotel and conference center at HSMC, likely located off Kohut Road.
- MSA and HANBURY anticipate convening HSMC and SMCM leadership, community representatives, and local elected officials in March 2026 to review study findings and solicit input regarding design, layout, amenities, and overall vision.

#### Rental Homes: Deferred Maintenance Crisis

- Comprehensive deficiency reports for all fourteen rental homes have been submitted to DBM.
- DBM has declined financial support, citing reluctance to fund income-producing properties.

- The homes remain largely unrentable due to mold contamination, structural deficiencies, and decades of deferred maintenance.
- Ongoing utility costs (electric and fuel) remain elevated, diverting limited maintenance staff from core institutional priorities.
- Westerly House: Located adjacent to Chancellor's Point and formerly the residence of Dr. Regina Faden. Recently received a new roof, gutters, and downspouts through DGS. These improvements will slow deterioration while additional funding is pursued for comprehensive interior and exterior restoration.
- Hogaboom House: Adjacent to the HSMC Visitor Center and currently in rentable condition, although mold presence has been identified—an unsurprising circumstance for waterfront properties in St. Mary's County.

Historic St. Mary's City remains steadfast in advancing these critical capital and infrastructure initiatives despite the cumulative impact of deferred maintenance, constrained resources, and state funding limitations. We will continue to work collaboratively with SMCM, DBM, DGS, MSA, and other partners to preserve, strengthen, and enhance Maryland's first capital for the benefit of the citizens of the State.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
FINANCE, INVESTMENT, AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**ACTION ITEM 2526–12**

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE FY25 AUDIT REPORT AND APPROVAL  
OF THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The Finance, Investment, and Audit Committee recommends that the St. Mary's College of Maryland Board of Trustees accept the FY25 auditor's report and the audited financial statements of the College.

**RATIONALE**

Statements reflecting the financial transactions and position of the College for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, reflecting the GASB 34, 35, 87, 96 and 101 reporting requirements. The independent firm of SB & Company, LLC, whose report and opinion are included in the document, has audited these statements. To provide evidence that the statements have been provided to, and approved by, the Board of Trustees, the Committee is asked to recommend acceptance of the financial statements by the St. Mary's College of Maryland Board of Trustees.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
FINANCE, INVESTMENT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**ACTION ITEM 2526–13**

**APPROVAL OF THE FY27 PLANT FUND BUDGET**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The Finance, Investment, and Audit Committee recommends approval by the Board of Trustees, contingent upon a favorable endorsement by the Technology, Buildings and Grounds Committee, of the proposed FY27 plant fund budget in the amount of \$1.62M. The primary source of funding comes from the student facility fee.

**RATIONALE**

The Technology, Buildings, and Grounds Committee is charged with the responsibility to establish priorities for capital projects. A cost breakdown by priority categories and a listing of FY27 plant projects is provided.

**ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND**  
**FY27 PLANT PROJECT "A" PRIORITY LIST**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>
<b><u>CAPITAL PROJECTS</u></b>	
Schaefer Hall - Renovation & Expansion Programming	100,000
Campus Wide - Exterior Signage Improvements (Phase 3)	280,000
Calvert Hall - Entrance Automatic Doors	50,000
Calvert Hall - Renovate 1st Floor Restrooms	23,940
<b>TOTAL COST OF CAPITAL PROJECTS</b>	<b>453,940</b>
<b><u>MAINTENANCE &amp; REPAIR</u></b>	
Miscellaneous maintenance and repair projects - unknown	30,000
Campus Wide - Roof repairs	40,000
Campus Wide - Building Automation	20,000
Campus Wide - ADA Automatic Doors	10,000
Campus Wide - Parking Lot Repairs/Maintenance	20,000
Library - AHU 6 replacement	400,000
PG Hall - Chilled Water Pump/Motor Repair	10,000
Campus Center - Chilled Water Pump and Motor Replacement	10,000
<b>TOTAL COST OF MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR PROJECTS</b>	<b>540,000</b>
<b><u>PROGRAM SUPPORT</u></b>	
Goodpaster Hall - Laboratory - Card Reader Installation	10,000
Goodpaster Hall - Computational Chemistry Research Lab	50,000
Kent Hall - Replace Carpet in Three Office	7,500
Schaefer Hall - Floor Remediation in SH201-205	15,000
Ethel Chance Hall - Reception Window	2,000
Ethel Chance Hall - Lab Pass-Through Box	1,500
Margaret Brent Hall - First Floor Bathroom Reflooring	5,000
ARC - Pool Heat Exchangers	30,000
ARC - Screen and Reseal Arena	45,000
ARC - 25m Pool Pump	10,000
Admission - Renovation of 2nd Bathroom at Welcome Center	10,000
Admission - Exterior Lighting	15,000
Calvert Hall - Rear Retaining Wall Project	50,000
<b>TOTAL COST OF PROGRAM SUPPORT PROJECTS</b>	<b>251,000</b>
<b><u>RESIDENCE HALL RENEWAL PROGRAM</u></b>	
Miscellaneous residence hall repairs	30,000
Townhomes Greens - Complete Painting	90,000
Waring Commons - Mattress Replacement	55,000
Crescents - New Furniture Phase 3	200,000
<b>TOTAL COST OF RESIDENCE HALL PROJECTS</b>	<b>375,000</b>
<b>TOTAL COST OF PRIORITY "A" PROJECTS</b>	<b>1,619,940</b>



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
FINANCE, INVESTMENT, AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**ACTION ITEM 2526-14**

**APPROVAL OF THE FY27 TUITION, FEES, ROOM, AND BOARD RATES**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The Finance, Investment, and Audit Committee recommends approval of a 3% increase in tuition, mandatory fees, room, and board (dining) rates for FY27 (academic year 2026–2027), including the addition of a restricted Technology Fee of \$100 per student, per semester, as part of the mandatory fees. This action applies to Maryland resident undergraduate students, non-resident undergraduate students, DC resident undergraduate students, part-time students, and MAT students.

The Technology Fee will be restricted and used solely to support student-facing and academic technology services, including instructional and academic technology, core digital student services, cybersecurity and compliance requirements, student information systems, and enhancements to the digital student experience.

**RATIONALE**

The Board of Trustees is the authorizing body for setting student tuition, fees, room, and board rates. Based on inflationary impacts, and the need to continue to support the advancement of academic programs, the College recommends adjusting the charges for tuition, fees, room and board accordingly.

Total Charges for FY27:

- In-state tuition, fees, room, and board = \$32,520
- Out-of-state tuition, fees, room, and board = \$49,575
- DC resident tuition, fees, room, and board = \$42,520
- Graduate MAT program costs = \$22,900

**Academic Year 2026/2027 Student Rates**  
**Annual, Unless Noted**  
**Proposed 3% Increase + Addition of Mandatory Technology Fee**

	<b>Academic Year 26-27 FY27</b>
<b>Description</b>	
Tuition: Full-time, In-State	\$12,855
In-State, Part-Time	\$360
DC Resident	\$22,855
DC Resident Part-Time	\$360
Tuition: Full-time, Out-of-State	\$29,910
Out-of-State Part-Time	\$490
Tuition Overload, Undergrad > 19 Credits Variable by Residency Status	Variable
Tuition: Graduate MAT (includes summer credits)	\$17,535
Room: Residence Hall, Double Occupancy	\$9,185
Room: Residence Hall, Triple Occupancy	\$9,185
Room: Suite	\$9,830
Room: Suite, Single	\$10,390
Room: Residence Hall, Single Occupancy	\$10,390
Room: Apartment Style Single	\$11,020
Room: Apartment Style Double	\$10,855
Room: Townhouse	\$11,250
Platinum: Anytime Dining, 64 guest passes, \$800 Dining Dollars	\$7,560
Gold: Anytime Dining, 40 Guest Passes, \$600 Dining Dollars	\$7,275
Silver: Anytime Dining, 24 Guest Passes, \$400 Dining Dollars	\$6,990
250 Meal Credits, \$600 Dining Dollars	\$4,810
150 Meal Credits, \$600 Dining Dollars	\$3,560
Flex Plan: 20 Meal Credits, \$800 Dining Dollars	\$1,510
Mandatory Fee: Full-Time Resident and Non-Resident	\$3,490
Program Fee: Graduate MAT	\$1,875
<b>Annual Full-time Student Charges</b>	
In-State, Commuter (Tuition/Fees)	\$16,345
In-State, Residence Hall (Tuition/Fees/Room/Board) *1	\$32,520
In-State, First-Year Residence Hall (Tuition/Fees/Room/Board) *2	\$32,520
DC Resident, First-Year Residence Hall (Tuition/Fees/Room/Board)	\$42,520
Out-of-State, Commuter (Tuition/Fees)	\$33,400
Out-of-State, Residence Hall (Tuition/Fees/Room/Board) *1	\$49,575
Out-of-State, First-Year Residence Hall (Tuition/Fees/Room/Board) *2	\$49,575
Tuition & Fees, In-State Residence Hall	\$16,345
Tuition & Fees, Out-of-State Residence Hall	\$33,400
MAT Graduate Student Program Cost: Tuition + Mandatory Fee + Program Fee	\$22,900

Note \*1: Using Silver Board Plans

Note \*2: Using Silver Board Plan, students must choose a Platinum / Gold / Silver plan

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
FINANCE, INVESTMENT, AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**ACTION ITEM 2526-15**

**APPROVAL OF RESIDENCE HALL MODERNIZATION**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The Finance, Investment, and Audit Committee recommends approval by the Board of Trustees of the Summer FY26 Residence Hall Modernization Project, thus authorizing administration to proceed with the modernization of Caroline Hall.

**RATIONALE**

As part of the institution's multi-year Residence Hall Modernization Plan, significant upgrades are being completed on a rotating summer cycle to address deferred maintenance, improve student living conditions, and modernize aging facilities.

During Summer FY25, the institution successfully completed the full modernization of Prince George Hall, which included updates to finishes, bathrooms, flooring, etc. This project was delivered on schedule and within the approved budget, resulting in improved residential satisfaction and reduced maintenance demands. The remaining updates to Prince George include updates to the mechanical, electrical and sprinkler systems, which will be completed as funds become available.

The next phase of the modernization plan focuses on Caroline Hall, which continues to serve a large portion of residential students and requires upgrades to address outdated interior finishes, bathrooms, flooring, etc. Completing this work during Summer FY26 will ensure that the residence hall is fully operational for fall occupancy and aligns with the institution's long-term facilities renewal strategy.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**ACTION ITEM 2526-16**

**APPROVAL OF THE RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAM POLICY**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The Academic Affairs Committee recommends approval of the proposed Research and Sponsored Program Policy by the Board of Trustees.

**RATIONALE**

In Pillar I.A of the Rising Tide, the College set the goal to develop three to five new programs by fall 2024 and to implement at least two new programs by fall 2026. In summer 2024, faculty steering committees developed four new programs for possible inclusion in our curriculum. Following a thorough review by shared governance and upon the recommendation of the faculty, and approval by the President, the two aforementioned programs have met the requirements for new program creation and seek Board approval. Supporting information regarding the two programs and the administrative logistics, curriculum, resource needs and timeline is included in the attachment.



**Policy Title: Faculty and Staff Release for Sponsored Research Participation Policy**

**Statement:** St. Mary's College of Maryland allows eligible faculty and professional staff to be released from a portion of their contracted duties to participate in externally funded research and sponsored programs. This policy establishes eligibility, procedures, and budgetary requirements for requesting and approving release time, ensuring compliance with institutional, state, and federal guidelines.

**Responsible College Administrator:** Provost and Dean of Faculty

**Effective Date:** October 1, 2025

**Date of Last Review/Update:** October 1, 2025

**Responsible College Office:** Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

*(The information provided above will be shown on the front pages of the Policy Website. The following information will be found at the web location for each policy)*

**Audience:**

This policy applies to full-time tenured, tenure track and lecturer positions as well as professional staff with academic or 12-month appointments who participate in externally funded sponsored research at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

**Purpose of the Policy:**

This policy provides a framework for faculty and professional staff to obtain release from teaching or other contractual duties to engage in research and scholarly activities funded through grants, contracts, or other sponsored agreements. It ensures clarity around eligibility, procedural steps, and budgetary considerations related to release time, while maintaining compliance with relevant institutional, state, and federal policies (e.g., the Uniform Guidance and Code of Federal Regulations). It addresses how release time is calculated, approved, and recorded.

**Procedures:****A. Background:**

- a. Full-time tenure, tenure-track and lecturer positions and professional staff, including administrative faculty, may request release time from their regular duties to participate in sponsored research or other program activities.
- b. Release time is distinct from professional leave, which is generally granted when a faculty member is released from all academic duties (teaching, scholarship, and service) for the purpose of pursuing a scholarly project or fellowship.
- c. Funds associated with release time are managed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Dean of Faculty and are typically reinvested within the College to support instructional faculty in covering the workload left vacant by the member's release.
- d. Full-time tenure, tenure-track, and lecturer teaching loads are typically equivalent to 8 course equivalents per academic year. The format may vary, including a 3-3 format with expectations of one additional course equivalent of scholarly activity and service each semester, or a 4-4 format where service and research expectations are reduced. The College recognizes that, in some cases, significant scholarly work may require a reduction in teaching load. In such instances, faculty members may request a reduced teaching load during their regular academic year appointment, allowing them to be "released" from part of their teaching duties to focus on research or other assigned responsibilities, while continuing to receive their regular full-time salary.

**B. Application:**

- a. Faculty requesting release time must be tenure-tracked or tenured.

- b. Faculty with a 10-month and 11-month appointment may request release time when working on sponsored work during the academic year (fall and/or spring semester), allowing them to charge the grant for their release.
- c. Faculty with 10-month and 11-month appointments may charge grants for time spent on research participation during their off-contract period, as permitted by the Code of Federal Regulations.
- d. Faculty and professional staff with a 12-month appointment may only participate in sponsored research by following the formal release time process.

C. Release Time Allocation:

- a. Cost Calculation for 10-month and 11-month employees: The standard method for calculating the cost of a course release, in line with federal regulations, is based on the faculty member's base salary rather than the replacement cost for a course. A full-time faculty teaching load is typically equivalent to 8 course equivalents per academic year. This can be structured in one of two common formats: a 4:4 format (four courses each semester, with reduced expectations for service and scholarly activity) or a 3:3 format (three courses each semester, with one additional course equivalent per semester assigned for service and/or scholarly activity). In both formats, the total workload equals 8 course equivalents per year. One course release is equal to 12.5% (1/8) of the faculty member's annual institutional base salary (IBS), plus applicable fringe benefits. For example, a faculty member with a base salary of \$65,000 would request \$8,125 for the release, plus on-contract fringe benefits (~38%) of \$3,088, totaling \$11,213 for one course buy-out.
- b. Cost Calculations for 12-Month employees: The standard method outlined by federal regulations is followed to calculate the cost of a release for a 12-month employee. This method is based on the faculty member or professional staff's base salary rather than the replacement cost of an equivalent course. In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, the release buyout can be charged to the grant. For 12-month employees, the amount of release time is determined at the discretion of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). For example, if one month of release buyout is approved, the grant will be charged 8.333% (1/12) of the annual institutional base salary (IBS), plus associated on-contract fringe benefits. If the employee is approved for more than one month, the percentage should be adjusted accordingly.

CI. Approval Process for Release Time:

- a. Office of Research & Sponsored Programs (ORSP):  
The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs assists with budgeting

the buyout in the proposal and ensures that the release time is properly accounted for in the grant proposal.

- b. Faculty Member/Professional Staff: Once budget estimates are confirmed by ORSP, the faculty member completes the Course Buyout/Release Request Form, which includes a detailed description of the project's scope, sponsor funding, and requested release time (semester(s) and year(s) of requested release). This form is forwarded to the program chair for recommendation.
- c. Program Chair: The chair reviews the release request in the context of the external grant application and recommends either support or non-support. The Course Buyout/Release Request is then forwarded, along with the chair's recommendation, to the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs (AVPAA).
- d. Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs: The Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs reviews the request to ensure it aligns with the faculty or staff member's workload and institutional priorities and may provide clarification or adjustments as needed. The AVPAA then forwards the Course Buyout/Release Request to the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) with a recommendation for support or non-support. The VPAA has final approval authority for all release time requests.
- e. Once approved, the form will be kept on file in the ORSP, AVPAA, and Chair Offices during the grant submission and review processes. Faculty are required to complete the Course Buyout/Release Form prior to grant submission.
- f. If the grant or sponsored activity is funded, ORSP will re-circulate the Course Buyout/Release Form, noting the award, through the appropriate offices to ensure all parties have a record of the funding.

E. Frequency:

- a. Release time is granted at the discretion of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The primary responsibility of college faculty is to provide a consistent and high-quality educational experience. Approval is neither automatic nor guaranteed; each release time request will be evaluated individually, considering the needs of the program, the College's overall academic and institutional priorities, availability of funds, and the needs of the faculty/professional staff member.

F. Restrictions and Limitations:

- a. Faculty with a 10-month appointment may use their two months outside their contractual period (June and July) for research or sponsored activity, subject to approval.



- b. Faculty with an 11-month appointment may use their one month outside their contractual period (June or July) for research or sponsored activity, subject to approval.
- c. Faculty and professional staff with a 12-month appointment may only participate in sponsored research through the formal release time process. The total time spent on their normal duties, combined with any release time, cannot exceed 12 months for grant charging purposes.

**Sanctions:**

Failure to follow the required procedures for seeking release time or requesting course buyouts in advance may result in the College declining to honor the request. Retroactive approvals may not be granted, and faculty or staff may instead be required to fulfill their full contractual responsibilities.

Charging grant funds for unapproved or unsupported release time is not permitted under this policy. All release time or course buyouts must be formally requested, reviewed, and approved through the appropriate channels prior to submission of the grant proposal or commencement of the sponsored activity.

**Definitions:**

- A. Release Time: The approved time granted by the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Dean of Faculty for eligible faculty members and professional staff to engage in research, scholarly activities, or sponsored programs.
- B. Academic Year Appointments:
  - a. 10-month Appointment: Faculty with professional responsibilities from August 1 to May 31.
  - b. 11-month Appointment: Faculty with professional responsibilities from July 1 to May 31 or from August 1 to June 30.
  - c. 12-month Appointment: Faculty or professional staff with responsibilities from July 1 to June 30.
- C. Sponsored Research Course Release: Funding provided by a sponsor to release a faculty member from contractual duties to focus on a sponsored project, covering the equivalent cost of the release time.
- D. Course Buyout: A course buyout funded by extramural funding refers to the process by which a faculty member reduces their teaching load by one or more courses, with the cost of the buyout covered by an external grant or sponsored agreement. The external sponsor provides funding to cover the faculty member's salary during the buyout period, allowing the faculty member to focus on research or other scholarly activities.

**Hyperlinks**

1. [Office of Research & Sponsored Programs \(ORSP\)](#)
2. [Uniform Guidance \(2 CFR 200\)](#)
3. [SMCM Faculty Handbook](#)
4. [Course Buyout/Release Request Form](#)

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**PROVOST AND DEAN OF FACULTY'S REPORT**

**Charge**

The Academic Affairs committee shall: 1) receive and consider recommendations of the President for appointments, promotions, and dismissals to and from the faculty; 2) consider all major plans for and changes in the curricular policies and organization when presented by the President; and 3) recommend to the Board of Trustees the adoption, modification, or rejection of proposals emanating from the faculty, as proposed by the President.

**Unit Mission**

Academic Affairs works to cultivate a rigorous and equitable academic environment where the St.Mary's College community thrives.

Below, I offer an update on multiple facets of our work supporting faculty excellence and innovative educational experiences: the FY27 faculty search season, an overview of new integrations into the Academic Affairs division, an update on the proposed Master of Counseling and Clinical Psychology, and on achievements supporting the Rising Tide.

**I. Hiring Updates** Below is the status of our searches to date.

Art (art education)	COMPLETED
Business Administration (financial accounting)	IN PROGRESS
Biology (developmental biology, cluster hire)	FAILED
Biology (microbiology, cluster hire)	COMPLETED
Chemistry (analytical chemistry, cluster hire)	COMPLETED
Economics	IN PROGRESS
International Languages and Cultures (Spanish)	COMPLETED
Marine Science	COMPLETED
Neuroscience	COMPLETED
Political Science (international relations)	COMPLETED

In the case of the failed search in Biology, the one-year visitor has been retained for a second year to ensure curricular continuity. Hiring will continue through the academic year; as is our practice, the committee will be updated on our progress at each meeting.

## II. Newly integrated units in Academic Affairs

President Phillips has continued her reorganization plans with the goal of reassigning and integrating selected offices from other divisions in a way that brings cohesion, efficiencies, and excitement in support of the student experience. These processes have brought some exciting changes to report in Academic Affairs. These newly-integrated offices in our division include:

- Inclusive Excellence and Belonging (AVP now reports to the president and provost)
- Honors Society Caucus (three additional collegiate honors societies to be added to our existing chapter of Phi Beta Kappa)
- Office of Student Success Services (OS3; reassigned from Enrollment Management)
- Student scholar cohorts (DeSousa-Brent, Sum Primus, Landers, and Monument Scholars; now collectively overseen by Academic Affairs)

In pulling together the functions of student support with academic achievement, this integration has taken pains to avoid inadvertently implying a distinction between "remedial" functions for some students (advising and mentoring) and "honors" functions for others (scholars groups, honors societies). Instead, the most significant shift in Academic Affairs will be **the formation of "Compass," an integrated unit of student support offices** and staff dedicated to academic success and leadership guidance for *every* SMCM student. Accordingly, the mission of Compass will be **"Purpose, Progress, and Distinction."**

There are two main branches to the new Compass unit: Navigation and Access (Registrar; Office of Student Success Services; Inclusion and Belonging) and Strategic Academic Initiatives (National Fellowships and Awards; Health Sciences Advisory; International Education; Honors Society Caucus).

The implementation of Compass is being achieved with zero net increase in administrative positions. Through a strategic reorganization of Academic Affairs, I have distributed the Associate Provost's existing duties among our current team, allowing her to dedicate her primary focus to overseeing the new unit. This partnership ensures both cost-efficiency and the senior-level oversight required for an effective rollout. I will maintain an active role in the unit's development to guarantee a seamless integration.

As we position the College for a future defined by increased competition and evolving student needs, our administrative structures are moving beyond traditional silos toward a more integrated, student-centered model. Academic Affairs offices outside of Compass have also been reorganized; by grouping our specialized advising offices—National Fellowships, Pre-Health, and International Education—into a unit focused on **Strategic Academic Initiatives**, and unifying our Library, Writing Center, and Gallery under a single unit known as the **Library and Collections**, we are creating a more intuitive and powerful support network. This transition

ensures that our resources are not just accessible to students, but are actively working in concert to foster the interdisciplinary skills, global perspectives, and professional readiness required for their long-term growth and success.

The remainder of the spring semester will be dedicated to bringing the new offices into conversation with Academic Affairs, with a focus on building trust, and in my May report, I'll offer our preliminary take-aways from the Phase 1 efforts, and draft plans for how we will approach the Phase 2 work.

### **III. Update on proposed MACCP program**

Following the Board's approval of the proposed Master in Counseling and Clinical Psychology, work began immediately on the final stage of review by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). Per their protocol, our Letter of Intent giving notification of our plans to put forward the program was submitted on January 2, 2026. MHEC has indicated they are still making their way through the January submissions; subsequently, our Letter will be posted for public comment for 30 days.

In the interim, program chair Libby Williams is drafting the full MHEC proposal, which may be submitted with MHEC's approval following the 30-day commenting period. The Board will be apprised as we progress through these milestones.

### **IV. Progress in fulfilling the Rising Tide**

As we approach the end of the Rising Tide, 2023-2026, Academic Affairs has been actively pursuing several objectives, particularly those outlined in Pillars I and II. Below are some brief updates of work in support of the strategic plan.

**Under Pillar I** ("Create an innovative, distinctive and competitive academic identity that attracts and retains talented students, faculty and staff"):

- A. **National Fellowships and Awards Office:** For the second year in a row, SMCM has much to be proud of in our support of students competing for national awards. Director Jennifer Cognard-Black worked with nine students this summer on the Fulbright mentoring and drafting process. We learned this week that four of those nine have been selected as Semi-Finalists.

As semifinalists, these SMCM students and alumni have been recommended by the National Screening Committee for final consideration by the host country for a Fulbright award. Recipients of the highly competitive Fulbright grants are selected based on academic and professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields. All semifinalists will be notified of their final award status this spring.

The four semi-finalists who are moving forward are:

- Bechorah Aguoru ('26): research award to Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland PhD

- Tyler Campbell ('26): English Teaching Assistant to Moldova
- Nicole Gibson ('26): English Teaching Assistant to Spain
- Allison Thress ('26): English Teaching Assistant to Colombia

- B. **Acquisition of a Bloomberg Terminal:** By way of Strategic Plan funds, SMCM has initiated a two-year lease for our first Bloomberg Terminal, for use by the Business Administration program. Faculty have already begun integrating the terminal—both its functions and its hands-on use—into our classes.
- C. **Data Science:** In its first semester, our new program in Data Science has already attracted 10 minors. We continue to track its progress, and the program will be formally included in the Program Snapshot review next year.
- D. **Globalization at Home:** This initiative has funded pedagogical activities for two courses in the last year. The Asian Studies program has been at the forefront of co-curricular activities that broaden students' understanding of diverse international cultures for years. These activities engage with multiple classes, make the campus a resource for community members, and provide student leadership opportunities. Strategic Plan funds have supported campus celebrations for Diwali; Holi; Eid; Lunar New Year; and a day trip to Washington D.C.'s Chinatown District). In an upper-level French course, our students took a day trip to Citadel Creole Cuisine in Silver Spring, Maryland, a Haitian restaurant that is also Haitian owned and operated. This trip also connected with the instructor's ongoing research project and relationships he is building with the Haitian community and a Haitian professional organization in D.C. This event has inspired student interest in engaging with the Francophone, Caribbean, and African communities in the DMV and Maryland more broadly.
- E. **Wellness in the Curriculum:** This fall, Dr. Libby Williams taught the inaugural class of "Measuring Well-being." Her students presented research posters to the campus community during our third annual LiveWell day. In addition, Professor of Neuroscience Aileen Bailey was granted funding to develop our second credit-bearing course on this subject, studying the closely interrelated impact of the body and brain on wellness. The course is set to be taught in fall 2026.
- F. **Student Leader Training Opportunity:** This academic year (AY25/26), the ENST department launched environmental action-research workshops for high school youth, piloting their "Youth Resilience Leaders" program. Four SMCM student interns shaped and developed the curriculum for the workshops, and conducted outreach to Great Mills High School. Through peer- and co-mentoring, our students had the opportunity to work with nine high school students on shared and pressing community challenges, such as environmental conservation, food insecurity, reforestation, and water quality.

**Under Pillar II** ("Empower all students for success.):

**G. Key opportunities to fulfill the Honors College Promise.**

- Eleven student research assistants have been paired with faculty to support accomplished scientists with their current research.

- b. Eight students so far have applied for subsidies to travel and present their research and capstone work at regional and national conferences.
- c. Seven students enrolled in our LEAD Inquiries received recognition for their “Outstanding Learning Portfolio.” Three of them are using the accompanying stipend to subsidize a related study abroad or internship experience.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**PRESIDENT OF THE FACULTY SENATE'S REPORT  
February 12, 2025**

**Introduction**

The Spring semester promises to be a busy one as we work through ongoing problems with Anthology, move forward with our shared governance review, and work toward compliance with Title II digital accessibility standards. Mother Nature was kind enough to send us an icy covered curveball at the start of the Spring Semester resulting in the campus being closed during the second week of classes. The Faculty Senate passed a resolution of appreciation for staff who worked tirelessly through the ice, snow, and cold, particularly Physical Plant and food services (Bon Appetit), and played a crucial role in maintaining campus facilities and safety.

**President Phillips First 100 Days and Beyond**

In November 2025, the Pulse Survey asked faculty several questions regarding President Phillips Listening Sessions and Campus Initiatives. Fully 86% of respondents said they attended one of President Phillips' listening sessions and 97% found them to be beneficial and 97% said they'd like for there to be more such sessions in the future. With regard to the president's new campus initiatives, 96%% said the Shared Governance Workgroup was Very Important/Important. For the Space Advisory Committee, 91% said it was Very Important/Important. Regarding the Campus Budget Advisory Committee, 94% said that it was Very Important/Important.

**Shared Governance**

Although the Shared Governance statement was presented to the Board Governance committee, I felt that the work warranted a reference in this report as well. In Fall 2025, President Rhonda Phillips convened a Shared Governance Working Group of individuals representing the Board of the Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students to create a statement and recommendations for shared governance at St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) – incorporating best practices and capturing our traditions and special status in the State's higher education system. As the first step in this process, the Working Group has drafted a Statement on Shared Governance, which articulates the guiding and operating principles for shared governance within our community.

The definition of shared governance relied upon by the Working Group derives from the joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (1966), which was crafted by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (ABG), and which is generally considered the foundational definition of shared governance in higher education. Specifically, the



Statement notes that the “variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among [the College’s] governing board, faculty, students, and others.” In addition to shared responsibility, AAUP policy describes the roles of various constituencies in the following ways:

*“The role of the governing board is to ensure that the institution stays true to its mission, to play a major role in ensuring that the institution has the financial resources it needs to operate successfully, to possess final decision-making authority, and to entrust the conduct of administration to the administrative officers.*

*The role of the president is to be the chief executive officer of the institution, to ensure that the operation of the institution conforms to the policies set forth by the governing board and to sound academic practice, to provide institutional leadership, to make sure there is effective communication between components of the institution, and to represent the institution to its many publics.*

*The role of the faculty is to have primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. The responsibility for faculty status includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal.”*

To guide their understanding of shared governance at St. Mary’s College of Maryland, the Working Group relied on the College’s foundational documents. These include the College’s legislative charter, which vests the “responsibility for the governance, care, control, and management of the College” in the Board of Trustees, the College Bylaws, and the SMCM Faculty Bylaws, which further describe the faculty’s primary responsibility over matters of curriculum, methods of instruction, research, and faculty status.

The working group agreed at their first meeting that their first priority should be the creation of a Statement of Principles on Shared Governance agreed to by all stakeholders and that, upon approval, should serve as the foundation for action items. A draft statement of principles was developed and presented to all stakeholders for approval. The Staff Senate will approve on behalf of the staff, the SGA on behalf of students, and the full faculty on behalf of the faculty. The Faculty Senate approved the draft statement in January and it will be presented to the full faculty on February 9th. The Governance Committee of the Board voted to send the statement to the full Board at the February Board Meeting. All Board members should have a copy of the statement.

### **Anthology Student**

Anthology continues to be a major problem for students and faculty and we are pleased that the Board has approved a plan to address the problems. In the November 2025 Pulse Survey, nearly 84% of faculty said that Anthology has lessened their confidence in advising either a lot (44.5%) or little (39%). Nearly as many, 83%, say that it has increased the time and resources needed to prepare for advising either a lot (78%) or a little (5%). When asked about advising meetings with students, 78.5% said that Anthology has increased the time and resources needed during their actual meeting with students for advising by a lot (61%) or a little (17.5%) and 85% reported that it has made it more difficult for students to make their own academic plans a lot (67.5%) or a little

(17.5%).

Only 2.6% of faculty said we should stay with Anthology while 87% said we should find another vendor. The remaining 10.5% were unsure or felt unable to offer an opinion. When asked if we should switch vendors, even if it meant another lengthy transition, only 4% said we should remain committed, 72% said we should switch, and 24% were unsure or felt unable to offer an opinion.

### **Public Health Major**

Professors Asif Dowla and Bill Roberts proposed a new major in Public Health for St. Mary's College of Maryland. These factors contributed to the development of this proposal:

- Student Interest: There is significant and growing student interest in public health at SMCM. This is evidenced by the consistent enrollment in the Public and Environmental Health Inquiry, student requests for a Public Health major, and the number of admitted students who chose to enroll in public health programs at other institutions.
- Market Demand: A recent market analysis by Stamats indicates strong demand for public health professionals nationally and regionally. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects substantial job growth in the field, making it a promising career path for graduates.
- Alignment with SMCM's Mission: The proposed major aligns with SMCM's mission of providing a high-quality liberal arts education that prepares students for leadership and service. The multidisciplinary nature of public health resonates with the College's emphasis on interdisciplinary learning and its commitment to social justice.

The proposed Public Health major is designed to be a rigorous and engaging program that provides students with:

- A strong foundation in public health principles and practices.
- The ability to analyze public health issues from multiple disciplinary perspectives.
- Practical experience through internships and community engagement opportunities.
- The skills necessary to communicate effectively about public health issues to diverse audiences.
- A commitment to ethical and social justice approaches in public health.

The Public Health major was approved by the faculty in December, 2025 and we look forward to its consideration by the Board at a future meeting.

### **Title II and Digital Accessibility**

On April 24, 2024, the Department of Justice (DOJ) ruled that all digital content will need to be accessible regardless of space (public-facing or behind a login), in alignment with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This rule sets the standard that state and local governments (including colleges like SMCM) must meet guidelines to legally meet digital accessibility standards. The deadline for SMCM to meet this standard is April 24, 2026.

Meeting the Title II requirements will be a heavy lift with regard to faculty time and resources. Among the core implications for higher education:

- Strict Digital Accessibility Standards: Institutions must adhere to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA for all web and mobile content.

- Comprehensive Coverage: The rule applies to all digital platforms, including learning management systems (e.g., Canvas), course websites, library resources, online syllabi, and PDFs.
- Audit Digital Assets: Identify non-compliant websites, mobile apps, and course materials.
- Captioning and Transcripts: Ensure all videos have accurate, synchronized closed captions and audio content has transcripts.
- Accessible Content Creation: Train faculty and staff to create accessible, structured documents and use alt text for images.
- Third-Party Platform Review: Ensure that external tools used for teaching, such as online textbooks or assessments, meet the accessibility standards.
- Operational & Financial Strain: Retrofitting legacy content, such as archived videos and documents, requires significant time, training, and resources, potentially leading to budgetary strain.

Title II implementation is a high priority within Academic Affairs. There are several parallel initiatives intended to reduce the burden on individual faculty and to support the creation of a more equitable learning environment for our students:

- Since last summer, CITL has offered asynchronous training focused on incorporating Title II requirements into teaching materials.
- Program Student Ambassadors are available to assist faculty with converting files and have received targeted accessibility training.
- Academic Affairs is working with OIT to secure new campus-wide software licenses aimed at simplifying the process of making PDFs and other files Title II compliant.
- Katy Arnett is leading an effort to develop a centralized and streamlined process for faculty seeking support with file conversion.
- The Digital Accessibility Work Group piloted a Google Form that allowed instructors to share files or describe resources they've found difficult to make accessible. This was intended to help better understand common challenges and prioritize support where it is most needed.

It is important to note, that even with the assistance available, coming into compliance with Title II will be a heavy lift for faculty and staff. Faculty must ensure all teaching materials, including older syllabi, scanned PDFs, and presentation slides, are fully accessible to screen readers, which requires significant time for review and reformatting. All instructional videos and live-streamed lectures must have accurate, synchronized captions, and audio content needs accurate, formatted transcripts - at present, no available software has been identified that is capable of generating captions or transcripts that meet the Title II requirements for accuracy.

Faculty often use external apps or open educational resources (OERs) that may not meet accessibility standards, putting them at risk of non-compliance. Faculty who upload written notes, including but not limited to mathematical and scientific equations, will face new challenges as such handwritten material will not be compliant. Faculty who have incorporated "virtual field trips" into their course to visit museums or explore digital reconstructions of ancient sites now find themselves needing to thoroughly vet these experiences for Title II compliance and possibly abandon some as a resource. As noted by one faculty member:

*"I have serious concerns about the possibilities for success with compliance due especially to the amount of added time that is required to get materials in proper shape. My initial plan was to revise and make compliant materials each week as I prep for classes, it was immediately clear that this is not possible. I understand the individual steps and even "hacks" to get my materials compliant, but the time involved far exceeds what I can afford with my other responsibilities, and by saying that I am in no way saying that I do not value accessibility, only that our work loads cannot accommodate the full load that has resulted from this requirement. We need student workers or other staff dedicated solely to this need... This effort should not be done professor by professor or department by department. A centralized effort for hiring and training will be the most efficient and ensure full compliance"*

The shift to creating accessible content from the beginning, rather than retrofitting, requires a steep learning curve and constant maintenance. Much of our Engaged Learning component is handled via digital instruction. Many instructors lack formal training on how to make digital content accessible (e.g., using proper header structures, alt text for images, or checking color contrast) and the training provided by the college requires faculty time that would otherwise be spent on course preparation, student advising and instruction, as well as grading and scholarly research.

### **Conclusion**

I have no action items to present in this report as the Shared Governance statement was presented to the Board Governance Committee, but I anticipate a very busy Spring semester as we work toward Title II compliance and as the Shared Governance Working Group continues. It is quite likely that some of this work, especially the new Shared Governance workgroup, will result in recommendations being brought to this committee and the full Board of Trustees this Spring - including revisions to the Faculty Bylaws. Please note that I am likely to miss the February Board meeting as I recover from surgery, but Faculty Senate VP Ayse Ikizler will be present.

Respectfully submitted,



Todd Eberly, Ph.D.  
President, Faculty Senate

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

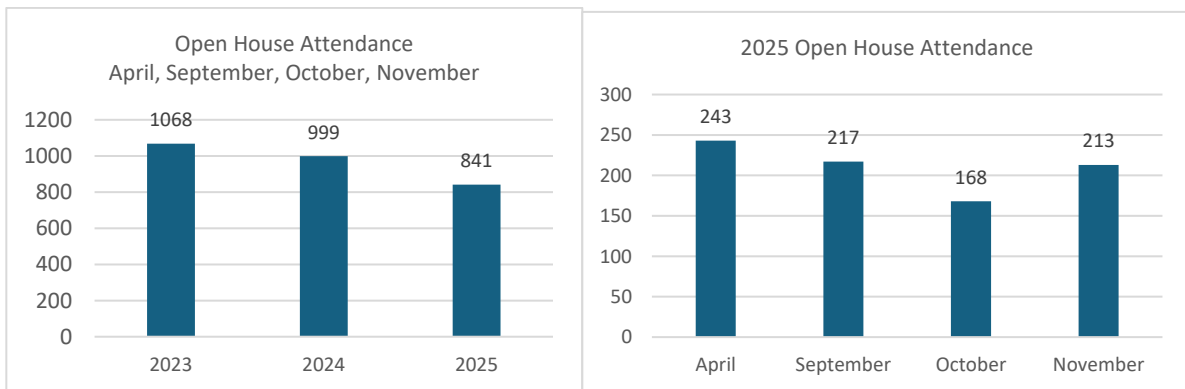
**VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Division of Enrollment Management is pleased to submit its January 2026 mid-year and mid-cycle report to the Board of Trustees. 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 to contribute to the College's retention goals.

**Fall 2025 Recruitment Season**

Over the past two enrollment cycles, prospective student visit behavior has shifted at colleges and universities, with survey data indicating that an increasing number of students prefer to wait until they receive admission decisions before visiting campuses. This change has two important implications. First, the compressed timeframe between admission decisions and deposit deadline dates means that students have to be more selective about which colleges or universities they visit, intensifying competition for in-person engagement during the critical yield period. Secondly, this shift places even more emphasis on the College's digital presence including the website, virtual experiences and advertising to build brand recognition and awareness to drive campus visits.

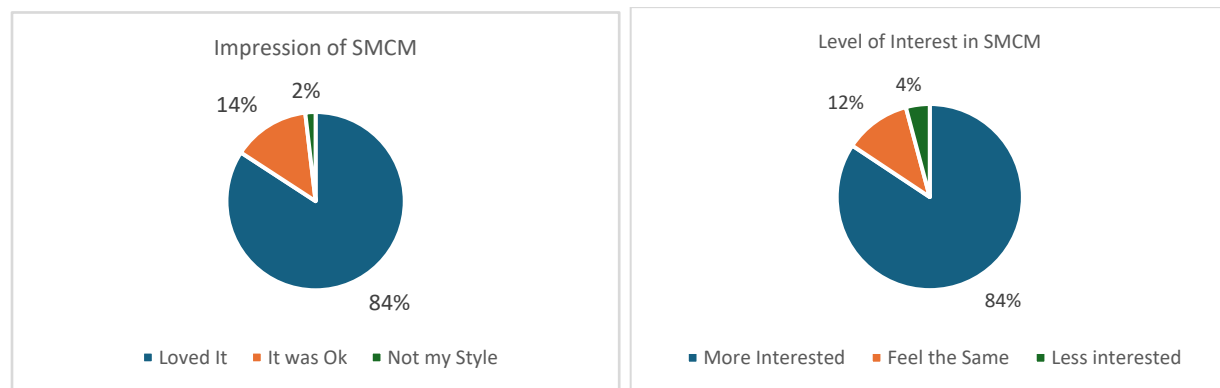
Given the significant influence of the College's waterfront location on prospective student decision-making, converting digital interest into on-campus visits is essential. Ensuring a strong volume of prospective students who visit campus throughout the recruitment funnel is a key driver of enrollment success and a critical lever in achieving institutional enrollment goals.



Overall, the number of prospective students visiting campus during the Fall 2025 recruitment season decreased by 13% compared to the 2024 recruitment season. The decrease is primarily due to fewer students registering for and attending our open house programs. The largest year-over-year decrease in attendance was the April Open House, with 93 fewer students, followed by

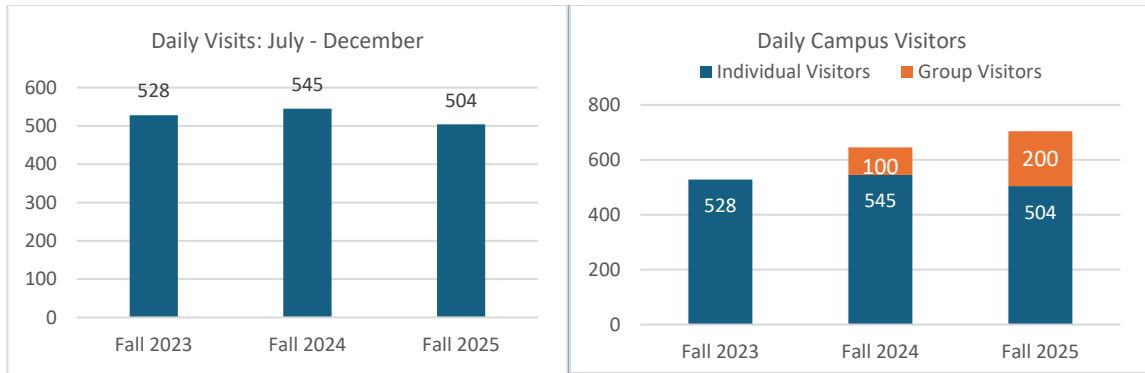
the November and October Open Houses with 65 and 32 fewer students, respectively. The September Open House had an increase of 27 students attending compared to Fall 2024. Despite fewer students registering for the open houses, the percent of students who registered for and attended the open houses improved by a range of 3.2%–9.2% compared to Fall 2024. This tells us that our registrants were more interested in attending the open house relative to the same program the previous year.

The decrease in attendance at the open houses can be attributed to a number of factors. The lower attendance at the April Open House was another data point in the diminishing effectiveness of our previous marketing partners during the 2024–2025 academic year. The October Open House attendance decline can be attributed to an increased number of competing open houses being held across the region on the weekend before Halloween. There was also an increased number of competing open houses on the day of the November Open House. Supporting this hypothesis, when we look at the percent of registrations who did not attend the October and November open houses without cancelling (“no-shows”), it has been double that of September. Moving forward, the October Open House will be held on the same day as ‘HawktoberFest to provide a stronger incentive to visit campus. The College may also need to consider hosting open houses on Sundays.



Program evaluation responses (n=215) from our open house attendees continue to be strong and positive, with 78% of respondents very likely to apply and 27% indicating that St. Mary’s College is their first choice at this point in the recruitment process. Program evaluations serve to inform the ongoing improvement of the program. Of the four open house programs, the September program was the most highly rated, followed by November, April, and October. The Spring Open House is scheduled for Saturday, April 25, 2026.

In addition to our open houses, the Office of Admission hosts prospective students for daily tours and information sessions and group visits from community based organizations and secondary schools.



Prospective students visits to campus for our daily tour and information sessions from July through December declined by 7.5%. While overall visitation from late spring through mid-fall fell short of targets, the number of visitors in November and December met goals as the work of our new marketing partner gained traction. Families also indicated that the *Discover SMCM Visit Grant* program, launched in mid-September, was influential in their decision to visit campus. Without the Discover SMCM Visit Grant program, it is likely that campus visit volume would have further declined. In addition, Saturday campus visit programs continue to be well received by families, reinforcing the importance of offering consistent weekend visit opportunities.

Over the course of the fall semester, the Office of Admission also hosted and supported more than 200 students and counselors for group campus visits. This compares to 100 students and counselors during the Fall 2024 semester. These groups included students and counselors from the College Track Program based at the Kevin Durant Center in Suitland, MD; the International High Schools at Langley Park High School and Largo High School; Crisfield Academy; and the Academy for College & Career Exploration located in Baltimore. Hosting these visits is an important strategy in our efforts to serve underrepresented students.

In response to changing campus visit behavior, the College is adapting to this new landscape through a strategic focus on incentives, access, and promotion. Together, these approaches are designed to reduce barriers, increase motivation, and ensure the College remains top of mind during a more compressed and competitive visit window. Complementing these initiatives, the Office of Admission is planning to host thematic visit programs over the summer.

### **Discover SMCM Grant**

The Discover SMCM Grant is designed to incentivize students to visit campus earlier in the recruitment process when they have greater flexibility and are developing their college visit lists. By providing a one-time grant applied to the first two semesters of enrollment, the program both incentivizes earlier engagement and increases the likelihood that the College is included among the campuses students choose to visit.

### **YouVisit Online Campus Tour**

The College's website is a primary marketing and recruitment tool. We are adding a new online campus tour, YouVisit, to complement the existing SMCM Virtual Discovery Tool. YouVisit is a best-in-class platform featuring immersive motion graphics (interactive photo, video and text elements) that will deliver a more engaging experience than the current tool. The tour will

include destination themed content highlighting our academic programs, campus facilities, location, campus culture and admission information. By strengthening the online experience, we anticipate mitigating the impact of students who are unable to visit campus in-person while also encouraging prospective students to schedule an on-campus visit to experience the College first hand. An initial version of the YouVisit tour is expected to launch in late February with the final version in later in June.

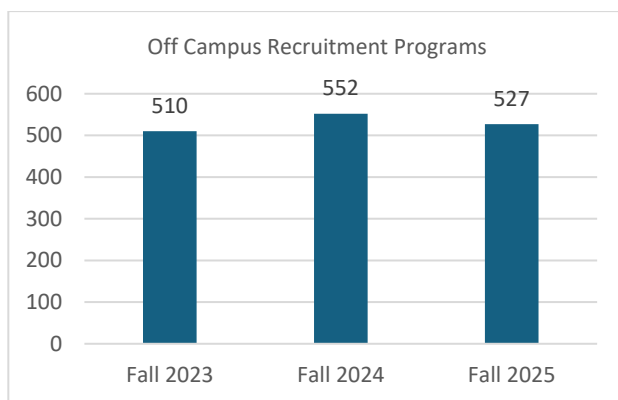
### **“Always On” Digital Advertising**

Digital marketing by the College’s new enrollment marketing partner, 3 Enrollment Marketing (3E), is intentionally designed to be “always on” maintaining a consistent presence with prospective students and their families throughout the recruitment cycle. In addition to promoting open houses, 3E’s campaigns actively highlight our daily visit programs.

This approach is a strategic shift from the College’s previous model which primarily concentrated advertising efforts around open house programs. Declining attendance at our open houses during the 2024-2025 academic year underscored the need to secure a partner capable of sustaining ongoing digital engagement to increase awareness among prospective students and parents through the recruitment and enrollment funnel.

As the College continues its transition to 3E over the current academic year, we anticipate renewed visibility and a rebound in campus visit attendance.

### **Fall 2025 Off Campus Recruitment**



Admission staff conducted recruitment activities at 527 events, primarily in Maryland and then in targeted out-of-state markets including Delaware, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. This compares to 552 programs during Fall 2024, when all staff vacancies were filled before the start of the fall travel season. Recruitment travel included visits to high schools and community colleges; local, regional, and national college fairs; and workshops for prospective students and counselors.

The College is a member of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC). Over the last two years, we have been working in a leadership capacity with SUNY Geneseo and the University of Minnesota Morris to develop a COPLAC recruitment consortium designed to cooperatively promote awareness of the benefits of a COPLAC education among college



counselors, prospective students and their families. Counselor events were hosted in Atlanta, Georgia and Raleigh, North Carolina on October 21 and 22 with a total of 21 secondary school counselors attending. In addition to St. Mary's College, SUNY Geneseo, and the University of Minnesota Morris, Georgia College and the University of Virginia Wise participated in the events. The group is planning a similar event in the Boston area this spring.

### **Alumni Launch-a-Leader Initiative**

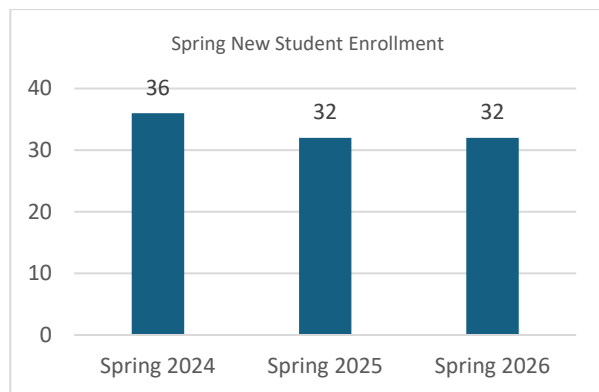
The Office of Admission continues to partner with the Office of Alumni Affairs on the alumni referral program for prospective students entitled "Launch-a-Leader" for this application cycle. As of January 23, 2026, 54 applicants have been referred by 45 St. Mary's College alumni. These figures represent an increase from 44 applicants referred by 39 alumni during the Fall 2024 application cycle.

### **Board of Trustee Adopt-a-School Program**

Seven Board of Trustee members volunteered for the "Adopt-a-School" program announced at the October Board of Trustee Meeting. While the intent and enthusiasm for the program are strong, the initial rollout had some timing and technical-related challenges.

A more straightforward approach with individual outreach for this initial phase would have been more effective in hindsight. This is an important program with significant potential and the team is fully committed to ensuring a smooth and successful implementation moving forward.

### **Spring 2026 New Student Enrollment**



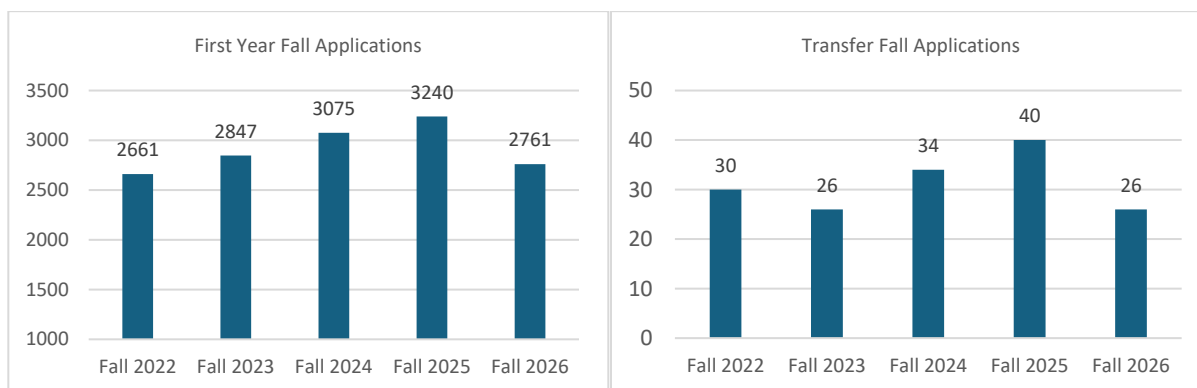
As of January 23, Spring 2026 new student enrollment includes 32 students (three first-year students, 28 transfer students, and one second-degree student). This exceeds the goal of 30 new students. The new student cohort includes two students from our Pathway to Honors Program. One is from Carroll Community College and the other from Baltimore City Community College enrolled. This is our first transfer student from Baltimore City Community College since Fall 2022.

For our transfer students, six students enrolled from the College of Southern Maryland and five students enrolled from Anne Arundel Community College for Spring 2026. This compares to one transfer student from Anne Arundel Community College and 16 from the College of Southern

Maryland for Spring 2025. Twelve students from another four-year college or university transferred to the College compared to nine students in Spring 2025.

The census date for spring enrollment is February 16, 2026. At that time, we will communicate the College's actual Spring 2026 and blended annual enrollment totals, as well as updated financial aid expenditure figures.

### Fall 2026 Applications



Following six years of growth in first-year applications, the current application volume now falls between comparative point-in-time counts for Fall 2022 and Fall 2023.

The College has received 170 (8.2%) fewer Early Action (EA) applications; 15 (18.5%) fewer Early Decision (ED) applications; and three (17.6%) more Early Decision II (EDII) applications. The decline of 304 Regular Decision (RD) applications accounts for 63% of the overall decline in applications. Historically, an additional 250 first-year applications are submitted and reviewed for admission between this point and the start of the fall semester.

Early Decision I and Early Action applicants were notified of their admission decision and merit scholarship in November and December, respectively. Early Decision II applicants will be notified of their admission decision by February 15, and Regular Decision applicants will be notified by April 1. First-year applicants whose applications became complete after the release of other decisions for their application plan or who applied late are notified of their admission on a rolling basis.

The first-year EA and ED application pool is strong, with 1,528 applicants offered admission to date. This is consistent with prior cycles at this same point in time (Fall 2024: 1,504; Fall 2025: 1,572). The Admission Committee and Enrollment Operations are working diligently to ensure that applications are completed and to maximize the number of qualified admits. While application volume growth challenges persist within the Regular Decision pool, the academic quality of admitted students and predictability of enrollment outcomes are trending positively, according to Human Capital Education, our financial aid leveraging partner.

Early indicators suggest strengthening yield dynamics including an increased percent of admitted students submitting a FAFSA; a higher proportion of admits having visited campus despite a decline in overall visits; a more concentrated geographic mix in historically higher yield markets;

and a greater share of admitted students from high schools with established feeder patterns. Collectively, these trends more closely resemble the Fall 2024 overall which had a yield rate approximately 1.5% higher than Fall 2025.

An offset to these positive yield indicators, per Human Capital, is that the FAFSA Student Aid Index (SAI) distribution is skewing to families with greater financial resources (+60,000) a segment that historically yields at lower rates. Even so, the strategy to maximize the number of admitted students, combined with the modest increases in affinity and our merit and need-based aid strategy is currently showing an increase in the projected yield of our admitted first-year students.

While the applicant pool may be smaller, characteristics of the pool suggest that our admitted students are more likely to yield at higher rates than those admitted from recent applicant pools. To meet our enrollment goals and leverage these positive factors of the admitted student pool, disciplined execution of the College's comprehensive yield strategy will be essential.

### **Transfer Applications**

While it is early in the transfer application cycle with the Fall Priority Transfer application deadline being May 1, increased fall community college recruitment (45 events compared to 32 in Fall 2024), the new Phi Theta Kappa Direct Admission Program and the Pathway to Honors program should contribute positively to the cycle. Transfer students are notified of admission on a rolling basis.

### **Financial Aid Update**

#### **Human Capital Education**

Having a partner who understands the College, our strategic goals, and the broader higher-education landscape is critical as we refine our merit scholarship and financial aid leveraging strategy to achieve our enrollment objectives. Over the past two years, the College utilized the services of Othot, with results that did not meet our expectations. I am pleased that we have returned to working with our team at Human Capital Education (formerly Human Capital Research Corporation). Human Capital brings a level of depth, sophistication, and strategic partnership to this work that was missing previously and is essential to aligning our financial aid strategy with both our mission and long-term enrollment growth goals.

As part of our reengagement, Human Capital conducted a rapid analysis of our outcomes from the Fall 2024 and Fall 2025 enrollment cycles. Their analysis identified several elements of the prior aid-leveraging approach that could have been strengthened to produce better enrollment outcomes. At the same time, there was a decline in the number of our early applications and we understand that this is occurring in an increasingly competitive recruitment and enrollment environment. In response, Human Capital proposed multiple merit scholarship and need-based financial aid strategies designed to maximize headcount while carefully managing discount growth and improving overall net revenue. In consultation with the Office of Business and Finance, we selected a strategy that most closely aligns with the College's enrollment priorities.

### **Merit Scholarships and Financial Aid Awards**

Following two years of delays with the FAFSA, we are pleased to be moving back to a typical timeframe. Students admitted during the Early Decision process have been informed of their need-based financial aid awards, and students admitted during the Early Action process will be notified of their need-based awards the first week in February. Students admitted as part of the Early Decision II, Regular Decision, and transfer applicant processes will receive their awards within two weeks of their admission decision.

### **National Merit Finalist Scholarship Program**

The College is seeking membership in the National Merit Scholarship Program which will allow the College to directly sponsor and award scholarships to National Merit Finalists. Membership aligns with our mission as an honors college, strengthens our recruitment of top-tier academically talented students and enhances institutional prestige.

To qualify for membership, the College must meet one of the following thresholds: enrollment of six finalists each year for two years; four finalists each year for three years; or three finalists each year for four years. National Merit Finalists who enroll at the College and designate the College as their first-choice institution will receive an SMCM National Merit Finalist Scholarship.

At this stage in the competition, all eligible students are designated as semi-finalists, with Finalist status announced in February. Nine National Merit Semi-Finalist have applied to the College. Seven were admitted during the Early Action Process and two have applied as part of the Regular Decision process. This includes six students from Maryland and one each from Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Ohio. Should they advance to finalist status, they will be awarded their SMCM National Merit Finalist Scholarship in March.

### **Admitted Student Yield Initiatives**

The execution of our annual comprehensive yield strategy is more important than ever to leverage the positive yield signals in the current Fall 2026 admitted student pool. The annual campaign includes a robust print and email communications flow, digital advertising, on- and off-campus events, and call campaigns by admission staff, students, and faculty. One of the goals for this year was to align the timing of our yield initiatives more closely with the early, regular, and rolling decision release processes. This includes separating the faculty call campaign into two rounds, earlier notification of invitations to become members of the DeSousa Brent Scholars and Monument Scholars programs, and an earlier launch of the “Shadow a Seahawk” admitted student visit program.

### **Admitted Seahawk Days**

The Admitted Seahawk Days are our signature on-campus programs for admitted students. The College will be hosting two on-campus Admitted Seahawk Days (ASD) on Saturday, February 28, and Saturday, April 11. In partnership with the Dean of Students, the April ASD will be held on the same day as the annual World Carnival to provide an even more vibrant view into campus life.

### **Expanded Off-Campus Yield Programs**

To strengthen personal connections with admitted students and their families in their home communities, the Office of Admission is expanding its off-campus Admitted Seahawk Celebrations programs from three to six. Events are scheduled for March 4 in Silver Spring, MD; March 11 in Capital Heights, MD; March 22 in Frederick, MD; March 24 in Hanover, MD; and April 1 in Springfield, VA. A program in Baltimore County is forthcoming. Admission staff will also be hosting micro-yield events in selected in- and out-of-state areas. These programs complement the Office of Admission's comprehensive outreach and communication campaigns and are designed to support enrollment yield through more personalized engagement.

### **ZeeMee Social Media**

As part of our broader strategy to strengthen connection and engagement and the yield of our admitted students, the Office of Admission is partnering with ZeeMee. ZeeMee is a social media platform designed specifically for high school and college students to connect with peers, learn more about colleges and identify potential roommates during the admission and enrollment process.

Through this partnership, the Office of Admission will support an enhanced ZeeMee presence that includes moderated group chats for admitted students allowing them to begin building community prior to arriving on campus. The platform also features an Instagram-like feed where students can share video, stories and photos further reinforcing engagement and a sense of belonging during the critical decision-making period.

### **3 Enrollment Marketing Update**

The transition to 3 Enrollment Marketing (3E) is progressing well. The *3E Conversion Apply Quick Start* campaign launched in September following completion of the procurement process. Enrollment Management, Admission and Marketing are working closely with 3E to refine and align the recruitment strategy with enrollment growth goals and to ensure that messaging and digital and print collateral reflects the College's brand and distinctiveness.

Unlike the prior strategy of partners supporting select aspects of recruitment process, 3E is providing integrated support across the full recruitment and enrollment funnel. The *3E Awareness* campaign for Fall 2027 and 2028 is scheduled to launch shortly and the admitted student deposit campaign set to begin in February. With increased time in market as part of a comprehensive strategy, we anticipate that 3E will contribute to a return to application volume growth.

### **Transfer Initiatives**

#### **Phi Theta Kappa Direct Admission**

In December, the College became a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Direct Admission initiative. Phi Theta Kappa is a national transfer honor society for high-achieving community college students who intend to transfer to a four-year institution. The Direct Admission initiative provides these highly qualified community college students across the country the opportunity to participate in an expedited admission process. The College is the first institution in Maryland to join the initiative.

### **AACRAO Learning Mobility Challenge**

The College is participating in the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers' (AACRAO) Learning Mobility Challenge throughout the Spring 2026 semester. As part of the Challenge, participating colleges will examine their speed in admitting transfer students. Colleges will identify process obstacles and address them to provide faster and more efficient transfer admission decisions.

### **Transferology**

In January 2026, the College began rolling out Transferology, a web-based nationwide transfer credit network platform and recruiting tool that helps students, advisors, and parents understand how their college credits will transfer to the College.

Transferology serves both prospective and current students. It will enhance the College's visibility to transfer students across the country and allow staff to track the advising of prospective transfer students. Staff in the Office of Student Success Services (OS3) will be able to use the platform to advise current students on which replacement courses at other colleges and universities will transfer back to the College. The platform also houses course equivalencies for study abroad. Along with the Transfer Evaluation System (TES), launched in April 2024, implementing Transferology provides an integrated solution to streamline the entire credit transfer process.

### **Aspen Institute's Maryland Transfer Intensive (MTI) Update**

On October 24, David Hautanen, Jr., Jacqui Rogers-Frere, and Keisha Rolle participated in the MTI Convening of Independent and Small Colleges with Maryland Community Colleges at the Aspen Institute headquarters in Washington, D.C.. Throughout the day, participants worked on designing end-to-end models with community college partners to accelerate and support timely student degree completion. The College was partnered with Montgomery College.

### **The Office of Student Financial Services**

The Office of Student Financial Assistance and the Business Office Student Accounts function are being integrated into a new Office of Student Financial Services (OSFS) within the Division of Enrollment Management. The goal of this integration is to enhance the student and family experience by providing a coordinated, seamless and service-oriented approach to financial aid, billing and payment processes.

By aligning organizational structure with how students experience financial services, OSFS will advance the College's priorities around access, persistence, and service excellence while preserving compliance, accountability, and fiscal integrity. This integration represents a strategic, student-centered evolution of the College's student-facing financial operations.

The integration will be fully implemented upon the appointment of an Executive Director for Student Financial Services and the completion of modest renovations to create a centralized enrollment services space during the spring semester.

## Integrated Retention Strategic Plan Implementation Update

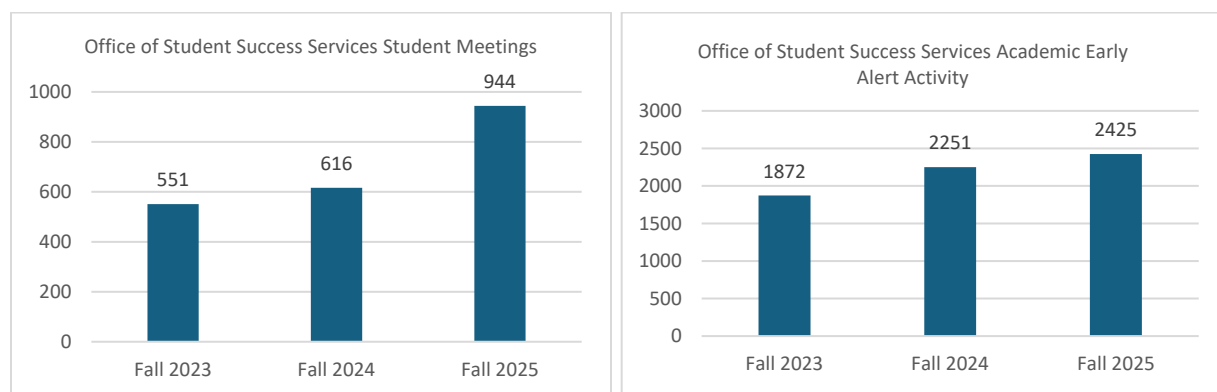
The Integrated Retention Strategic Plan (IRSP) is moving steadily from planning to implementation, with several foundational elements now in place. Cross-divisional working groups have been convened and are actively advancing priority strategies focused on early identification of student need, coordinated outreach, and clearer pathways to academic and personal support.

The IRSP is organized around three goals:

1. Developing an intentional series of common experiences and traditions to strengthen community cohesion
2. Creating a broader system of support and mentorship
3. Strengthening a student-centered, service-oriented culture

Initial implementation has focused on improving communication and alignment across student-facing units, and embedding retention priorities into existing structures such as orientation, advising, and first-year support initiatives. As part of this process, the IRSP is establishing a shared framework for accountability and assessment, positioning the College to more systematically monitor outcomes and refine strategies that support student persistence and success. This is as much change management process as it is the implementation of the initiatives associated with goals.

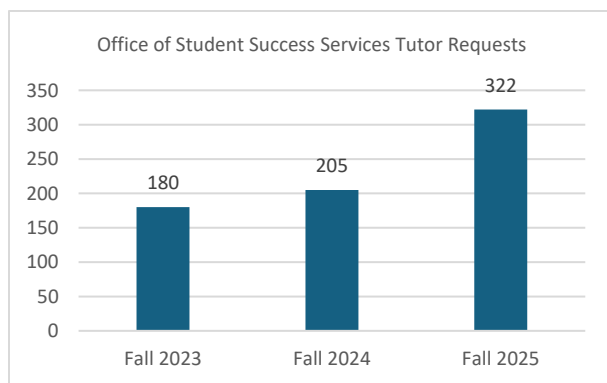
### Student Success Services:



The Office of Student Success Services (OS3) staff supports student success by providing academic coaching and advising; workshops for students, faculty, and staff; parent/family outreach and support; management of the College's Seahawk Early Alert System (SEAS); the PASS peer mentor program; the academic tutoring program; and programming for the Monument Scholars program. They also steward critical partnerships with admission, athletics, equity programs, and external organizations such as the College Bound Foundation and DC CAPs. As the data shows, participation in the services provided by OS3 continues to increase. OS3 works to ensure that students have the tools to support their academic, social, and personal well-being and to thrive in college.

## Parent & Family Engagement

The Seahawk Family Liaison (SFL) and OS3 staff worked closely with parents and family members throughout the summer and fall. The SFL presented sessions for DeSousa Brent Scholar and Sum Primus program parents during their respective summer bridge programs. OS3 facilitated three evening webinars: “How to Stay Connected with Your College Student”; “Your Student’s Safety Net: Inside SMCM’s Public Safety Team,” presented by Chief Martinez; and “Pathways to Purpose: Supporting Your Student Through Career Uncertainty,” presented by Career and Professional Development staff. Four additional webinars are scheduled for the spring semester. Staff members authored 10 articles for the fall semester Parent/Family eNewsletters extending engagement and communication throughout the semester.



## Tutoring

In Fall 2025, OS3 experienced a 57% increase in tutor requests compared to Fall 2024, logging 322 requests for tutoring in 58 courses and serving 246 individual students in 692 tutoring sessions (a 68% increase from Fall 2024). The courses with the most requests for tutors were Principles of Biology I, General Chemistry I, Organic Chemistry I, Calculus I, and Genetics. Eighty-three percent of students who requested tutoring and did not withdraw from the course passed the class in which they received support with a C- or higher. 78% passed with a grade of C or higher.

The Tutoring program launched three new initiatives this fall semester.

1. In collaboration with the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, OS3 offered an Organic Chemistry Prep Series in August 2025 for students entering Organic Chemistry in Fall 2025. Assessment following the series indicated that the sessions helped the participants understand how to be successful in Organic Chemistry.
2. With input from faculty, OS3 launched the Technology How-To Video section of the OS3 website. The video, “How to Add Due Dates from Google Classroom to Google Calendar,” was viewed by all first-year students as part of their LEAD 111 course.



3. OS3 collaborated with the Chinese program to require students to meet with a Chinese tutor in pairs for 20 minutes twice throughout the semester because the Chinese program did not have a teaching assistant this year. Every student earned a B- or higher in the course.

### **Monument Scholars**

The Monument Scholars Program was launched in Fall 2024 (with 35 scholars, 31 of whom have been retained) to create a cohort of scholars in the top 10% of admitted students. Our second cohort consists of 25 scholars. OS3 coordinates activities for Monument Scholars that support their social growth and expose them to high-impact opportunities on campus.

OS3 co-hosted two informational sessions. The first session featured the Director of the National Awards and Fellowships Office, Dr. Jennifer Cognard-Black, who highlighted the scholarships students may apply for depending on their individual interests. The second session with Rinya Countiss, Director of Career Development, and Meredith Weiers, Internship Coordinator, in the Center for Career and Professional Development, shared information about on-campus jobs, internships, and the steps involved in finding and applying for them. At the end of the semester, OS3 hosted a Monument Scholars Social. This event provided an opportunity to bring together the two cohorts for connection. Second-year cohort members were also invited to serve on a panel to share helpful information about their first-year experience with first-year students.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
CAMPUS LIFE COMMITTEE**

**VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS REPORT**

Students and staff over the last several months were filled with anticipation to meet and learn more about President Phillips vision. Many Student Affairs staff participated in the President's 100 Day Listening Tour and shared their hopes for the future of SMCM. In January in direct response to what she learned and heard from campus President Phillips announced a reorganization and realignment within Student Affairs and plans for a new and improved Commuter Student Lounge.

The Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) and the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement (OCOE) are realigned into a new unit – the Office of Career Development and Community Engagement (OCDCE). Cindy Greb, former Executive Director of CCPD left the college in December. With Cindy's departure it presented an opportunity to strengthen the collaborative relationship between these two offices and codify synergies. Lead by Caroline King OCDCE goals this spring remain to enhance student success through high impact practices and workforce development initiatives, and to strengthen the College's position as a vital regional asset. OCDCE will continue to be housed in Glendening Hall and all programs and services remain intact for this spring semester. In the upcoming months the staff will work to draft a new mission and vision under this new unit in conjunction with a new campus strategic plan.

SMCM has on average 300 commuter students each year. While there is a designated space for commuter students in the Campus Center Room 105 the current lounge was being used by all students as a game-room. We are now working towards creating a lounge space exclusively for commuter students to gather, connect, and rest (between classes) that is welcoming, private and comfortable with all the comforts of home. The improved lounge space will include soft seating, TV, refrigerator, microwave, coffee station, cubbies, card reader door access, tables and chairs and new furniture. Commuter students will be engaged soon in the input, style, and color choices of the furniture for this upgraded space. We are looking forward to hosting an open house to unveil this new space to commuter students in the coming months.

In conjunction with the launching of the Integrated Retention Strategic Plan (IRSP) last August the entire division remains focused on making our campus a welcoming, supportive, inclusive place for students, staff and faculty. With this as the goal Student Affairs units implemented multi-layered strategies to improve student retention and strengthen engagement for staff and students in each of their respective areas. These activities and initiatives focus on academic support and accessibility, career development and experiential learning, student life skills, mental and physical health services, community engagement and belonging, and safety, wellness, and trust-building initiatives. Collectively, these initiatives address the primary drivers of retention and persistence: academic confidence, sense of belonging, access to resources, wellness support, and clear pathways to post-graduation success. The coordinated nature of these programs demonstrates a systemic commitment to student success rather than isolated interventions. One

of Student Affairs divisional goals is to create consistent touchpoints that connect students to peers, staff, faculty, and the broader campus environment to foster persistence and degree completion. Below is a summary of the work thus far this academic year by the units tied to the primary drivers of retention and persistence.

### **Academic Confidence**

The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) focused on inclusive academic support, community building, and faculty partnership with the creation of two new programs, the Mutual Accountability Study Halls (MASH) and the Seahawk Ally Network for Disabilities (SAND). MASH involved weekly body-doubling (a productivity strategy where one person works alongside another to improve focus, motivation, and task completion) study sessions encouraging shared academic productivity. This initiative was developed from students and family recommendations. Attendance at SAND sessions average 10 students per session. OAS is looking to grow their tutoring/studying space in the future when they acquire more space. The SAND program holds monthly meetings and events with an average of 15–30 participants. Activities sponsored by SAND include allyship education, inclusive practices, and community service partnerships. In September SAND held an introduction session to talk about campus statistics for disabilities, goals for the group, and ways to be an ally (using correct language and inclusive practices). October's session focused on best practices via trivia on ways to make campus events/meetings/etc. the most inclusive. The November and December sessions were combined to host a "SANDsgiving" session. Students made holiday card that we delivered to the Arc of Southern Maryland. All of the programs were co-sponsored by the Career and Professional Development (CCPD) and the student run Best Buddies Club. These initiatives reduce academic and environmental barriers, foster belonging among students with disabilities, and improve faculty awareness directly supporting persistence and equity. SAND has been really successful in contributing to an inclusive environment on campus, even getting students with disabilities involved in the community service. OAS has a fun slate of SAND sessions planned this spring semester which will culminate in Autism Acceptance Month in April.

Also, OAS provides regular feedback surveys to their connected students that allow them to assess and improve services on an ongoing basis to best meet students' needs, and to encourage them to continue to stay involved with the OAS office staff. OAS contributes to a weekly Academic Affairs newsletter which provides faculty with additional information and resources to best support our students, encouraging retention. OAS has hosted digital accessibility training sessions for faculty, staff, and students to encourage compliance with Title II of the ADA, which contributes to student retention by supporting access for all students. OAS has partnered with the Physical Plant to do campus accessibility audits to collaborate on accessibility projects and recommendations, which best supports our students with disabilities.

### **Sense of Belonging**

Frequent peer and staff interactions build support networks and normalize help-seeking behavior. Residence Life and Housing host biweekly residential programs in each hall and cross-building events where residence halls collaborate with each other to bring students together from different areas on campus. This program encourages social integration beyond one's immediate friend

groups. Another program required by all Resident Assistants (RAs) is intentional interactions. Each RA are required to log a minimum of 3 interactions per semester for each resident. These are structured one-on-one check-ins meetings with each of their assigned residents to ensure students get to know their RA and the resources they provide in the residence hall. Staff are tracking interactions with traditional halls at 85%, suites at 70%, and apartments and townhouses at 55%. The percentage of interaction decreases in the upper-class housing areas because there is more independence from the students in the suites, apartments and houses and there are more students per area. The decrease is not a result of RAs not reaching out to residence rather it shows that upper-class students are less interested in talking and meeting with their RAs.

Here is the breakdown of RA to Student per area (higher range is when we are at full capacity):

- **Traditional Halls** (*Prince George, Queen Anne, Dorchester, Caroline*): 18- 29 students per RA
- **Suites** (*Lewis Quad and Waring Commons*): 31 - 46 students per RA
- **Apartment/Houses** (*Waring Commons and Townhouses*): 48 - 80 per RA

When students see their identities reflected and supported, they are more likely to feel psychologically safe and socially integrated. This sense of belonging reduces isolation, increases engagement with campus resources, and improves persistence from semester to semester.

To promote community-oriented engagement and foster a sense of belonging and strengthen institutional trust the Office of Public Safety hosted three 3 “Beyond the Fade: The Discussion” sessions. The Beyond the Fade series is directed at African American and Latino male students but is open to all students. Beyond the Fade provides structured space for open, unfiltered dialogue in a safe and supportive environment. The sessions are designed to enhance visibility, accessibility, and sustained engagement with students who may otherwise feel disconnected. To date, 15 students have attended consistently, with the series originally launching with 8 participants, reflecting steady growth as awareness has increased. To date, 15 students have attended the Beyond the Fade series consistently.

## **Wellness Support**

Engagement is strengthened when students’ physical and emotional needs are addressed alongside academic. Counseling Services continues to provide a variety of services to students including individual and group counseling, psychiatric medication management, art therapy, wellness workshops, consultation for mental health related questions, case management and referral services, the Peer Health Educator (PHEs) program, virtual telehealth rooms, and a meditation/calm room. As well as the **24/7 campus help line**, ProtoCall and Welltrack Connect, a referral system that links students to mental health providers off campus. New retention efforts include 12 informational sessions and workshops on topics such as anxiety, stress reduction, and mindfulness provided to the full campus. The PHEs (through a grant) hosted a total of 24 events and activities including resident hall outreach, tabling outreach, presentations, and prevention events.

Health Services has focused on supporting student retention through accessible clinical care, educational outreach, and closer collaboration with campus and community partners to ensure students receive appropriate support. Initiatives have emphasized timely access to appointments, preventive care, health education, and early identification of health concerns that may affect student success, particularly for those with ongoing or complex medical needs. Retention efforts include collaboration with PHEs, Counseling Services, student success teams, and academic departments; same-day medical appointments, walk-ins, and RN consultations; OTC self-care clinic, nurse case management, on-site LabCorp services, point-of-Care lab testing. With the addition of these programs our students are able to stay on campus to get the care they need.

Additionally, Health Services has expanded its role in addressing gaps in mental health care. While not the primary mental health provider on campus, the resident nurse practitioner and clinical team have helped meet immediate needs through assessment, short-term support, and medication management when appropriate. This approach has enabled students to remain engaged academically while the clinic coordinates referrals and follow-up care for longer-term mental health services. Through these combined efforts, Health Services plays a critical role in promoting student well-being, supporting academic persistence, and advancing the institution's broader retention goals.

The Office of Public Safety has also implemented targeted student engagement and wellness initiatives designed to strengthen student connection to the institution, reduce stress during high-impact periods, and foster trust through visible, relationship-based programming. Officers sponsored a pre-finals Therapy Dog and Wellness Event, which supported student mental health during a critical academic period. Over 100 students participated in the event which included therapy dogs, art-based wellness activities, and the distribution of more than 90 boxes of food for finals week. Each box consisted of frozen proteins, non-perishable items, fruits, and vegetables.

In addition, Officers facilitated informal student engagement activities through a pick-up basketball game with 20 students, partnering with the Black Student Union (BSU) in the Pie in the Face event in support of a Black History Month fundraiser, participated in a Hispanic Heritage Month soccer game, hosted a "Walk in Her Shoes" event to raise awareness about the serious causes, effects, and remediations to men's sexualized violence.

### **Clear Pathways to Success**

CCPD continues to provide a diversified offerings of internships to meet varied student needs across disciplines. For FY2026 (summer 2025 – spring 2026) they have administered 382 internships (filled positions), including 149 funded by the college through Signature Honors Internship Program (SHIP) and 137 funded by other sources. CCPD also advertises over 100+ non-CCPD administered internship opportunities from around the regional for students on their SHIP google site. Using data provided by the Office of Institutional Research CCPD tailored the externship opportunities based on student interest and satisfaction added four new externships, Creative Pathways: Careers in the Arts, Helping Others: Humanitarian Services, Museum Operations and Engagement, and Self-Leadership and Workplace Wellness. Externships are taught by industry leaders and provide a real-world job shadowing or mini training in a workplace as part of the course.

A number of changes have been made to the First-Year LEAD courses to increase engagement based on student and faculty feedback:

- An expanded equity and inclusion curriculum for both LEAD 111 and 112 that integrates deeper exploration of diversity, equity, and social justice themes, ensuring that students develop the skills and awareness necessary to lead in an inclusive community, including a lesson focused on the Commemorative to Enslaved Peoples of Southern Maryland.
- Collaborations with the Office of International Education and Health and Counseling Services to include class visits and the potential for mid-semester workshops to strengthen student engagement and expand access to campus resources. These collaborations were designed to ensure that students at St. Mary's College have the support they need to thrive academically, socially, and personally.
- A reorganization of course content for the spring semester, ensuring that materials are better aligned with student needs and instructional goals with a focus on sequencing, the integration of National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) competencies, and implementation of experiential learning. This reorganization aims to foster deeper connections between academic content and real-world application by aligning course content with on campus events and community events.

An exciting new venture being piloted managed by the CCDCE this spring is the **Navigator Leadership Program**. This program is a non-credit leadership certificate semester-long program offered in partnership with Leadership Southern Maryland (LSM) and Leslie Taylor Consulting. Sybol Anderson of LSM and Leslie Taylor are co-teaching this leadership and mentorship initiative with a 16-student cohort to hone their leadership skills. The students attend bi-weekly sessions and are paired with LSM/SMCM alumni mentors and complete a capstone community-based service project in support of the new St. Mary's County Family YMCA.

OCOE developed several community service initiatives in partnership with CCPD to support high-impact community engagement activities which is essential for fostering a sense of tradition and belonging among students. They are:

- **Hawks in the Community:** Service projects conducted by 113 students resulted in 226 service hours, including harvesting 300 lbs. of potatoes at Historic Sotterley and planting 153,600 oysters spat in the St. Mary's River.
- **Bay to Bay Service Day:** Now a signature annual event, participation is a requirement for first-year LEAD students to ensure early integration into the college's culture of service.
- **Civic and Social Connection:** The River Runner provides monthly "fun trips" to the County Fair, local cinemas (*including a screening of Wicked 2*), First Fridays in downtown Leonardtown and monthly weekend trips home for students. The weekend trips have been very popular:
  - September 26 – 36 students
  - October 10 - 45 students
  - October 19 – 19 students

- November 25 (Thanksgiving Break) – 55 students
- December 19 (Winter Break) – 44 students

The River Runner now has expanded to include class and cultural trips, such as the Maryland General Assembly trip in February to Annapolis in partnership with the Center for Democracy, Government Relations and Student Trustee.

Student Affairs retention and engagement efforts during the 2025–2026 academic year reflect a coordinated, student-centered ecosystem designed to sustain academic progress and institutional connection. The combination of accessibility initiatives, residential engagement, career pathways, health and counseling services, and relationship-oriented safety programming demonstrates a comprehensive retention framework. These efforts collectively strengthen student belonging, resilience, and clarity of purpose—three core predictors of persistence and successful degree completion. Across the Student Affairs division, engagement activities share several retention-enhancing characteristics:

1. **Consistency:** Regular meetings, workshops, and check-ins provide ongoing connection rather than one-time interventions.
2. **Inclusivity:** Programs intentionally reach diverse student populations, reducing equity gaps in persistence.
3. **Relational Focus:** Peer leaders, mentors, and staff visibility foster meaningful relationships.
4. **Purpose and Direction:** Career, service, and leadership opportunities give students a clear sense of trajectory.
5. **Holistic Support:** Integration of academic, social, emotional, and physical wellness services addresses multiple risk factors simultaneously.

As a division we know continued cross-departmental collaboration and data-driven refinement will further enhance long-term retention outcomes and student success for our students. We will remain laser focused on strengthening community bonds, affirming student identity, linking academic life to personal and professional goals, and engagement initiatives to create an environment in which students are more likely to feel valued, supported, and motivated to continue toward graduation.

## **ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INCLUSION & BELONGING REPORT**

The Office of Inclusion and Belonging is currently in the midst of a six-month plan (see addendum #1 which discusses the strategic priorities for spring 2026). After a sustained period of tumult over the last two years, the primary objectives are to stabilize the unit and the Office of Equity Programming, rebuild trust among students and other stakeholders, and lay the groundwork for a strong 2026 - 2027 academic year.

## ADDENDUM #1

### Office of Inclusion and Belonging Strategic Priorities Spring 2026

**OVERVIEW:** This six-month plan specifies the priorities for the Associate Vice President of Inclusion and Belonging. After a sustained period of tumult, the primary objectives are to stabilize the unit and the Office of Equity Programming, rebuild trust among students and other stakeholders, and lay the groundwork for a strong 2026 - 2027 academic year.

#### STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

1. Implement Unit Restructuring
  2. Title VI
  3. Stabilize Signature Programs
  4. Improve Operations
  5. Fundraising
  6. Building a Culture of Excellence
- 

#### 1. Implement Unit Restructure

##### Key Actions

- Once greenlit, launch relevant searches
- Re-Name Office of Equity Programming
- Review and edit all communications, websites, etc.

##### Key Performance Indicators

- Successful searches drawing on a deep pool of qualified candidates
- Engagement of students and other stakeholders in re-naming and re-branding process
- Full transition to *Inclusion and Belonging*
- Communications reflecting new structure and branding

#### 2. Title VI

##### Key Actions

- Draft formal procedures
- Draft an education and outreach plan
- Share with President's Cabinet, Mary Broadwater, and other relevant partners (relevant Board of Trustees Committee) for review and feedback



- Develop Strategic Communication and Launch Plan
- Deliverables

- Draft plans for review

### **3. Stabilize Scholars Programs**

#### Key Actions

- Develop and implement timelines for each program: DeSousa-Brent, Landers, and Sum Primus
- Clear assignment of duties and responsibilities within Office of Equity Programming
- Explore hiring of a contractual Program Coordinator through Summer 2026

#### Key Performance Indicators

- Successful recruitment and yield of talented pool of scholars
- Enhanced student engagement in programs, activities and operations

### **4. Improve Office Operations for Professionalism and Excellence**

#### Key Actions

- Develop Standard Operation Procedures for unit
- Develop updated descriptions and summary of activities for all scholars' programs attuned to current regulatory and legal environment
- Develop a calendar of events for Spring 2026
- Prepare for summer programs and academic year 2026-2027
- Get an enhanced understanding of unit budget

#### Deliverables

- Preliminary draft of Standard Operating Procedures
- Description and summaries of activities for scholar's programs
- Semester calendar of events

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### **5. Fundraising**

#### Key Actions

- Work with Institutional Advancement to outline a plan of action
- Giving Day: Add Inclusion & Belonging unit and DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program as a choice for donors
- Identify strategic partners

#### Deliverables

- Draft of near-term plan

### **6. Build a Culture of Excellence, Consistency, Support and Care**

#### Key Actions

- Develop a near term *Student Engagement Initiative* to re-engage upper-class students
- Enhance consistency and efficacy of communication
- Begin 2026 - 2027 program planning
- Begin to develop long-term plan for scholar success and retention
- Continued consistent presence in Lucille Clifton House, 8am - 5pm

#### Deliverables

- Draft Student Engagement Strategy document
- Draft Communication Plan



## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES CAMPUS LIFE COMMITTEE**

### **STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT**

While traversing the snowy campus of St. Mary's College of Maryland, students, faculty, and staff have begun activities for the Spring 2026 semester. After the holiday break, the campus had one week of normal academic activity before a large amount of snow and ice blanketed the campus, causing closures and remote academic activity for the second week of classes. The resilience of faculty and students to keep working and maintain their spring motivation is admirable, but what is truly worth noting is the relentless effort put forth by the staff of the campus, particularly those working in the Physical Plant and the Food & Dining teams on campus. Working in extreme weather conditions to try to improve the accessibility of the pathways and to prepare food for all students, regardless of whether or not they have a meal plan, is truly the embodiment of the St. Mary's Way.

#### **Third Spaces**

With the cancelling of classes January 26-28, the student body has enjoyed a unique start to the spring semester. The campus closures, although not ideal for any party, have created a "second winter break" experience for students, giving them a chance to try and enjoy the snow and become truly as prepared for the ongoing semester as possible. Through the ongoing work of campus staff, including student workers, there has been clear communication regarding the status of the campus as well as the resources available to students while the weather persists. However, there has been a substantial amount of "cabin fever," as many of the existing third spaces (spaces not meant for living or school/work, but for flexible meet-ups) have been closed. Although students understand the need to maintain safety precautions for the employees who operate some of these spaces, such as the staff working in the Hilda C. Landers Library, there is still an underlying need for socialization during these times.

Regarding North Campus, in particular, there are very few third spaces for students outside of their own living spaces. While the housing on North Campus includes common rooms or living rooms, depending on the housing area, it is difficult for students to have a feeling of community as these spaces continue to be in or directly connected to their living space. There have been students who have reached out to me about a desire for extra community spaces on North Campus, and I think having even one more of these spaces would greatly increase the community and reduce the feelings of isolation students are currently experiencing. I understand that there is already a work group who are focusing on campus space utilization. I would like to

thank them greatly for their work so far and bring this matter to their attention to reflect the student opinion.

### **STEM Success**

The Marine Science program has been a beautiful addition to the St. Mary's academic community, and a true sense of culture is beginning to form around it. Recently, Professor Breece, Assistant Professor of Marine Science, has secured a \$500,000 NASA grant to be dispersed over three years to aid in research involving Atlantic sturgeon; this is a great achievement for Professor Breece, also an alum of St. Mary's, as well as for the Marine Science department. Several students within the Biology Department, including double major in Biology *and* Marine Science Krystal Moore-Nicks '26, have also secured several grants with the support of the Biology Department. STEM-based majors are flourishing, and this is in no small part due to the support the Board and Administration have been able to provide.

However, student remarks have been made regarding seat availability and course availability in more of the popular majors. After having an in-depth discussion with Northside Division Associate Dean Shafqat, I am very happy to report that Academic Affairs is very aware of these concerns and they are actively working towards further stabilizing course coverage. A cluster hire was recently conducted, with two new professors starting this year, two next AY, and the final one the year after. There has additionally been a successful tenure-track hire in Marine Science, and the professor has expertise in research vessel-based instruction, meaning they will be able to provide hands-on experience along with their new courses. In a case when students were consistently unsuccessful in registering for a required course, Academic Affairs was able to force-register the students who had been waiting for the course before opening it for registration. Dr. Shafqat and their team are truly working towards the best solutions possible for students and faculty in a coordinated way, and we are lucky to have them.

Partnerships among departments are proving successful, as Biology professors have been assisting with the large number of seniors in Marine Science who are completing SMPs; however, this does not seem very sustainable over long periods of time, as the Marine Science program continues to grow and the amount of students completing SMPs will continue to rise. Additionally, the Physics department is truly essential for several majors— the department is teaching three separate versions of their introductory courses, one for Physics majors, one for Bio/BioChem/Chem majors, and one for Marine Science majors. While the addition of a lecturer this year has added capacity, the Physics department seems to be in need of strategic support.

### **Housing Renovations**

Students have been pleased with the recent renovations to the Prince George (PG) Hall, and the project has been a remarkable success with a positive effect on the college community. The speediness of the remodel and the commitment to honor college aesthetics as well as community

features are tangible, and students living in the hall are pleased with their living situation. Information taken from the April 2025 Technology, Buildings, and Grounds committee meeting, PG Hall has gone from the campus' most dilapidated Residence Hall by measure of facility condition index (FCI) to now one of high quality, representing the commitment of the College to invest in the wellbeing of its students.

However, the renovation of PG has created feelings of uncertainty among students who live in other housing options, as they feel the cost and quality of their housing is not equal to the cost and quality of living in PG Hall. I understand that this has been brought up informally before in conversations, but I believe it is important to express the needs of students formally. This disparity is particularly acute for upperclassmen living on the Townhouse Greens or the Townhouse Crescents, the most expensive living options on campus. The most recent renovations among these housing areas are: the removal of bedroom carpets and replacement with vinyl tile in 2017 for the Greens, and aside from the replacement of rear French doors in 2023, the most recent substantive renovation was the replacement of 44 windows in 2017 for the Townhouse Crescents (TBG committee meeting, April 2025). The student body is aware and understanding of budget constraints, especially considering the fact that state-supported funding cannot be used towards residential areas; keeping upperclassmen in mind when considering future renovation projects would improve any feelings of animosity students experience in relation to their living circumstances, and would additionally help support summer events that utilize on-campus housing, such as Alumni Weekend.

Finally, I would like to re-emphasize the continuing issue of Anthology. There are still persisting problems with Anthology, the new ERP of the campus, but there have been developments and efforts from staff and faculty members to make the platform somewhat more accessible. Most of the anxieties surrounding the platform have to do with registering for courses and billing processes.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE  
ALUMNI AFFAIRS REPORT**

**Alumni Council**

The Alumni Council last met on Saturday November 1st, where we welcomed the opportunity to meet and get to know President Phillips. Additionally, we discussed the final plans for Giving Tuesday, had lunch with the SAGE students, and carried out our quarterly business.

**Giving Tuesday**

As others have reported, Giving Tuesday was again a strong success. Led by the Office of Alumni Relations, the campaign exceeded its goal of 3,500 donors, engaging 3,677 donors in just 32 hours and setting an institutional record of \$466,023 raised. This brings the 12-year total to more than \$3.2 million, supporting a wide range of College priorities, from the St. Mary's Fund (unrestricted) and scholarships to academic departments, athletics, and student organizations. The growth of the campaign is notable when compared to its first year in 2014, when \$17,066 was raised from 227 donors. I'd like to recognize the current and former Alumni Council members for generously donating nearly \$35,000 this year to fund the Alumni Council Champion Challenge which inspired 90 students, faculty, staff and alumni to serve as Champions and encourage their personal networks to donate.

**Alumni Benefits Program**

With encouragement from President Phillips, the Office of Alumni Relations has prioritized the expansion of alumni benefit programs to strengthen alumni engagement and generate modest, sustainable revenue to support alumni activities. Currently, the Office offers four annual alumni scholarships, a lifelong Google account, access to campus facilities (gym, waterfront, and library), and FreeWill, which enables alumni to create a will or trust at no cost.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Office plans to relaunch the alumni license plate program and introduce several new benefits, including an alumni travel program, a virtual learning consortium featuring industry leaders, and select partnerships with credit card and insurance providers.

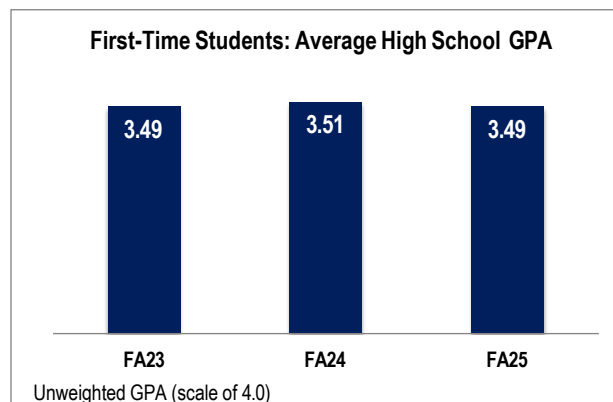
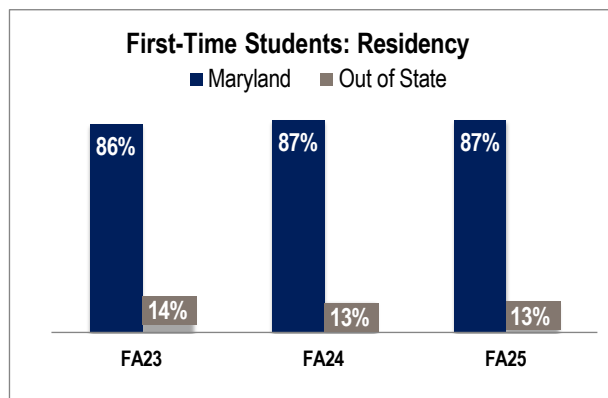
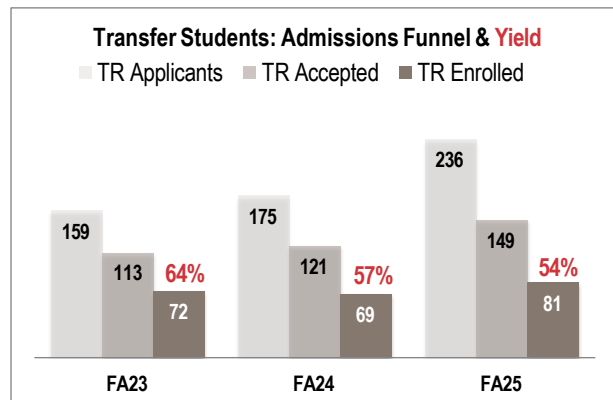
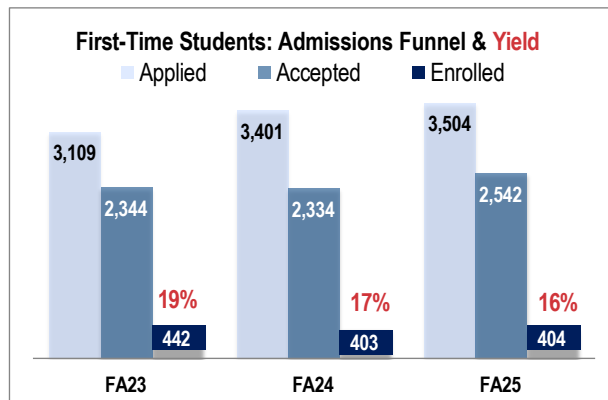
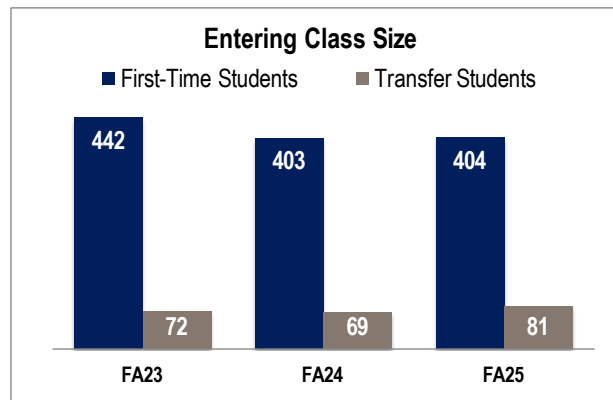
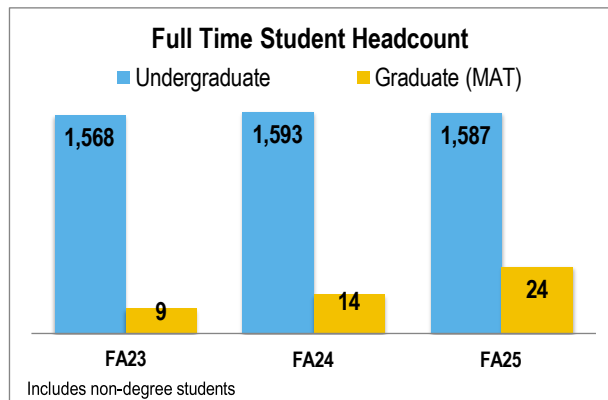
**Regional Alumni Events**

The Office of Alumni Relations is finalizing its annual travel schedule to maintain engagement with alumni across the country and to introduce these new engagement tools. In partnership with the Alumni Council, the team plans to host events with all Maryland-based chapters and approximately half of the out-of-state chapters this year, with the remaining chapters scheduled for next year. Establishing this regular rotation will help alumni plan ahead and allow the College to better coordinate outreach and resources.

## Board of Trustees Dashboard - February 2026

### Student Characteristics in Enrollment

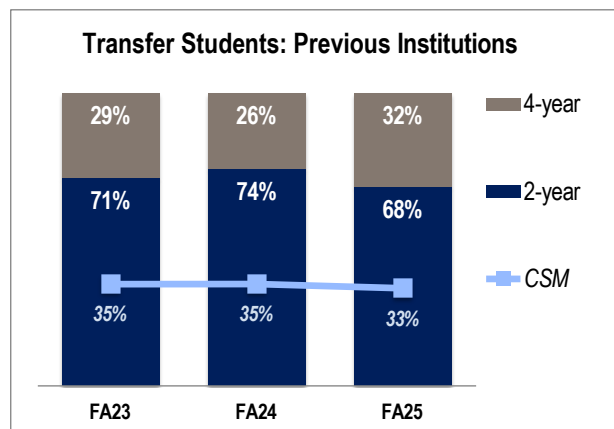
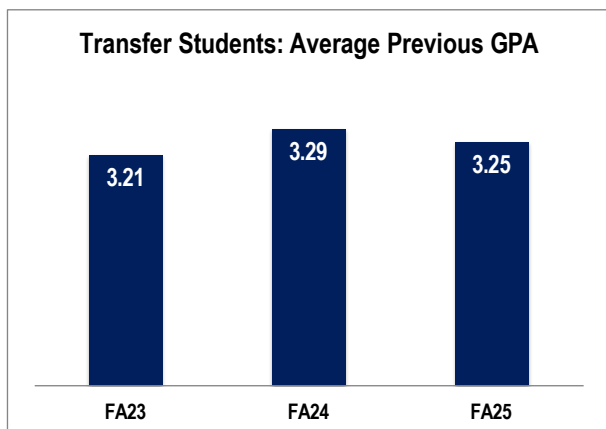
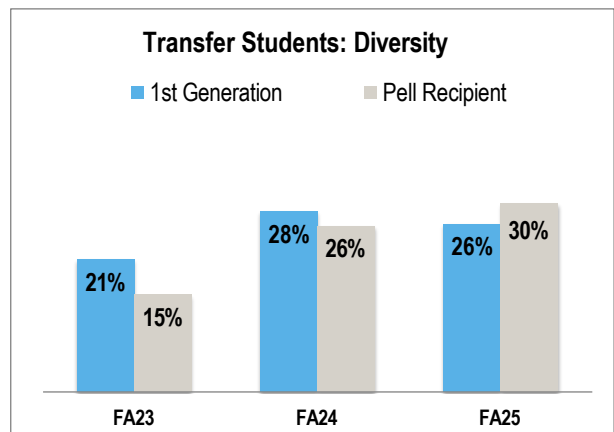
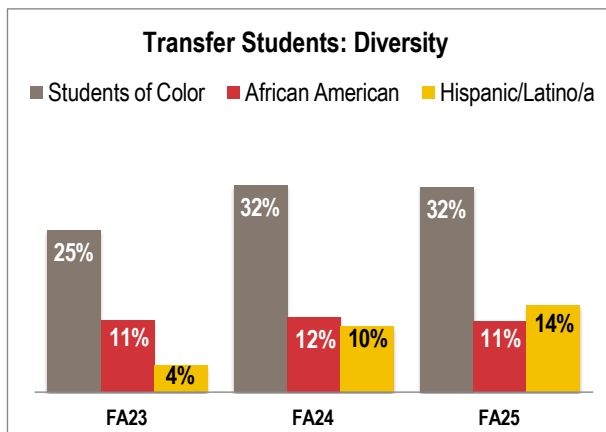
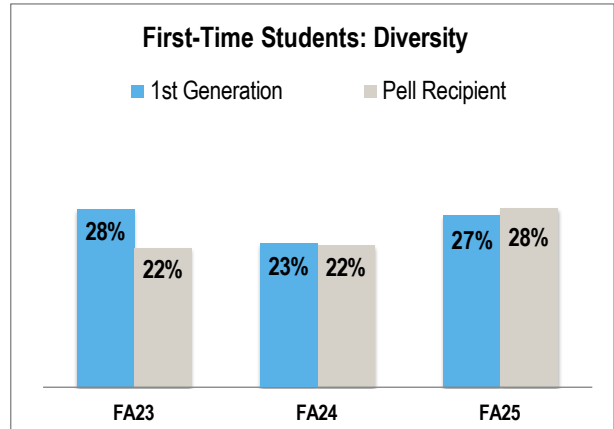
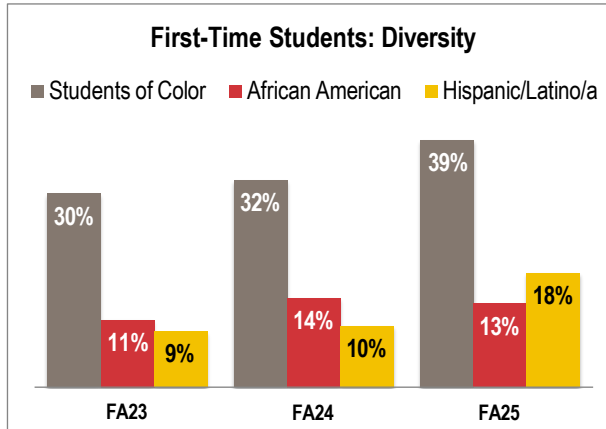
Fall 2025 figures based on final census data, 9/29/2025



## Board of Trustees Dashboard - February 2026

### Student Characteristics in Enrollment

Fall 2025 figures based on final census data, 9/29/2025

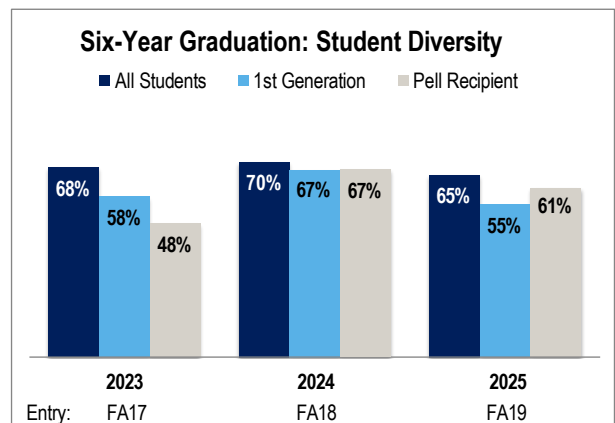
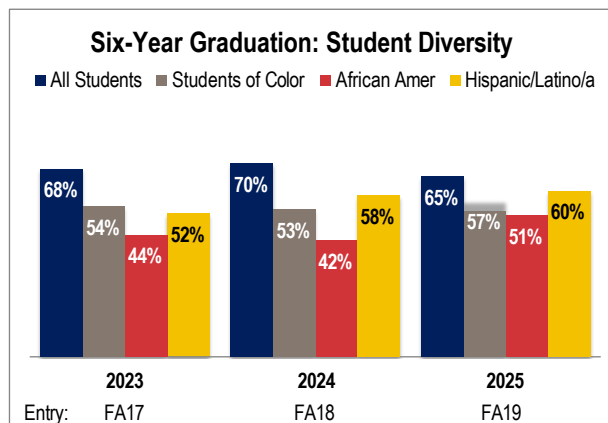
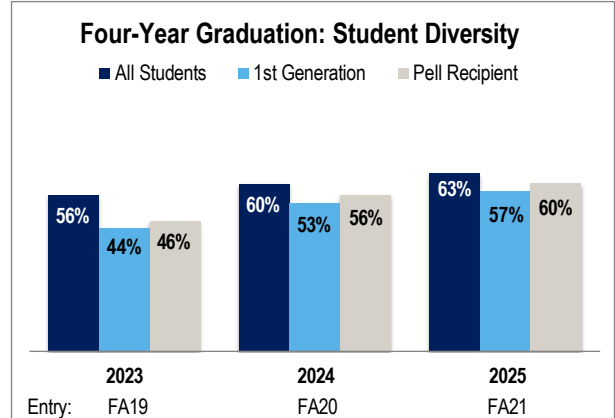
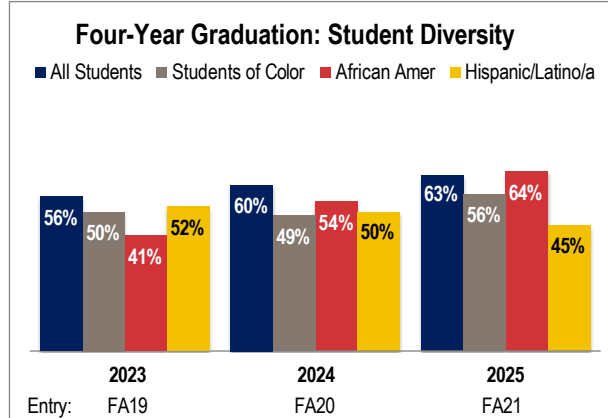
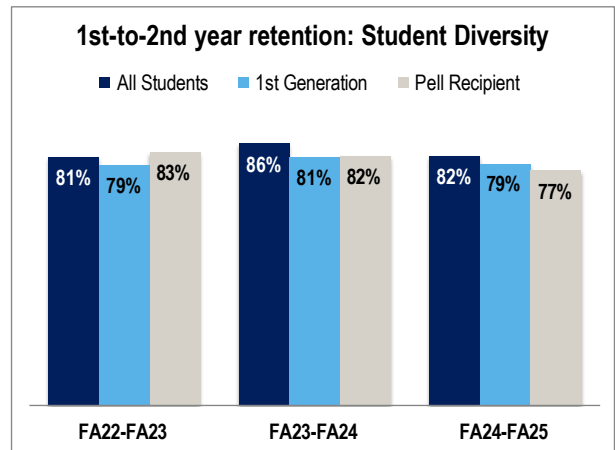
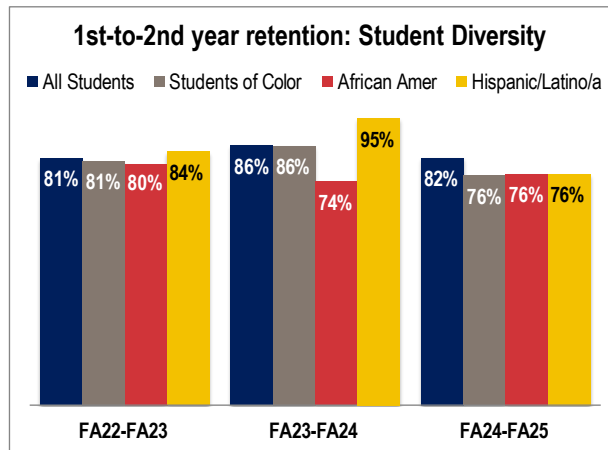




## Board of Trustees Dashboard - February 2026

### Student Retention and Persistence (First-Time Students)

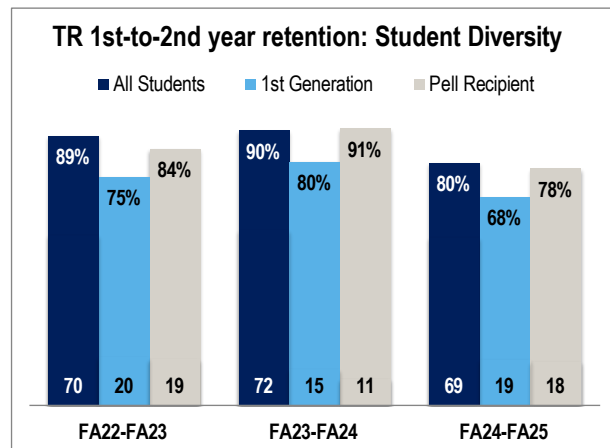
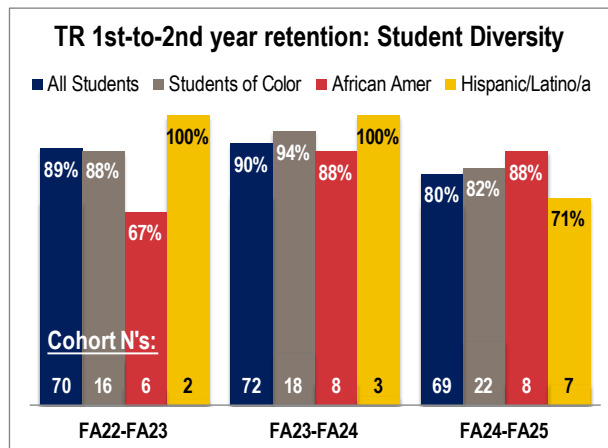
Fall 2025 figures based on final census data, 9/29/2025



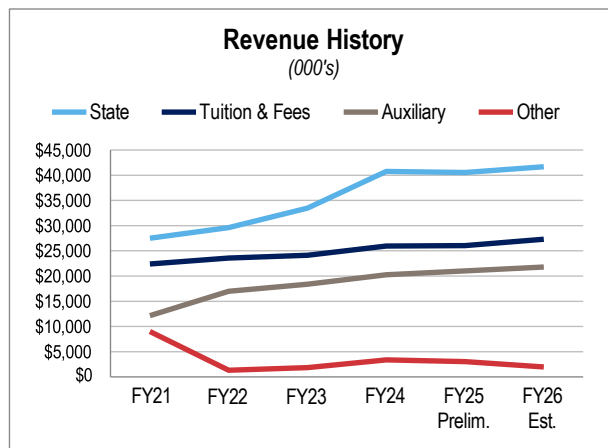
## Board of Trustees Dashboard - February 2026

### Student Retention and Persistence (Transfer Students)

Fall 2025 figures based on final census data, 9/29/2025



### Revenue and Fundraising



**Note regarding FY21 Revenue:** The COVID-19 pandemic had major impacts on Auxiliary revenues. A significant portion of the student population chose to study remotely, leading to substantial decreases in on-campus living and dining participation rates. Offsetting revenue increases were recorded in the Other category in the form of CARES act institutional support (\$1.1 million), Paycheck Protection Plan loan forgiveness (\$6.7 million) and federally funded COVID expense reimbursements through the state (\$1.5 million).

