

ST MARY'S

COLLEGE *of* MARYLAND

RD14D00

Higher Education Overview

February 5, 2021

House Appropriations Committee
Education and Economic Development Subcommittee
Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair

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Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Education, Business, and Administration Subcommittee
Senator Craig J. Zucker, Chair



Dr. Tuajuanda C. Jordan, President
Mr. Charles C. Jackson, Government Relations Liaison

Introduction – The Public Honors College

As the State's designated public honors college, St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) provides a premier liberal arts education that is both affordable and accessible. The College awards a variety of undergraduate degrees, as well as a Masters of Arts in Teaching graduate degree. With a

*The Nation's 1st Public
Honors College*

faculty of gifted teachers and distinguished scholars, a talented and diverse student body, and a low student/faculty ratio, St. Mary's College provides a challenging curriculum within an academically nurturing environment. In addition, the College fosters a sense of social responsibility and community among its students through its curriculum and campus life.

Supporting the two goals articulated by the State's historical vision for the College - the educational requirements of an honors program and the promise of access - sets St. Mary's College uniquely in the State and in rare company in the national higher education sector. St. Mary's College has been highly successful in supporting State-wide goals with one of the highest retention and completion rates among Maryland publics, a commitment to diversity, and in providing financial resources for students with need.

As a public college that is both accessible and affordable, St. Mary's College provides the opportunity for academically talented students from a broad socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial spectrum to acquire a liberal arts education. This diversity creates a rich academic and social environment that enhances the education provided by the College.

The College continues to evolve as an innovator within the national higher education sector. Our new core curriculum, Learning through Experiential and Applied Discovery (LEAD), will provide every student with theme-based integrated learning experiences, practical skills, internships, capstone projects, and other experiences that integrate career preparation with an honors curriculum within the context of the foundation of a liberal education. Our national standing and successes make us the leader among public liberal arts institutions. St. Mary's College has become **The National Public Honors College**.

As always, the College is grateful to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Maryland Higher Education Commission for their ongoing commitment to higher education, in general, and to St. Mary's College of Maryland specifically.

Response to Questions in the Higher Education Overview

Page 24: MHEC, USM, Morgan State University (MSU), SMCM, MICUA, and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) should comment on what steps are being taken to assist the transfer student population, specifically identifying actions that have been taken as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to more easily facilitate the student transfer process for these students.

St. Mary's College continues to improve the ease with which transfer students are able to matriculate from community colleges. Recently, the College has added articulation agreements with the College of Southern Maryland in Computer Science, Mathematics, Environmental Sciences, Applied Physics, Biochemistry, Biology, and Chemistry. The College has similar agreements in place or in development with Anne Arundel Community College, Howard Community College, Montgomery College, the Community College of Baltimore County, and Prince George's Community College. The Master of Arts in Teaching program is also working on agreements with Carroll Community College, Frederick Community College, Hagerstown Community College, and Wor-Wic Community College. In addition, an Assistant Director of Admission for Transfer Students was appointed last year, providing a seasoned professional to lead our efforts to improve enrollment of transfer students.

For the Fall 2020 semester, St. Mary's College saw an increase in transfer students from community colleges, increasing from 55 in Fall 2019 to 61 in Fall 2020 (11%). The number of transfer applications for Fall 2020 was down, however, from previous years due to the pandemic, as many transfer fairs were cancelled and admissions staff was unable to visit community colleges.

Currently, St. Mary's College is using virtual formats to recruit transfer students. To further improve the admissions process, in Fall 2020 the College held focus group meetings with admitted transfer students with a goal of identifying ways to improve the process. Those improvements, which include a quicker release of admission decisions, financial aid awards, and transfer credit evaluations, were subsequently implemented in the Spring 2021 application cycle.

Also, in partnership with the College of Southern Maryland (CSM), St. Mary's College has developed the St. Mary's Transfer Edge Program (STEP), which allows CSM students to take one class per semester at the College with a 50% tuition waiver. This program will engage CSM students with SMCM and ease their transition from community college into the St. Mary's College community.

Page 31: The Chancellor, presidents of SMCM and MSU, MICUA, and MACC should comment on steps that have been taken to address education delivery and access for their students.

St. Mary's College began the 2020-2021 academic year on August 17th utilizing a hybrid model of synchronous in-class and remote instruction. Implementation of our hybrid synchronous model of teaching and learning is working well. The College remains flexible and is prepared to pivot to all online instruction if the need arises.

The rapid shift to remote operations, including instruction and student support services, provided significant opportunities to increase access. Online student services allowed for more intentional scheduling of appointments, rather than simply relying on drop-ins, while still maintaining the ability for students to obtain service quickly. Online instruction, particularly between standard academic terms, allowed the College to better assist students in making timely degree progression. For example, in a pilot Winterim term, students were able to return home during the winter break and still continue to make academic progress toward their degrees via online courses. Entering the pilot, 57% of the students registered for Winterim were “on-track” for four-year graduation. After earning credits during Winterim, now 70% of the students registered during Winterim are “on-track” for four-year graduation. The College anticipates increased enrollment (and therefore increased revenue) from regularly offering remotely off-session terms (Winterim and Summer). These extra terms will undoubtedly also allow more students to graduate in four years.

