



**ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE**

**MEETING OF FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2018**

**AGENDA**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- A. Review Spring 2018 matriculation and College's overall enrollment numbers
- B. Financial aid and application process update
- C. Report on the admitted student yield strategy
- D. Report on Fall 2019 and 2020 new student search
- E. Update on enrollment marketing project from Creative Communications Associates

**III. ACTION ITEMS**

- A. None

**IV. INFORMATION ITEMS**

- A. Minutes from meeting of October 20, 2017



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID**

**REPORT SUMMARY**  
*(See appendix for supporting materials)*

**Date of Meeting: February 2, 2018**

**Date of Next Meeting: May 10, 2018**

**Committee Chair: Carlos Alcazar**

**Committee Members:** Anirban Basu, Peter Bruns, Sven Holmes, President Jordan, Ann McDaniel

**Staff Member:** David L. Hautanen, Jr. Vice President for Enrollment Management

**Executive Summary:**

The Office of Enrollment Management is pleased to submit its February report to the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid of the Board of Trustees. This report includes information about our Fall 2018 recruitment efforts, Spring 2018 enrollment information, Fall 2018 application cycle figures, admitted student yield plans, financial aid process, Fall 2019 and 2020 recruitment, and an update on staffing.

**A. Recruitment Efforts**

**Fall Recruitment:**

During the Fall recruitment travel season the admission staff completed more than 450 (+23%) recruitment events compared to Fall 2016. With a focus on relationship building both in Maryland and out of state, the number of school visits increased by 42%. The increase in school visits where admission staff personally met with counselors and interested students was offset by a decrease (22%) in the number of college fairs attended.

Secondary school counselor breakfasts in Montgomery County and in the Boston, MA, areas were also sponsored by SMCM. These were the first such counselor focused events in many years. At each SMCM staff presented up-to-date information about the College as well as led a discussion about how the Admission Office could improve recruitment efforts. Significant intelligence was gained at both events.

The Admission Office hosted three "Fall for St. Mary's" Open House programs. 354 students and 500 family members attended the programs. This is in comparison to 291 students (+22%) who attended similar programs held in Fall 2016. Feedback on the programs was very positive. In particular, feedback from campus colleagues was very positive about their experience as they compared these open house programs to past programs. Program improvements can be attributed to the efforts of the Signature Recruitment Events Committee that was convened in September to engage campus-wide support and improve recruitment events.

**B. Enrollment**

**Spring 2018:**

Current Spring 2018 new student enrollment deposits include 31 total students (two first year and 29 transfer students) on a goal of 21 new students. This compares to 21 new students who enrolled beginning Spring 2017. The census date for Spring enrollment is on February 12, 2018. At that time we will communicate the College's actual Spring 2018 and blended annual enrollment figures.

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## **Fall 2018:**

As of January 22, 2018, the College has received 1523 first year applications and 21 transfer applications for Fall 2018 admission. This is compared to 1522 first year applications and 33 transfer applications on the same date for Fall 2017.

In order to further increase the number of Fall 2018 first year applications we are continuing to recruit through a multi-channel communication strategy as well as accept admission applications past the January 15 Regular Decision application deadline. Transfer recruitment is ongoing and I expect that the Spring 2018 new student enrollment results are a signal of the capacity of our new Assistant Director for Transfer Admission, Guiana Oates, to recruit and enroll new transfer students.

While the first year applicant pool looks very similar to last year's pool at this time, the average grade point average of first year applicants has increased from 3.45 to 3.53 on a 4.0 scale, and the average SAT has increased from 1198 to 1218. The following chart lists select three-year demographic trends of the first year applicant pool.

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Fall 2016</b>	<b>Fall 2017</b>	<b>Fall 2018</b>
Out of State	170	208	209
First Generation	159	275	384
Black	175	215	251
Hispanic	124	155	153
White	952	1035	1015
Female	829	948	917
Male	550	596	623
<b>Total Applicants</b>	<b>1369</b>	<b>1522</b>	<b>1523</b>

Admission has been offered to 804 first year applicants compared to 814 last year at this time. First year admission decisions are being released in batches so that financial aid packages can be included in the admit packets and to manage the comprehensive yield plan. The first batch of Early Action decisions were mailed the week of December 18 and the second batch were mailed the week of January 15. Regular Decision application decision releases are scheduled to begin the week of February 19. Transfer application admission decisions will begin being mailed on a rolling basis the week of January 29, 2018.

By comparison, Fall 2017 first year admission decisions were released on a rolling basis beginning in late November with financial aid awards following. Transfer decisions were also released on a rolling basis.

The College has received 30 first year student enrollment deposits at this time compared to 61 first year and 3 transfer student enrollment deposits last year at this time. This may be a function of our releasing admission decisions later than last year in order to include financial aid awards in the admit packet. Or, it may be due to students wanting to have more offers in hand before making their enrollment decision. As with all metrics, we are closely monitoring these numbers.

In order to increase the yield of admitted students who choose to enroll, we are implementing an extensive yield strategy compared to the Fall 2017 effort. The yield strategy includes the comprehensive admit packet

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followed by a robust social media, email, and print mail campaign with faculty, staff and student outreach. We are also hosting Admitted Student Days on Friday, February 23, and Friday, April 6; an Admitted Student Reception in Montgomery County as well as smaller events in various areas.

**C. Financial Aid**

We have successfully begun our work with Human Capital Research Corporation (HCRC). They will serve as the College's financial aid leveraging partner as well inform the in-state and out-of-state recruitment strategy to build the applicant pool in subsequent years. Fall 2018 first year applicant merit scholarships and financial aid awards were set based on their analyses of the past results and the current pool.

**E. Fall 2019 and 2020 Recruitment**

As part of the Enrollment Marketing Request for Proposal awarded in November, we have been working with SPARK 451 to develop a new student search strategy for Fall 2019 and 2020. Working along with HCRC we are identifying target recruitment territories and SPARK 451 will be implementing a multi-channel communication outreach strategy for students in these territories beginning in mid-February. This will then be followed by a robust communication flow, in-territory recruitment travel, and counselor engagement strategies. This is the first time the College has engaged a partner to assist with the search outreach efforts.

**F. Staffing**

After a comprehensive search, Robert Maddox, Associate Director of Financial Aid, has been promoted to Director of Financial Aid. Quiana Oates, Assistant Director of Transfer Admission, joined the admission staff in November and Damita Brown, Financial Aid Counselor/Student Loan Coordinator joined the financial aid team in January. With the Director of Financial Aid position filled, Kathy Sahlhoff, Interim Director, will complete her engagement with the College on January 26.

**Action Item(s) related to specific strategic plan goals as appropriate:**

None

**Committee Action Taken/Action in Progress:**

**Recommendation to the Board:**



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID**

**MINUTES**

**Date of Meeting:** October 20, 2017

**Status of Minutes:** DRAFT

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Carlos Alcazar, Sven Holmes, Tuajuanda Jordan, Peter Bruns, Bonnie Glick, Ann McDaniel, Allan Wagaman '06

**Committee Members Absent:** Anirban Basu

**Others Present:** David Hautanen, Robert Maddox, Matthew Fehrs, Sandy Abell, Kristina Anderson, Allison Boyle, John Bell '95, Lex Birney, Leonard Brown, Cindy Broyles '79, Michael Bruckler, Donny Bryan '73, Carolyn Curry, Peg Duchesne '77, Susan Dyer, Cynthia Gross, Gail Harmon, Tim Heely, Chip Jackson, Larry Leak '76, Todd Mattingly, Kortet Mensah, Sharon Phillips '18, Beverly Read, Danielle Troyan '92, Michael Wick, Andrew Wildermuth, Anna Yates

**Executive Summary:**

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

**Admissions Data**

David Hautanen, Jr., Vice President for Enrollment Management, reported to the committee on the following items related to enrollment and applications:

- 2017 preliminary headcount for all students is 1,518 which includes 343 first-time first-year students and 87 transfer students. Last year's numbers were 334 first-time first-year students and 110 transfer students. Lower transfer numbers are the result of transitions in the office, the loss of the counselor in charge of transfer students, and a small staff. A new Assistant Director of Admissions for Transfer has been hired and will begin working on November 6. The enrollment goal for minority students is 25% with the preliminary numbers for FA 17 currently at 27% which represents 10% African American and 8% Hispanic. The average high school GPA for the FA 17 incoming class is 3.33 vs 3.34 for the FA 16 incoming class. The FA 17 average SAT is 1173 but cannot be compared to FA 16 average of 1150. Changes made in scoring by the College Board in 2016 make us unable to compare the new and old scores. The Retention rate is 87% and the 4-year graduation rate is 68% while the 6-year graduation rate is 78%. A study of those students leaving St. Mary's indicated that first generation students who choose to leave St. Mary's leave at the end of the first semester. The Beacon tracking software administered by the

Office of Student Support Services, is helping to identify at-risk students through a survey administered at orientation.

### **Financial Aid Report**

Robert Maddox, Associate Director of Financial Aid reported on Financial Aid:

- Total institutional dollars spent on financial aid for FA17 is approximately \$6.4 million dollars. Total dollars to spend for the entire 17-18 year is \$7.3 million.
- The discount rate for FA 17 first time students is 39%. The normal rate should be 33-35%. The increase in the discount rate is attributed to a change in the awarding parameters for the DeSousa Brent Program.
- Human Capital Research Corporation will be our new partner in Financial Aid. They will be looking at ways to better manage the discount rate as well as support the development of markets for new student recruitment.
- Several initiatives for the coming year:
  - Student Communication – updated award letter
  - Institutional need-based aid – simplifying need-based awarding and strengthening Foundation stewardship
- Updated Merit Award Branding k- President, Trustee, Excellence

### **Admissions**

Kris Anderson, Director of Admissions, reported on Admissions:

- Using the Strategic Enrollment Management Framework, the Admissions Staff will build the class from prospect through enrollment.
- The enrollment goal for FA18 first year students is 375 students – 12% out-of-state, 2% international, 29% students of color, and 20% first generation.
- The enrollment goal for FA 18 transfer students is 100.
- As of October 16, 2017, the first year inquiries are up 15% from the same date in 2016.
- Focusing on Maryland, Admissions will continue to build the inquiry pool by continuing communication via email, print, and social media. A series of six emails have been/will be sent to 80,000 students and a series of four post cards will be sent to 28,000 students.
- An additional 15,000 new search names were purchased and will be sent the same series of postcards and emails.
- Off campus recruitment will increase by 31% this year compared to Fall 2016, by increasing visits to high schools, community colleges, and community based organizations in Maryland, DC, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, California, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. Special events are scheduled for high school guidance counselors in Montgomery County, Baltimore County, and Boston, MA.
- Work will continue to coordinate the print, digital, and text messaging to students leading up to their application by responding to the Generation Z characteristics.
- Open Houses will focus on the quality of the visit experience. An Arts Day pilot program will be held in conjunction with our November open house. Additionally, there will be targeted outreach programs to College Bound in Baltimore and GEAR UP on the Eastern Shore.



- David Hautanen stated the yield strategy involves the entire campus – Admissions & Financial Aid; Athletics & Student Life; Academics; Alumni & Parents; and Leadership. He encouraged members of the Board and Alumni to open their homes for receptions for prospective students and their parents, by making phone calls, or writing notes. It will also involve targeted student and parent communications; faculty, student, and staff outreach as well as admitted student days and personalized visit programs.

### **Integrated Marketing update**

Michael Bruckler, Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications, reported to the Committee on the following strategies impacting enrollment marketing:

Current efforts (dubbed Honors College 1.5) in collaboration with Admissions focus on telling stories, testimonials, website enhancements, and print and digital social messaging (examples provided at the Committee meeting). The messaging currently focuses on the strengths of the curricular and student experience, the SMCM nurturing community, and location based on image work done in 206-2017 with a consultant.

The front [smcm.edu](http://smcm.edu) was overhauled to better speak to prospective students and parents and drive traffic to key areas.

To plan and build brand and messaging for Honors College 2.0, with the assistance of an external enrollment marketing consultant, the following steps will be followed:

- Discover - test qualitatively and quantitatively to develop the brand promise (includes focus group and survey testing with key internal and external constituents)
- Strategy - choose a singular brand promise and rationale
- Creative - bring the brand to life by creating a new look, tone, and feel
- Activation - share the brand and tell the story both internally and externally
- Measurement – listen, track responses, and optimize each campaign component

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.