BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

OPEN SESSION
MINUTES

Date of Meeting: May 15, 2026 **Status:** Approved

Board Members Present: Chair John Bell '95, Secretary Nicolas Abrams '99, Treasurer John Wobensmith '93, Peter Bruns, Antoinette Coleman, Susan Dyer, Judy Fillius '79, Kate Fritz '04, Elizabeth Graves '95, Kristen Greenaway, Tim Heely, Talib Horne '93, Kimberly Kelley, Student Trustee Summer LaRocco '26, Micheline Lopez-Estrada, Heidi Murdy-Michael, Jesse Price '92, Melanie Rosalez '92, Aaron Tomarchio '96, Danielle Troyan '92, Ray Wernecke

Board Members Attending Remotely: Susan Bass

Board Members Absent: Anirban Basu, Vice Chair Paula Collins, Steny Hoyer

Others Present: President Rhonda Phillips, Katie Arnett, Robert Artiga-Valencia '21, Sandra Benson, Silvio Borrero, Anne Marie Brady '93, Mary Broadwater, Donny Bryan '73, Patrice Darby, Todd Eberly, Brandon Engle '18, Jennifer Falkowski, Wanda Fenwick, Katherine Gantz, Mary Grube, David Hautanen, Jerri Howland, Samantha Katz, Jenn Kersch, Felix Martinez, Stephen McDaniel, Robert Maddox, Leslie Mangold, Sarah Miller Martin, Pamela Mertz, Kelly Neiles, Kelly O'Grady, Eileen Petula, Gretchen Phillips, Rose Phillips, Karen Raley, Julia Rapier, William Roberts, Lauren Sampson, Jenell Sargent, Brock Sassler, Barbara Scanlon, Shanen Sherrer, Michele Shipley '92, Jennifer Sivak, Jackie Wright, Anna Yates, Rafael Zapata

Executive Summary
The St. Mary's College of Maryland Board of Trustees held an open session meeting on May 15, 2026. Participation was both in-person and virtual. Board Chair John Bell called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

President Phillips welcomed Associate Vice President of Human Resources Kathryn Dao and Steven Power, who is managing the ERP project, as new members of the campus community.

The College's current strategic plan will end on June 30, 2026. In Fall 2025, the process of creating a new strategic plan began. The new strategic plan *Excellence Reimagined: Honors at the Helm* will be brought forth for Board approval at the meeting. Its content is focused, the goals are measurable, and it sets the tone for the president's vision for the College. Its tactical

format provides the opportunity to look at priorities and measure performance. Any baselines not yet established will be by July 1, 2026. Many of the goals are expected to be met within the first year. If approved, implementation will begin on July 1, 2026.

Much progress has been made to improve processes to maintain and expand excellence across operational and academic dimensions. Physical infrastructure improvements are a priority with a focus on academic spaces and support facilities. Housing options for both students and employees are being explored.

Communications and Marketing Update

Interim Assistant Vice President for Communications and Marketing Renea Morris shared the recent efforts and future plans of the communications and marketing team. The first priorities were the inauguration and the strategic planning process. Now the focus will be on extending visibility and engagement, followed by the development of finalized strategies. Communication is paramount in supporting institutional change and enrollment objectives. Trustee Elizabeth Graves emphasized the importance of increasing social media presence.

Academic Affairs Committee

Committee Chair Kim Kelley thanked Faculty Senate President Todd Eberly for his service, and for role in the Academic Affairs Committee. Associate Professor of Neurobiology Sarah Latchney will assume the Faculty Senate President position in academic year 2026-2027.

Eberly reported on the Faculty Pulse Survey results. The faculty's satisfaction with shared governance has increased considerably since 2024. Ninety-one percent of faculty have made use of digital accessibility training, a requirement for Title II compliance. The faculty bylaws were recently updated to reflect the recent administration restructuring.

Provost and Dean of Faculty Katie Gantz presented the Provost's Report, highlighting the work of the Faculty Workgroup on AI Governance and the "Essential Questions" Project. The report also included updates on recent grant awards and related initiatives.

Admissions and Financial Aid Committee

Committee Chair Ray Wernecke provided updates on recent efforts to strengthen recruitment, including community college transfer programs, personalized recruitment strategies, recruitment pipeline partnerships, and a dual admission initiative with Montgomery College that is currently underway.

Vice President for Enrollment Management David Hautanen provided an enrollment update. As of April 12, 2026, the College received 2,925 applications for Fall 2026 admission, a 14% decrease compared to the number received for Fall 2025. The first-year fall trendline showed the numbers increasing from November 1 to May 1, 2026, with the greatest increase during the month of April, likely due to the extended deadline for enrollment. Hautanen noted that students choose colleges based on their interest in specific programs or sports. The stable implementation of new programs and partnerships in athletics has increased interest among prospective students. Provost and Dean of Faculty Katie Gantz noted that faculty and departments are making changes to assist with increasing enrollment.

The College offered admission to 2,277 applicants, compared to 2,491 and 2,288 for Fall 2025 and 2024, respectively, and 251 students have submitted their enrollment deposit. 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 out-of-state students compared to in-state students. Trustee Dyer noted that the new strategic plan and the changes in athletics will be beneficial to recruitment. Students are also realizing the benefits of a liberal arts education and many are taking advantage of the opportunity to design their own major.

Athletics and Recreation Subcommittee
Subcommittee Chair Elizabeth Graves stated that two athletes were recently added to the Council. A search is underway to hire an outside firm to prepare a strategic plan. Current Director of Athletics and Recreation Crystal Gibson will leave her position at the College in July. The search for a permanent vice president for the department continues.

Interim Vice President for Athletics and Recreation Donny Bryan has met with the athletics staff to identify areas that need improvement. Director of Capital Planning, Design, and Construction Jonathan Dobry used his extensive knowledge of coaching to develop a partnership with the Baltimore Ravens, in coordination with the NFL, to create a women's flag football team. The Ravens will sponsor the College's team and will provide all the equipment, including custom created jerseys created by Under Armor. This sponsorship by the Ravens is of no cost to the College. A women's flag football team will assist with recruiting efforts.

Institutional Advancement Report
Committee Chair Judy Fillius reviewed new initiatives, the Burton Morris commemorative art project developments and the Foster Care Initiative. There are currently three final candidates for the vice president for institutional advancement position and the position is expected to be filled this summer.

Interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement Stephen McDaniel reported on the progress of the Academic and Research Industry Cluster Initiative. McDaniel plans to meet with Trustee Emerita Bonnie Green '74 to discuss possible opportunities, given her robust program with the naval air station. Acquiring funds for student internships is challenging and developing relationships with nearby contractors could present opportunities for sponsorships and serve as a pipeline for employment. McDaniel noted that there are several contractors who have expressed interest in recruiting our students.

The College exceeded its goal of $1.8M. Moving forward, the College's annual goal for fundraising should be $3M to $4M annually. Some of the campaign successes include scholarship funds for the marine science program and the funding of a faculty line. There are 14,942 alumni that can be asked to contribute. We are at the midpoint of the national average for alumni donations.

Trustee and Alumni Council President Kate Fritz reported that Alumni Weekend will take place on June 11. There are 1,100 alumni currently registered, and an additional 1,500 typically show up without registering. A travel program available to alumni has been developed and will begin this fall. The program will include trips to the Southwestern National Parks, the Galapagos

Islands, and Tuscany, to name a few. The College is also reviving the personalized state license plate and plans to create a virtual book club led by retired English faculty.

Campus Life Committee
Committee Chair Nick Abrams thanked Student Trustee Summer LaRocco for her service to the Board and wished her success in her future endeavors. Student Trustee Summer LaRocco expressed concern about the lack of support and services available to commuter students. Eighteen percent of St. Mary's students are commuters and there is limited parking available for them. As a result of discussions with Dr. Howland, additional designated parking areas for commuters will be made available. LaRocco also stressed the importance of student housing and its effect on retention.

Technology, Buildings, and Grounds Committee
Committee Chair Talib Horne reported that the proposed FY28 capital budget, which includes funding for the refurbishment of Kent Hall, was endorsed by the Committee and would be brought forward to the Board for approval through the Finance, Investment, and Audit Committee.

Trustee Tim Heely provided an update from the Historic St. Mary's City Commission. The City continues to investigate the possibility of building a hotel. The Visitor's Center is still on track to open July 26. Trustee Emerita Bonnie Green '74 will replace Tim Heely on the Board of Trustees as the Historic St. Mary's City representative.

Housing and Campus Planning Working Group
Trustee Judy Fillius reported that the Working Group had received information on the P3 process, which would primarily focus on student housing, and have the advantage of a tax break. If student housing is renovated, alternative living space must be provided for the affected students. The Working Group plans to meet with Morgan State University to learn more about their experience with P3s.

Trustee Governance Committee
The Trustee Governance Committee adopted a calendar of major actions which require Board of Trustee Approval. The calendar was created to improve situational awareness across campus constituencies who may be interested in, or impacted by, these actions. It does not serve as a binding requirement, but to enhance transparency, strengthen shared governance, and improve coordination by providing a forward-looking framework of significant decisions and support engagement between the Board of Trustees, the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association.

Finance, Investment, and Audit Committee
Committee Chair John Wobensmith noted that five action items would be brought forward for approval. (See action items section for more detail.)

ERP Working Group Update
Vice President for Business and CFO Eileen Petula provided an update from the ERP Working Group. Deer Brook has conducted interviews, surveys, and working sessions to assess the

deployment of Anthology, and has established a cross-functional Anthology Stabilization Task Force to prioritize remediation. The financial aid automation and confirmation of data accuracy for the registrar is in progress.
A procurement strategy to purchase Workday, leveraging the University of Maryland College Park's master subscription agreement, has been identified. This will result in a 30% cost savings. The College hired Steven Power to manage and lead the daily execution of the ERP project. The potential hire of a DBA student is under consideration, and a search is underway for a business analyst.

The College expects to submit the procurement contract to the Board of Public Works for approval on June 3, with anticipated approval on June 18, 2026. The goal is to complete the execution of the Workday order by June 30 to receive an additional discount. The College will continue to use Anthology Student until May 2029.

Government Relations Report
Trustee Aaron Tomarchio reported that the 2026 legislative session went great and that President Phillips was well received by legislators. Although the state had many fiscal challenges, the College's budget was fully funded and approved by the legislature. Tomarchio complimented Director of Government Relations Brandon Engle for his excellent representation of the College in Annapolis. Engle provided an update regarding legislation that was relevant to the operations of the institution.

Action Items
Action item 2526-21: Approval of the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan
The 2026-2029 Strategic Plan - *Excellence Reimagined: Honors at the Helm* builds on the successes of *The Rising Tide*, leverages the experiences of the 2025 Middle States Reaffirmation process, and responds to the community's feedback. Its goals, objectives, and tactics are based on the College's mission, vision, and core values and was developed with extensive input from the Student Government Association, the Staff Senate, and the Faculty Senate. The strategic plan was intentionally developed for three years, rather than a longer period to allow flexibility and recalibration as institutional conditions evolve. Board Chair John Bell asked for a motion to approve the Strategic Plan as presented. A motion was made by Trustee Susan Dyer and seconded by Trustee Danielle Troyan. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Action Item 2526-22: Recommendation to Approve the 2026 Candidates for Graduation
The Board of Trustees is vested with all the powers, rights, and privileges attending the responsibility of full governance of St. Mary's College of Maryland. The Board of Trustees has the authority to approve all earned degrees. A motion was made by Committee Chair Kim Kelley and seconded by Trustee Susan Dyer. A vote was taken and the action passed. Student Trustee Summer LaRocco abstained.

Action Item 2526-23: Recommendation to Approve the Public Health Undergraduate Major
The demand for jobs in public health is growing with an expected 12-15% increase nationally by 2033. This demand is driven by an increasing awareness of public health challenges and a growing need for skilled professionals to address these challenges. The public health major will directly address this increasing demand and attract students who wish to pursue a career in that

area. This curriculum will draw upon courses and faculty expertise from multiple academic departments and give students a well-rounded understanding of public health. The new major proposal will be forwarded to the Maryland Higher Education Commission for review and approval. The Office of Academic Affairs will ensure that all compliance steps are followed. A motion was made by Trustee Peter Bruns and seconded by Trustee Susan Dyer. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Action Item 2526-24: Recommendation to Approve the Indirect Cost Distribution Policy
This policy provides a framework for the distribution and use of recovered indirect costs associated with externally sponsored programs. Indirect costs represent expenses that support research and sponsored activities that cannot be directly assigned to a specific project, such as administrative operations, facilities maintenance, and utilities. This policy will ensure compliance with federal regulations, promote transparency in the allocation of funds, and support institutional infrastructure, academic programs, and senior personnel engaged in sponsored research. A motion was made by Committee Chair Kim Kelley and seconded by Trustee Peter Bruns. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Action Item 2526-25: Approval of the Faculty and Staff Release for Sponsored Research Participation Policy
This policy provides a framework for faculty and professional staff to obtain a 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, maintains compliance with relevant institutional, state, and federal policies, and addresses how release time is calculated, approved, and recorded. A motion was made by Committee Chair Kim Kelly and seconded by Trustee Ray Wernecke. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Action Item 2526-26: Approval of the Cultural Diversity Report
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 and to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) by September 1 annually. MHEC 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 and report its findings to the legislature by December 1 of each year. A motion was made by Trustee Talib Horne and seconded by Trustee Ray Wernecke. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Action Item 2526-27: Approval of the Board of Trustees Three-Year Meeting Schedule
The St. Mary’s College of Maryland bylaws provide that the Trustee Governance Committee recommend a three-year meeting schedule to establish working parameters for the business of the Board. A motion was made by Committee Chair Kristen Greenaway and seconded by Trustee Melanie Rosalez. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Action Item 2526-28: Approval of the Preliminary FY27 Current Fund Operating Budget
Maryland law entrusts the development and approval of the operating budget to the Board of Trustees. Authorization of the FY27 preliminary current fund budget will allow the College to

continue its mission of providing a high quality, public, post-secondary education. A motion was made by Committee Chair John Wobensmith and seconded by Trustee Ray Wernecke. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Action Item 2526-29: Approval of the FY28-FY32 State Capital Budget Proposal
The proposed FY28-FY32 state capital budget proposal, endorsed by the Technology, Buildings, and Grounds Committee, includes funding for the design and renovation of Montgomery Hall, various campus infrastructure improvements, the Schaefer Hall laboratory and greenhouse replacement. The projects proposed for FY28-FY32 include Kent Hall infrastructure improvements, Hilda C. Landers Library/OIT generator and transfer switch replacement, roof replacement for the Hilda C. Landers Library and the Michael P. O'Brien Athletics and Recreation Center and other projects and improvements. The total request for infrastructure projects is $9.6M. A motion was made by Committee Chair John Wobensmith and seconded by Trustee Susan Dyer. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Action Item 2526-30: Approval of Revisions to the Secondary Employment Policy
The proposed revisions to the Secondary Employment policy will ensure compliance with Maryland Public Ethics Law § 5-502, which requires disclosure of secondary employment and prohibits state employees from engaging in employment that conflicts with their official duties. This policy will ensure transparency, avoid conflicts of interest, uphold public trust, and protect the integrity of the College and its employees from ethical violations. A motion was made by Committee Chair John Wobensmith and seconded by Trustee Kim Kelley. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Action Item 2526-31: Approval of Revisions to the Conflict-of-Interest Policy
The policy was revised to closely align with the State of Maryland's Conflict of Interest Policy and the Secondary Employment Policy. A motion was made by Committee Chair John Wobensmith and seconded by Trustee Susan Dyer. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Action Item 2526-32: Approval of the Authority and Responsibility Matrix
The Authority and Responsibility Matrix was developed to provide an accurate and clear summary of the responsibilities delegated to the Board of Trustees, the president, and to the officers of the College, regarding various functions and operations. The Authority and Responsibility Matrix highlights actions that require Board of Trustees approval. Specific revisions to the matrix were provided in the meeting materials. The Authority and Responsibility Matrix last received approval of the Board of Trustees on May 10, 2025. A motion was made by Committee Chair John Wobensmith and seconded by Trustee Susan Dyer. A vote was taken and the action passed unanimously.

Adjournment
Board Chair John Bell asked for a motion to close the open session meeting. A motion was made by Trustee Heidi Murdy-Michael and seconded by Trustee Talib Horne. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. The open session was adjourned at 2:09 p.m.

The Board of Trustees entered closed session at 2:19 p.m. during which the following topics were discussed:

1. Proposals for Campus Store operations
2. ERP Transition update
3. Legal Report
4. Personnel matters

The topics discussed were permitted in closed session, under Md. Gen. Prov. Code Ann. Section 3-305(b), and include the following:

1. The appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom the Board has jurisdiction or any other personnel matter that affects one or more individuals.
2. To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice and receive information regarding pending or potential litigation
3. To discuss a matter directly related to a negotiation strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, specifically the outsourcing of the campus bookstore and the Enterprise Resource Project.