

ST MARY'S
COLLEGE of MARYLAND

The National Public Honors College

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
APRIL 14, 2025**

**OPEN SESSION
AGENDA**

- I. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. Faculty Senate Report
 - B. Dean of Faculty Report

- II. ACTION ITEM**
 - A. Recommendation to Approve 2025 Candidates for Graduation

- III. INFORMATION ITEM**
 - A. Meeting Minutes of January 16, 2025

The Committee expects to close a portion of this meeting.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT OF THE FACULTY SENATE'S REPORT

April 14, 2025

Introduction

Where did the Spring Semester go? Faculty look forward to an announcement regarding President Jordan's successor as well as a resumption of the shared governance review discussion. Senate leadership will be meeting with department Chair's to discuss workload. That meeting is scheduled for 4/9/2025. The "transition" to Anthology continues to create major headaches for faculty, staff, and students. The negative impact on students is especially troubling and the failure to implement a functioning ERP has hindered faculty's ability to advise students and created considerable challenges for students as they try to plan their coming semesters. The Academic Affairs team, including Katie Gantz, Katie Arnett, Nick Tulley, Anthony Guzman, Maria Snyder, and Virginia Callis have worked diligently to create workarounds and bridge sites and other one time fixes. Anne Marie Brady in the President's Office has provided milestone updates for all students, but the reliance on ad hoc fixes cannot be sustained.

Pulse Survey

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 [February 2025 Pulse Survey](#) included 7 questions ranging from the college's use of social media to the openness of the presidential search.

- Several faculty members had raised concerns regarding the college's use of social media sites that do not engage in fact-checking or do not have policies against posting misinformation or hate speech. The Senate was asked to measure faculty sentiment on this matter.
 - For the most part, faculty are comfortable with the college's social media use, with the exception of X (Twitter). 56% of respondents were "Uncomfortable" with the college's use of X. In written comments, respondents mentioned actions taken by the owner of X, Elon Musk, as well as the elimination of content moderation and fact checking. But there was also a widely expressed sentiment that while individual faculty may choose to limit which social media platforms they use, it's not feasible that the college not use these platforms as it would result in reduced visibility for the college, which could be too detrimental. As one respondent noted, "If engagement is based on posting materials advertising the college and what it is doing, I think this is fine."
- The October Pulse Survey revealed a marked increase in dissatisfaction with the Physical

Plant and Facilities Maintenance. Students have also raised concerns about the same. In an effort to better understand faculty concerns, please select any of the following that apply to your concerns regarding the Physical Plant and Facilities Maintenance.

- Building Maintenance and the related issue of Inadequate Staffing were the most common concerns cited. Respondents cited dirty or fading building exteriors, sidewalks still covered with snow or ice following weather events, and bathrooms lacking basic necessities like soap or paper towels. Several respondents mentioned problems with the ticket submission process and responsiveness, but noted that inadequate staffing may be behind this. As a side note, the student trustee on the Board raised similar concerns at the most recent Board meeting. This creates an opportunity for faculty and students to present a unified voice in calling for improvements.
- Faculty were asked if they were satisfied with the level of transparency in the college's presidential search.
 - A clear plurality of respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with the transparency of the Presidential search. Only $\frac{1}{3}$ were satisfied with the transparency and $\frac{1}{4}$ indicated that they were unsure. Timing mattered though with regard to respondent sentiments. Among those who completed the survey prior to Chair Bell's 2/10/25 email announcement that the finalists would not be meeting with the entire campus community, 41% were comfortable with the level of transparency and 52% were uncomfortable with it (the remaining were unsure). Among respondents who completed the survey after the 2/10/25 announcement, only 20% were comfortable with the level of transparency and 63% were uncomfortable with it (the rest were unsure).

Presidential Search

A cohort of faculty members met with the Presidential Search finalists in late February. The cohort members were selected by the faculty to represent a broad cross section of the programs and perspectives. The questions asked of the finalists by the faculty cohort were drawn from submissions by the faculty. With the search completed we all look forward to an announcement regarding the outcome of the search. Members of the Faculty Senate have expressed a desire to engage with the new president over the Summer.

Shared Governance

The faculty look forward to taking the next steps in the college's shared governance review. President Jordan's 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.

Academic Affairs, Chairs, and Associate Deans

Faculty Senate leadership will meet with Chairs on April 9 to discuss the Chairs' workload. The objective is to have a preliminary conversation on a few central issues: 1) what's going well in Chair interactions with the Associate Deans; 2) where are the points of friction; and 3) how might we brainstorm about the work that chairs do to redistribute, reprioritize, or eliminate some of those tasks all together? Based on this initial conversation, we intend to hold a joint Chairs/Senate retreat in August. The goal for Academic Affairs is to work toward better communication and some improved processes. On the Senate's side, the goal is to learn more about the Chairs' work so that they can advocate effectively.

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 Senate approved a plan to have sitting Senators serve as proxies for any Board Committee representative unable to attend a scheduled meeting. Faculty Board Committee representatives are to contact the Faculty Senate to arrange for a Senator to fill in for them. This process should go smoothly for all of the Board Committees except for Finance, Investment, and Audit as that's the only Board committee on which the faculty have a vote. In consultation with Chair Bell it was determined that a Senator could serve as a proxy for the FIA committee representative so long as a specific Senator is identified as the sole proxy. The Senate voted to approve the Faculty Senate Vice President as the FIA proxy. Moving forward, it would be best to codify these changes via a Faculty Bylaws revision. We appreciate the Board working with us to find a method for faculty to have representation at these important meetings.

Transition to Anthology Student

The transition to Anthology continues to be a major problem for students and faculty. At present, there is no way for a faculty member to pull up a list of their advisees. Until recently there was no way to access an up to date transcript for an advisee. The transcript now available via Anthology leaves much to be desired as it does not reflect courses that a student may have dropped during the semester, does not display the course credits for a course, and does not make clear if it is displaying completed credits or attempted credits. There's no way to review a degree audit. It's entirely unclear if any progress has been made regarding the transition to Anthology since the Fall of 2024. In lieu of a functional ERP, VPAA Gantz and the entire Academic Affairs team have been creating ad hoc workarounds. Though their efforts are appreciated, the litany of one time fixes are time consuming and confusing - especially for students. For Fall 2025 advising, advising day was delayed by 3 weeks and faculty received final instructions for advising, via a series of emails and a slide presentation containing 47 slides, a week before advising day. Tweaks to the process continued throughout the week leading into advising day. Completing what was asked of us meant that advising day became advising week as we were tasked with doing manually what a functional ERP should be doing automatically. And there's still no indication as to when we will have a functional ERP.

Unfortunately, the transition to Anthology has attracted the attention of the Maryland Department of Legislative Services and [an audit released in Decembers](#) revealed some very troubling findings:

Our audit disclosed several concerns with the procurement and/or monitoring of three contracts for the implementation of a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. For example, the College could not justify and did not properly document significant increases to the cost of a project implementation contract. As of October 31, 2023, payments on the contract were \$1.4 million (or 40 percent) more than the base contract cost of \$3.5 million. In addition, we noted certain questionable activity related to the College's procurement of a contract with a vendor affiliated with a State university to assist with the ERP implementation, which raised questions about the propriety of the award. The College also did not adequately monitor this contract and could not justify or support modifications to

the contract payment terms and pricing.

The implications of this audit, which doesn't even cover more recent events, are troubling. The audit suggests a lack of oversight regarding the transition to Anthology and a disturbing mismanagement of funds. According to the audit, "The College did not adequately monitor and could not justify or support significant contract modifications to the project implementation contract, which was \$1.4 million over budget as of October 2023." To provide just a little perspective, that inappropriately spent and inadequately justified \$1.4 million would've provided funds sufficient to provide course releases for 30 program Chairs for the next 9.3 years. It would've provided funds sufficient to send faculty to nearly 1,100 conferences. The audit only covered Anthology management and payments as of October 2023 meaning that we have no way of knowing if the inadequate project monitoring cited by the audit has continued. But at a time when faculty are told that the college lacks the resources to support the hiring of adjuncts, fund new faculty lines, or provide support for program Chairs, and given Maryland's current budget struggles, the findings of the audit are... frustrating.

Beyond the cost overruns, the legislative audit further determined that:

The College did not monitor the contract to ensure the project was progressing on schedule. The contract provided that the vendor was to provide the College with a project schedule, risk assessment plan, and project management plan to help monitor the progress of the project. Our review disclosed that the College did not obtain this information and accordingly was unable to properly monitor the contract.

Faculty and students are being asked to pay the price for this lack of monitoring and oversight by learning and taking on time consuming and ad hoc workarounds and we still do not have any idea as to when a functioning ERP will be in place. We do not even have a point person to contact regarding the Anthology transition. As I am finishing this report I find myself between advising appointments. I can tell you that students are extremely frustrated with the lack of progress in the Anthology implementation and annoyed by what they are being asked to do to register for the Fall semester. Among my advisees, only one was even aware that they had been sent instructions for Fall 2025 registration. Given the crucial role that advising and scheduling play in student satisfaction and retention the Anthology transition cannot continue as it has.

Respectfully submitted,



Todd Eberly, Ph.D.
President, Faculty Senate

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
APRIL 14, 2025

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
AND DEAN OF FACULTY'S REPORT

As we complete the 2024-2025 academic year, Academic Affairs has much good news to report on implementing 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, growing enrollments in our new programs, an overview of our new “Program Student Ambassadors” initiative, highlights from the Middle States evaluation related to assessment, and details of the recent dedication of public art in the Dodge Performing Arts Center.

Hiring Updates

Of the twelve tenure-track and three lecturer searches undertaken this year, Academic Affairs has had a successful hiring season, filling all but two positions (the failed searches in Psychology were discussed at the January 2025 AAC meeting). As an update for the Board’s reference, below is the status of our successful searches for positions to begin in FY26.

Program	Position/rank	Search Status
Math/ Computer Science	Senior rank, tenured, computer science	Completed
Math/ Computer Science	Tenure-track, computer science	Completed
Marine Science	Lecturer	Completed
Chemistry/ Biochemistry	Tenure-track (cluster hire)	Completed
Biology	Tenure-track (cluster hire)	Completed
Biology	Tenure-track (cluster hire)	Completed
Environmental Studies	Tenure-track	Completed

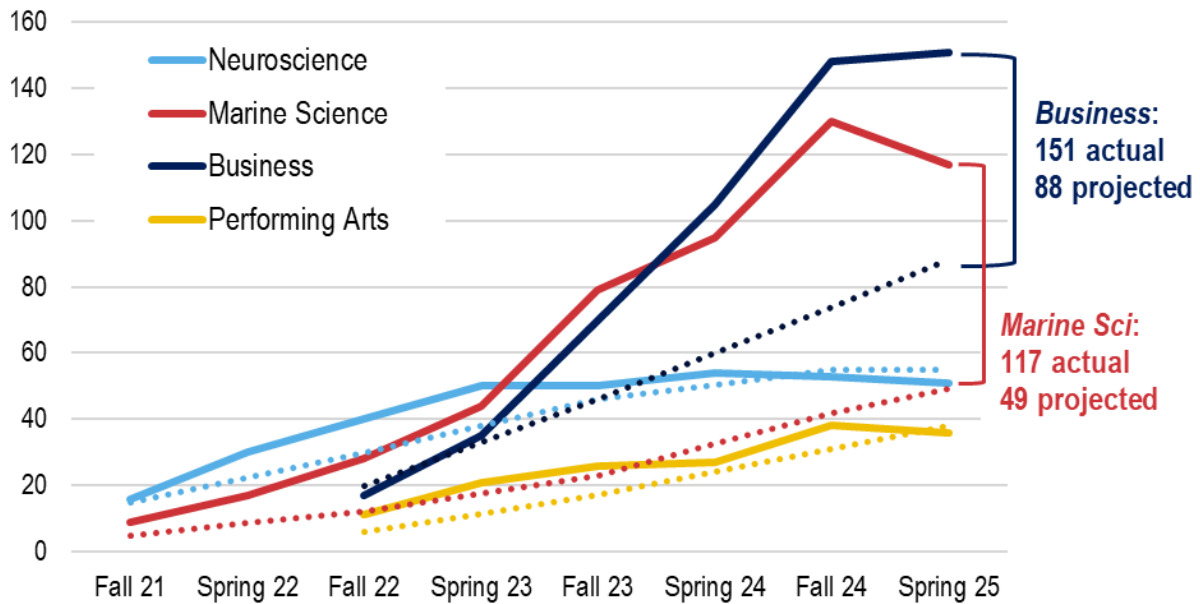
Women, Gender, & Sexuality	Tenure-track	Completed
Intl Languages & Cultures	Lecturer, Chinese	Completed
Performing Arts	Tenure-track, Scenographer	Completed
Psychology	Tenure-track	Failed search*
Psychology	Lecturer	Failed search*
English	Tenure-track, literature	Completed
English	Tenure-track, Composition and Rhetoric	Completed
Anthropology & Sociology	Tenure-track	Completed
Educational Studies	Lecturer	Completed

** As noted in January 2025 update. Both searches have been reopened.*

Update on New Majors

The four new majors added to the program array in 2022 and 2023 continue to thrive. Business and Marine Science, in particular, continue to surpass projections for the number of declared majors (see graph below) and Neuroscience and Performing Arts are on track with projections. Business is now the third most popular major, and Marine Science the fifth most popular (out of 24 majors). All programs have also begun to produce graduates; there are currently 63 students slated to graduate in the four programs combined, representing an astonishing 20% of the Class of 2025, especially given that two of the four programs have not yet had time to complete a full four-year cohort.

Declared Majors in New Programs



Middle States Reaffirmation of Accreditation: Successes in Building Assessment Culture

Following our successful campus visit from the Middle States reaffirmation of accreditation team, the Division of Academic Affairs is especially pleased to note the glowing review of our academic (student learning) assessment practices. In measuring the impressive distance the College has traveled since our last Middle States review, the Middle States team's comments led with an acknowledgement that we have moved from an assessment process driven by compliance to a culture that is faculty-led, faculty-owned, and focused on using assessment of student learning as part of a broader conversation about improving the curricular structure and experiences. This stands out from the current higher education landscape for all of the right reasons, and I am proud of our faculty for that recognition.

Within their comments, they were also complimentary of multiple elements that contributed to that transformation, including:

- the involvement of all academic units in the assessment process;
- the high rates of participation in assessment across the departments and across the faculty;
- the centralized coordination of efforts, supported by an expanded software infrastructure and dedicated positions in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning to with an emphasis on institutional assessment;
- the creation of the Coordinator of Transparent Teaching and Assessment position, particularly the fact that it is an active faculty member and not an administrative staff

position;

- the innovation of the “year 4 reflection” within each assessment cycle, as a dedicated time to analyze assessment data and think about how to use it (the fact that this innovation was made in response to faculty requests about our assessment work likely caught their attention as well); and
- the use of direct and indirect data to assess students’ learning and preparation for life beyond SMCM.

In terms of areas of growth, the recommended further development of assessment processes for co-curricular experiences and programming, and, as recommended by the self-study results, an ongoing look at how the introduction of the LEAD professional pathways curriculum and overall initiative may have led to changes in alumni perceptions of their preparation for life beyond SMCM.

Program Student Ambassadors

Launched in fall 2024, the Program Student Ambassador (PSA) Internships represent a campus-wide collaboration that provides leadership opportunities for St. Mary’s College students who have shown a history of excellence within their declared program (major or minor). In AY 24-25 we had 30 PSAs (one allocated to each program) selected from a competitive application process and vetted by the individual programs.

The PSA interns receive high-caliber training from various campus offices so that they may, in turn, support their affiliated program across five main areas: recruitment events, external outreach, online presence, event management, and student engagement. In addition to these main support areas, PSA interns use their disciplinary expertise to assist their program point-person (chair/coordinator or other designated person in the program) in other areas needed to maintain program health. This may involve tasks such as researching peer aspirant institutions with similar programs, preparing disciplinary-specific materials for an event (such as a science demonstration or art exhibit), or other reasonable tasks identified by the program point-person.

These positions represent a role transition from student to colleague; the expectations of professionalism, problem solving, and initiative are higher than most other student positions on campus (the PSAs begin the year with official SMCM nametags and professional headshots--amplifying the students’ sense of pride and accountability). Additionally, the PSA roles directly address the Strategic Plan’s commitment to offer more leadership opportunities for students.

To assess the PSA program’s first year, we will first review the work that has been accomplished in AY24-25 by these students. At this time, the PSAs have logged roughly 2,500 hours of work for their programs including four open houses, two Admitted Students Days, and four campus fairs (career fairs, majors/minors fair, and study abroad fairs). They have received training during their [summer orientation](#) and in their [biweekly meetings](#) from some of the College’s top experts in various fields. As we build the program, offices on campus have started to turn to the PSAs for assistance on various tasks beyond our original scope. In addition to Academic Affairs, these offices include Community Outreach and Engagement, Enrollment Operations, Transfer Recruitment, and more. The PSAs assisted their academic programs in participating in Giving Tuesday, resulting in a significant increase in the number of academic programs that participated

versus last year. At the end of this first year of the program, we intend to survey the PSAs and the academic programs on the status of the program so that we can continue to refine it in the upcoming year.

One of the most distinctive aspects of this program is its capitalization on campus expertise. We have nationally recognized experts on campus in each of our divisions. By connecting those experts with the PSAs, we not only provide professional development to the PSAs themselves, but by extension to their programs. Additionally, by centralizing the PSA training, we are ensuring that *all* programs have equitable access to campus resources. These students are filling gaps in various areas that faculty/chairs have struggled to address for years.



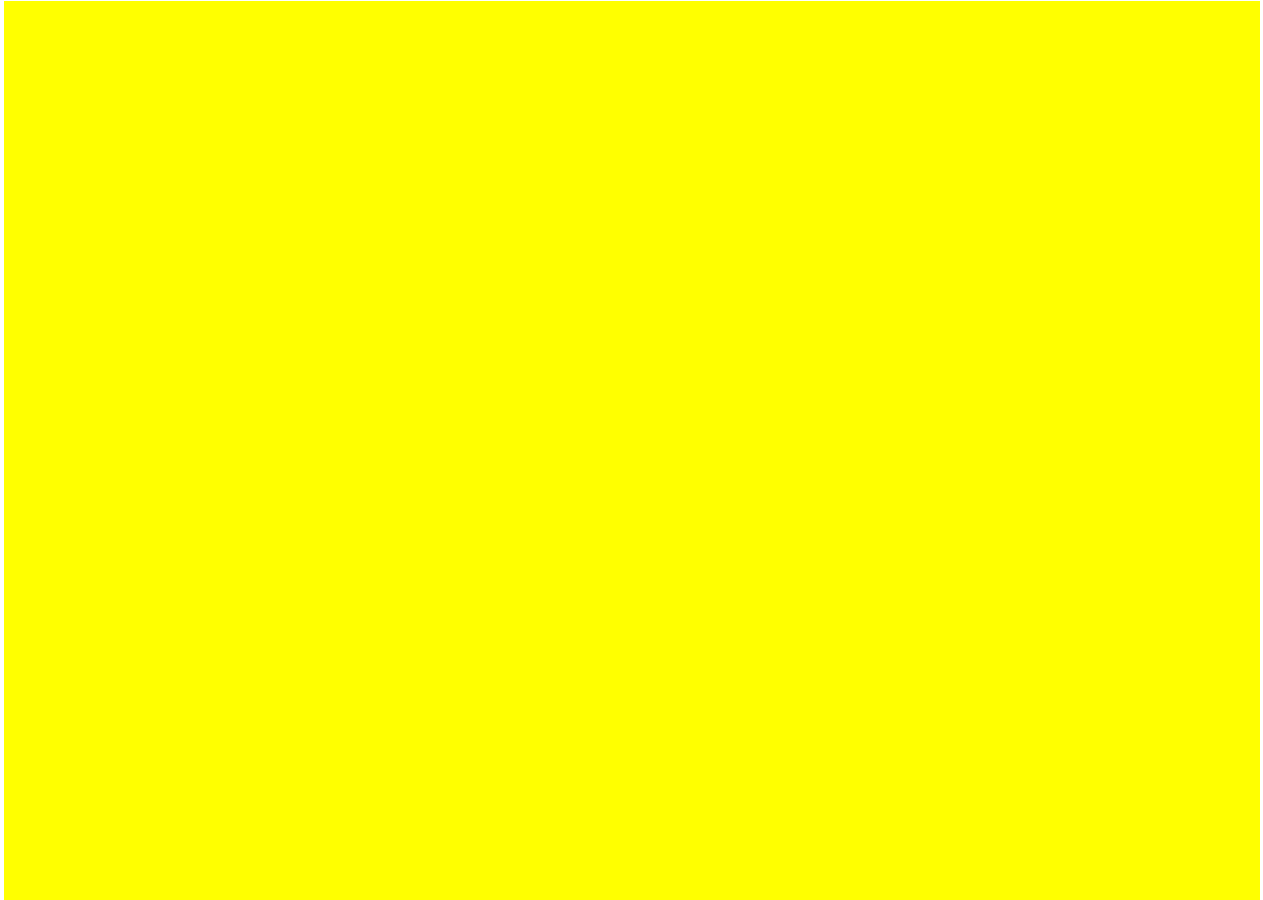
Group of PSAs at the 4/5/25 Admitted Students Day (these students met with over 200 families)

Public art dedication, Dodge Performing Arts Center

On Wednesday, March 26, 2025, the College hosted a highly successful campus event to celebrate the dedication of a new work of public art in the Dodge Performing Arts Center.

This was the outcome of a competitive nationwide call for public art during the design phase of the building, funded by a \$300,000 earmark from the state and supplemental funds from the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). The selection committee included our own Art faculty, members from the St. Mary's County Arts Alliance, and the program director from MSAC. Nationally recognized sculptor and installation artist Aurora Robson was awarded the commission. "Lover's Spat" is a large sculpture suspended from the lobby ceiling, featuring

clustered, luminous shapes evocative of oyster shells. The elements were created from recycled medical-grade plastic waste, 3D-printed into lightweight, semi-transparent shells.



In the place of a formal dedication, the event began with a public lecture by Ms. Robson on her artistic process as a form of environmental activism. The lecture attracted a robust crowd of students (SMCM art majors brought great questions to the discussion), community members, and representatives from MSAC. Following the lecture, guests were invited into the lobby for brief remarks from President Jordan and the MSAC Public Art Project Director, and culminated in a ribbon cutting ceremony.

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**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
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MEETING OF APRIL 14, 2025**

ACTION ITEM III.A.

**RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE
2025 CANDIDATES FOR GRADUATION**

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Academic Affairs Committee recommends approval of the candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Master of Arts in Teaching.

RATIONALE

By action of the Maryland State Legislature in 1964 St. Mary's College of Maryland was authorized to become a public, four-year college with its own Board of Trustees. 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 College Bylaws enumerate the duties, powers, and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, officers of the College and the faculty. The Board of Trustees has the authority to approve all earned degrees through the faculty and President as they shall recommend.