

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID**

REPORT SUMMARY
(See appendix for supporting materials)

Date of Meeting: October 16, 2020

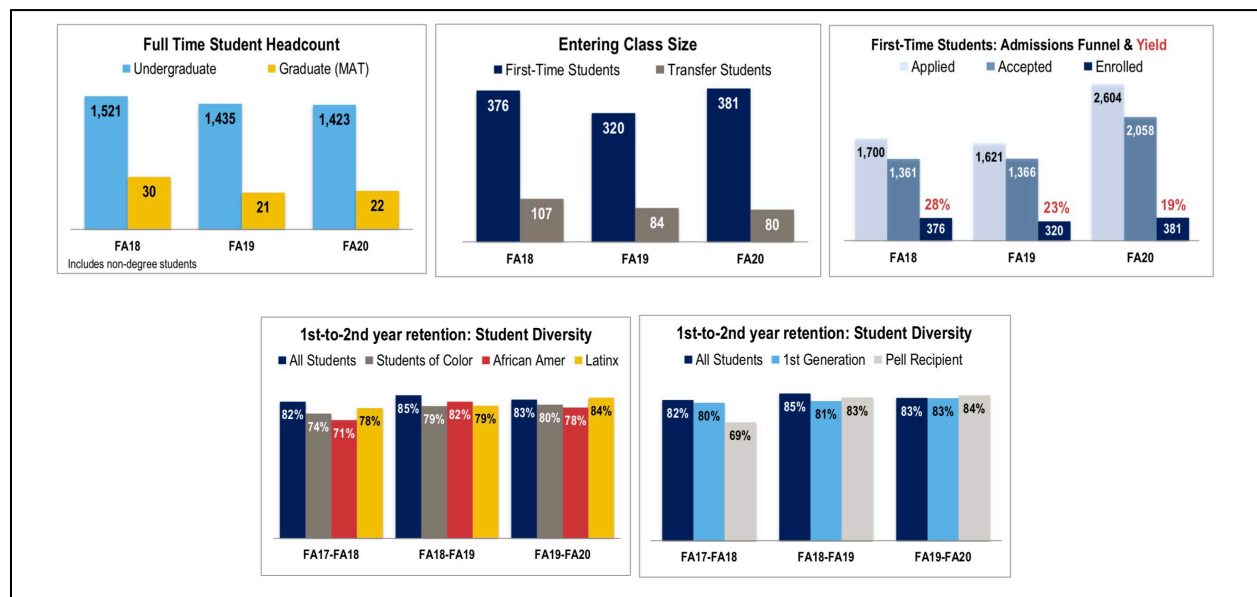
Date of Next Meeting: February 5, 2021

Committee Chair: Ray Wernecke

Committee Members: Board Chair Lex Birney, Judith Fillius '79, Sven Holmes, President Tuajuanda Jordan, and Harry Wetzel.

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

Dashboard Metrics: *(Enter NA if this does not apply)*



Executive Summary:

The Office of Enrollment Management is pleased to submit its October 2020 report to the Board of Trustees. This report includes Fall 2020 enrollment and financial aid figures, fall recruitment plans, new partnerships, and organizational updates.

Enrollment:

Enrollment (headcount) for the Fall 2020 semester includes 1491 undergraduate students and 22 graduate students. While this figure is level with Fall 2019, there are 12 more part-time undergraduate students (N=68) and the proportion of new students has increased from 27% to 31%.

For the Fall 2020 entering class, the College received 2604 first-time, first-year (FTFY) applications. This is an increase of 62% compared to the previous year and is the second largest number of FTFY applications in the history of the College. The Admission Committee offered admission to 5% fewer applicants in the pool compared to the Fall 2019 pool and the College enrolled 381 new first-year students. This is an increase of 61 new students compared to the previous fall. The College's first-year admitted student yield went down 4% compared to Fall 2019. This can be primarily attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic causing the cancellation of on-campus recruitment events during the critical recruitment month of April and more students cancelling their enrollment or deferring to a future term.

The College received 166 transfer applications for Fall 2020 compared to 176 the previous year. Admission was offered to 29 fewer students because an increased number of applicants did not complete their applications compared to last year. Both the smaller transfer application pool and the reduced application completion rate were likely due to the timing of the COVID-19 pandemic. The College enrolled 80 new transfer students compared to 84 in Fall 2019. This is an increase in admitted transfer applicant yield of 12.5%. Including both first-year and new transfer students, there are a total of 461 new students for Fall 2020.

Maryland residents account for 92% of new students. Twenty three percent of the FTFY class and 25% of the TR class are Pell-Grant eligible, 26% are first generation students, and 31% are underrepresented BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students. The academic profile of the FTFY class is very similar to the Fall 2019 class with an average unweighted GPA of 3.44 on a 4.0 scale, a weighted GPA of 3.77, and an average SAT of 1175. The Desousa Brent (DB) program enrolled 52 new students.

In September 2019, the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) approved a number of revisions to the association's Code of Ethics and Professional Practice (CEPP). These were made because the United States Department of Justice believed that certain prohibited practices inhibited, to some extent, competition among colleges for students. One of these changes was the removal of a prohibition on the recruitment of first-year undergraduates who had committed elsewhere including after the May 1 National Candidates Reply Deadline. To mitigate the possible impact of other institutions recruiting students who had already committed to the College, the Office of Admission, in partnership with the New Student Experience Team, developed a series of weekly 'Hawk Talk' programs from May through August. While Fall 2020 melt was 13%, an increase of 7.7% over Fall 2019 primarily due to the pandemic, these programs served to further engage enrolling students and their parents.

First to second year retention is 83% for Fall 2019 FTFY students to Fall 2020. This is a decrease of 2% compared to the retention of the Fall 2018 FTFY entering class and 1% over the retention of the Fall 2017 FTFY entering class. While overall retention is down, the retention of Latinx, first generation, multi-racial, and Pell grant eligible students increased.

The College continues to invest significant institutional funds for merit and need-based financial assistance with 81.8% of undergraduate students receiving institutional merit and/or need-based aid this fall compared to 79.3% last fall. For the 2020-2021 academic year, we project that \$7.2M of College funds and approximately \$1M of St. Mary's College Foundation funds will be used

for merit and need-based financial assistance for our students. In addition, \$593K in waivers for Tuition Exchange, Resident Assistants, and Tuition Remission have been granted. This compares to \$6.9M of College Funds, \$830K of St. Mary's College Foundation funds, and \$600K in waivers during 2019-2020. While the projected 2020-2021 figures represent an increase from the 2019-2020 figures, this is due to a larger entering class and having all enrolled students at the increased tuition and fees discount of recent years. Now that this has been normalized, future increases would be the result of larger enrollment or increased demand for institutional aid.

Fall 2021 Recruitment:

The Fall 2021 recruitment cycle is unprecedented. After a successful launch of the 2020 search campaign in early January and a 100% increase in the number of campus visitors in January and February, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a brief pause in all campus visit activities which was then followed by a pivot to all virtual programming. Beginning in August, the Office of Admission resumed offering in-person daily tours on a one-on-one basis following strict public health guidelines. Even though the number of information sessions and tours were expanded from 2 per day to 4-6 per day and including Saturdays, the number of prospective students that can be hosted is limited compared to larger group tours. In addition, a self-guided campus tour has been developed and is available on the Guidebook app.

When recruitment programs were revised from in-person to virtual, programs were delivered using Zoom. Zoom was not well-suited to delivering event-style programming. After reviewing a number of options, the Office of Admission selected a digital platform designed for events. The platform will be used for our signature events such as Open Houses and other programs. Our first virtual Open House of the fall was held on October 3 with 177 prospective students logging in to the event. This is compared to 135 students who attended our first Open House on campus last fall. As a digital platform there is significant data collection about participating students interests and engagement with the event. Utilizing this rich data collection, feedback from College faculty and staff participants. and in consultation with the vendor, our Open House program will continue to evolve.

In addition to daily programs and Open Houses, the Office of Admission will be offering a number of virtual programs to engage with prospective students. Examples of programs include, "Mock Admission Committee" workshops, "Financial Aid/College Costs" workshop, "Being a Person of Color at a Predominantly White Institution" and "Athletics at SMCM." Most of these programs will be offered in collaboration with campus partners. The Office of Student Financial Assistance is continuing to promote the College by participating in off-campus financial aid awareness programs albeit virtually.

The College is again working closely with our brand and marketing partners to increase awareness of the College and our recruitment programs. In addition to the print, email, and digital communications generated by the Office of Admission, our partners have implemented a significant digital, social media, and outdoor advertising campaign. This campaign has been expanded from the Fall 2019 campaign and will continue through the middle of November with a relaunch as part of our spring yield strategy.

Visiting a college campus in-person is a critical component of the college search process. Of all predictive measures, whether or not a student visits campus carries the greatest weight meaning that prospective students who visit campus are more likely to apply and enroll. This is even more important for a campus like St. Mary's College with our distinct location and stunning campus setting. While the Office of Admission is creating alternative programming to build relationships with prospective students, it is reasonable to expect there will be an impact on the enrollment funnel from limited on-campus programming.

Off-campus recruitment events have also been impacted by the pandemic. All high school and community college recruitment visits are now virtual. Each year, admission staff conduct recruitment travel at about 400 high schools, community colleges, and community-based organizations primarily in Maryland and then in our targeted out-of-state markets. Admission staff are working to make these same appointments. However, there have been challenges with scheduling visits due to the hybrid nature of school schedules and the capacity of the school to manage this additional demand on the school day. In addition to the scheduling challenges, admission staff are reporting that student engagement during visits is impacted compared to in-person meetings. College fairs, important opportunities for exposure and meeting prospective student and their parent, have been cancelled with the exception of a limited number of national fairs which are now virtual.

Our first year Early Decision (ED) and Early Action (EA) application deadlines are November 1 with the Regular Decision (RD) application deadline on January 15. We plan to release ED admission decisions by December 1, EA decisions by January 1, and RD decisions by March 1. Once admission decisions are released, we will implement a COVID-19 pandemic inspired comprehensive yield campaign targeting admitted students and their families.

New Partnerships:

The College has entered into three new student pipeline program agreements for transfer students, first-year students, and undocumented students. The St. Mary's Transfer Edge Program (STEP) for College of Southern Maryland (CSM) students was developed in partnership and will provide select CSM students the opportunity to take one course per term, up to four total courses at the College utilizing a special tuition discount waiver. These students will also have an expedited transfer application process to SMCM. The College will be working with Verto Services in a spring term pipeline program for first-year students. Verto Services offers study abroad programs for first year students after which the student matriculates at one of Verto's partner institutions. The College has entered into an agreement with The Dream.US. The Dream.US is the largest college access and success program for Dreamers in the U.S. The Dream.US provides funding for 8-10 undocumented students as well as recruitment and retention support for these students who will also be members of the DeSousa Brent Scholars Program.

Division Expansion:

As of July 1, the Office of Student Support Services (OS3) and New Student Transitions became part of the Division of Enrollment Management. This reorganization is designed to expand the role of Enrollment Management to include the full enrollment continuum from recruitment to graduation. New Student Transitions is being overseen by a part-time Director who is charged

with coordinating services and developing programming in partnership with Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and other areas, that will engage students from the moment they submit their enrollment deposit through their first year. I am assessing the Office of Student Support Services and will have a plan by December 1 for intentional programming and assessment to strengthen student outcomes as measured by retention, persistence, and graduation rates.

Staffing:

Staffing in the Division of Enrollment Management is stable for this year after on-boarding a significant number of new staff, particularly in the Office of Admission, in 2019. The open Associate Director of Admission was rewritten as an Associate Director of Admission for Inclusion & Diversity. Jordan Cartwright was promoted from Assistant Director of Admission to this reimagined role. With Jordan's promotion, there were two open Assistant Director positions. Emily Huey, who was previously an Admission Counselor, and Roderick Lewis, who was previously a contractual employee, were hired into these positions. The search to fill the vacant Admission Counselor position will begin as soon as possible. There is also a vacancy in the Office of Student Support Services. Proposed utilization of this position be included in the plan for OS3.

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

None