

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

1. MISSION

St. Mary's College of Maryland is Maryland's honors college, a selective, public liberal arts college—a vibrant community of scholars and learners. We foster a rigorous and innovative curriculum; experiential learning; scholarship and creativity; close mentoring relationships; and a community dedicated to honesty, civility, and integrity. We are committed to diversity, access, and affordability. Our students, faculty and staff serve local, national, and global communities and cultivate and promote social responsibility.

2. INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

A. Analysis of Goals and Objectives (*Aligned with State Plan Goals*)

Goal 1: Ensure a high quality and rigorous academic program. (*Success, Innovation*)

Objective 1.1: SMCM places intentional emphasis on student completion of high-impact practices (HIPs), setting aggressive targets and providing opportunities to meet them. Students in the Class of 2026 completed an average of four HIP experiences each, and both targets were met or surpassed (100% completed at least two and 93% completed at least three HIPs). The high level of participation observed over the past three years likely reflects both the impact of the LEAD curriculum, which emphasizes experiential learning, and continued recovery from the decline of pandemic-affected graduating classes. SMCM continues to actively increase and encourage HIP opportunities for all students, particularly internships, research experiences, and international experiences, three HIPs that are guaranteed as part of the Honors College Promise.

Objectives 1.2 and 1.3: SMCM is committed to offering a rigorous curriculum taught by qualified faculty with high individual contact. Full-time faculty continue to teach the great majority (87%) of undergraduate credit hours. Since 2020 there has been an increase in part-time faculty, largely due to SMCM's engagement of expert practitioners in a variety of fields to teach courses in the professional pathways course sequence of the LEAD curriculum. Students benefit from learning with these professionals while taking the majority of their traditional coursework with full-time faculty. Finally, the undergraduate student-faculty ratio has been at 10:1 for the past five years, more pedagogically favorable than the target of 12:1 yet more financially sustainable than the 9:1 ratio reported in 2020 and 2021. The increase in part-time faculty teaching the professional pathways courses has contributed to keeping the student-faculty ratio low; without those adjunct faculty, the ratio would be approximately 10.5:1.

Peer Benchmarks: According to the most recent available data (Fall 2024), at 10:1, SMCM has one of the lowest (most favorable for the student experience) student-faculty ratios among the traditional four-year public institutions in Maryland, which average 15:1. The SMCM student-faculty ratio is fourth lowest among the 27 Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) institutions, which also average 15:1; and is on par with Maryland private institutions' and peer institutions' average of 11:1, and aspirant institutions which average 9:1. (*Source: IPEDS Data Center*)

Goal 2: Recruit, support, and retain a diverse and qualified group of students, faculty and administrative staff. (*Access, Success*)

Objective 2.1: All entering class demographic targets were met or exceeded this year. After several years of steady but slow increases, the percentage of incoming students who identify as students of color reached 39% with the Fall 2025 class, exceeding the target of 33% set two years ago. This is a substantial and sustained improvement from about a decade ago when the percentage averaged only 20% (data not shown). Entering class targets were exceeded for first generation college students for the ninth consecutive year, for the out-of-state population for the fifth consecutive year, and for Pell recipients for the fourth consecutive year. High school academic performance of the entering class remains strong; the average GPA of incoming students (3.49, unweighted) surpassed the target of 3.40 for the fifth consecutive year.

Objective 2.2: Both four-year graduation rates (Fall 2022 cohort graduating by Summer 2026) and six-year graduation rates (Fall 2020 cohort graduating by Summer 2026) were below targets for all groups. Note that graduation targets for students from underrepresented groups were reset to aspirational levels four years ago to reflect SMCM's commitment to narrowing equity gaps in student success. Based on currently available data, the four-year graduation rate is on track to meet the 70% target in two years. To ensure this success, SMCM will focus on providing all students with resources and strategies to support timely graduation, with particular emphasis on students from historically underrepresented groups. SMCM's newly adopted 2026-29 strategic plan, *Excellence Reimagined*, contains several initiatives aimed at improving student retention and persistence to graduation. Also, SMCM is in the midst of implementing its Integrated Retention Strategic Plan which explicitly engages faculty and staff across the institution to enhance community cohesiveness, support and mentor students, and cultivate a service-oriented culture, and has engaged with multiple external partners to deepen institutional understanding of factors driving student persistence. For entering first generation students, the *Sum primus* ("I am first") program offers extended pre-orientation activities, focusing on students' academic, financial, and social preparedness for an honors-level undergraduate experience, as well as cohort-building.

Peer Benchmarks: Based on the most recent national comparison data available (FY22), SMCM's overall four-year graduation rate (60% for the 2018 entering cohort graduating by 2022) exceeded the averages of other COPLAC institutions and of other Maryland public and private four-year institutions, and nearly equaled the average rate at SMCM's peer institutions, many of which are private. The average four-year graduation rate at aspirant institutions (all private) represents a benchmark well above our target. As shown below, SMCM's four-year graduation rates for African American and Hispanic students were consistently above the corresponding averages at other COPLAC and Maryland public institutions, but fell below the comparison rates at Maryland private and national peer institutions. Benchmark four-year graduation rates for Pell recipients are not available from IPEDS.

Four-Year Graduation Rates, FY22 (Fall 2018 cohort)					
Institution(s)	N	Overall	Students of Color	African American	Hispanic
SMCM	1	60%	41%	37%	42%
COPLAC	27	40%	31%	27%	36%
MD Public	11	32%	29%	28%	29%
MD Private	9	57%	50%	41%	51%
Peer	12	61%	56%	54%	60%
Aspirant	6	79%	78%	74%	75%

Source: IPEDS Data Center

Similarly, for six-year graduation rates, the most recent IPEDS comparison data available (FY24) reveal that SMCM's overall rate in that year (70%, for the 2018 entering cohort) exceeded the average rate at other COPLAC, Maryland public and Maryland private institutions, and nearly equaled that of peer institutions. As shown below, SMCM's six-year rates for students of color, Pell recipients, and need-based aid recipients also generally met or exceeded average rates at COPLAC and Maryland public institutions, but were more variable in comparison to Maryland private and peer institution averages.

Six-Year Graduation Rates, FY24 (Fall 2018 cohort)							
Institution(s)	N	Overall	Students of Color	African American	Hispanic	Pell	Need-Based Aid
SMCM	1	70%	53%	42%	58%	67%	62%
COPLAC	27	53%	45%	41%	48%	46%	48%
MD Public	11	49%	48%	47%	48%	45%	47%
MD Private	9	64%	58%	49%	59%	58%	62%
Peer	12	71%	67%	66%	70%	67%	69%
Aspirant	6	88%	87%	85%	86%	89%	89%

Source: IPEDS Data Center

Objective 2.3: The second-year retention rate of 82% for FY26 reflects a return to 2023 and 2024 levels. This retention rate still exceeds many benchmarks, and as mentioned above, retention is a key focus of the *Excellence Reimagined* strategic plan.

Peer Benchmarks: Based on the most recent data available (FY25), SMCM's first-to-second year retention rate last year (86%) continued to match or exceed those of COPLAC institutions (average = 74%), Maryland public four-year institutions (average = 72%), Maryland private institutions (average = 78%), and peer institutions (average = 82%), many of which are private. Retention rates at aspirant private institutions averaged 93%,

supporting SMCM's aspirational target of 90%. *(Source: IPEDS Data Center)*

Objective 2.4: SMCM continues to work to maintain a diverse faculty and staff. Gender parity returned in FY26 after being down for two consecutive years. Employee diversity targets were reset to 33% three years ago to match the student diversity goal, and this target was met for the second consecutive year for full-time staff (34%). The faculty metric rose to an all-time high of 30% in FY26, doubling the rate of 15% observed in FY20. In addition to SMCM's portfolio of faculty mentoring and professional development resources, recent efforts to advance an inclusive learning environment (the Ross Fellows cluster hire initiative) and to diversify search processes have been successful in advancing toward this goal; over the past five years, 50% of newly hired full-time faculty (ranging from 33% to 70% per year) have been faculty of color, and 92% of them have been retained to date.

Objective 2.5: Between FY14 and FY20, SMCM met or exceeded the target of an entering class that contains 20% transfer students each year. However, as the size of the first year entering class has rebounded, the percentage fell to 17% in FY21 and has remained under the target since then; a reconsideration of the target will be undertaken soon. SMCM will continue to devote resources toward recruiting transfer students, and efforts by the Transfer Recruitment, Admission, and Services unit (established in 2023) to enhance the transfer student experience successfully resulted in increased transfer student enrollment for the entering class in Fall 2025, and the unit is well positioned to grow transfer enrollment in the coming years.

Objective 2.6: Among transfer students, both the three year-graduation rate (67%, Fall 2023 entering students graduating by 2026) and four-year graduation rate (77%, Fall 2022 entering students graduating by 2026) exceeded the set targets (60% and 70%, respectively) by 7 percentage points each. Analysis of all transfer students' degree progress suggests that three- and four-year graduation rates will increase further over the next two years. Continued development and refinement of articulation agreements with Maryland two-year institutions will facilitate transfer students' timely progress toward the baccalaureate degree.

Peer Benchmarks: Benchmark information for transfer student four-year rates is available from IPEDS, but with quite a delay. The most recently available data is from transfer students who entered during 2016-17 and graduated by 2020. In that year, SMCM's four-year graduation rate for transfer students (68%) exceeded the average rates for Maryland public (54%) and COPLAC institutions (55%), and nearly matched those for private four-year institutions (69%), mainly private peer institutions (72%), and all-private aspirant institutions (73%). *(Source: IPEDS Data Center)*

Goal 3: Ensure access for students with financial need through a strategic combination of federal, state, private, and institutional funds. *(Access, Success)*

Objective 3.1: This objective has consistently been met or exceeded as SMCM has focused on meeting the financial needs of entering first-time students.

Objective 3.2: Both four-year and six-year graduation rates among students receiving need-based aid (Pell grant or Direct Stafford loan) were low this year, similar to other cohort groups as

discussed above for Objective 2.2. First to second year retention was similarly low at 79%. Given the particularly sensitive financial situation of students receiving need-based aid, these gaps warrant increased attention.

Peer Benchmarks: Discussed under Objective 2.2 above.

Goal 4: Increase student contributions to the Maryland community and to the state and national workforce. (Success, Innovation)

Objectives 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4: Community service participation in FY26 was 52%, which did not meet the target of 65% but is a substantial rise from an average of 40% over the last four years. It is unclear whether recent low rates, after several years of higher participation (65-70% before 2021), result from a lingering effect of the pandemic, changes in student priorities, or are related to the availability of community service opportunities. The Office of Career Development and Community Engagement is focused on expanding community leadership and service opportunities for students, through such efforts as “Hawks in the Community” during new student orientation; an annual Nonprofit Expo; multiple Days of Service throughout the academic year; and Volunteer Week each spring. Additionally, the office works with faculty and staff to incorporate service projects into courses and co-curricular activities, and hosts the Navigator Leadership Program, a noncredit certificate program during which students complete a community-based project in partnership with a local organization. Internship participation increased to 61% participation, continuing a three-year climb and surpassing the 45% target. This is likely attributed to the continued expansion of the professional skills component of the LEAD curriculum and expanded support for internships. The six-month employment rate declined to 35% this year, well below the target; however, as observed in past years, there was a substantial increase in the six-month continuing education rate (36% to 56%) for the Class of 2025, which continues to surpass the target. Together, these shifts suggest that SMCM graduates remain on target for success after graduation; a total of 91% of graduates are either employed or continuing their education, consistent with the past several years.

Peer Benchmarks: Benchmarks for the six-month employment and continuing education rate come from the nationally administered First Destination Survey and are for Carnegie Baccalaureate Arts & Sciences institutions. For the Class of 2024, the most recent graduating class for which benchmark data is available, SMCM’s employment rate was 53% and the national rate was 65%, while SMCM’s continuing education rate was 36% and the national rate was 23%. The total Career Outcome Rate (rate of graduates with a “positive career outcome”, such as employment, continuing education, fellowship, or service experience) for the SMCM Class of 2024 was 90%, similar to the national rate of 92%; for the seven years prior, SMCM’s career outcome rate met or exceeded the national rate by as much as 5 percentage points. These numbers illustrate that SMCM graduates enjoy a high rate of post-graduate success, and are more likely than similar college graduates nationwide to choose to continue their education (rather than enter the job market) just after graduation. (Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) First Destinations for the Class of 2024 Report)

B. Response to Commission Questions

1. How were the benchmarks for your institution's Performance Accountability Report (PAR)/Managing for Results (MFR) metrics established for the current cycle? If a benchmark has not been established for a particular metric, please explain why and describe how your institution tracks progress and holds itself accountable for improvement in that area. Please describe the process used to set targets, including the role of institutional data, historical trends, peer comparisons, or strategic priorities. Please state your current MFR cycle in your response (e.g., 2026-2030 or 2026-2029).

Targets for St. Mary's College of Maryland metrics are both aspirational and realistic, and are set based on a combination of historical data, peer performance, and strategic goals. Every metric has a corresponding target. Some examples:

- The current target for "Percent of entering first year class who identify as members of historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups" (M203) is 33%, raised in 2022 from 25% after that target was exceeded for four consecutive years. At the same time, the targets for percentages of full-time faculty and staff from underrepresented groups (M220, M222) were also set to 33% to match the student expectation.
- Graduation rate overall targets (four-year, M207 and six-year, M213) are set at historically attainable levels, and corresponding targets for underrepresented subgroups are set high to emphasize the importance of eliminating equity gaps.
- Recruitment targets are set in accordance with the goals established by the Division of Enrollment Management, which in turn align with the targets of the current SMCM Strategic Plan.

2. Please describe the role of your institution's governing body in monitoring progress toward PAR/MFR accountability metrics. How are these metrics communicated to the governing body, and how does the governing body use this information to support institutional improvement and accountability?

The PAR and MFR accountability metrics are presented for discussion and approval to the Board of Trustees annually each fall. Reports including these metrics are specifically shared and discussed by Trustees during Committee meetings which include, at minimum, the Academic Affairs Committee, the Campus Life Committee, and the Finance, Investment, and Audit Committee. Once reviewed and approved for recommendation to the full Board by each of these three Committees, the same process occurs. Trustees may request clarification of any metric, additional discussion on metric performance and strategic efforts related to any metric, supporting data, and/or formal presentations by College leadership. The Board may also subsequently recommend or require that the College focus staff, time, and/or additional resources toward individual metrics as concerns may arise during each full Board meeting, as well as during the College's annual budgeting process, strategic planning process, or audit and evaluation process.

Agency Name: St. Mary's College of Maryland

Agency Budget Code: R14

Mission:

St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) is Maryland's honors college, a selective, public liberal arts college—a vibrant community of scholars and learners. We foster a rigorous and innovative curriculum; experiential learning; scholarship and creativity; close mentoring relationships; and a community dedicated to honesty, civility, and integrity. We are committed to diversity, access, and affordability. Our students, faculty and staff serve local, national, and global communities and cultivate and promote social responsibility.

Vision:

St. Mary's College of Maryland will increasingly serve as the liberal arts college of choice for intellectually ambitious students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds, attracted by a rigorous, innovative, and distinctive curriculum that integrates theory and practice; a talented, professionally engaged, and student-centered faculty and staff; and a strong infrastructure. Students will be part of a collaborative learning community that embraces intellectual curiosity and innovation, the power of diversity, and the College's unique environment. Our graduates will thrive as responsible and thoughtful global citizens and leaders.

Agency Website:

<http://www.smcm.edu/>

Key Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

Goal 1:

Ensure a high quality and rigorous academic program.

Objective 1.1

All graduating students will participate in at least two high-impact practices, and at least 80 percent of the graduating class will participate in at least three high-impact practices.

Objective 1.2

Maintain a full-time faculty of which 98 percent have terminal degrees. Maintain the proportion of undergraduate credit hours taught by full-time faculty at 88 percent.

Objective 1.3

Maintain an environment that promotes individual contact between faculty and students by maintaining a student-faculty ratio of no more than 12 to 1.

Performance Measures	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Actual	2027 Estimate	2028 Estimate	Footnote Number
Percent of the graduating class successfully completing at least two high-impact practices	97%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Percent of the graduating class successfully completing at least three high-impact practices	76%	83%	96%	96%	93%	95%	95%	
	97%	96%	93%	95%	94%	94%	94%	
Percent of all full-time faculty who have terminal degrees								
Percent of undergraduate credit hours taught by full-time faculty	80%	84%	86%	83%	87%	86%	87%	
Undergraduate student to faculty ratio	10:1	10:1	10:1	10:1	10:1	10:1	10:1	

Goal 2:

Recruit, support, and retain a diverse and qualified group of students, faculty and administrative staff who will contribute to and benefit from the environment.

Objective 2.1

Recruit a qualified and diverse entering class with the following attributes: Average high school grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.40 (4 point scale), enrollment of at least 10 percent of students from historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.

Objective 2.2

Achieve and maintain 4-year graduation rates for all students (70 percent), students from all historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups (65 percent), African American students (60 percent), and Hispanic students (55 percent).

Performance Measures	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Actual	2027 Estimate	2028 Estimate	Footnote Number
Average high school grade point average	3.45	3.5	3.49	3.51	3.49	3.45	3.45	
Percent of entering first year class who identify as members of historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups	31%	31%	30%	32%	39%	38%	38%	
Percent of entering first year class who originate from outside of Maryland	11%	13%	14%	13%	13%	15%	15%	
Percent of entering first year class from first generation households	21%	25%	28%	23%	27%	28%	28%	
Percent of entering first year class receiving Pell Grants disbursed during their first semester	18%	20%	22%	23%	29%	26%	26%	
Four-year graduation rate for all students	60%	56%	60%	63%	58%	67%	70%	
Four-year graduation rate for students from historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups	41%	50%	49%	56%	56%	63%	62%	
	37%	41%	54%	64%	45%	52%	56%	
Four-year graduation rate for African-American students								
Four-year graduation rate for Hispanic students	42%	52%	50%	45%	60%	74%	63%	
	57%	44%	53%	57%	52%	59%	62%	
Four-year graduation rate for all first generation students								
Four-year graduation rate for students with a Pell Grant disbursed during their first semester	58%	46%	56%	60%	54%	53%	60%	

Six-year graduation rate for all students	71%	68%	70%	65%	69%	71%	66%
Six-year graduation rate for students from historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups	60%	54%	53%	57%	58%	64%	66%
Six-year graduation rate for African-American students	59%	44%	42%	51%	68%	69%	59%
Six-year graduation rate for Hispanic students	50%	52%	58%	60%	53%	55%	72%
Six-year graduation rate for all first generation students	63%	58%	67%	55%	58%	60%	60%
Six-year graduation rate for students with a Pell Grant disbursed during their first semester	65%	48%	67%	61%	63%	66%	57%

- Objective 2.3 The first to second-year retention rate will be 90 percent.
- Objective 2.4 The College will strive for diversity in the faculty and staff so that the composition reflects the aspired diversity of the student body. The aspirant goals for full-time
- Objective 2.5 Ensure access for transfer students, particularly those from 2-year institutions. Achieve and maintain transfer students at 20 percent of the entering class each fall.
- Objective 2.6 Achieve and maintain degree completion rates for transfer students at 60 percent for three-year graduation rates, and at 70 percent for four-year graduation rates.

Performance Measures	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Actual	2027 Estimate	2028 Estimate	Footnote Number
First to second-year retention rate	85%	82%	81%	86%	82%	84%	86%	
Percent of all full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty who identify as members of historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups	18%	19%	21%	28%	30%	31%	33%	
Percent women of all full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty	50%	50%	48%	46%	50%	50%	50%	
Percent of all full-time (non-faculty) staff who identify as members of historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups	30%	27%	31%	33%	34%	34%	35%	
Percent women of all full-time (non-faculty) staff	58%	61%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	
Percentage of entering fall class who are transfer students	18%	15%	14%	15%	17%	16%	18%	
3-year graduation rate for all transfer students	64%	56%	62%	71%	67%	75%	83%	
4-year graduation rate for all transfer students	74%	70%	62%	69%	77%	76%	80%	

Goal 3: Ensure access for students with financial need through a strategic combination of federal, state, private, and institutional funds.

- Objective 3.1 72 percent of entering first-year student need is met by awarding any need-based aid.
- Objective 3.2 Support persistence to graduation of students receiving need-based aid at entry. Achieve and maintain first-to-second year retention rates at 90 percent, four-year

Performance Measures	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Actual	2027 Estimate	2028 Estimate	Footnote Number
Average percent of first-time full-time degree-seeking student need met by awarding need-based aid	84%	84%	87%	80%	88%	85%	85%	
First-to-second year retention rate for students receiving need-based aid in the first semester	87%	84%	83%	84%	79%	80%	84%	
Four-year graduation rate for students receiving need-based aid in the first semester	54%	46%	57%	63%	56%	58%	64%	
Six-year graduation rate for students receiving need-based aid in the first semester	64%	63%	62%	55%	64%	66%	63%	

Goal 4:**Increase student contributions to the Maryland community and to the state and national workforce.**

Objective 4.1

65 percent of graduating seniors will have performed community service while at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Objective 4.2

45 percent of graduating seniors will have participated in a paid or unpaid internship.

Objective 4.3

The rate of employment within six months of graduation will be at least 67 percent.

Objective 4.4

The rate of continuing education (at any level) within six months of graduation will be 25 percent.

Performance Measures	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Actual	2027 Estimate	2028 Estimate	Footnote Number
Percent of graduating seniors who will have performed community service while at St. Mary's College of Maryland	39%	37%	40%	40%	52%	58%	65%	
Percent of graduating seniors who fulfilled a paid or unpaid internship	47%	38%	49%	53%	61%	55%	55%	
Employment rate of graduates within six months of graduation	61%	67%	65%	53%	35%	50%	50%	
Percent of graduates continuing their education (at any level) within six months of graduation	35%	28%	30%	36%	56%	50%	50%	