



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 9, 2025**

**OPEN SESSION
AGENDA**

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A.** Enrollment Update
 - B.** The Evolving Transfer Student Market
 - C.** Financial Aid Strategy: Driving Enrollment
- III. ACTION ITEMS**
 - A.** None
- IV. INFORMATION ITEMS**
 - A.** None
- V. ADJOURNMENT**

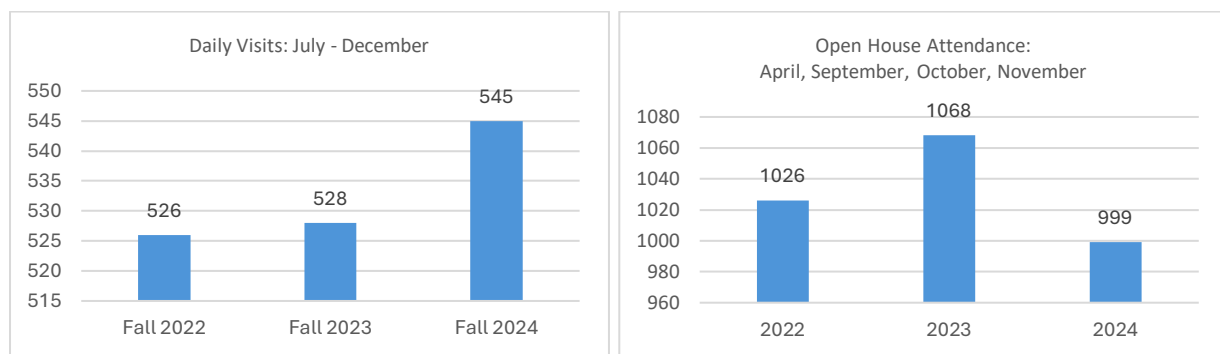
The Committee does not expect to close a portion of this meeting.

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ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE
JANUARY 9, 2025**

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Division of Enrollment Management is happy to submit its January 2025 mid-year and mid-cycle report to the Board of Trustees. Enrollment Management oversees the recruitment and enrollment of new students, the administration of federal, state, and institutional financial aid resources, and the delivery of student academic support services to contribute to the College's retention goals.

Fall 2024 Recruitment Season:



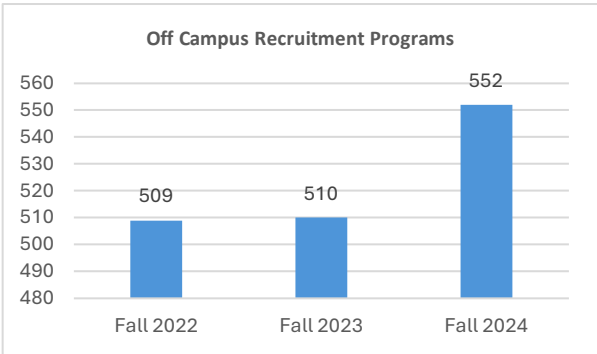
Overall, the number of campus visitors during the Fall 2024 recruitment season decreased by 52 students compared to the 2023 recruitment season. This was due to fewer students attending the fall open houses compared to the previous year. While there was an increase in the number of prospective students who attended daily campus tours and information sessions compared to 2023, it did not offset the decrease in the number of prospective students who attended the open houses. The increase in daily visits began in October. The increase can be attributed to a targeted campus visit digital advertising campaign which was launched in October by Institutional Marketing and Communications along with higher attendance at our Saturday campus visit programs which supports the importance of offering visit options on the weekend.

Decreases in the number of prospective students visiting campuses in the fall is occurring across the industry with survey data indicating that more students want to wait until they know where they have been offered admission to visit the campus. The impact of this shift in behavior is twofold. First, the limited time for students to visit campuses between offers of admission and deposit deadline dates means that students will have to be more selective about which institutions they visit. Secondly, it places even more emphasis on the College's digital presence on the web and in advertising to increase brand recognition and knowledge to drive campus visits. Given the influence of the College's location on prospective student decision making, increasing the number of prospective students who visit campus throughout the recruitment funnel is integral to

meeting enrollment goals.



Program evaluation responses (n=263) from our open houses attendees were strong and positive with increases in the highest rating for each question compared to the 2023 programs. In addition, 79% of respondents are very likely to apply and 33% indicate that St. Mary’s College is their first choice at this point in the recruitment process. This latter figure is an increase of 14% over the 2023 programs. Program evaluations serve to inform the ongoing improvement of the program. Of the four open house programs, the October program was the most highly rated. The Spring Open House is scheduled for Saturday, April 26, 2025.



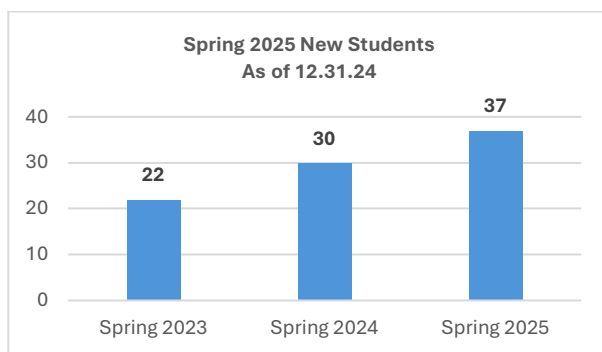
Admission staff conducted recruitment activities at 552 events primarily in Maryland and then in targeted out-of-state markets including Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington D.C.. This included visits to high schools and community colleges, local, regional and national college fairs, and workshops for prospective students and counselors.

The Office of Admission sponsored three college counselor events this fall. In October, 34 counselors attended a luncheon event in Baltimore County and another 12 counselors attended a luncheon event in Salisbury, MD. On December 6 the Office hosted seven counselors from 5 high schools and the College of Southern Maryland for the Southern Maryland Counselor Preview Day. The off-campus events serve to engage counselors in their home area and to motivate them to visit campus. On-campus events provide an experience for counselors to see the College first-hand and to personally meet faculty and staff.

Over the course of the fall semester, the Office of Admission also hosted and supported more the 100 students and counselors for group campus visits. These groups include students and counselors from the College Track Program based at the Kevin Durant Center in Suitland, MD, the International High Schools at Langley Park High School and at Largo High School, Crisfield Academy and the College of Southern Maryland Men of Excellence Program. Hosting these visits are an important strategy in our efforts to serve underrepresented students.

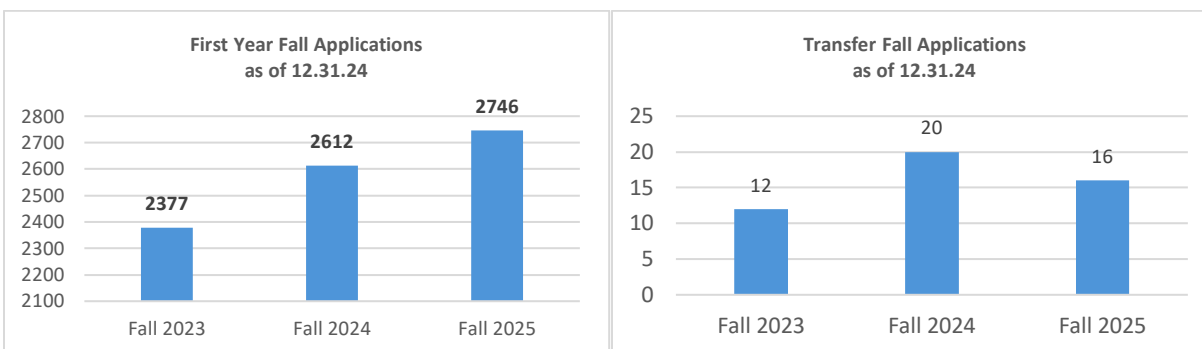
The Office of Admission continues to partner with the Office of Alumni Affairs on the alumni referral program for prospective students entitled “Launch-a-Leader” for this application cycle. As of December 31, 2024, 44 applicants have been referred by 39 St. Mary’s College alums. This is compared to a total of 63 and 66, respectively, at the close of last year.

Spring 2025 New Student Enrollment:



As of December 31, 2024, Spring 2025 new student enrollment includes 37 students (two first-year students, 31 transfer students, and four students who were readmitted into the College). This is on a goal of 30 new students. Of note is that the new student cohort includes the first enrollee from the Pathway to Honors (p2H) program launched last spring in partnership with the College of Southern Maryland. As we expand this program, p2H should become an effective contributor to the new transfer student pipeline. The census date for Spring enrollment is on February 17, 2025. At that time, we will communicate the College’s actual Spring 2025 and blended annual enrollment totals as well as updated financial aid expenditure figures.

Fall 2025 Applications:



The number of applications for admission to the College continues an upward trajectory. For Fall 2025, first-year Early Decision I applications have increased by 14% from 72 to 82; Early Action applications have increased by 4%; and, while the application deadline for Regular Decision (RD) and our new Early Decision II (ED II) program is on January 15, RD applications are 10% ahead of last year's figures at this point in time and there are 10 ED II applications following a soft launch of the application plan this fall. Early Decision II, like Early Decision I, is a binding application plan. While it is very early in the transfer application cycle with the Fall Priority Transfer application deadline on May 1, a robust fall community college recruitment schedule (32 events compared to 8 in Fall 2023), increased outreach to the community colleges, and the Pathway to Honors program should contribute positively to the cycle.

Admitted Student Yield Initiatives:

Early Decision I and Early Action applicants were notified of their admission decision and merit scholarship in November and December, respectively. Early Decision II applicants will be notified of their admission decision by February 15 and Regular Decision applicants will be notified by April 1. Need-based financial aid awards will be communicated to admitted students who filed the federal Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible in January following the completion of the need-based aid strategy and the awarding process.

The College will be hosting two on-campus Admitted Seahawk Days on Saturday, February 15 and Saturday, April 5. The Office of Admission is again planning on hosting at least two off-campus Admitted Seahawk Celebrations in Montgomery County and in Baltimore County. Admission staff will be hosting micro yield events in targeted in- and out-of-state areas. These programs complement the Office of Admission's comprehensive outreach and communication campaigns. Following decreased attendance since the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, this cycle's virtual Future Seahawk Series will be scaled back to only a few programs.

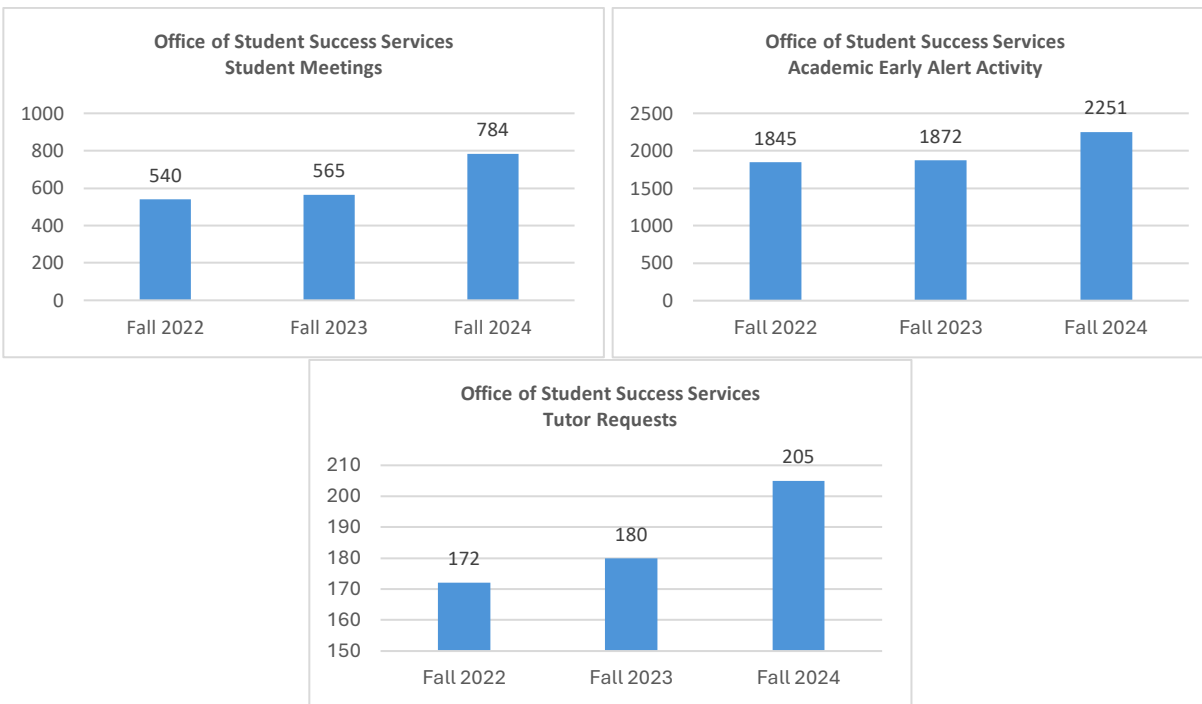
Retention Initiatives:

In partnership with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Seahawk Success Network was launched this fall for new students. Each student's network includes their academic advisor, assigned counselors in the Office of Student Success Services and the Office of Student Financial Assistance, and a co-curricular advisor. These advisors and counselors serve as a point of contact to provide students with advice, guidance, and support. Each student received communication introducing them to their network and continued to receive timely messages of encouragement and offers of assistance as needed. The network fosters a supportive community to enhance retention and graduation rates.

The launch of the Seahawk Success Network follows the establishment of the online Seahawk Success Center in Summer 2024 which gathers the College's student success, academic, and student life programs into a virtual one-stop resource for students. It ensures students have access

to resources that will help them thrive throughout their college experience. A chatbot is embedded on the site to quickly answer questions. Unanswered questions are automatically routed to the appropriate office.

Student Success Services:



The Office of Student Success Services (OS3) staff supports student success by providing academic coaching and advising, workshops for students, faculty, and staff, parent/family outreach and support, and managing the College's early alert system (Beacon), the PASS peer mentor program, and the academic tutoring program. As the data show, the participation in the services provided by OS3 continues to increase. This is likely due to ongoing outreach, including through the Seahawk Success Network, to ensure that students, faculty and staff are aware of the office and its services, as well as an increase in the number of courses (N=66) that offer tutoring. During the fall semester OS3 also offered 22 workshops in support of faculty and in partnership with campus departments and units such as Athletics and Equity Programs. Along with their coordination of the Seahawk Success Network and their leadership in the implementation of the Seahawk Success Center, OS3 works to ensure that students have the tools to support their academic, social, and personal well-being and thrive in college.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
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**OPEN SESSION
MINUTES**

Date of Meeting: September 16, 2024

Status of Minutes: Approved

Committee Members Present: Committee Chair Ray Wernecke, Carlos Alcazar, Anirban Basu, President Tuajuanda Jordan, Kim Kelley

Committee Members Absent: Judy Fillius '79, Jesse Price

Staff Member: David L. Hautanen, Jr.

Others Present: Betsy Barreto, Paula Collins, Carolyn Curry, Katherine Gantz, Gail Harmon, Sven Holmes, Jerri Howland, Samantha Katz, Amir Mohammadi, Gretchen Phillips, William Roberts, Caleb Shankle, Chuck Steenburgh, David Taylor, Danielle Troyan '92.

Executive Summary

Committee Chair Ray Wernecke, called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. The Committee Chair thanked the committee for being flexible with the new time and format. He noted the strong enrollment numbers year over year and acknowledged this year's class as the most diverse class in history. He also thanked Vice President Hautanen and his team for their support and work.

Vice President for Enrollment Management, David Hautanen, Jr, updated the committee on highlights of the Fall 2024 enrolling class including the top five states, Maryland counties with the largest enrollment and academic program yield and enrollment; provided an update on Fall 2025 Key Performance Indicators; and shared information about possible environmental challenges such as another delayed FAFSA cycle and the possible impact/opportunities of how AI may affect the Fall 2025 and future recruitment, admission, and enrollment cycles. He previously submitted his report for the committee's review.

Discussion

Vice President Hautanen then responded to questions from the committee, specifically related to AI and Financial Aid. Chair Wernecke requested that these topics be added to the next AFA committee meeting agenda scheduled for January 2025.

Action Items

None

Following a motion and a second, Chair Wernecke concluded the session at 3:52 p.m.