ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

1. MISSION

St. Mary's College of Maryland is Maryland's honors college, a selective, public liberal arts college—a vibrant community of scholars and learners. We foster a rigorous and innovative curriculum; experiential learning; scholarship and creativity; close mentoring relationships; and a community dedicated to honesty, civility, and integrity. We are committed to diversity, access, and affordability. Our students, faculty and staff serve local, national, and global communities and cultivate and promote social responsibility.

2. INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

A. Analysis of Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Ensure a high quality and rigorous academic program.

Objective 1.1: For two of the past four years, SMCM has met the target of 100% of graduates completing at least two high-impact practices (HIP), and reached 99% and 95% in the other two years. The goal of 80% completing at least three HIPs has been met for three of the past four years. It is likely that the lack of international and experiential opportunities during the pandemic is a major reason for these recent decreases. This year, 97% of students completed at least two HIPs and 76% completed at least three HIPs – small but promising increases from last year. SMCM is actively working to increase HIP opportunities for all students, particularly internships, research experiences, and international experiences as part of the Honors College Promise. We are confident that moving forward, we will resume meeting these goals.

Peer Benchmarks: The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) releases annual benchmarks regarding the completion of HIPs among graduating seniors at institutions participating in the survey. For the Class of 2021, SMCM's rate of 95% of students completing at least two HIPs far exceeds the national average of 84% of students at participating Carnegie Baccalaureate Arts & Sciences institutions. (*Source: NSSE*)

Objectives 1.2 and 1.3: SMCM is committed to offering a rigorous curriculum taught by qualified faculty. For the past five years, SMCM has met or exceeded the targeted percent of full-time faculty who have terminal degrees. Although the percentage of credit hours taught by full-time faculty has declined slightly over the past two years, full-time faculty still teach the great majority of undergraduate credit hours. Further, the rise of part-time faculty is largely due to SMCM's engagement of expert practitioners in a variety of fields to teach courses in the professional pathways sequence, part of the recently (2020) instituted LEAD curriculum. Students benefit from studying with these professionals while still taking the majority of their traditional coursework with full-time faculty. Finally, the undergraduate student-faculty ratio has been between 9:1 and 10:1 for the past five years, well below (better than) the target of 12:1.

Peer Benchmarks: According to the most recent available data (Fall 2020), SMCM has by

far the lowest student-faculty ratio (9:1) among the traditional four-year public institutions in Maryland, which average 15:1. The SMCM student-faculty ratio is second lowest (after New College of Florida at 6:1) among COPLAC institutions, which average 14:1; and is on par with Maryland private institutions, peer institutions, and aspirant institutions, which range from 7:1 to 15:1 (average = 10:1). (Source: IPEDS Data Center)

Goal 2: Recruit, support, and retain a diverse and qualified group of students, faculty and administrative staff.

Objective 2.1: The target for the percentage of incoming students who identify as students of color was reset this year to 33%. In FY22 (Fall 2021), SMCM recruited a first-year class with 31% students of color – just below this new target, but still a substantial improvement from about a decade ago when the percentage averaged only 20% (data not shown). Entering class targets were exceeded for first generation college students (for the fifth consecutive year) and for the out-of-state population. The latter measure has slowly been rising and is expected to hold steady just above the target of 10% for the next few years. High school academic performance of the entering class remains strong; the average GPA of incoming students has steadily improved to its current ten-year high and is projected to improve even more with the next entering class.

Objective 2.2: Both four-year graduation rates (Fall 2018 cohort graduating by Summer 2022) and six-year graduation rates (Fall 2016 cohort graduating by Summer 2022) were below targets for all groups. Note that four-year and/or six-year targets for students of color, African American students, first generation students, and Pell recipients were reset to aspirational levels to reflect SMCM's commitment to narrowing equity gaps in student success. SMCM will focus on providing all students with resources and strategies to support timely graduation, with particular emphasis on students from these historically underrepresented and/or marginalized groups. We know that reaching certain early academic milestones is crucial for students to make timely progress toward their degree, and we will explore additional ways to communicate and support the attainment of these milestones to students, faculty advisors and academic support staff. In addition, we will continue to offer online courses during both Summer and Winter sessions to provide students with a convenient means of earning additional credits in between traditional semesters. We will consider how best to make Winter and Summer session offerings applicable and accessible, particularly to students who may have financial challenges paying for classes during an extra term.

Finally, about 15% of departed first-year students over the past several cohorts have transferred out to two-year institutions, according to data from the National Student Clearinghouse. We are considering how best to reach out to these students regarding the possibility of reverse transfer, encouraging them to return and complete their baccalaureate degree at SMCM. The continued development and implementation of targeted, program-specific articulation agreements with many Maryland community colleges is expected to facilitate such reverse transfer efforts.

Peer Benchmarks: Based on the most recent comparison data available (FY18), SMCM's overall four-year graduation rate (63% for the 2014 entering cohort) exceeded those of other institutions belonging to the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) and other Maryland public four-year institutions, as well as Maryland private institutions and SMCM's peer institutions, many of which are private. The average four-year graduation rate at aspirant institutions (all private) represents a benchmark well above our target. As

shown below, SMCM's four-year graduation rates for African American students, Hispanic students, and all students of color combined were nearly all at or above the corresponding rates at other COPLAC, Maryland public, and Maryland private institutions. Benchmark four-year graduation rates for Pell recipients are not available. (Source: IPEDS Data Center)

Four-Year Graduation Rates, FY18 (Fall 2014 cohort)										
			Students							
Institution(s)	N	Overall	of Color	American	Hispanic					
SMCM	1	63%	59%	46%	68%					
COPLAC	28	41%	34%	28%	38%					
MD Public	11	30%	26%	24%	29%					
MD Private	9	57%	49%	51%	48%					
Peer	12	66%	63%	62%	63%					
Aspirant	6	87%	84%	82%	83%					

For six-year graduation rates, the most recent comparison data available (FY20) reveal that SMCM's overall rate (72%, for the 2014 entering cohort) exceeded that of other COPLAC and Maryland public and private institutions, and neared that of (primarily private) peer institutions. SMCM's six-year rate for nearly all demographic groups examined (students of color, Hispanic students, Pell recipients, need-based aid recipients) also exceeded those at other COPLAC, Maryland public, and Maryland private institutions. Notably, the six-year graduation rate for Hispanic students at SMCM was at or well above all other groups except aspirant institutions. (Source: IPEDS Data Center)

Six-Year Graduation Rates, FY20 (Fall 2014 cohort)										
			Students	African			Need-			
Institution(s)	N	Overall	of Color	American	Hispanic	Pell	Based Aid			
SMCM	1	72%	67%	51%	74%	62%	68%			
COPLAC	28	53%	48%	42%	53%	48%	50%			
MD Public	11	51%	48%	49%	48%	46%	47%			
MD Private	9	65%	58%	61%	55%	58%	62%			
Peer	12	74%	72%	72%	74%	72%	73%			
Aspirant	6	91%	89%	87%	88%	89%	91%			

Objective 2.3: The second year retention rate continues to fluctuate, rising slightly to 85% in FY22. While still not meeting the target, this year's retention rate still exceeds many benchmarks (see below).

Peer Benchmarks: Based on the most recent data available (FY20), SMCM's first-to-second year retention rate in that year (83%) exceeded those of other public liberal arts colleges (COPLAC institutions, average = 73%), Maryland public four-year institutions (average = 76%), Maryland private institutions (average = 75%), and peer institutions (average = 83%), many of which are private. Retention rates at private aspirant institutions averaged 90% in FY20, matching SMCM's aspirational target and underscoring how

important it is to remain competitive with those institutions. (Source: IPEDS Data Center)

Objective 2.4: SMCM continues to work to maintain a diverse faculty and staff. Gender parity was once again achieved for both faculty and staff in FY22. Racial and ethnic diversity targets were reset to 33% this year to match the goal for diversity of the student body. SMCM has a long way to go to meet this goal in the faculty, but efforts to advance cluster hiring and diversify search processes this year are expected to assist with meeting the target in coming years. The percent of staff who are people of color is on track to meet the target within the next few years.

Objective 2.5: SMCM has met or exceeded the target of an entering class that contains 20% transfer students for the past seven years, but the percentage fell to 17% in FY21 and 18% in FY22. This is likely related to the challenges of recruiting transfer students during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and 2021. We will continue to focus on recruiting a strong incoming class of transfer students.

Objective 2.6: Among transfer students, both the three-year graduation rate (64%, Fall 2019 entering students graduating by Summer 2022) and four-year graduation rate (74%, Fall 2018 entering students graduating by Summer 2022) well exceeded the targets of 60% and 70%, respectively. Moreover, analysis of current transfer students' degree progress suggests that these graduation rates will remain high over the next two years. Continued development and refinement of articulation agreements with Maryland two-year institutions will facilitate transfer students' timely progress toward the baccalaureate degree.

Peer Benchmarks: Benchmark information for transfer student four-year rates is available from IPEDS, but with quite a delay. The most recently available data is from transfer students who entered during 2012-13 and graduated by 2016. In that year, SMCM's four-year graduation rate for transfer students (73%) was the highest among Maryland public four-year institutions, and exceeded the average for this group (51%) as well as for COPLAC institutions (51%), Maryland private institutions (62%), and peer institutions (69%). Transfer students at aspirant institutions averaged a 90% four-year graduation rate. (Source: IPEDS Data Center)

Goal 3: Ensure access for students with financial need through a strategic combination of federal, state, private, and institutional funds.

<u>Objective 3.1:</u> This objective has consistently been met or exceeded as SMCM has focused on meeting the financial needs of entering first-time students.

Objective 3.2: Both four-year and six-year graduation rates among students receiving need-based aid (Pell grant or Stafford loan) were low this year, similar to other cohort groups as discussed above for Objective 2.2. Given the particularly sensitive financial situation of students receiving need-based aid, this gap warrants increased attention. On the other hand, the leading indicator of retention to the second year was substantially above recent levels at 87% this year, even higher than the all-student level.

Peer Benchmarks: Similar to findings for graduation rates among Pell recipients, SMCM's six-year graduation rate for students receiving need-based aid (68% in FY20, most recent

comparison data available) was well above that of other COPLAC institutions (50%), Maryland public institutions (47%), and Maryland private institutions (62%), and approached the FY20 rate at peer institutions (73%). The six-year graduation rate for recipients of need-based aid at aspirant institutions was 91%, matching their overall six-year graduation rate. (Source: IPEDS Data Center)

Goal 4: Increase student contributions to the Maryland community and to the state and national workforce.

Objectives 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4: Community service participation in FY21 did not meet the target for the third time in five years after many years of consistently higher levels, likely due to ongoing effects of the pandemic persisting through 2022. Internship participation rose slightly to just above the target of 45% of graduates, and is expected to grow over the next few years as students move through the professional skills component of the LEAD curriculum. With regard to six-month post-degree outcomes, while the six-month employment rate (61%) was below the target for the Class of 2021, it increased above both Class of 2019 and Class of 2020 levels. In addition, the six-month continuing education rate (35%) continues to be substantially above the target, suggesting that SMCM graduates who are not employed are choosing to continue their education instead. In support of this interpretation, the overall Career Outcomes Rate (rate of graduates with a "positive career outcome", such as employment, continuing education, fellowship, or service experience) for the SMCM Class of 2021 was an outstanding 97%.

Peer Benchmarks: Benchmarks for the six-month employment and continuing education rate come from the nationally administered First Destination Survey, and are for Carnegie Baccalaureate Arts & Sciences institutions. For the Class of 2020, the most recent data available, SMCM's employment rate was 53% and the national rate was 65%, while SMCM's continuing education rate was 34% and the national rate was 21%. The total Career Outcome Rate for SMCM was 91%, matching the national rate. Again, these numbers support the interpretation that SMCM graduates are just as successful as college graduates nationwide, and are more likely than similar college graduates nationwide to choose to continue their education (rather than enter the job market) just after graduation. (Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) First Destinations for the Class of 2020 Report)

B. Response to Commission Assessment

What is the biggest challenge your institution faces as it attempts to equitably meet the goals, objectives, and performance measures in the 2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education?

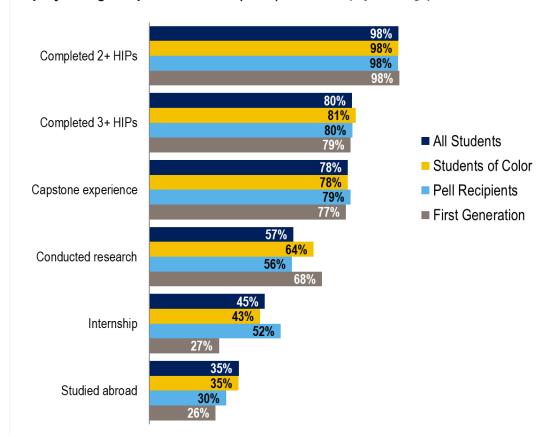
SMCM is committed to supporting the State's goals of access, success, and innovation, all three of which figure prominently in our mission statement. We are proud to offer a rigorous liberal arts education with a low student-to-faculty ratio at a fraction of the cost of small private liberal arts colleges, our closest programmatic peers. Our identity as the National Public Honors College underscores our commitment to provide access to a quality education. However, our biggest challenge in meeting these goals is resources, both financial and human capital in nature. Attracting and retaining high-quality faculty and staff, particularly employees of color, has been

a growing challenge for us in recent years as we struggle to offer competitive salaries. Our rural location can also be a challenge in recruiting faculty. Further, while our cost is low compared to similar private institutions, tuition is currently higher than other public four-year institutions in Maryland, providing a challenge for equitable access. As a result, we have committed to freezing tuition for the next 10 years. The funding support provided by the State of Maryland has been instrumental in allowing us to implement this long-range strategy to maximize access. As a tuition-driven institution, we will continue to focus on growing enrollment to expand our available resources; the increased incoming class sizes over the last three years suggest that these efforts have been successful thus far.

Has your institution used disaggregated data to identify equity issues in students' educational opportunities and outcomes? If so, how has this disaggregation of data provided insight into your institution's educational equities and inequities? If not, what data has been used to understand student outcomes?

SMCM routinely examines disaggregated data to assess the equity of student success. Recently, we have been pleased to discover that there is widespread equity among the completion of highimpact practices (HIPs) by our graduates. HIPs include first-year seminars, internships, international experiences, learning communities, research with faculty, experiential coursework, and senior capstone experiences. As shown below, students of color, low-income students (Pell recipients), and first generation students are completing many of the same high-impact practices at the same or even higher rates than the general student population. Notable exceptions are seen in the lower rates of internships and international experiences (study abroad) among first generation students. These are more expensive experiences for students, both in terms of actual financial cost and loss of other income opportunities. As a result, we are exploring mechanisms to provide additional funding and access to these experiences, for example by greatly expanding our offerings of on-campus paid internships during the semester and by increasing scholarship opportunities for students who wish to study abroad. These strategies will be particularly important as we have recently implemented the Honors College Promise, which guarantees every student the opportunity for an internship, international experience, or collaborative research or creative experience. The newly expanded Sum Primus ("I am first") program for first generation students, coordinated by the Center for Career and Professional Development, will also be instrumental in encouraging and preparing more first generation students to participate in these high-impact practices before graduation.





As discussed in the Analysis of Goals and Objectives section above, we have also observed inequities in our four-year and six-year graduation rates. We have implemented multiple programs and initiatives to address these gaps in degree completion. The DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program is a long-running leadership program designed to support and enhance students' experiences from before matriculation (via a Summer Bridge program) through their degree completion. The Landers Scholars Program provides four years of full funding, mentoring, and service opportunities to first generation and other underrepresented students, especially students from the Baltimore area. And as discussed above, the Sum Primus program provides pre-matriculation support for first generation students, as well as continuing social support and networking with other first generation students, faculty and staff (including President Tuajuanda Jordan). Faculty, staff and students are regularly informed and reminded about the importance of meeting first- and second-year academic milestones, as discussed above, which are particularly impactful for students from historically underrepresented and/or marginalized groups. In addition to these student-based programs, recent changes in faculty and staff organizational structures reflect our commitment to addressing equity gaps. The Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (CITL), founded in 2019, supports faculty professional development with a strong focus on inclusive teaching practices. The campus diversity office was reorganized and expanded in 2020 to become the Division of Inclusive Diversity, Equity, Access, and Accountability. An ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate devoted to Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity was established in May 2021. And finally, a two-year cluster hire initiative, the Ross Fellows program, began in Fall 2021 to actively seek out faculty with scholarly and pedagogical experience centered on diversity and inclusion.

MISSION

St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) is Maryland's honors college, a selective, public liberal arts college—a vibrant community of scholars and learners. We foster a rigorous and innovative curriculum; experiential learning; scholarship and creativity; close mentoring relationships; and a community dedicated to honesty, civility, and integrity. We are committed to diversity, access, and affordability. Our students, faculty and staff serve local, national, and global communities and cultivate and promote social responsibility.

VISION

St. Mary's College of Maryland will increasingly serve as the liberal arts college of choice for intellectually ambitious students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds, attracted by a rigorous, innovative, and distinctive curriculum that integrates theory and practice; a talented, professionally engaged, and student-centered faculty and staff; and a strong infrastructure. Students will be part of a collaborative learning community that embraces intellectual curiosity and innovation, the power of diversity, and the College's unique environment. Our graduates will thrive as responsible and thoughtful global citizens and leaders.

KEY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Goal 1. Ensure a high quality and rigorous academic program.

- **Obj. 1.1** All graduating students will participate in at least two high-impact practices, and at least 80 percent of the graduating class will participate in at least three high-impact practices. High-impact practices are defined by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U).
- **Obj. 1.2** Maintain a full-time faculty of which 98 percent have terminal degrees. Maintain the proportion of undergraduate credit hours taught by full-time faculty at 88 percent annually.
- Obj. 1.3 Maintain an environment that promotes individual contact between faculty and students by maintaining a student-faculty ratio of no more than 12 to 1.

Performance Measures	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Est.	2024 Est.
Percent of the graduating class successfully completing at least two							
high-impact practices	100%	100%	99%	95%	97%	100%	100%
Percent of the graduating class successfully completing at least							
three high-impact practices	86%	87%	82%	72%	76%	76%	80%
Percent of all full-time faculty who have terminal degrees	99%	98%	98%	98%	97%	98%	98%
Percent of undergraduate credit hours taught by full-time faculty	89%	88%	87%	82%	80%	82%	85%
Undergraduate student to faculty ratio	10:1	10:1	9:1	9:1	10:1	10:1	10:1

- Goal 2. Recruit, support, and retain a diverse and qualified group of students, faculty and administrative staff who will contribute to and benefit from the enriched academic and cultural environment provided by St. Mary's.
 - Obj. 2.1 Recruit a qualified and diverse entering class with the following attributes: Average high school grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.40 (4 point scale), Black, Indigenous, and Person of Color (BIPOC) student enrollment of at least 33 percent, out of state student enrollment of at least 10 percent, students from first generation households enrollment of at least 20 percent, and Pell Grants disbursed during their first semester student enrollment of at least 20 percent.
 - Obj. 2.2 Achieve and maintain 4-year graduation rates for all students (70 percent), all BIPOC students (65 percent), African-American students (65 percent), Hispanic students (70 percent), all first generation students (65 percent), and all students with a Pell Grant disbursed during their first semester (65 percent). Achieve and maintain 6-year graduation rates at 80 percent for all students and all student subgroups, including BIPOC students, African-American students, Hispanic students, first-generation students, and students with a Pell Grant disbursed during their first semester.

Performance Measures	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Est.	2024 Est.
Average high school GPA	3.33	3.38	3.38	3.44	3.45	3.49	3.49
Percent of entering first year class who identify as BIPOC students	27%	25%	33%	31%	31%	31%	33%
Percent of entering first year class who originate from outside of Maryland	9%	7%	6%	9%	11%	12%	12%
Percent of entering first year class from first generation households	25%	21%	23%	25%	21%	25%	25%
Percent of entering first year class receiving Pell Grants disbursed during their first semester	20%	17%	22%	24%	18%	20%	20%
Four-year graduation rate for all students	63%	64%	60%	58%	60%	59%	65%
Four-year graduation rate for BIPOC students	59%	52%	49%	44%	41%	52%	53%
Four-year graduation rate for African-American students	46%	51%	48%	38%	37%	39%	49%
Four-year graduation rate for Hispanic students	68%	53%	44%	44%	42%	56%	61%
Four-year graduation rate for all first generation students	59%	60%	53%	44%	57%	45%	52%
Four-year graduation rate for students with a Pell Grant disbursed							
during their first semester	55%	60%	58%	43%	58%	49%	58%
Six-year graduation rate for all students	80%	77%	72%	73%	71%	68%	71%
Six-year graduation rate for BIPOC students	72%	69%	67%	64%	60%	53%	56%
Six-year graduation rate for African-American students	56%	70%	51%	69%	59%	41%	45%
Six-year graduation rate for Hispanic students	81%	70%	74%	58%	50%	52%	63%
Six-year graduation rate for all first generation students	85%	69%	64%	71%	63%	59%	67%
Six-year graduation rate for students with a Pell Grant disbursed during their first semester	84%	69%	62%	76%	65%	49%	67%

- **Obj. 2.3** The first to second-year retention rate will be 90 percent.
- **Obj. 2.4** The College will strive for diversity in the faculty and staff so that the composition reflects the aspired diversity of the student body. The aspirant goals for full-time faculty and staff will be: 33 percent BIPOC and 50 percent women.
- Obj. 2.5 Ensure access for transfer students, particularly those from 2-year institutions. Achieve and maintain transfer students at 20 percent of the entering class each fall.
- Obj. 2.6 Achieve and maintain degree completion rates for transfer students at 60 percent for three-year graduation rates, and at 70 percent for four-year graduation rates.

Performance Measures	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Est.	2024 Est.
First to second-year retention rate	87%	82%	85%	83%	85%	83%	85%
Percent BIPOC of all full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty	17%	16%	14%	15%	18%	20%	22%
Percent women of all full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty	51%	51%	52%	51%	50%	50%	50%
Percent BIPOC of all full-time (non-faculty) staff	27%	29%	27%	27%	30%	31%	32%
Percent women of all full-time (non-faculty) staff	52%	57%	57%	57%	58%	58%	58%
Percentage of entering fall class who are transfer students	20%	22%	21%	17%	18%	17%	17%
3-year graduation rate for all transfer students	56%	62%	69%	68%	64%	62%	71%
4-year graduation rate for all transfer students	71%	74%	69%	74%	74%	73%	67%

Goal 3. Ensure access for students with financial need through a strategic combination of federal, state, private, and institutional funds.

- Obj. 3.1 72 percent of entering first-year student need is met by awarding any need-based aid.
- **Obj. 3.2** Support persistence to graduation of students receiving need-based aid at entry. Achieve and maintain first-to-second year retention rates at 90 percent, four-year graduation rates at 70 percent, and six-year graduation rates at 80 percent for students receiving need-based aid in the first semester.

Performance Measures	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Est.	2024 Est.
Average percent of first-time full-time degree-seeking student need met by awarding need-based aid	75%	73%	78%	84%	78%	78%	78%
First-to-second year retention rate for students receiving need- based aid in the first semester	80%	80%	81%	79%	87%	85%	87%
Four-year graduation rate for students receiving need-based aid in the first semester	61%	59%	56%	54%	54%	48%	60%
Six-year graduation rate for students receiving need-based aid in the first semester	81%	78%	68%	69%	64%	64%	64%

Goal 4. Increase student contributions to the Maryland community and to the state and national workforce.

- **Obj. 4.1** 65 percent of graduating seniors will have performed community service while at SMCM.
- Obj. 4.2 45 percent of graduating seniors will have participated in a paid or unpaid internship.
- **Obj. 4.3** The rate of employment within six months of graduation will be at least 67 percent.
- **Obj. 4.4** The rate of continuing education (at any level) within six months of graduation will be 25 percent.

Performance Measures	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Est.	2024 Est.
Percent of graduating seniors who will have performed community service while at SMCM	71%	69%	63%	50%	39%	45%	55%
Percent of graduating seniors who fulfilled a paid or unpaid							
internship	41%	40%	45%	44%	47%	48%	50%
Employment rate of graduates within six months of graduation	67%	62%	58%	53%	61%	61%	61%
Percent of graduates continuing their education (at any level) within six months of graduation	23%	28%	30%	34%	35%	35%	35%