

ST MARY'S
COLLEGE of MARYLAND

The National Public Honors College

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF JANUARY 16, 2025**

**OPEN SESSION
AGENDA**

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. Faculty Senate Report
 - B. Dean of Faculty Report
- III. ACTION ITEM**
 - A. Program Proposals
- IV. INFORMATION ITEM**
 - A. Meeting Minutes of October 1, 2024

The committee expects to close a portion of this meeting.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT OF THE FACULTY SENATE'S REPORT

January 3, 2025

Introduction

This has been anything but a quiet Fall! The last of the 2024 Bylaws revision was completed. The college's ERP has been replaced. The faculty approved three new programs. And we're in the midst of a presidential search. In this report, I will reflect on those developments and close with a sobering assessment of Maryland's rather sobering budget challenges.

Bylaws Update

The Board met on Friday, October 11th and approved the last remaining section of the 2024 revised Faculty Bylaws.

As a refresher, the 2019 Bylaws state:

"Tenure terminates with the retirement or resignation of the faculty member, or when the faculty member is dismissed for cause, or when the position is eliminated."

Below is the revised language approved by the Faculty Senate on September 4th, 2024 and then approved twice by the Faculty on September 16th and September 30th:

"Tenure terminates with the retirement or resignation of the faculty member, when the faculty member is dismissed for cause after due process, or when the position is eliminated under extraordinary circumstances such as financial exigency or discontinuance of a program or department of instruction. Termination of tenured faculty members because of financial exigency should be declared and demonstrably bona fide. The determination that it is in the best interest of the College to discontinue a program or department shall be made following a review by the faculty, via the Faculty Senate, the administration, via the President, and the Board of Trustees, via the Academic Affairs Committee. Any proposal to eliminate a program or department will require input from all three sectors. The final decision, however, is lodged in the Board of Trustees. Reasons for any decisions of the Board that are adverse to faculty recommendations shall be communicated to the faculty. Tenured faculty in academic programs that are discontinued may be offered an opportunity to fill positions available in other programs at the College if they qualify for those positions."

The new language is borrowed heavily from the Bylaws of peer institutions as well as the AAUP definition of tenure, it specifically acknowledges that the faculty are to be involved in any such

decisions, and adds a provision on trying to find another position for any affected faculty.

Pulse Survey

In the Fall of 2022, the Faculty Senate launched The Faculty Pulse survey to get a better, more timely sense of faculty perspectives on important topics. In addition to gathering responses to new issues, the Faculty Pulse Survey also tracks trends over time to better understand changes in faculty opinion. The [October 2024 Pulse Survey](#) included 7 questions that had been asked in prior surveys (Six Campus Quality of Life questions as well as thoughts on Forming a Union).

- 75% of the faculty are Satisfied or Very Satisfied with Classroom Faculty to Student Ratio. That compares to 70% in September 2023. Only 10% are Dissatisfied as compared to 15% in 2023. 15% are Neutral/Had No Opinion and that is the same as in 2023.
- 54% are Satisfied or Very Satisfied with Resource availability, statistically unchanged from 2023. 24% are Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied, little changed from 22% in 2023. 23% are Neutral/Had No Opinion - the same as in 2023.
- 47% are Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied with Administrative Changes and Restructuring. That was 43% in 2023. 29% are Satisfied or Very Satisfied, which is up from 17% last Fall. Fully 40% were neutral last Fall and that has fallen to 23% now.
- 46% are Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied with Shared Governance. That is down from 55% in 2023 and 67% in 2022. The share of faculty who are Satisfied or Very Satisfied has gone from 8% in 2022 to 14% in 2023 and 23% now.
- 45% are Satisfied or Very Satisfied with Public Safety Policies as compared to 33% in 2023. Only 16% are Dissatisfied (and none are Very Dissatisfied) as compared to 26% in 2023. 39% are Neutral/Had No Opinion which is close to the 41% in 2023.
- There has been a marked shift in opinion regarding the Physical Plant and Facilities Management. 45% are Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied. That was only 28% last Fall. Satisfaction has fallen from 38% last year to 29% now. 26% are Neutral/Had No Opinion now as compared to 34% last Fall.
- 68% of faculty respondents are Interested or Very Interested in Forming a Union and that is little changed from the 65% in 2023. 11% are Not Interested or Not at All Interested and that is little different from the 13% last Fall. 21% are Neutral/Had No Opinion. (In the 2022 Pulse survey 61% were Interested or Very Interested, indicating a steady uptick in interest over time.)

Workload Perceptions

- 57.5% of faculty responded that their Non-Teaching Workload has increased A Lot over the last 4 years and another 24% said that it had increased A Little. No respondents indicated a decrease in workload. More than 8 in 10 faculty report an increase in their non-teaching workload.
- 35% of faculty who had previously served as a Chair/Coordinator said they'd do it again, 26% said they would not. The remaining 40% were unsure.
 - The most commonly cited reason for not wanting to serve again as Chair is that the

- amount of work required far exceeds the compensation provided.
 - The most commonly cited reason for saying one would serve again was out of a sense of obligation to colleagues, the department, or students.
- 27% of faculty who have never served as Chair/Coordinator say they would agree to do so in the future. 32% said no they would not. The remaining 41% were unsure.
 - Again, the most referenced reason for not wanting to be Chair/Coordinator was the disconnect between the workload and the compensation. The most commonly cited reason for saying one would serve was service to the department, colleagues, or students.

New Programs

Faculty have developed several proposals for new programs and three of these proposals were approved by the Curriculum Review Committee, the Faculty Senate, and the Faculty. The three program proposals are summarized in VPAA Gantz's report so I'll limit myself to the vote tallies:

- [Bard Dual Degree Program](#) - Approved 76-5
- [Master of Arts in Counseling and Clinical Psychology](#) - Approved 75-7
- [Data Science Minor](#) - Approved 62-10

Presidential Search

The search for President Jordan's successor continues apace. The search committee includes three faculty members, including myself. Each member of the search committee signed a confidentiality agreement and in deference to that agreement, I will refrain from discussing any specifics other than to say that the search undertaken by WittKieffer has resulted in an incredibly impressive list of candidates. The quality of candidates attracted reflects well on the reputation of St. Mary's College. The search is progressing in accordance with the timeline released to the public in the Fall.

Shared Governance

The faculty looks forward to taking the next steps in the college's shared governance review. President Jordan's pending retirement and the search for a new College President resulted in a temporary postponement of follow up to the college's shared governance review, but we look forward to its resumption under the college's new president.

New Committee Meeting Structure

Faculty understand and see the value in the switch to pre-Board meeting committee meetings, but it has caused some growing pains. The prior approach offered a degree of predictability as committee meetings took place on the Friday of scheduled Board meetings. This predictability was helpful given that faculty have no flexibility with regard to their teaching schedule - they cannot realistically cancel a class to attend a committee meeting. Faculty representatives to board committees have had difficulty reconciling the new committee meeting approach with their teaching schedule. The faculty representative to the Campus Life Committee was unable to attend the Fall or Winter committee meetings owing to a conflict with their teaching schedule. Faculty participation on board committees is a critical component of shared governance and we appreciate any flexibility in ensuring their ability to attend these meetings.

Transition to Anthology Student

Faculty have known for some time that our current ERP system, Jenzabar CARS, was going to be discontinued and there would be a transition to a new ERP - Anthology Business and Anthology Student. We understand why this needs to happen and most of us likely will not miss the old system, but the transition has been disruptive and has added to faculty non-academic workload. VPAA Gantz and the entire Academic Affairs team have worked to ease the transition, but transitions this substantialre going to be bumpy. The demands placed on the campus IT department have limited their ability to provide support to faculty. The live support once provided during Chairs/Coordinator Meetings has become intermittent and live support for Faculty Meetings is no longer available.

Maryland's Looming Budget Woes

In the Spring of 2024 I briefed the faculty on Maryland's looming budget challenges. At that time, the state was facing a \$761 million budget shortfall projected for the fiscal 2025 budget. Members of the legislative Spending Affordability Committee adopted recommendations that called for a series of one-time budget actions that closed the 2025 budget gap. But over the next five years, revenues are expected to grow 3.5% annually while spending growth is expected to be 5% annually over the same period. Maryland faces a projected \$2.7 billion deficit for fiscal 2026 that grows to almost \$6 billion over a five-year period, according to budget analysts. Much of that is caused by spending hikes tied to education reforms in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future which increased K-12 spending by \$3.9 billion (45%) by 2034. Those spending commitments were made without identifying a funding source. By fiscal 2028, the state will exhaust the money set aside to cover the costs of education reforms and will require money from the general fund. The structural deficit will grow to nearly \$4.7 billion in 2028, then \$5.2 billion a year later, and again to \$5.9 billion in fiscal 2030. Add to this the expiration of billions of dollars of K-12 and Higher Ed aid provided in response to COVID.

Unfortunately, perverse incentives tied to federal matching funds available for K-12 education, healthcare, and infrastructure make higher education funding an easy target for state budget cuts. During the last round of budget shortfalls in Maryland, nearly every state agency, including colleges and universities, were given budget reduction targets that needed to be met. Those of us who have worked for St. Mary's College (or the state of Maryland) long enough likely remember those days. It's unfortunate that such times have come around again. Though the budget picture will become much more clear as the General Assembly convenes for the 2025 legislative session, I want to make clear that during prior periods of budget crisis the faculty (and staff) have proven to be valuable partners in identifying ways to meet state mandated budget reductions while maintaining the college's commitments to faculty, students, staff, and the larger community. There's little that we can do to forestall the state's budget shortfalls, but there may be much that we can do to minimize any negative impacts.

Respectfully submitted,



Todd Eberly, Ph.D.
President, Faculty Senate



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
JANUARY 16, 2025**

**VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
AND DEAN OF FACULTY’S REPORT**

The units that compose Academic Affairs have adopted a core mission that, in turn, support both the Academic Affairs Committee and the institution as a whole: to cultivate a rigorous and equitable academic environment where the St. Mary’s College community thrives. As we move into the spring semester, Academic Affairs is making steady progress in support of Pillar I of our Strategic Plan. Below, I offer an update on multiple facets of our work supporting faculty excellence and innovative educational experiences: the FY26 hiring season, an overview of our progress on Strategic Plan objectives to develop and implement new program proposals, highlights from the Anthology implementation, details of the College’s second annual LiveWell day, a summary of the College’s evolving approach to generative artificial intelligence in higher education, and some brief remarks on post-pandemic lessons learned.

Hiring Updates

Academic Affairs is roughly at the midpoint of the FY26 hiring season, so far completing six out of 12 tenure-track hires, as well as two lecturers. As an update for the Board’s reference, below is the status of our successful FY25 searches to date.

Program	Position/rank	Search Status
Math/ Computer Science	Senior rank tenured computer science position	Completed
Math/ Computer Science	Tenure-track computer science position	Completed
Marine Science	Lecturer position	Completed
Chemistry/ Biochemistry	Tenure-track chemistry position (Cluster Hire)	Completed
Biology	Tenure-track biology position (Cluster Hire; microbiology)	Completed

Biology	Tenure-track biology position (Cluster Hire; molecular biology)	Completed
Environmental Studies	Tenure-track environmental studies position	Completed
Women, Gender, & Sexuality	Tenure-track position	Finalist interviews
Intl Languages & Cultures	Lecturer in Chinese	Finalist interviews
Performing Arts	Tenure-track Scenographer	Finalist interviews
Psychology	Tenure-track Psychology	Failed search
Psychology	Lecturer in Psychology	Failed search
English	Tenure-track position in English	Long list
English	Tenure-track in Composition and Rhetoric	Long list
Anthropology & Sociology	Tenure-track in Sociology	Offer/negotiation
Educational Studies	Lecturer in Educational Studies	Completed
Biology	Visiting assistant professor in biology	Failed search

For context: the failed Biology FTV search arose from an attempt to quickly replace a visitor who backed out of his verbal agreement; by the time the search committee returned to the pool, there were no viable candidates remaining. Our Biology faculty are teaching overloads to cover those courses. Per the feedback from finalists of the two failed searches in Psychology, the failed searches in Psychology are less straightforward, but in part relate to our rural location.

New Program Proposals for Approval

In Pillar I.A of the Rising Tide, the College set the goal of a) developing three to five new programs by fall 2024, and b) implementing at least two new programs by fall 2026. There is substantial progress to report in both these areas.

I am pleased to report that we satisfied our objective for three to five fully-developed program proposals. In summer 2024, faculty steering committees developed four new programs for possible inclusion in our curricular array. Those pre-proposals included:

- Data Science minor
- Public Health major
- Dual degree, 3-2 program with Bard College for two possible Environmental Studies specializations

- Master's degree in Counseling and Clinical Psychology

Of these four, I have recommended the Data Science minor and the Environmental Studies dual degree program for immediate implementation. A memo outlining my program recommendations to the President is in the accompanying materials for the committee's review.

Briefing on Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) at SMCM

In response to the expanding presence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in higher ed, SMCM has undertaken a series of steps to a) define the issues pervasive in our classrooms and workspaces; b) evaluate the positive adaptations as well as the threats of AI at SMCM; and c) provide broad guidance to our students and faculty on how to engage in an AI-informed learning environment.

A year after the first conversations on AI at our 2023 teaching excellence workshops, the College hosted a workshop on AI at the 2024 COPLAC Summer Summit. At the close of that discussion, the COPLAC participants had identified a number of ways in which AI is—and increasingly will be—a support tool for work across the institutions. Such applications include ADA accessibility measures (e.g. auto-captioning); administrative tasks (e.g. generating committee minutes); and academic support (e.g., personalized learning tools such as self-graded quizzes).

The College returned to the topic in fall 2024 SMCM teaching excellence workshops, in which I hosted a faculty discussion on AI in the liberal arts classroom.

There were three outcomes of that recent presentation.

1. We identified a common interest among faculty and Academic Affairs staff in forming a workgroup to discuss and propose guidelines for effective, ethical AI use in academic work. The workgroup will begin meeting in Spring 2025 to review some [templates and sample guidelines](#) generated by the non-profit, TeachAI.
2. The Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning responded to the request for a shared folder with examples of how our faculty have proactively integrated AI into their coursework. This resource bank is available to SMCM faculty for incorporation into their own classes.
3. A number of resources were shared that can help instructors with such things as syllabus statements on the use of AI, student/instructor agreements, and how students can cite the AI they have used in preparation of their assignments.

In fall 2023, faculty were encouraged to include formal guidance in their syllabi on their own approach to the use (or the prohibition) of AI in their courses. This was repeated a year later in fall 2024, with the additional recommendation that faculty consider adopting a seminal resource on AI in the classroom for their students from a collaboration between Elon University and AAC&U. Their [Student Guide to Navigating College in the Artificial Intelligence Era](#) PDF was

personalized with permission to include the SMCM logo, and is free for distribution under the Creative Commons License.

Advances in Anthology Implementation: Academic Processes

As the roll-out of the Anthology ERP progresses, we are pleased to report advances for both students and faculty involving academic processes. Our cohort of students in Winterim 2024 classes proved ideal to pilot our standard process of student self-registration. Due to the successful outcome of that pilot, we will expand the process for all students self-registering for fall 2025 classes this spring.

At the end of fall semester, the faculty were able to successfully enter course grades through Anthology. The process was smooth, and some small glitches were productively addressed. The simpler user interface has been a change that is much appreciated by the faculty.

Second Annual LiveWell event

Building upon Goal I.C of the Strategic Plan, the College hosted our second annual LiveWell on October 30, 2024. Planned in collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs and staffed by both campus members and external experts, the event centers on physical, mental, and social wellness. Like last year, 2024 LiveWell was scheduled the day after fall advising to provide a more cohesive conversation for our students about the role of personal choices toward well-being.

A full day of programming open to students, staff, and faculty, the 2024 LiveWell featured multiple events on the hour dedicated to informational presentations and to active, skill-based workshops. Sessions included yoga, Zumba, a meditative labyrinth walk, a faculty panel discussion on the physiology and neuroscience of stress, art therapy with the counseling staff, a journal-making workshop, healthy cooking with the Bon Appetit nutritionist, “recess games” on the lawn, a financial wellness discussion for staff and faculty hosted by the Calvert County Family and Consumer Sciences agent, and a workshop on conflict resolution led by a St. Mary’s County Mediation Services representative. Attendance was markedly increased (and with a much higher staff turnout) from our inaugural event.

Lessons learned: the post-pandemic classroom

While the pandemic has influenced processes across all parts of the College, two changes arising from the pandemic are especially significant to the academic experience: 1) the integration of our web conferencing platforms into the SMCM curriculum; and 2) the establishment of our Continuity of Learning protocol. The common thread is an emphasis on access (how may we extend and amplify our support of student success?) and equity (what steps must we take--and what must we avoid--to ensure all students have the learning experience we have promised them?).

The applications of web conferencing have had a range of positive after-effects, such as more expansive availability for faculty and staff to offer student support in virtual office hours. The faculty have also made excellent use of web conferencing in their additional hour of Engaged Learning each week, setting up virtual student discussion groups and foreign language conversation practice. As a result of the “Zoom classroom” that the faculty were forced to adopt

during the pandemic, they have acquired a new fluency with online learning. We have learned that remote instruction is an effective and viable form of content delivery during the winter and summer sessions. The inaugural Winterim term was launched in December 2020, offering 48 fully remote courses to 281 students. The success of that pilot has meant that Winterim is now a permanent feature of our academic year. The recent expansion of online course offerings to SMCM's portfolio between standard academic terms (summer term is now increasingly composed of remote courses) has enhanced students' opportunities to make additional progress toward completing their academic programs. Within its brief four-week timeframe, Winterim's all-remote courses are ideal to get ahead or catch up on credits, or to complete major or LEAD course requirements. Analysis of students who enrolled in Winterim supports its success in advancing degree completion. The percentage of students who were on track for graduation increased after both Winterim 2021 and 2022, while the percentages of students up to 16 credits behind decreased.

In summer 2020, a number of campus-wide task forces were established to support the College's fall 2020 reopening as a residential campus. The subcommittee focused on teaching and learning proposed an expansive Continuity of Learning protocol, emphasizing clear and comprehensive guidance for faculty in the event of campus closures of any sort:

... To support continuity of learning on days when the instructor cannot physically be present in the classroom, instructors may utilize online/remote modalities when the planned curriculum supports such a modality, and the instructor can access the appropriate infrastructure to conduct remote teaching. However, remote instruction is expected to be a rare occurrence and may not be a regular, recurring part of the syllabus (e.g., "every other Tuesday will be virtual") unless the class has already been approved as hybrid by the Dean of Faculty.

Remote instruction should *not* be utilized under circumstances when the College is officially closed under emergency conditions (e.g. public health crises, natural disasters, emergency weather situations) or when widespread digital access may be compromised (e.g. power outages). Doing so, even as a voluntary gesture, creates inequalities of access.

-2024 Faculty Handbook.

While faculty's individual agency to switch to online teaching in certain conditions was central, the broader protocol affirms our institutional identity as a face-to-face learning environment. In sum, our post-pandemic lesson was that remote learning could be a superb tool to ensure stable and comprehensive coverage, but that in-person instruction is fundamental to the SMCM academic experience.

TO: Tuajuanda C. Jordan, President
FROM: Katherine Gantz, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty
DATE: January 8, 2025
RE: FY'26 Program Proposal Recommendations



In Pillar I.A of the Rising Tide, the College set the goal of a) developing three to five new programs by fall 2024, and b) implementing at least two new programs by fall 2026. In summer 2024, faculty steering committees developed four new programs for possible inclusion in our curricular array. Three have been reviewed by shared governance and were recommended by the faculty. Below, I offer my recommendations for two new programs:

- Data Science minor
- Dual degree, 3-2 program with Bard College for two possible Environmental Studies specializations

Data Science Minor: recommended for approval

Co-chairs: Prof. Chuck Adler (Physics); Asst. Prof. Dan Savelle (Economics)

Academic Affairs has made targeted efforts to recruit faculty across the disciplines with data science skills and research. A number of those faculty, acting as a steering committee, assembled a Data Science minor, focusing on applied contexts and liberal arts interdisciplinarity. Our [external market research report](#) points to quickly-growing employer demand for data science skills throughout the mid-Atlantic region. [In-house research](#) of our peer- and peer-aspirant institutions shows a roughly even split between those offering minors and those offering majors; among small liberal arts colleges most comparable to SMCM, a Data Science minor is most common. All proposal materials are available for review in the [Data Science Folder](#).

Administrative logistics: Data Science will join the North division, as overseen by Assoc. Dean of Faculty Sahar Shafqat. Initially, the minor will be modeled on the early days of our Environmental Studies CDSA: a steering committee of four affiliated faculty members, one of whom serves as coordinator, will administer the minor. This steering committee will be responsible for course schedules, advising minors, submitting hiring requests, and serving as the Program Evaluating Committee for tenure and promotion. Upon moving into a major, the program will convert to a department with an appointed chair.

Curriculum: The [full curricular map](#) with course outcomes has been reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Review Committee and by Academic Affairs. In contrast to the curricular design of the Data Science major approved in 2021, the present proposal is distinct in its use of cloud computing, as well as in a staffing model that does not rely on course contributions from Computer Science. Instead, the 24-credit minor requires a total of six courses, with an eye to both foundational skills and flexibility: two required courses are specific to the minor (DATA 101, DATA 102), while the remaining credits may be fulfilled through approved courses in other disciplines.

The proposed minor requires:

- DATA 101 (Introduction to Data Science I). NB: in spring 2025, a pilot section of “Introduction to Data Science” taught by a new adjunct will be offered in the department of Math and Computer Science. Upon the minor’s approval, this course will be counted as the equivalent of DATA 101.
- DATA 102 (Introduction to Data Science II)
- DATA 150 (Quantitative Foundations) or MATH 151 (Calculus I)
- One statistics course
 - either DATA 301 (Probability and Statistics 2) or an approved statistics course offered in Biology, Economics, Math, Physics, or Psychology
- Two elective courses
 - DATA 201 (Probability and Statistics II), DATA 310 (Data Visualization), or other approved courses in Biology, Computer Science, Economics, Marine Science, Physics, and Psychology

Resource needs and Timeline: In light of current state budgetary uncertainties, the proposed minor is careful to scaffold its resource needs apace with the course needs of new DATA students progressing through the minor. This proposal plans for steady, incremental growth to assure the most successful launch with the ultimate objective of evolving the minor into a major. Of note: because DATA 101 and 102 are offered in year one, students may complete the minor in that same year through cross-listed courses in other disciplines.

In its first year (presumably AY25), there will not yet be a tenure-track dedicated data scientist on staff. Because we anticipate the same market challenges that we encounter when searching for computer scientists, it will be critical to successfully implement the Data Science minor to entice faculty to a viable, stable institutional home base. Initially, Data Science faculty would be affiliated appointments, housed in an existing SMCM program and contributing two or three DATA courses annually, and the other half to the home department. In some cases, cross-listed DATA courses would mean no need for replacement staffing in the home department. In other cases, adjuncts or half lines would be needed.

The SMCM faculty presently includes 11 faculty offering data science-informed courses in Biology, Computer Science, Economics, Marine Science, Math, and. In its role as a cross-disciplinary program, Data Science is invested in affiliating additional disciplines; this might also be a moment in which faculty working in digital humanities could more formally organize. It is anticipated that some existing SMCM faculty will be interested in modifying their current departmental affiliation to this hybrid model. However, full-time data scientists will be needed to deliver upper-level courses. Depending on the seat availability needs and the budgetary picture, this may later take the form of a tenure-track hire and lecturer or two tenure-track hires.

Regarding infrastructure: We expect that some of our DATA program instructors will require more powerful desktops/laptops. As one-time dollars, those expenses will be included in the instructor’s hiring package. The Data Science proposal co-chairs met with Associate Vice President of Information Technology Jenell Sargeant on Monday, December 30, 2024 to discuss the College’s technology readiness to support the minor. AVP Sargeant reported that the school is in the process of improving infrastructure to handle the internet needs for Data Science and has continued ongoing projects related to this. She is confident that the Web computational services needed for the Minor and potential Major can be provided by adjusting current enterprise agreements with Amazon Web services and other partners, based on programmatic needs. Based on the discussion, she suggested that up to \$25,000 would be needed for computing resources for the first year of the minor, which would primarily be licensing costs (while there is the possibility that free resources may be sufficient in year 1, this expense is included to be comprehensive in cost estimates). This would increase to \$50,000 in year 2 and by year

3, combined costs of licensing and computer lab needs are likely to be approximately \$100,000. These expenses, representing a range of resources used by other campus constituencies, will likely not all be part of the DATA annual operating budget.

We continue to encounter challenges regarding office space for new programs. State funding to develop a Schaefer Hall annex will be critical to the expansion of the Data Science program, providing suitable space for both faculty offices and dedicated classrooms. As this is likely to occur in the second half of the decade, staffing the program initially with existing faculty is the most pragmatic means to launch in AY25.

The proposed timeline for implementation is as follows:

YEAR 1 (2025-26): Existing SMCM faculty affiliated with the program will be solicited to offer DATA 101 and DATA 102, and MATH 151. Academic Affairs will also approve self-designed majors in Data Science as one measure of student interest.

YEAR 2 (2026-27): The minor will offer all DATA courses by way of three existing SMCM faculty who have modified their program affiliation to include Data Science, contributing coursework equivalent of 1.5 FTE. A total of 9 courses per year contributing to the Data Science program will amply cover the needs of a minor. Student interest will be assessed to determine the timeline for further staffing and curricular growth.

YEAR 3 (2027-28): In AY26, the bond will be expended, further emphasizing the need for a self-sustaining program. Assuming a total of at least 30 minors across all classes (see resource needs analysis below), the steering committee will put forward a proposal to upgrade the program to a major. Upon successful shared governance review, Board approval, and MHEC approval, the College will search for a tenure-track data scientist and a lecturer.

YEAR 4 (2028-29): Possible implementation of the Data Science major; the new hires will be the first dedicated faculty member in the program. Affiliated faculty will serve as program steering committee until the new tenure-track hire is tenured.

Detailed resource needs analysis:

	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Year 3</i>	<i>Year 4</i>	<i>Year 5 +</i>
	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Computing/licensing needs	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Course development	\$ -	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ -
New TT faculty (salary + benefits) *	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 157,300	\$ 157,300
New lecturer (salary + benefits)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 136,500	\$ 136,500
Projected expenses	\$ 25,000	\$ 62,000	\$ 112,000	\$ 343,800	\$ 343,800
Enrollment targets (new students) **	8	12	16	20	20
Enrollment targets (all classes) **	8	18	30	37	42
Projected revenue ***	\$ 76,184	\$ 171,414	\$ 285,690	\$ 352,351	\$ 399,966
Projected surplus (deficit)	\$ 51,184	\$ 109,414	\$ 173,690	\$ 8,551	\$ 56,166
<p>* Presently, the salary range for assistant professors of data science nationally is \$58k to \$474k; the average salary is \$119k; however, that average is inflated by salaries at R1s. Currently, the average salary for an assistant professor of data science in the mid-atlantic region is between \$77k-80k (I've been unable to find salaries specific to SLACs). Salary estimation sources: 6figr.com, Comparably.com. Regional and size differences have a significant impact on salary averages. For example, the Chronicle is advertising this same position at San Jose State U (a program that not only has a major but is a prime recruiter for Silicon Valley jobs) for \$100k-110k. With these numbers in mind, I believe \$121k salary in 2028 for an assistant professor at a mid-atlantic SLAC is a reasonable projection.</p>					
<p>** Enrollment targets are modeled on recent growth of new minors at SMCM, and anticipated demand for Data Science among new and returning students, and are adjusted to reflect the targets needed to cover expenses each year.</p>					
<p>*** Projected revenue is based on \$9,523 per student, a 38% discount from FY26 projected tuition and fees.</p>					

Lab needs: We are collaborating with OIT to identify underutilized existing computer lab assets, such as the computer lab on the library's third floor, the three computer labs in the basement of Goodpaster Hall, and the computer lab in CITL. Targeted computer upgrades across those labs are estimated to cost \$50,000.

Conclusion: The proposed Data Science minor has been designed for immediate implementation and for sustainable growth; we presently have sufficient data science expertise among our current faculty to launch the minor in AY25 pending board approval (MHEC approval is not required for minors). A review of comparable institutions indicates that a minor is aligned with small liberal arts colleges like SMCM, and the minor is readily integrated as a complementary field of study with many of our existing majors. All indications confirm that the demand for hires with data science skills is rapidly expanding in our area. Data science is becoming not just a preferred skill in the workplace, but a required one. This program will be a timely addition to our honors college curricula. **I respectfully recommend the approval and implementation of the Data Science minor for fall 2025.**

Environmental Studies 3-2 program with Bard Graduate Programs

Chair: Associate Prof. Barry Muchnick (Environmental Studies)

The goal of the proposed agreement with Bard Graduate Programs for a dual degree program is to provide motivated, academically talented SMCM undergraduates with the opportunity to earn either an [M.S. in Climate Science and Policy](#) or an [M.S. in Environmental Policy](#) along with their SMCM Environmental Studies bachelor's degree in five years. The full proposal may be reviewed in the [Environmental Studies 3-2 Program folder](#). Through the review of comparable agreements between Bard and other institutions, we estimate an average **cohort size between 1-3 students annually**. This program will require no new resources other than marketing materials.

The SMCM proposed dual degree program is distinguished in several ways from potential competitors. The proposed dual degree will uniquely integrate an interdisciplinary major versus a conventional STEM degree; embody a public-private partnership; and implement a distinctive 2:1:1:1 format. This model maintains students' connections to their SMCM class, leverages a junior year abroad model, presents our students with new degree options, and folds rich professional development experiences, opportunities, and networks back into the SMCM community.

Administrative Logistics: The Environmental Studies program and these proposed graduate concentrations will remain with the Riverside Division, as overseen by Assoc. Dean of Faculty Randy Larsen. The program requires no additional staffing, and thus the chair of Environmental Studies will be the *de facto* administrator.

Curriculum: (NB: The existing curricular map for the ENST major remains in place.) The Environmental Studies 3-2 agreement with Bard Graduate Programs proposes five years of scaffolded coursework, resulting in an SMCM Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies (coursework in Years 1, 2, and 4) and a Bard Master's of Science in either Climate Science and Policy or Environmental Policy (coursework in Years 3 and 5). The five-year progression of coursework is below:

YEAR 1: SMCM students work to satisfy foundational LEAD and ENST major requirements, and Bard prerequisites (built into ENST major).

YEAR 2: SMCM students continue to meet LEAD and ENST requirements. SMCM students apply to the dual degree program through the normal Bard process by May 15 of sophomore year.

YEAR 3: Students spend junior year at Bard taking interdisciplinary masters core curriculum coursework from degree programs linked above.

- Includes pre-requisite bridge coursework in the summer before junior year at Bard (included with tuition to Bard, which will match SMCM's annual tuition)
- Pre-matriculation courses held on summer evenings, weekly beginning in Mid July for either two or three weeks.
 - Quantitative Analysis (12 hr remote)
 - Bard Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Training (6 hrs remote/6 hrs in person)

YEAR 4: Students return to SMCM to complete their B.A., transferring in Bard graduate courses to satisfy College and ENST major requirements. During Year 4 at SMCM, Bard remotely supports setting up high-level, 4-6 month internships to start after graduation. If the student's plans change, the student may decide to complete just the Bachelor's Degree at this juncture.

YEAR 5: Summer and Fall – students complete Masters Internship and Capstone Proposal,

returning to Bard for 2nd yr coursework to complete Master's Degree.

Resource Needs and Timeline: Except for modest funding to develop online and print marketing materials and the implementation of a recruitment strategy, the program is cost neutral for the College; there are no staffing, space, or equipment needs. The third year tuition payment to Bard will be an SMCM revenue loss of tuition and fees; however, for every new Environmental Studies student drawn to the value added of this 3-2 degree opportunity who would otherwise not have attended SMCM, the College gains at least three years of tuition dollars. If we weigh the \$20,000 of lost tuition revenue for two students a year, we must also consider the prestige we gain, and alumni who will credit SMCM with giving them a unique experience.

	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Year 3</i>	<i>Year 4</i>	<i>Year 5 +</i>
	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Projected expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Projected participation (juniors)	2	2	2	2	2
Projected revenue ***	\$ (19,046)	\$ (19,046)	\$ (19,046)	\$ (19,046)	\$ (19,046)
Projected surplus (deficit)	\$ (19,046)	\$ (19,046)	\$ (19,046)	\$ (19,046)	\$ (19,046)
*** Projected revenue is based on \$9,523 per student, a 38% discount from FY26 projected tuition and fees.					

With Board approval, SMCM may finalize the agreement with Bard Graduate Programs this spring, allowing for the College to begin advertising and recruiting for the program in fall 2025.

I respectfully recommend approving the proposed agreement with Bard Graduate Programs for the Environmental Studies dual degree, with implementation planned for fall 2025.