

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID
MEETING OF APRIL 13, 2026**

AGENDA

- I. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. Enrollment Update
 - B. 3 Enrollment Marketing
 - C. Strategic Plan Area 3
 - D. Retention Update

- II. ACTION ITEMS**
 - A. None

- III. INFORMATION ITEMS**
 - A. None

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



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE
APRIL 11, 2026**

REPORT

The Office of Enrollment Management is pleased to submit its April report to the Admission and Financial Aid Committee of the Board of Trustees. This report provides an update on Fall 2026 enrollment, spring recruitment activities, financial assistance, student success services, and key strategic initiatives.

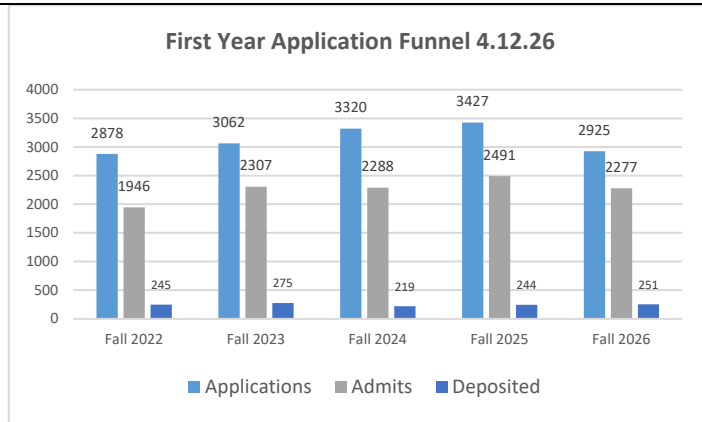
A. Fall 2026 Enrollment

First Year Students

As of April 12, 2026, the College has received 2,925 applications for Fall 2026 admission. This is a 14% decrease compared to the number received for Fall 2025 at the same point in time and is between the number received for Fall 2022 and Fall 2023.

In February, the College conducted an analysis of the enrollment funnel (prospects, inquiries, and applications) to better understand the decline in applications. The primary issue was identified at the top of the funnel, where fewer prospect names from key feeder schools were licensed (purchased) from the College Board by our previous marketing partner. This occurred despite no change in recruitment strategy or overall volume. Delays in the procurement process during the transition to our new marketing partner, 3 Enrollment Marketing (3E), also likely contributed to the decline. Overall, the decline in applications was driven by a change in the composition of the prospect pool. To mitigate this risk moving forward, the College is implementing more granular reporting to closely monitor the composition of both prospect and inquiry pools and ensure alignment with its highest-performing markets.

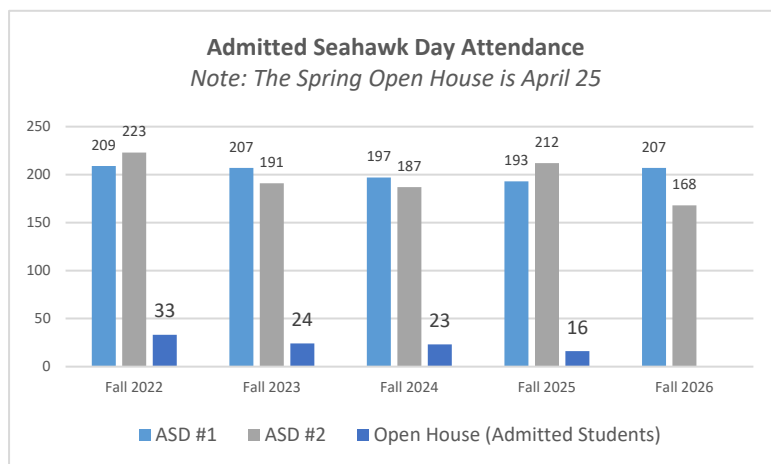
The College has offered admission to 2,277 applicants. This is compared to 2,491 and 2,288 for Fall 2025 and 2024, respectively. 251 admitted students have submitted their enrollment deposit compared to 244 and 219 for Fall 2025 and 2024, respectively. At this point in time, the yield of our admitted students has increased 1.22% over Fall 2025 and 1.45 % over Fall 2024. The increase in yield is in all application plans except for our Early Decision I application plan, with three students withdrawing their application after being offered admission. The increases in yield are in our highest (3.75+) weighted grade point average bands. While both in-state and out-of-state yield has increased, the increase in yield is greater for our out-of-state students compared to our in-state students.



To yield our admitted students, the Office of Admission is engaged in a comprehensive series of programs, communications, and outreach. Attendance at these programs is considered a signal of admitted student yield outcomes. Student attendance at all in-person on- and off-campus yield programs for Fall 2026 increased from 486 to 491 compared to Fall 2025 for the same programs. The reason for the modest increase can be attributed to the increase of off-campus yield programs from three to six. A total of 69 admitted students attended these programs compared to 28 at the Fall 2025 programs. Feedback from attendees has been very positive and they were the reason why a number of families chose to subsequently visit campus.

The College’s signature Admitted Seahawk Days (ASD) were held on Saturday, February 28, and Saturday, April 11, 2026. A total of 375 admitted students attended the 2026 Admitted Seahawk Days compared to 405 who attended the same events in 2025. While 6.2% (N=207) more students attended the February ASD, 41 fewer students attended the April ASD compared to the previous year. Concurrent admitted student days were also held on April 11 at UMBC, Salisbury University, Towson University, Frostburg University, Stevenson University, Washington College, McDaniel, Hood College, and Mount St. Mary's University, and likely affected our attendance. Historically, an additional 20 to 30 admitted students attend the Spring Open House and we will be expanding promotion of that event to admitted students. Depending on next year’s calendar, we may also need to consider hosting an Admitted Seahawks Day on a Sunday to mitigate the impact of possible concurrent programs being held at other institutions.

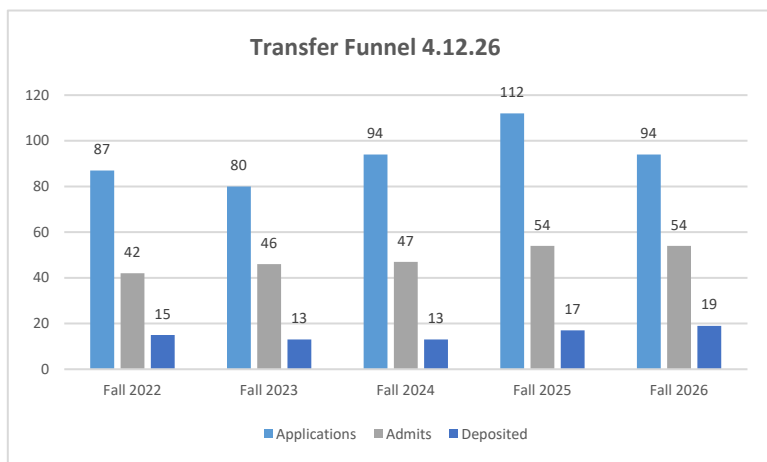
During the February ASD, a record 17 students submitted their enrollment deposits. During the April ASD, 11 students submitted deposits, consistent with typical April ASD deposit behavior.



Transfer Students

The new transfer student Fall Priority Decision deadline is May 1 and the Regular Decision deadline is July 15. Admission decisions and financial aid awards are released on a rolling basis through mid-August. At this point in time, the College has received 16 fewer applications compared to Fall 2025 and two additional students have submitted enrollment deposits.

One area of focus within the transfer admission funnel is the number of students applying and enrolling from the College of Southern Maryland, our largest community college feeder. While overall enrollment at the College of Southern Maryland has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, much of that growth has been driven by dual enrollment students, who are classified as first-year applicants under Maryland state law, and by online learners. The extent to which these shifts will impact the transfer pipeline remains uncertain and will become clearer as the cycle progresses.



The Transfer Recruitment, Admission, and Services unit within the Office of Admission is actively engaged in a range of ongoing and new initiatives designed to strengthen the transfer student experience across the recruitment and enrollment continuum.

Last year, the College hosted two on-campus Instant Decision Days with positive results. Building on this momentum, we have expanded our efforts for the Fall 2026 admission cycle and will host three on-campus Instant Decision Days on April 25 (as part of Open House), May 22, and July 10.

In addition, the College will participate in off-campus Instant Decision Days at Frederick Community College and Wor-Wic Community College to further strengthen the transfer pipeline. The College also began participation in the Phi Theta Kappa Direct Admit program in December, providing an additional pathway to attract high-achieving community college students.

Transfer Preview Visits

Beginning in March, the College has been offering a Transfer Preview Visit on the second Friday of each month. During this visit, prospective students receive a transfer-specific information session hosted by the Director of Transfer Recruitment, Admission, and Services, a campus tour, and a one-on-one appointment with a member of the Transfer Services team to receive a pre-transfer advising appointment or to discuss their transcript evaluation. To date, 12 students have participated in this initiative.

Spring 2026 Recruitment Travel

Office of Admission staff are engaged in robust spring recruitment travel to connect with both admitted students in their home locations and prospective students for Fall 2027 and beyond. Admission staff are

participating in 40 high school visits, 83 college fairs, 32 community college visits and 25 transfer fairs and 12 college admission/awareness workshops. Altogether, this is a 33% increase in recruitment events over Spring 2025.

As part of this spring's recruitment, and in response to feedback received through the Aspen Institute Maryland Transfer Intensive, the College has also expanded its pre-transfer advising efforts by offering off-campus advising appointments at the College of Southern Maryland (Leonardtown, LaPlata, and Prince Frederick campuses) and Montgomery College's Rockville campus. These engagements are designed to support prospective transfer students in planning coursework aligned with a successful transition to the College.

B. Financial Assistance

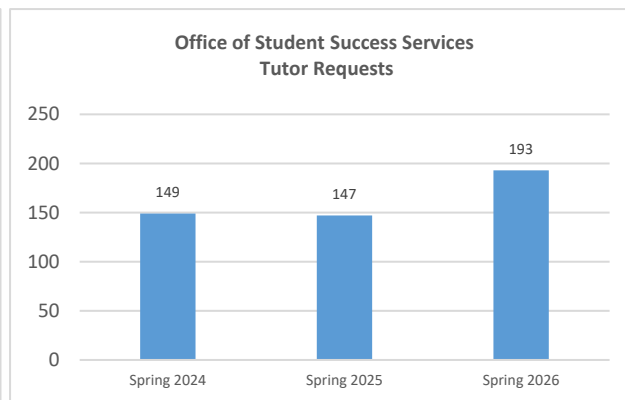
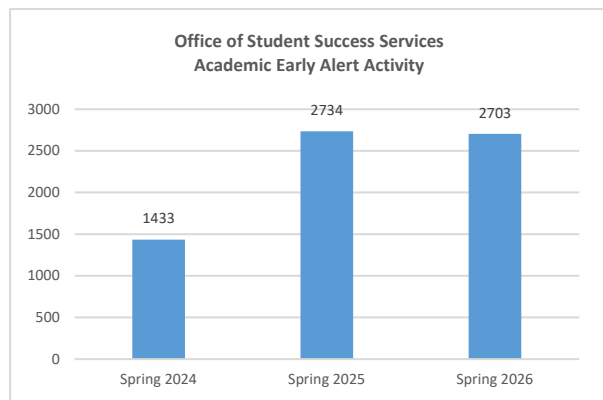
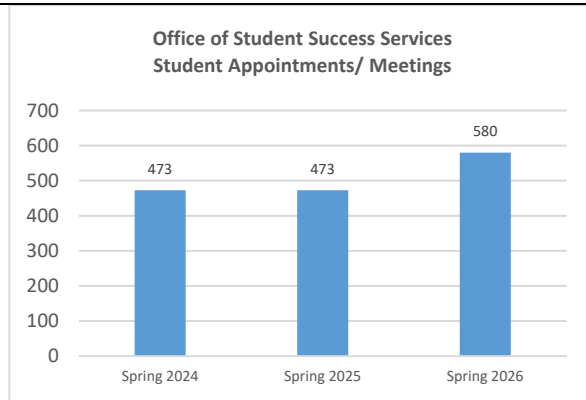
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms have been filed by 1,736 admitted students as of April 7. This is an increase of 175 students compared to Fall 2025 and represents that 76.4% of our admitted first-year students have applied for aid. This is an increase of 13.6% over the same point in time for Fall 2025 and 5.4% over Fall 2024. This is a positive signal of interest in the College. The Scholarship Committee has reviewed 41 merit scholarship appeals submitted by admitted students. This is consistent with the number received for Fall 2025.

The current tuition and fees discount rate for first-year students who have submitted enrollment deposits is 42.1% (+4.3%) compared to the close discount rate for the Fall 2025 cycle. Depending on the characteristics of additional enrolling students and the College's strategic investment in merit/need based aid, the first-year discount is expected to modestly increase between now and the Fall 2026 census. The current tuition/fees discount rate for transfer students who have submitted enrollment deposits is 26.2%. This figure is also consistent with the transfer discount rate at this stage in the cycle.

C. Student Success Services

The Office of Student Success Services (OS3) empowers SMCM students by connecting them with the people, resources, and activities that help them thrive in and out of the classroom, persist, and graduate on time. OS3 manages the College's academic early alert system and free course tutoring, engages in mentoring and coaching, and provides just-in-time programming for students and parents/family members. The work of OS3 is a critical component of the College's retention efforts.

The number of students who met with OS3 staff during the Spring semester increased by 23% compared to Spring 2025. The use of the new Slate Early Alert System (SEAS), developed by the Office of Enrollment Operations, is used by the College's faculty and staff as a tool to identify, record and respond to students of concern. For the Spring 2026 semester, as part of an initiative to use SEAS to communicate positive messages to students, OS3 communicated 864 "encouragements" to students. While there was a slight decline in the demand for tutoring from Spring 2024 to Spring 2025, there was a 31% increase for Spring 2026. The change in demand can be attributed to greater promotion of the tutoring program. Consistent with past years, STEM subjects had the greatest demand for tutoring.



After six years as a unit of the Division of Enrollment Management and with an extraordinary evolution of the service and support provided to students and their families, the Office of Student Success Services will move to the Division of Academic Affairs as of July 1, 2026. Even though OS3 will be part of another division, the collaborative partnerships build over the last six years with Enrollment Management colleagues will remain in place to support the success of our students.

D. Special Initiatives

Trustee Adopt-a-School Program

On Wednesday, February 18, Vice President Hautanen accompanied Trustee Murdy-Michael to St. Stephen's and St. Agnes Schools in Alexandria, VA to meet with Associate Director of College Counseling Libby Wieth. Follow-up efforts will include arranging a formal campus visit, confirming participation in the Washington Area Independent School (WAIS) college fair, and exploring the opportunity for the College to host the Potomac Chesapeake Association for College Admission Counseling Summer Institute.

On Friday, April 9, the College hosted the college counseling team from Indian Creek School (ICS), along with two additional ICS staff members including the mother of an SMCM student. The visit included a campus tour, meetings with College staff, and lunch in the Great Room with the three ICS alumni currently enrolled at the College. The visit was highly successful, and sincere appreciation is extended to Trustee Werneke for facilitating a deeper and more strategic connection between the College and ICS.

Office of Student Financial Services

Progress continues with the integration of the Office of Student Financial Assistance and Student Accounts to establish a unified Office of Student Financial Services. This reorganization is designed to provide a more seamless, student-centered experience in navigating financial aid, billing, and payment processes. The Executive Director of Student Financial Services position has been posted, with the goal of filling the role prior to July 1, 2026, to support the successful launch and leadership of the new office for Fall 2026.

National Merit Scholarship Program

The College is engaged in a strategic initiative to become part of the National Merit Scholarship Program. Becoming a member of the program aligns with our identity as an honors College. Achieving membership requires that 12 National Merit Finalists enroll at the College over a three-year period. For the Fall 2026 cycle, six National Merit Finalists applied to the College. Upon confirmation of their finalist status, each was awarded the SMCM National Merit Scholarship, positioning the College to make progress toward program membership.

Out-of-State Transfer Student Recruitment

To support the College's goal of increasing out-of-state enrollment, Transfer Services has identified 13 out-of-state community colleges as priority partners for targeted recruitment and relationship development.

Building on the success of Maryland Transfer Professionals Day, Transfer Services will host a Transfer Advisor Fly-In program on June 25, inviting representatives from these targeted out-of-state institutions. This initiative is designed to strengthen partnerships and expand awareness of transfer pathways to the College among key external stakeholders.

McDonogh School Partnership

In partnership with Academic Affairs, the College is finalizing two initiatives with McDonogh School, a private high school in Owings Mills, MD, designed to expand early college pathways and strengthen the recruitment pipeline. The first initiative will be to offer concurrent enrollment courses at McDonogh School. The McDonogh courses will be taught by McDonogh faculty and will be awarded pre-approved SMCM credit. The second initiative will establish a Direct Admission program for high-achieving McDonogh students, providing guaranteed admission to the College. Collectively, these efforts are intended to serve as a model for future partnerships with secondary schools.

Near Graduation Outreach

In partnership with the Registrar's Office, Transfer Services has initiated targeted outreach to students who participated in commencement since 2018 but remained within eight credits of degree completion. As a result of this effort, two students have already completed their requirements and graduated, with additional students actively working with Transfer Services to develop plans to fulfill their remaining coursework and complete their degrees.

Transfer Articulation Agreements

This spring, the College has finalized multiple articulation agreements with Montgomery College, providing students with benefits such as guaranteed admission, guaranteed scholarships, and opportunities to participate in Reverse Transfer. The College continues to advance this work statewide through the development of a Master Transfer Agreement and aligned Program Transfer Agreements with additional Maryland community colleges.

As part of its engagement in the Aspen Institute Maryland Transfer Intensive, the College is also undertaking a comprehensive redesign and rebranding of the STEP Program, originally launched with the College of Southern Maryland in May 2020. The updated program will focus on expanding dual admission benefits across the state, strengthening early connection points for prospective transfer students.

The redesigned program will be formally introduced at Maryland Transfer Professionals Day on May 4, when the College hosts transfer professionals from across the state, positioning SMCM as a leader in transfer pathway development.