

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

AGENDA

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

February 21, 2026
9:00 a.m.

Glendening Annex
St. Mary's City, Maryland

- I. Call Meeting to Order (9:00 a.m.) *John Bell '95*
- II. Motion to Close the Meeting *John Bell '95*
- III. Resume Open Session (11:00 a.m.) *John Bell '95*
- IV. Trustee Governance Committee *Kristen Greenaway*
 - A. Shared Governance Report *Heidi Murֆy-Michael*
 - B. Action Item 2526-20: Approval of the Statement on Principles of Shared Governance
- V. Other Business
- VI. Motion to adjourn

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
TRUSTEE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

ACTION ITEM 2526-19

APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Governance Committee recommends approval of the Statement on Principles of Shared Governance as drafted by the Shared Governance Working Group.

RATIONALE:

The Shared Governance Working Group was established by Pres. Phillips in Fall 2025 following a review and assessment by the Association of Governing Boards in 2024. The Working Group – comprised of Trustees, faculty, staff, student, and administrative representatives – met six times between August 2025 and February 2026 to identify specific operating and guiding principles for shared governance at St. Mary's College of Maryland aligned with both best practices and the College's unique status and mission. Following consideration of this Statement, the Working Group will continue to identify specific recommendations to further improve the state of shared governance at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

St. Mary's College of Maryland Statement on Principles of Shared Governance

This Statement on Principles of Shared Governance articulates the guiding and operating principles for shared governance within the St. Mary's College of Maryland community. These Principles serve as an agreement between participants in shared governance regarding their interactions with one another, and do not adjust responsibility for the governance of the College or assign decision-making roles or authority.¹

In a shared governance system, students, faculty, staff, administrators, and governing boards commit their collective participation to help inform decision making at the institutional level. Rooted in St. Mary's College of Maryland's unique mission, vision, and core values, the practice of shared governance must remain focused on ensuring that the College keeps its Honors College Promise to all the communities it serves. Through collaboration among different constituencies in accordance with the principles articulated below, the shared governance process serves as a critical mechanism to develop and implement decisions for the good of the College.

Guiding Principles for Shared Governance: Our Statutory Charter, Student Success, and The St. Mary's Way

As the State's designated public honors college, St. Mary's College of Maryland's legislative charter combines two ideals: academic excellence and the promise of public access to a traditional, yet innovative, liberal arts curriculum. Accordingly, the College's core commitment to empowering all students for success in their academic, personal, and professional goals must inform and guide decision making at all levels. In seeking to manifest this commitment through the process of shared governance, we look to The St. Mary's Way as our fundamental ethos.

As a member of St. Mary's College of Maryland, I accept the St. Mary's Way and agree to join in working with others to develop this College as a community:

- Where people respect the natural environment and the tradition of tolerance which is the heritage of this place
- Where people cultivate a life-long quest for disciplined learning and creativity
- Where people take individual responsibility for their work and actions
- Where people foster relationships based upon mutual respect, honesty, integrity and trust
- Where people are engaged in an ongoing dialogue that values differences and the unique contributions of others' talents, backgrounds, customs and world views
- Where people are committed to examining and shaping the functional, ethical values of our changing world

¹ The governing structure of St. Mary's College of Maryland is described in Maryland law, the College Bylaws, and the Faculty Bylaws. For example, the College's Faculty Bylaws state: "The College is governed pursuant to and in accordance with the statutes of the State of Maryland, the College Bylaws promulgated by the Board of Trustees, and the Faculty Bylaws approved by the Board of Trustees. The statutes of the State of Maryland prevail over any College Bylaw or Faculty Bylaw in the event of any inconsistency. In turn, the College Bylaws prevail over any Faculty Bylaw in the event of any inconsistency. Pursuant to its statutory authority for the care, management, and control of the College, the Board of Trustees may amend the College Bylaws and the Faculty Bylaws in the event the Board determines it is necessary and proper to do so under the law." (Faculty Bylaws at 2.)

- Where people contribute to a spirit of caring and an ethic of service.

Operating Principles for Shared Governance:

In keeping with the St. Mary's Way, the Operating Principles of shared governance at St. Mary's College of Maryland are intended to serve as an agreement between participants in shared governance regarding their interactions with one another, not to adjust or assign decision making authority. The Principles, in alphabetical order, include:

Accountability: All parties understand and agree on their respective roles and participation in institutional decision making as individuals and as groups and ultimately as a community with joint accountability for the institution's present and future. St. Mary's College also recognizes its responsibility to the communities it serves locally, nationally, and globally. In addition, St. Mary's College of Maryland is accountable to the State's articulated goals for institutions of higher education as well as to its role in the education and wellbeing of its citizens.

Adaptability: The challenges and opportunities confronting higher education institutions in the 21st Century may require an accelerated pace of decision making. It will be essential to identify shared-governance and decision-making processes and practices that create the right balance between thoughtful deliberation of the options and the need for immediacy in dealing with challenges and/or taking advantage of opportunities.

Consultation: Fully informed, collaborative decision making through shared governance requires timely consultation. Consultation is critical to maintaining a spirit of caring and an ethic of service. Constituent group representatives are brought into consultative processes at the earliest relevant point and regularly engaged in the development of initiatives. In addition, consultation respects the fundamental rule that representatives are chosen by the group they represent. Representatives of shared governance groups must regularly confer with the groups they represent, reporting to and soliciting feedback.

Effective Communication: Effective communication ensures that all stakeholders can communicate ideas, concerns, and aspirations with one another, which is essential for informed participation in decision-making processes and for the cohesiveness and vitality of the campus community as a whole. As such, the Presidents or Chairs of representative bodies should have the ability to communicate with their constituencies in a timely manner, allowing for collaborative decision making that results in critically-informed, inclusive, creative, and sustainable action. Moreover, effective communication involves ongoing and respectful dialogue between constituent groups where those involved actively listen to differing perspectives, seek to understand those perspectives, and deeply consider input from various constituencies in advance of decision making.

Inclusiveness: We seek to make visible our respect for differences in knowledge and ideas, in the processes of instruction and scholarship, and in experience within the diverse society we share and serve. Shared governance serves the community best when the voices engaged in decision making reflect our diversity as well as the tradition of tolerance which is the heritage of St. Mary's College.