



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CAMPUS LIFE COMMITTEE
APRIL 22, 2026**

**OPEN SESSION
AGENDA**

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Vice President of Student Affairs report
- B. Student Trustee report

III. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Approval of the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) Cultural Diversity Report

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

- A. Cultural Diversity Report 2026
- B. Approved minutes from January 29, 2026



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CAMPUS LIFE COMMITTEE**

**OPEN SESSION
REPORT SUMMARY**

Date of Meeting: April 18, 2026

Date of Next Meeting: September, 2026

Committee Chair: Nick Abrams '99

Committee Members: Board Chair John Bell '95, Peter Bruns, Katharine Fritz'04, Talib Horne '93, Summer LaRocco '26, President Rhonda Phillips, Jesse Price '92, Melanie Rosalez '92

Staff Members: Jerri Howland

Dashboard Metrics

None

Executive Summary

Information Items:

Associate Vice President for Inclusion and Belonging

Rafael Zapata will report on the Office of Inclusion and Belonging moving to Compass under Academic Affairs.

Vice President for Student Affairs

Vice President Howland will present a summary of her Board report including a proposal for a Barbershop Talk Baltimore pilot program and proposed additional duties for the Student Trustee position. Dr. Howland's full report can be found on OnBoard.

Student Trustee

Student Trustee Summer LaRocco will present a summary of her full board report which can be found on OnBoard.

Discussion Items: N/A

Action Items:

III.A. Approval of the 2026 Cultural Diversity Report

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CAMPUS LIFE COMMITTEE
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS REPORT

Student Affairs has supported the College efforts in complying with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which requires all programs, services and activities of public entities, including public higher education institutions, to make all digital content accessible. This rule includes web content and mobile apps. Within the last year, in anticipation of the upcoming April 24 deadline Vice President Howland has worked diligently in partnership with Associate Provost, Katy Arnet, and Kelly O' Grady, Director of Accessibility Services (OAS) to lead a Digital Accessibility Workgroup (DA Workgroup). Kelly and Amy Baker of OAS have been active members of the University Systems of Maryland (USM) Digital Accessibility Working Group to ensure SMCM informed and in accordance with other Maryland colleges. OAS partnered with the Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (CITL) to conduct DA trainings and presentations for the campus community. Within the last month, the College hired a Digital Accessibility Specialist who is located in CITL to also support training, remediation of documents and continued compliance for faculty in making course content accessible for students. The landing page of the campus website along with several other high traffic websites (i.e. Human Resources) have been remediated by Media Services to comply with the web content guidelines. The campus goal must be to demonstrate ongoing efforts to improve accessibility of digital content for all and provide clear alternative ways for users to access information or complete tasks on campus.

Student Affairs has continued to focus on increasing student connections, student engagement, and students' individual needs. The Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation (CARE) team received 87 reports requesting support for students in crisis. This was an increase of 12 compared to last year. Most reports involved first year new incoming students (25 cases). Cases were primarily about mental health and suicide ideation concerns with other issues involving roommate issues, relationship issues, concerns of alcohol and drug use, hygiene, and academic troubles.

Student Connections

Another goal for Student Affairs was to connect students to the local community and opportunities in the region. In January 2026, the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) merged with the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement (OCOE) to form the new **Office of Career Development and Community Engagement (CDCE)**. The new office includes an Executive Director, Director of Career Development, Director of Community Engagement, three Program Coordinators, Office Manager, and a part-time Office Associate. The team has successfully navigated the transition, maintaining the same level of service to students and the community and completing a very full spring semester of programming.

They continue to perform outreach both on campus (to new and returning students, faculty, and staff) and off, participating in campus and community events to build awareness of the College and CDCE, advertise opportunities, seek input and feedback, and establish the office as the first point of contact for community engagement activities. CDCE tables at most major community events, hosts monthly **“Coffee with Community”** events at local coffee shops, and attends meetings of the Chamber of Commerce, business associations, and other community organizations. In addition, the office created a popular **“Science in the Pub”** series in which faculty members give casual talks on scientific topics at Call Signs restaurant and facilitated faculty participation in the ongoing Pier450 MindBlown Speaker Series. Finally, staff routinely provide professional development workshops (e.g. resume writing) in the community, most recently during an event hosted by the Patuxent Partnership at Great Mills High School.

CDCE also welcomes employers and community organizations to campus to engage with students in numerous ways, including the Career and Internship Fair, Volunteer Expo, Small Business Expo, and smaller networking and tabling opportunities throughout the year.

CDCE has very active social media accounts and an email newsletter that reaches over 1,000 community members, highlighting campus and community events and activities. CDCE is also responsible for outreach to Arts Alliance members and has been working to grow membership in that organization through targeted communications.

Finally, some CDCE spring semester highlights are:

- Held a spring Career and Internship Fair - 64 employers and 394 students attended.
- Hosted a new Small Business Expo event. The office invited 10 local small businesses to the Campus Center during community hour to showcase their products and services and give students some insight into how a small business operates.
- Managed Bay to Bay Service Day/Volunteer Week, 210 LEAD students participated. They completed projects ranging from making sustainable dog toys for a local animal shelter to working at the Lexington Manor Passive Park community garden to making cards and delivering donations to the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home.
- Planned two exciting trips this spring: one to Annapolis to visit with legislators and SMCM alums, tour the State House, and see the General Assembly in action; and another to spend a morning at JP Morgan Private Bank in Washington, D.C.
- Administered 382 internships, including 149 funded by college and 137 funded by other sources.
- Developed and hosted the first annual Community Impact Awards are a campus-wide celebration of service, leadership and partnership, sponsored by the Student Affairs Division. The ceremony took place on April 13 and included 21 awards for students, faculty, staff, and community partners (St. Mary's County Museum Division and The MIL Corporation).
- Continued to partner with Alumni Relations to match 369 students with 315 mentors in the Mentor-A-Seahawk Program.

In a short amount of time CDCE has extended SMCM reach in the community and increased opportunities in the community for students, faculty and staff.

The River Runner, campus shuttle, connects students to the community too. In our second year running the River Runner, we expanded its usage to include trips to Leonardtown on the first Friday of each month, weekly trips to the movies, and trips supporting academic programs, in addition to the normal weekly shopping shuttle and twice monthly weekend trips home (D.C./Baltimore shuttles). While the shopping shuttles use is low, only 81 students used the shuttle between November and April this year, the break trips have been very successful. We had

a waitlist for each trip. The weekend home shuttle ran twice per month and averaged between 30-40 students consistently riding. With the work of CDCE and the inception of the River Runner SMCM is making connections for students to enhance their experiences.

Student Engagement

Student Clubs and Organizations produced 382 events this academic year, which is an increase of 51 events over last academic year. In addition, the Student Government Association (SGA)'s Programs Board hosted 51 events. We introduced new traditions to the campus this year with a St. Mary's Renaissance Festival in October and renting out a movie theater in town for students. In November we took students to view the movie *Wicked for Good*, which was so popular in the spring semester we booked a theater for 6 weeks allowing students to see newly released movies. Scary Fest and Winter Fest continued this year as well as our annual World Carnival, which was Alice in Wonderland themed.

SGA created 11 new clubs this past year. Not a surprise several focused around politics with an election year, such as the Young Democrats, Maryland Student Legislature Club, and Young Democratic Socialist of America. The new academic organizations were Business & Econ, Mock Trial, Sustainability, and Theater. Fun/engaging clubs were Floor hockey and Latin Dance. With the addition of these new clubs there are 76 active clubs/organizations on campus. SGA Senators showed their appreciation for staff and students by hosting free coffee events at the Daily Grind and making gift baskets for the Bon Appetit and Physical Plant staff for their assistance with the snowy weather.

The Office of Public Safety continues to expand its role in fostering student engagement, trust, and overall well-being through targeted programming and outreach. The **Barbershop Talk** event served 64 students, providing free grooming services through partnerships with barbers, a beautician, and a lash technician. This initiative continues to serve as a cornerstone program, creating a culturally relevant space for dialogue, mentorship, and relationship-building between students and Public Safety personnel. Spearheaded by Trustee Horn, this initiative is about to travel as a recruitment and engagement effort, see Addendum A, the Barbershop Talk Baltimore

Pilot draft proposal. We met our goals of ensuring students had multiple opportunities to be engaged on campus during the week and on weekends.

Supporting Students' Needs

Wellness is always a top priority for Student Affairs. All units work to strengthen relationships with students to build trust and show care through direct services and educational outreach programming. We also support systemic needs, such as food and housing insecurity. We have developed a process for students to request housing over break periods if they show a need. We had just over 700 usages this year so far in Solomon's Shoppe, food and clothing pantry. For the second year we were awarded the Hunger-Free Campus Grant, which we used to increase food availability in Solomon's Shoppe. The grant allowed us to support educational efforts around food insecurity, and collaborate with the campus farm, Kate Farm. Likewise, the Office of Public Safety hosted a Produce Box event at the Daugherty-Palmer Commons (DPC), distributing over 70 boxes of food to students.

Health Services

Health Services prioritized student retention by providing accessible, comprehensive clinical care, expanding educational outreach, and strengthening collaboration with campus and community partners to ensure students receive appropriate, timely support. Key initiatives have focused on improving access to same-day appointments, promoting preventive care, delivering health education, and identifying health concerns, particularly for students with ongoing or complex medical needs.

In addition, Health Services has expanded its role in addressing gaps in mental health care. While not the primary provider of mental health services on campus, the resident nurse practitioner and clinical team have supported immediate needs through assessment, short-term interventions, and medication management when appropriate. This approach has helped students remain engaged academically while the clinic facilitates referrals and coordinates follow-up care for longer-term mental health support.

Through these efforts, Health Services continues to play a vital role in promoting student well-being, supporting academic persistence, and advancing the institution's broader retention goals.

Some efforts of note are:

- Distributed 72 doses of Narcan to community members and expanded access by installing emergency opioid response boxes in 28 locations campus wide.
- There is steady demand for self-care products, driving consistent foot traffic to the Health Services lobby to access the Caring Corner and Comfort Station; statistics show at least 20 students per day (approximately 100 per week) utilizing this service.
- Provided FREE STI testing kit education and distribution program - 72 test kits were funded by the SGA.
- Specialty clinic appointments with the Nurse Practitioner = 67 in total (for health skin, breast cancer awareness, diabetes and heart health).

So far this year Health Services held 946 clinical appointments compared to 1,564 for AY 2024-2025 (as of 5/31/25). Unfortunately, the decrease was due to less appointments being available during the period because of the Nurse Practitioner being on parental leave in fall and a reduce reporting period. However, trends show a need for professional nurse case management as more students present complex medical needs, requiring coordination of off-campus specialty care, referrals, and insurance utilization. The Health Services staff have consistently looked for ways to expand outreach and services to students which includes hosting specialty clinics in residence halls throughout the year. Staffing may be a challenge soon with one vacant Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and an Assistant Director who is actively searching for a new position due to completing degree and licensure to become a nurse practitioner.

Counseling Services

Counseling Services provided over 494 individual sessions to students this spring semester compared to 430 this time last year. Other services include group counseling, psychiatric medication management, art therapy, Peer Health Educator (PHE) programs and case management/referral services. Counseling Services educational outreach includes visiting class to provide well-being information and resources.

On May 5, Counseling Services will host JED Day to celebrate the completion of a four-year JED Campus program grant assessment and strategic plan focused on suicide prevention and student mental health and wellness. Since fall 2022, Jessica Jolly, Director of Counseling Services and Elizabeth (Libby) Williams, Professor of Psychology have co-lead the campus steering committee for the college and have done a tremendous job of getting the campus to the finish line with a JED strategic plan. The JED strategic plan laid out 15 objectives for improvement. In pre and post Health Minds Survey results the JED steering committee reported an 18% increase in students feeling that they lead a purposeful and meaningful life (82% total), a 16% increase in students feeling their social relationships are supportive and rewarding (89% total), an 11% increase in students awareness of our mental health outreach efforts (80% total), and a 12% increase in students agreeing that mental and emotional wellbeing is a priority at SMCM (82% total).

Office of Accessibility Services

OAS has made significant strides in supporting students' needs and improving accessibility. They continue OAS to see an increase in request for accommodations from students who self-describe their diagnosis and/or health needs. The patterns OAS has seen show most students are reporting multiple categories of diagnosis and need consistent with the statistics. Roughly 85% of the students registered with OAS have disabilities and needs that are invisible to others. About 65% of the students self-disclose some form of neurodiversity, including ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, dyslexia, and other learning disabilities. About 60% of students self-disclose mental health needs, including anxiety, depression, PTSD, and obsessive-compulsive disorders. Further, about 16% of students report a significant health condition, like Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS), migraines, and diabetes. OAS also handles managing temporary accommodations for short-term disabling conditions, such as concussions, injuries, and surgeries, accounting for approximately 10%.

In Fall 2026, OAS ended the semester with a total of 260 requests for support. As of April 9th, 236 students had requested or activated accommodations from OAS for the spring semester. Consistent with the 2024-2025 academic year, more students requested or renewed accommodations in the Fall than in the Spring. About 10% of requests are not approved because

the students' needs do not fit the criteria for support under the ADA. This can be a challenge for students who self-diagnose. While students may not meet the criteria OAS will extend other avenues of support to them available on campus.

Year to year, the number of students connected fluctuates for a multitude of reasons. Some students are no longer recorded due to expiration of temporary accommodations, graduation, or non-renewals. To date OAS has 570 current undergraduate students connected to them through requesting accommodations, received or not, or renewing each semester or not, compared to 500 last year.

Data from the Spring 2025 Student Satisfaction Survey showed overall, student satisfaction with Accessibility Services increased by almost 10% from 2023 to 2025. OAS contributes this success to being fully staffed and updating their office policies. With the demand for services OAS hopes to in the future to be able to expand and improve their office space, to create space for students, and to be closer to the Testing Center. OAS staff oversee the Testing Center which is currently located inside the Office of Student Support Services (OS3). The Testing Center has continued to support all SMCM students (OAS and non-OAS). To date, about 370 undergrad students have been approved for some form of testing accommodation with OAS, but don't all necessarily have active accommodations. For the fall semester, there were 592 testing requests received and approximately 521 exams proctored. Of the 592 tests, 190 requests and approximately 143 proctored, were during final week specifically. This spring OAS has reported 307 requests, with approximately 288 exams proctored. The percentage of students using the Testing Center has increased hence the need for OAS to be relocated closer to the testing center. Our hope is the Space Advisory Committee and or Master Planning process will help to solve the space problems for OAS soon.

Title IX

During the 2025-2026 academic year through April 10, 2026, a total of 38 complaints were received however only one student filed a formal complaint, alleging stalking against another student. The student during their initial assessment meeting withdrew the formal complaint and requested a mutual, non-punitive, non-disciplinary No Contact Order as a supportive measure.

Title IX received 27 reports in the Fall 2025 semester; however, 20 reports were determined to be non-Title IX reports. So far this spring they received 11 reports; however, 6 of the reports were determined to be non-Title IX reports, see breakdown below:

Fall 2025

- Non-Title IX (20)
- Stalking (4)
- Sexual Harassment – Text Messages (1)
- Non-consensual Sexual Contact – Fondling (2)

Spring 2026

- Non-Title IX (6)
- Stalking (2)
- Sexual Harassment (1)
- Hostile Environment (1)
- Dating Violence (1)

These numbers are reflective of the tremendous work the Title IX staff are doing in ensuring all students are participating in training and prevention activities (996 students attend programming events in fall and 944 in the spring).

Office of Inclusion and Belonging Report Campus Life Committee

Submitted by Rafael Zapata
Associate Vice President of Inclusion and Belonging

Summary

This year, our focus was on stabilizing office operations and managing the restructuring process. We implemented an interim structure that included the addition of [Dr. José Ballesteros](#), Chair and Professor of International Languages and Cultures, as a part-time Co-Director of the Office of Equity Programming (along with myself), and the integration of [Alise Maxie](#), Coordinator of Multicultural Programming, into coordinating the Sum Primus and Landers Scholars Programs. These changes allowed us to regain a degree of consistency with these signature programs. [Lisa Brown](#), Office Associate, remains the pillar of the office anchoring our operations and student engagement.

In addition to anticipating the hiring of a new full-time Director and Program Coordinator in the Office of Equity Programming, the College recently announced our unit's move to Compass, under the Division of Academic Affairs. Note: Under this new structure, the Title IX Office will no longer be under our purview.

DeSousa-Brent Scholars

- We welcomed another outstanding cohort of 46 DeSousa-Brent Scholars during the Summer Light Experience.
- We focused on graduating seniors to ensure they were on track to graduate. We discovered that some students were behind on credits and were able to provide funding for 13 students (mostly seniors) to take Winter Session courses to keep them on track.
- We anticipate a 65% four-year graduation rate for this class, an improvement of 6% compared to previous years, to be confirmed once spring grades are in.
- Our early spring semester call for Tuition Assistance resulted in 20 applications, and we anticipate supporting most of those students—prioritizing current juniors/rising seniors—to ensure timely graduation.

Sum Primus Scholars

- In partnership with the Division of Student Affairs, we welcomed the largest-ever cohort of 34 Sum Primus Scholars this fall.
- We convened students in a variety of gatherings and networking opportunities.
- The first cohort of Sum Primus Scholars is graduating this year.
- We envision a U.S. travel component for Sum Primus Scholars soon.

Landers Scholars

- We welcomed a diverse and excellent cohort of 6 Landers Scholars this year.
- We are in the process of finalizing the selection of the next cohort of Landers Scholars.
- We will be working this summer to develop structured peer and professional networking programs as a central component of the program, while integrating myriad service opportunities for scholars to participate in.

Events and Programs Highlighting and Celebrating Cultural Diversity

The Office of Multicultural Programming, led by Alise Maxie, works closely with SMCM cultural and social student organizations to provide some of the most outstanding programs at the College, often in collaboration with numerous partners. A full list of programs from September 2025–March 2026 can be found in Addendum B.

Of particular note was the immensely successful *22nd Annual Martin Luther King Celebration of Southern Maryland: Lighting the Way: Faith, Hope, and Action,*” honoring Dr. King’s legacy of justice, unity, and civic engagement. The celebration was co-sponsored by the College of Southern Maryland, the local chapter of the NAACP, and the local chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Over 250 attendees joined us in the Great Room to listen to music by SMCM faculty and local middle school students, as well as remarks from President Rhonda Phillips, the Hon. Congressman and SMCM Board Member Steny Hoyer (D-MD 5th District), and keynote speaker Tanya Hughes, former Olympian and entrepreneur who was raised and attended high school in St. Mary’s County.

Additional events we have supported and collaborated on include: a robust series of events for Hispanic Heritage Month 2025; a Black Excellence and Leadership Panel in February 2026

featuring Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott '06 and former SMCM Emerita President Tuajuanda Jordan; our second annual Eid/Ramadan celebration on March 24, 2026, attended by over 125 students, faculty, and staff; and an evening musical event on Thursday, April 2, featuring Washington, DC-based musical group [Orquesta Manplea](#), attended by well over 100 students, faculty, and staff of all backgrounds. We are currently amid the 2026–2027 program planning process.

Addendum A

Barbershop Talk Baltimore Pilot ***Strategic Recruitment & Engagement Pipeline Proposal***

Dr. Felix Martinez
Chief of Campus Police, St. Mary's College of Maryland

I. Rationale

St. Mary's College of Maryland has a strategic opportunity to expand its recruitment footprint within Baltimore City by engaging high-potential students who are often not reached through traditional admissions strategies.

While institutions routinely invest in outreach, many efforts fail to overcome key barriers:

- Lack of trust in institutions
- Limited exposure to selective college environments
- Perception that institutions like St. Mary's College of Maryland are not accessible or designed for them

This initiative addresses those barriers directly by repositioning recruitment as relationship-building rather than transactional outreach.

The Barbershop Talk model leverages culturally relevant, trusted community spaces to:

- Establish credibility
- Foster authentic dialogue
- Introduce SMCM as a realistic and attainable pathway

This approach aligns with institutional priorities related to:

- Enrollment growth and diversification
- Access and belonging
- Regional engagement and visibility

II. Program Design & Engagement Model

Program Overview

The Barbershop Talk Baltimore Pilot is a 3–5 session engagement series conducted in a Southwest Baltimore barbershop, followed by a structured campus immersion experience at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Each session integrates:

- Free grooming services (removing participation barriers)
- Facilitated, high-impact discussions

- Consistent SMCM exposure through storytelling, representation, and guidance

Strategic Engagement Framework

The program follows a deliberate progression:

Trust → Relevance → Exposure → Access → Conversion

This sequencing ensures that SMCM is not introduced as a sales pitch, but rather as the natural outcome of a trusted relationship.

Session Architecture (SMCM-Integrated)

Session 1: Trust & Identity Development

- Establish rapport and credibility
- Introduce SMCM through facilitator presence

Session 2: Pathways & Possibility

- Explore post-secondary options
- Position SMCM as a viable pathway for students with similar backgrounds

Session 3: College Experience Demystified

- Define college life expectations
- Utilize SMCM student voices and lived experiences

Session 4: Access & Admissions Strategy

- Provide actionable guidance on admissions and financial aid
- Deliver clear insight into accessing SMCM

Session 5: Campus Immersion Experience

- Transport students to SMCM
- Deliver a structured visit including academic, social, and community exposure

Target Population & Partners

Primary School Partners:

- SEED School of Maryland
- KIPP Baltimore

Participant Scope:

- Per session: 15–25 students (This may change after speaking with community partner)

III. Broader Impacts

This initiative is designed to deliver both immediate and long-term institutional value.

Institutional Impact

- Establishes a direct recruitment pipeline from Baltimore City
- Expands access to high-achieving, underrepresented students
- Increases early-stage engagement, strengthening long-term enrollment potential
- Enhances SMCM’s reputation as a community-engaged public honors institution

Student Impact

- Increased awareness of post-secondary pathways
- Greater confidence in navigating college access
- Exposure to a college environment that may not have previously felt attainable
- Development of identity, decision-making, and long-term goal setting

Strategic Impact

- Creates a replicable and scalable engagement model
- Positions SMCM as a leader in innovative, relationship-based recruitment
- Strengthens partnerships with key Baltimore educational institutions

IV. Timeline

Phase	Timeline
Partner alignment	Month 1
Recruitment & onboarding	Month 1–2
Session delivery	Months 2–4
Campus immersion experience	Month 4
Evaluation & reporting	Month 5

V. Budget & Resource Allocation

Estimated Pilot Investment: \$15,000 – \$25,000

Primary Cost Categories

- Participant incentives (haircuts)
- Transportation (Baltimore ↔ SMCM)
- Food and refreshments
- Program materials and SMCM-branded engagement items

- Data collection and evaluation tools

Funding Strategy

- Foundation support
- Institutional initiatives (e.g., Giving Tuesday)
- Corporate partnerships

VI. Evaluation & Success Metrics

Key Performance Indicators

- Participation and retention across sessions
- Pre/post shifts in student awareness of college pathways
- Increased expressed interest in SMCM
- Engagement during campus immersion experience

Success Criteria

- Sustained attendance and engagement
- Demonstrated increase in SMCM consideration among participants
- Positive feedback from school and community partners
- Readiness for expansion

VII. Action Requested

Approval is requested to:

1. Proceed with pilot implementation in partnership with identified schools
2. Authorize funding within the \$15,000–\$25,000 range
3. Engage cross-divisional collaboration (Admissions, Student Affairs, Communications)

Conclusion

This initiative positions St. Mary's College of Maryland to move beyond traditional recruitment models and establish a relationship-driven pipeline rooted in trust, relevance, and access.

By meeting students where they are and guiding them toward where they can be, this model delivers both immediate engagement outcomes and long-term institutional value.

Addendum B

Office of Multicultural Programming Events: Fall 2025 - Spring 2026

September

- **International Day of Peace Tabling**
September 17 | 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Students wrote what peace means to them, added responses to a board, and received peace pins or bracelets.
 - **Around the World Tabling (Community Hour)**
September 17–18 | Campus Center Upstairs Foyer
Cultural games focused on Italian and Asian cultures with prizes.
 - **Hispanic Heritage Month Library Display**
All Month | Library
Books, DVDs, movies, and artwork highlighting Hispanic culture; included free pins created by the office in partnership with the library.
-

October

- **One Maryland One Book Program**
October 8 | 7:00 – 9:00 PM
Discussion of *Rooted in Kin* in collaboration with Community Outreach & Engagement.
- **Hispanic Heritage Month Poetry Event**
October 9 | 6:30 – 8:00 PM
- **Out in the Workplace: LGBTQIA+ Panel, Career Center partnership**
October 11 | 2:00 – 3:00 PM
- **From Twilight to Pride (LGBTQIA+ History Presentation)**
October 12 | 5:30 – 7:00 PM
In partnership with Enoch Pratt Library., The SMCM Library, and community outreach and engagement.
- **Tote Your Story (Global Diversity Awareness Month)**
October 19 | 2:00 – 4:00 PM | Leadership Lab
Students designed tote bags reflecting identity and personal history.
- **Queer Body Positivity Art Session**
October 23 | 5:30 – 7:30 PM
In collaboration with the Burlesque Club; focused on empowerment and self-expression.
- **LGBTQIA+ Mixer & Drag Show**
October 26 | 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Partnership with Haus of Solomon. LGBTIQ+ get to mix and mingle and play games to understand each other

- **Diwali Celebration Partner with APAC and Asian Studies, Asian cultural celebration of new beginnings**

October 28 | 4:30 – 6:30 PM

- **Hispanic Heritage Month Movie Screening (Posada)**

6:30pm -8pm | Cole Cinema

November

- **Piscataway Nation Singers and Dancers Performance**

November 4 | 7:00 – 9:00 PM

- **Cultural Arts & Crafts Night**

November 7 | 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Hispanic crafts, piñata activity, and nacho bar (with Peer Health Educators).

- **Accessibility Study Tips Workshop**

November 5 | 5:00 – 6:00 PM | Schafer Hall

Focus on ADHD, dyslexia, and accessible learning strategies.

- **Global Groove Festival**

ARC | 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Cultural dances, tabling, and food trucks. With athletics

- **Create Your Own Dreamcatcher**

November 13 | 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Educational program on Native American culture.

- **Baltimore American Indian Center Field Trip**

November 15 | 11:30 AM – 5:30 PM

- **Trans Day of Remembrance Tabling**

November 20 | 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

- **African Student Association Cultural Event**

November 21 | 2:00 – 5:00 PM | Glendening Annex

African food, dance workshop, and trivia.

- **Alianza Latinx Event: Plants Native to the Americas**

November 21

Educational planting activity.

December

- **De-Stress Event (Churros & Coloring)**

December 7 | 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Mexican desserts, snacks, and relaxation activities.

January

- **MLK Day of Service**

January 24

Students and campus partners completed service projects across Southern Maryland. Partnered with community outreach and engagement, athletic

- **Lunar New Year Celebration with APAC**

January 15 | 5:00 – 7:00 PM

February

- **Black History Month Kickoff**

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Trivia, “Unknown Heroes” wall, educational games, and food.

- **TD Beauty & Barber Business Talk**

- Feb 13th 6:30-8pm

Black-owned businesses provided services and led a Business 101 discussion on entrepreneurship. Campus safety partnership

- **Malikat Al Dabke Performance**

February 22 | 2:00 – 3:30 PM

Palestinian dance performance. Students for Justice Partnership

March

- **Black Student Union Gala**

March 7 | 8:00 – 11:00 PM

Formal celebration of Black culture and excellence.

- **Women’s History Month Tote Painting Event, Title IX**

March 27 | 4:30 – 6:30 PM

Focused on identity, confidence, and women’s empowerment. Questions and tips for consent.

**ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CAMPUS LIFE COMMITTEE
STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT**

As the 2025-2026 academic year comes to a close, it can be defined by a renewed sense of unity, and a collective commitment to growth across the campus community. The St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) community is about to celebrate the investiture of its 8th President Rhonda Phillips. This event has brought the college's students, staff, faculty, alumni, and general community together in hopes of looking forward to the college's growth. Inauguration Week in conjunction with the Student Government Association's (SGA's) first-ever Spirit Week, brought students together with intent for celebrating their school pride. Spirit Week demonstrated intent from campus communities to improve relationships, particularly those among students and the local Southern Maryland community.

Community Building Events

As on most college campuses, April is one of the busiest months of the year. During the Awards Convocation held on April 10th, SMCM celebrated students, staff, and faculty for their work. These intentional actions of recognizing members of the campus community are meaningful, and create deeper bonds for students to carry forward while completing their work. These events also provide institutional awareness for students, as they are able to visibly see their faculty supporting them, the staff who support them through service and daily action, as well as rejoice in their fellow student's success. The presence of Dr. Phillips was noted by students, as her commitment to recognizing members of the campus community for their work and efforts was displayed, and a large number of event participants were able to talk with her after the ceremony, deepening their relationship with her as well as members of the President's Cabinet.

On April 13th, the new Office of Career Development and Community Engagement (CDCE) held the first annual Community Impact Awards, in which many organizations and individuals from the Southern Maryland region were recognized for their service efforts. Such efforts include their commitment to providing SMCM's students with opportunities to be involved in the local community, by supporting hands-on, experiential learning opportunities, consistent with the college's LEAD (Learning through Experiential and Applied Discovery) educational framework. Through having such an event on campus in which community members are recognized for their hard work, along with faculty and staff at SMCM, a commitment to transparency and more enriched relationships will be established.

Commuter Students

Over this academic year, commuter students have experienced a combination of positive and negative emotions. Referring back to statistics from my October Fall 2025 report, as of Fall 2024 the Office of Institutional Research & Planning reported 18% of students are non-residential

(approx. 300), meaning they are commuting to attend classes at SMCM and are living at off-campus residences. While there has been more attention on the commuter student body at SMCM, some events have been unavoidable, such as a pipe bursting in the Campus Center in early February, putting the renovation of the Commuter Lounge on hold. Such a delay originally displaced commuter students from their consistent, reliable space, but due to Dr. Jerri Howland's support and flexibility and partnering with Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Gantz, a temporary space for commuter students was identified in the Center for Inclusion Teaching and Learning (CITL) and commuter students are utilizing the space. The renovations to the Commuter Lounge in the Campus Center have been advertised, and commuters are looking forward to gaining access to that space once again next academic year.

Event Communication

A consistent issue commuter students are facing is a lack of communication regarding large events being held on campus. Parking on campus is often disrupted when events on campus bring a sudden influx of visitors, who often park in lots and spaces reserved for commuter students. Commuters are able to park in three lots on campus: Lot K adjacent to the Campus Center; Lot Z behind Caroline Hall, and Lot T, the overflow parking lot affectionately referred to as "Guam." While these lots are not exclusively for commuter students, as the sign reads "Commuter Students and Visitors" the amount of visitors at times overpowers commuters, leaving them to park in the overflow parking, if a space can be found at all. These lots, particularly Lot Z, feel this tension in relation to parking during events at the Michael P. O'Brien Athletics and Recreation Center (ARC), Glendenning Hall, the Glendenning Annex, or the Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center (DPAC). Some events are not advertised to students, making them unaware of such events, and there has been very little communication regarding such parking disruptions. Such a lack of communication leads to commuter students parking in lots they are not designated in hope of attending class on time; doing so leads to commuter students getting ticketed, or sometimes just turning around and missing class due to a lack of parking availability. Hopefully, under the leadership of the new AVP of Communications and Marketing, Renea Morris, parking and large-scale events can be communicated to the commuter population in a better transparent manner.

Looking forward- Caroline Hall

As the year comes to a close, returning students are already anticipating the renovations to be conducted on Caroline Hall over the summer, and are looking forward to an improved residential space. While concerns for the renovations timeline have been raised, as the renovation of Caroline Hall is such a large undertaking, this is a time-sensitive need for the betterment of the college and the student experience that cannot be delayed. In the hopes of completing another renovation project, students are already looking beyond the status of first-year residential housing onto upperclassmen housing. As an upperclassman myself, I understand such a need and

emphasis, however, the first-year halls are in fact, the oldest residential areas on campus, and should be addressed. Additionally, the status of first-year halls has a connection to yield and retention, and as SMCM hopes to grow, this connection needs to be considered by all parties. Beautification projects, however, for upperclassmen housing should be considered further while the official renovation processes for first-year halls are in motion.

General Topics On The Minds Of Students

- Performing Arts Spaces Availability on Campus
 - Students are anticipating the upcoming renovations to St. Mary's Hall, and are hoping it will become a facility somewhat comparable to the DPAC to help alleviate the use in that space in regards to student performances.
- Route 5 Safety
 - There have been many concerns regarding speeding and appropriate signage for student/pedestrian crosswalks. In light of an incident on March 30, 2026, where a truck crashed into the marsh near the college, damaging the pedestrian bridge connecting to North Field, continued cooperation with the Maryland State Highway Administration regarding improved safety measures along Route 5 is necessary.
- Montgomery Hall Renovation
 - While this is a long-term project and issue, it is important to remind campus parties of the need to monitor the state of Montgomery Hall, and take action within the next viable period of time for the sake of safety and betterment of academic buildings. For example, the presence of mold as well as frequent leakage.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND
CAMPUS LIFE COMMITTEE
MEETING OF APRIL 22, 2026**

**ACTION ITEM III.A.
APPROVAL OF THE 2026 CULTURAL DIVERSITY REPORT**

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Campus Life Committee recommends approval by the Board of Trustees, St. Mary's College of Maryland, of the College's 2026 Cultural Diversity Report for submission to the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

RATIONALE

In accordance with §11-406 of the Education Article, the governing body of each Maryland public college and university is required to develop and implement a plan for a program of cultural diversity. These plans must be submitted to each institution's board by July 1. Further, the statute requires that each institution submit, by September 1 of each year, a report to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) summarizing institutional progress toward the implementation of its plan for cultural diversity. According to statute, the Commission must monitor each institution's progress toward achieving the goals outlined in its plan and ensure compliance with the State's goals for higher education. Additionally, the Commission is required to report its findings to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee; the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee; the House Appropriations Committee; and the House Committee on Ways and Means by December 1 of each year.

St. Mary's College of Maryland
Office of Inclusion and Belonging
2026 Cultural Diversity Plan

Introduction: The mission of the Office of Inclusion and Belonging (OIB) is to identify, develop, and implement campus-wide efforts to establish and sustain initiatives, policies, and resources to ensure that St. Mary's College of Maryland is a welcoming, transformative, and empowering institution where all students, faculty, and staff can thrive. During the upcoming academic year, OIB will continue its concerted efforts to partner within and across individual campus divisions, departments, and offices to advance and promote cultural diversity at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Section 1: *A summary of the institution's plan to improve cultural diversity as required by the Maryland Annotated Code Education Article §11-406*

As the State's designated public honors college, St. Mary's College of Maryland provides a premier liberal arts education with an affirmative commitment to access and affordability. Successfully implementing this statutory mission is challenging; however, the College's mission sets it uniquely apart in both the State and national higher education sectors, and the College continues to serve as an innovator and national model for other institutions. This success stems, in part, from a recognition that inclusion and belonging cannot be siloed into a single office within a larger institution. Instead, OIB must proactively establish a conscious presence in every office, program, and function of the College to effectively serve the entirety of our diverse student staff, and faculty populations.

The College's major goal – to improve cultural diversity in academic affairs, student life, enrollment, personnel, and community engagement in the coming academic year – continues to flow directly from our core mission. As such, the College will continue to identify opportunities to promote inclusive initiatives as part of its curricular offerings, personal and professional development programming, campus events, and wellness. These may include the establishment of new academic international experiences which appeal to a wide array of cultural interests, as well as the hosting of intellectually stimulating and entertaining lectures, performances, and concerts, among other items.

Each of these components enables the College to engage students in a rigorous, experiential, and nurturing environment which capitalizes upon the unique nature of SMCM's location in Maryland's first capital city and the birthplace of religious tolerance. In doing so, OIB will particularly focus on collaborating with other campus units to offer workshops, outreach programming, and communications to reflect and support the needs of students, staff, and faculty. These efforts are particularly important as the College seeks to continue its efforts to further

improve diversity among its incoming classes, as well as to close achievement and graduation gaps for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

Section 2: *Campus Statement of the Process for Reporting Hate-Based Crimes*

Hate crimes are against the ethos of SMCM's campus community as well as violations of the College's [Student Code of Conduct](#) or [Employee Handbook](#). SMCM encourages anyone who is the victim of, or who witnesses, a hate crime to report it to the Office of Public Safety, which will respond to the incident in conjunction with local law enforcement. Any crime that is reported to SMCM that meets the definition of a hate crime under the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092, et.seq. (1990) ("Clery Act"), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681, et. seq. (1972) ("Title IX"), or the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act of 2013, is reported to the Maryland State Police via the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system, and reported in the [Annual Security and Fire Safety Report](#) in accordance with the Clery Act. The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office ("Sheriff's Office") may take the lead on investigating hate crimes.

**St. Mary's College of Maryland
Office of Inclusion and Belonging
2026 Cultural Diversity Progress Report**

Introduction: As the State's designated public honors college, St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) remains steadfast in its commitment to providing a premier liberal arts education that is both affordable and accessible to Maryland students, and with an affirmative commitment to diversity. Accordingly, the Office of Inclusion and Belonging (OIB) seeks to identify, develop, and implement campus-wide efforts to establish and sustain initiatives, policies, and resources which ensure that SMCM is a welcoming, transformative, and empowering institution for its students, staff, and faculty. This progress report outlines the College's efforts and achievements during the 2025-2026 academic year as initially outlined in the College's 2025 Cultural Diversity Report.

Plan Item I: Developing an Innovative, Distinctive, and Competitive Academic Identity

As part of the College's 2025 Cultural Diversity Report, SMCM emphasized the importance of developing and maintaining an innovative, distinctive, and competitive academic identity which attracts and retains a diverse body of students, faculty, and staff. A cornerstone of this effort in 2025 has been the expansion of resources to support all students, but particularly students from historically underrepresented cohorts (such as first-generation students, students from low-income families, students of color, and neurodiverse students). Operationally, this has manifested through continued investment in, and refinement of, signature campus programs like the DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program, the Landers Scholars Program, and *Sum primus*, which provide dedicated academic and co-curricular support to assist students in pursuit of their personal, professional, and academic goals. The DeSousa-Brent Scholars program in particular has undergone a significant pedagogical shift in AY25-26 in order to better serve the evolving needs of incoming students through proactive and high-touch advising structures, the adjustment of summer bridge programming, and more consistent academic and co-curricular engagement throughout the year.

Plan Item II: Empowering All Students for Success

In addition to the development of the College's academic identity, a primary objective of the 2025 report included the improvement of four-year graduation rates for students from historically underrepresented cohorts; preliminary data suggest that our efforts are yielding exceptional results to further close achievement gaps. Specifically, the DeSousa-Brent Scholars program currently projects a four-year graduation rate of over 65% for the 2022 entering cohort, a substantial improvement from pandemic-era lows, with the Landers Scholars and *Sum primus* cohorts showing even stronger performance. These successes are the direct result of stabilized and expanded OIB operations, as well as the College's Integrated Retention Strategic Plan, which include interventions such as mandatory degree-audit meetings for students who have fallen "off-

track” for a four-year graduation timeline. Additionally, to support neurodiverse students, the College has hosted academic workshops focused specifically on strategies to support students with ADHD, dyslexia, and other common conditions. This focus on practical, high-impact strategies have brought the College very close to achieving its four-year graduation targets for students within these cohorts.

Plan Item III: Building a Vibrant, Sustainable, and Diverse Student Body

The 2025 admission cycle continued SMCM’s recent trend of growth as the College received its fifth consecutive record year of applications. This year’s entering class is slightly larger than the entering class of 2024, and it is the College most diverse class ever; 38% of students in this entering class identified as non-white, 27% identified as first-generation students, and 29% are Pell-eligible. Moreover, the College’s full student body is representative of the entire state, with a majority of students enrolling from Montgomery, Prince George’s, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, and St. Mary’s counties. Enrollment growth has also significantly outperformed the state’s overall undergraduate enrollment trends, meaning that SMCM continues to demonstrate value to local students and their families. These feats have been achieved through strategic increases in recruitment events across in-state and targeted out-of-state markets, as well as the College’s efforts to address physical and financial barriers to participation. A key component of these initiatives included the launch of the River Runner program in AY25-26, which improves transportation access for students to local commerce and cultural centers, as well as provides no-cost transportation options between our southern Maryland campus and major population hubs (such as the Baltimore and Washington, D.C., metropolitan areas) during academic breaks.

Plan Item IV: Becoming a Sought-After and Engaged Community Resource

SMCM continues to serve as a vital community center in southern Maryland, leveraging the Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center and other campus facilities to host diverse programming which attracts more than 22,000 patrons each year. Moreover, the College has awarded grants to faculty for the development of new community-based courses which span disciplines such as Anthropology, Spanish, and Political Science, and which include curricula focused specifically on local rural culture, historically Black churches, and Spanish-language literature. The College has also hosted several high-profile events to improve cultural diversity in the region, including: the Black Excellence and Leadership Panel featuring prominent alumni and community leaders such as Baltimore City Mayor Brandon Scott and SMCM President Emerita Tuajuanda Jordan; Hispanic Heritage Month arts programming which spanned poetry, literature, cinema, and musical performances; panel discussions and presentations on LGBTQIA+ history, empowerment, and community building; Eid, Diwali, and Lunar New Year celebrations; performances by the Piscataway Nation Singers & Dancers and field trips to the Baltimore American Indian Center; and the College’s 21st annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast. By maintaining a robust calendar of culturally diverse programming, SMCM is able to foster a sense of belonging for all members of our campus community, as well as members of our broader local, regional, and state-wide communities.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CAMPUS LIFE COMMITTEE
OPEN SESSION
MINUTES**

Date of Meeting: January 29, 2026

Status of Minutes: [Draft](#)

Campus Life Committee Members Present: Committee Chair Nicolas Abrams '99, Peter Bruns, Staff Liaison Melissa Golowski, Talib Horne '93, Summer LaRocco '26, Jesse Price '92, Faculty Liaison Alla Semenova

Campus Life Committee Members Not Present: Board Chair John Bell '95, President Rhonda Phillips, Melanie Rosalez '92, Aaron Tomarchio '96

Staff Members: Jerri Howland and Rafael Zapata

Others Present: Jennifer Sivak, Gretchen Phillips, Mary Broadwater, Chuck Steenburgh

Executive Summary

Campus Life Committee Chair Nick Abrams called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. A motion was made to approve the Campus Life Committee minutes from September 18, 2025. Trustee Bruns seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items

1. Vice President Report

Vice President Howland discussed the recent two-day closure of campus due to snow and ice. Staff who could worked remotely and classes were moved online for students. Howland provided an overview of the commuter student lounge upgrades, the consolidation of the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) and Office of Community Outreach and Engagement (OCOE) in a new unit, **Office of Career Development and Community Engagement (CDCE)**, and ongoing retention programming.

Commuter Student Lounge

The commuter student lounge on the first floor of the Campus Center is undergoing renovations. The current furnishings have been removed and relocated to other buildings and storage. New carpeting will be installed, along with a full-size refrigerator, a new microwave, and a TV. Students will choose the color and style for the new furniture to be installed in the lounge; until then, temporary existing furniture is being used. The project is expected to open in a few weeks with completion slated for after spring break.

Career Development and Community Engagement

CCPD and OCOE have merged into a single entity, the Office of Career Development and Community Engagement, with staff from OCOE moving into Glendening Hall. Consolidating the two offices will better serve our students and make sense given their shared programming and outreach efforts to support opportunities for real world experiences for students in the community. Over the coming months, the office will complete a strategic plan by reimagining their work. New this semester is a pilot leadership development semester-long program, the Navigator Program, taught by two community partners: Leslie Taylor, Leslie Taylor Consulting LLC and Dr. Sybol Anderson, Leadership Southern Maryland.

Retention Programming

Howland highlighted the following retention efforts:

- Student Affairs Pre-finals Wellness Events - Different offices will host each event during finals.
- Beyond the Fade – Initiated by Public Safety is a discussion series led by students
- Mutual Accountability Study Halls (MASH) – Hosted by Accessibility Services for students to help and support each other
- Residence Life programming – Resident Assistants are required to have more intentional interaction with the students on their floor, not just monitoring, but actively engaging with students on an individual basis.
- Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner – Expanded hours as a pilot to respond to increase student requests for meds/ and medication management

Also, Dr. Howland presented a snapshot of the Student Pulse Survey results. A more in-depth look at the results will be presented at the February 20, 2026, Board meeting.

Assistant Vice President for Inclusion and Belonging, Rafael Zapata updated the committee on the Office of Inclusion and Belonging's strategic priorities for Spring:

- Finalize the office restructuring, including filling two vacant positions.
- Working to establish the infrastructure of the Title VI office similar to the Title IX structure.
- Improve operations and stabilize the structure of the four scholars' programs.
- Explore fundraising opportunities with Institutional Advancement to add the signature programs to Giving Tuesday.

Dr. Howland's full report is available in the materials on OnBoard for the February 20th board meeting.

1. Student Trustee Report

Student Trustee LaRocco reported that students have expressed a need for third spaces on North campus for socializing outside of their living spaces. STEM-based majors have been quite successful, with the Marine Science program in high demand. However, students have expressed concerns about seat and course availability for this program. Academic Affairs is aware of the issue and is working on a solution. Summer's full report will be available in OnBoard for the February 20th board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:58 pm.