



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE
REPORT SUMMARY**

Date of Meeting: n/a

Date of Next Meeting: May 7, 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.

Dashboard Metrics:

N/A

Executive Summary:

The Office of Enrollment Management is pleased to submit its January 2021 report to the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid of the Board of Trustees. This report includes information about our Fall 2020 recruitment efforts, enrollment, admitted student yield initiatives, Fall 2021 recruitment, emergency grants for students, student support services, the Faculty Admission Delegate, and staffing.

A. Fall 2021 Recruitment Efforts

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of the College's new student recruitment activities. After a hiatus beginning in March 2020, the Office of Admission resumed offering in-person daily tours on a one-on-one basis following strict public health guidelines in August. The number of information sessions and tours were expanded from 2 per day to 4-6 per day and includes Saturdays. Between the resumption of on-campus tours until the tours were placed on pause on November 18 for public health reasons, the campus hosted 353 prospective students. This is a 10% decrease in the number of prospective students hosted for campus tours compared to the August through December 2019 time period. The Office of Admission will resume hosting on-campus tours as the public health situation improves.

Each year the campus hosts three on-campus Open House programs in the fall. These programs were replaced by a series of 20 virtual programs for prospective students and their families. The virtual series included abbreviated open house programs, student panels, financial aid and application workshops, student activities and athletics programs, an academic and experiential learning panel, and programs for underrepresented students. The Office of Admission also hosted six programs for secondary school and community college counselors. In total, 1569 visitors of which 1245 were unique visitors attended these events. During the Fall 2019 semester 609 students

and 1056 guests attended the three on-campus Open House Programs.

Off-campus recruitment events were also impacted by the pandemic. All high school and community college recruitment visits were virtual. Due to the hybrid nature of school schedules and the ability of the school to manage this additional demand on the school day, fewer schools hosted college admission representatives. College fairs, important opportunities for exposure and meeting prospective student and their parents, were limited due to the complexity of organizing programs with hundreds or thousands of participants. In addition to the scheduling challenges, admission staff are reporting that student engagement during visits is impacted compared to in-person meetings.

During the Fall 2020 recruitment travel season, admission staff participated in 286 off-campus recruitment programs. This included virtual visits at 233 high schools (149 in Maryland, 48 in the District, Pennsylvania and Virginia, and 36 in 12 states across the country), 47 national, regional, and local college fairs, and 6 community college transfer fairs. This compares to more than 400 off-campus programs attended by admission staff during the Fall 2019 recruitment travel season.

Moving forward and as the public health situation gets back to a more normal status, I expect that our recruitment events will include both on-campus and virtual programs. We can also expect that off-campus recruitment will also include a mix of virtual and in-person programs. This mix will enable the College to expand our recruitment reach while continuing to strengthen our relationships in our primary recruitment area.

The College is 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 implemented a significant digital, social media, and outdoor advertising campaign. The Fall 2020 campaign ran between September and the middle of November with a digital campaign relaunch in late winter to build awareness among Fall 2022 prospective students and to support our Fall 2021 yield strategy.

B. Enrollment

Spring 2021:

Current Spring 2021 new student enrollment includes 35 students (five first year students, 29 transfer students, and one student who was readmitted into the College). This is on a goal of 28 new students. By comparison, in Spring 2020 the College enrolled 32 new students (one first year and 31 transfer students). The census date for Spring enrollment is on February 15, 2021. At that time, we will communicate the College's actual Spring 2021 and blended annual enrollment totals as well as updated financial aid expenditure figures.

The New Student Experience Team, including staff from Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs developed a hybrid-delivery Winter Orientation Program with 16 of our new students attending in-person and the balance attending the program virtually. The three-day program included a range of sessions designed for students to get to know each other, learn about our community standards, values, and expectations, sign the President's Book, and participate in the MLK day of service.

Fall 2021:

As of February 1, 2021, the College has received 2627 first-year and 32 transfer applications for Fall 2021 admission. This compares to 2420 first year and 33 transfer applications on the same date for Fall 2020.

C. Admitted Student Yield Initiatives

Early Decision and Early Action applicants were notified of their admission decision and merit scholarship and financial aid awards in November and December, respectively. Following the online notification, hard-copy admitted student packets were mailed to those offered admission. The mailing of the admitted student packets initiates a comprehensive multi-channel communications campaign along with faculty, staff, and student outreach to our admitted students and their families. Regular Decision candidates will receive their admission decision no later than April 1, 2021.

All of our yield programs will be virtual. To replace the two on-campus Admitted Seahawk Days, the Office of Admission has developed a Future Seahawk Series of yield programs. The series will include 26 programs designed to appeal to admitted students and their families, generally, as well as programs designed for certain populations or to feature specific academic, student support, or student interest programs. When we are able to relaunch in-person campus visits, admitted students will have priority over other prospective students. In the meantime, all prospective students may use our self-guided campus tour app.

E. Fall 2022 Recruitment

The recruitment cycle for an entering class begins more than two and a half years before the start of the entry term. Recruitment for the Fall 2022 entering class was launched in February 2020 when the College started recruiting students who had taken the PSAT test in the Fall of their sophomore year in high school. Recruitment for Fall 2022 continues and recruitment for the Fall 2023 entering class has begun with the launch of the sophomore and junior search strategy as soon as PSAT data were available in early December. This is more than a month earlier than last year and two months earlier than in previous years. We are continuing to work with Waybetter Marketing in the execution of the search strategy. Initial results are strong. The Office of Admission will also be hosting six virtual programs for prospective students over the course of the spring semester.

F. Emergency Financial Grants for Students

The Office of Student Financial Assistance manages the process for the selection and awarding of the COVID-19 Emergency Grant and the SMCM Hardship Grant programs. The COVID-19 Emergency Grant program was designed to support students who incurred unanticipated expenses due to the pandemic. The SMCM Hardship Grant is designed to provide financial support to students with extenuating circumstances. The COVID-19 Emergency Grant is funded by the SMCM Recovery Fund and the SMCM Hardships Grants are funded by SMCM Foundation and SMCM Recovery Fund resources.

The COVID-19 Emergency Grant Program has provided 114 grants totaling \$96,000 with an average grant of about \$845. A small number of students have received more than one grant due to extenuating circumstances. The SMCM Hardship Grant Program has provided 46 grants

totaling about \$113,000 with an average grant of about \$2450. Both programs have been promoted to students and information about the programs is on the Office of Student Financial Assistance website.

G. Student Support Services

The Office of Student Support Services (OS3) is responsible for services and programs designed to support student success and retention. This includes the College's academic early alert system (Beacon), academic advising, mentoring, coaching, and tutoring. The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) works closely with the campus community to ensure reasonable accommodations are provided to eligible students. Like other student service offices, OS3 and OAS offered a combination of in-person and virtual appointments and programs during the fall semester. Services during the Winterim term were provided virtually. In the transition to hybrid service delivery, new accommodations and assistive technology were identified and implemented for many students and OAS needed to develop expertise around captioning, physical accessibility, and multiple new assistive technologies.

During the Fall 2019 semester and Winterim term, OS3 provided direct support to 309 students over 446 individual appointments and OAS worked with 210 students with accommodations and had 456 individual appointments. OS3 worked with faculty and staff to resolve 452 Beacon "alerts" about students of concern. This figure represents a 39% increase in Beacon "alerts" compared to the previous year and was primarily driven by the impact of unprecedented living and learning experiences due to the pandemic.

Following each term, OS3, DeSousa Brent Scholars Program staff, and advisors provide individual coaching to students who are placed on academic probation due to their academic performance the previous term. For students on academic probation, the office has developed the Seahawk Advising and Individual Learning Support (SAILS) program. This pilot program is designed to strengthen the support provided to students on academic probation.

H. Faculty Admission Delegate

Dr. Janna Thompson, Educational Studies, is currently serving as the Faculty Admission Delegate for a three-year term from 2020-2023. In this role she consults with the Office of Admission/Enrollment, reports to the faculty on matters related to admission, and attends meetings of the Board of Trustees Admission and Financial Aid Committee. Janna has enthusiastically adopted this role. Janna, the Director of Admission, and I have a monthly standing meeting and during the fall semester she met with academic departments to share admission recruitment and yield plans to garner their support. With her enthusiasm, it will be important for her to remain within the defined scope of the position so that the role of the Faculty Admission Delegate and the Office of Admission remain clear.

I. Staffing

Staffing in the Division of Enrollment Management is stable with only two vacancies. The search to fill the vacant Admission Counselor position is in progress and the position description for the vacancy in the Office of Student Support Services has been rewritten and will be posted by in February.

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

None



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

Date of Meeting: October 16, 2020

Status of Minutes: APPROVED January 29, 2021

Admission and Financial Aid Committee Members Present: Ray Wernecke, Committee Chair, Board Chair Lex Birney, President Tuajuanda Jordan, Judith Fillius '79, Sven Holmes, Harry Weitzel

Committee Members Absent: None

Staff Member: David L. Hautanen, Jr.

Others Present: Nicolas Abram '99, Anirban Basu, John Bell '95, Alice Bonner '03, Peter Bruns, Donny Bryan '73, Paula Collins, Mike Dougherty, Peg Duschene '77, Susan Dyer, Gail Harmon, Doug Mayer '04, William Seale, Danielle Troyan '92, John Wobensmith '93, Betsy Barreto, Allison Boyle, Mike Bruckler, Kelsey Bush, Carolyn Curry, Bhargavi Bandi, Helen Ann Lawless, Shana Meyer, Paul Pusecker, Sara Ramirez, Beverly Read, Jenny Sivak, Janna Thompson, Michael Wick, Libby Williams, Anna Yates, Derek Young

Executive Summary

Ray Wernecke, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

David Hautanen updated the committee on Fall 2020 enrollment and retention numbers.

- Enrollment for Fall 2020 is 1,491 undergraduate and 22 graduate students, which includes 381 first year students and 80 transfer students.
- This class is more diverse than last year – 25% Pell Eligible, 26% first generation, 31% student of color, and 8% out-of-state.
- 50% of the 81 transfer students came from the College of Southern Maryland, up from our normal 40%.
- 61% of our new students have demonstrated financial need with more than 81% of all undergraduate students receiving institutional merit and/or need-based aid this fall.
- First year (2019) to second year (Fall 2020) retention is 93% a decrease of 2% compared to retention of the Fall 2018 entering class.
- Retention of Latinx, first generation, multi-racial, and Pell eligible students increased.

He then reported on the challenges and opportunities facing Enrollment Management this year. The pandemic arrived during the most significant time of the year of the recruitment funnel with April being the most critical month for the Fall enrolling class and for secondary school juniors who are at the front end of their college search process. In person, off-campus recruitment is not

possible and capacity limits along with social distancing have made an impact on what the college can offer for on-campus programming.

We have responded to the challenges by transitioning our signature events to the virtual world – Admitted Seahawk Day, open houses, and off-campus recruitment. In partnership with Carolyn Curry and her team, we have worked with our partners, CCA and Waybetter Marketing, to implement more robust social media, digital advertising, and billboards. Our print and email communication flows have continued unabated.

On-campus recruitment is now highly personalized with one-on-one campus visits 4-6 times per day including Saturdays. 90% of the 90-120 slots per month are being used. Yield plan will be built to be highly personalized. Looking ahead, it's impossible to be able to predict how all of this will impact next year's enrollment but realistically we have to look at revising the goal.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.