



2018 Performance Accountability Report Maryland Public Colleges and Universities

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maryland's public colleges and universities' 2018 Performance Accountability Report (PAR) benchmarks, indicators, performance measures, and narrative reports reflect their progress toward helping to achieve the goals of the 2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education: *Student Success with Less Debt*. The three State Plan goals are access, success, and innovation. Institutions identified indicators and benchmarks that reflected their mission and goals and aligned them within the State plan's goals and strategies.

Maryland's public colleges and universities have faced notable changes to their student enrollment over the past decade. First, the overall surge in enrollments across all public institutions in 2011 and 2012 has decreased; enrollment at the community colleges (both credit and non-credit) has stabilized, and the public four-year institutions are seeing their highest undergraduate enrollments on record. All institutions have seen increases in the diversity of their students (e.g., by age, race/ethnicity). These changes require institutions to continue to be more agile and flexible in the ways they recruit, retain, support, and graduate their students.

It is within the context of these enrollment shifts and increases in the diversification on college campuses that institutions are working towards the State's higher education goals, as these enrollment trends have a direct effect on their ability to successfully help the state achieve the goals set forth in the Plan.

Efforts by the colleges and universities to increase access to quality postsecondary education for Maryland residents are tied to several key areas: increasing enrollments, easing pathways to higher education, and maintaining affordability. Community colleges' efforts include strengthening dual enrollment and workforce education programs; public four-year institutions continue to focus on facilitating transfer and growing their distance education programs. Finding solutions to rising college prices and increased costs is a responsibility that the state and the institutions share.

Institutions are committed to maintaining and improving retention and academic progress outcomes for all students, with a focus on the long-term goal of improving overall student success. Steps taken to help support the state's success goals include enhancing academic advising and using data analytics and other technological tools to assess students' needs and address issues before they put the student at risk of departure.

The retention and completion outcomes for the community colleges and the public four-year institutions are generally positive. The institutions' efforts to address student retention have a carryover effect in helping students persist to completion. While institutions should be encouraged that the long-term trends are an indicator that their efforts are making a difference, ongoing focus on the intractable issues tied to the achievement gaps must continue.

Institutions' efforts to foster innovation in research, meeting workforce needs, and teaching and learning are ongoing. What is evident from the institutional PAR reports is that their approaches to innovation take a variety of forms and are tailored to their mission and institutional goals.

In the coming year, the Commission staff will continue to use statewide data to help answer questions tied to affordability, student success, degree completion, and workforce needs. In addition, there will be continued discourse with institutions around issues tied to equity and achievement gaps among student populations.

OVERVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

The annual Performance Accountability Report (PAR) provides an opportunity for the State, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), colleges and universities, and individual governing boards to review and evaluate institutions' efforts to advance the goals of the state and fulfill their missions. Maryland's public colleges and universities' commitment to this is demonstrated by their ongoing efforts to provide detailed and high-quality reports to the Commission each year. This is the 23rd accountability report published by the Commission.

Volume 1 of the report includes the following:

- An overview of the accountability process;
- An analysis of institutional performance on state plan goals; and
- Institutional responses to the Commission's questions about indicators submitted in the 2017 PAR.

The full accountability reports for all of the public two- and four-year institutions in Maryland are contained in **Volume 2**. These reports are unedited by Commission staff except to ensure consistent formatting.

The reports from the community colleges include:

- An update regarding their performance on the indicators in each "mission/mandate" area;
- Their progress toward meeting the goals of the 2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education: *Student Success with Less Debt* most applicable to the community colleges;
- A discussion of how well the campuses are serving their communities;
- Four years of trend data; and
- Benchmarks for each indicator.

The reports from the public four-year institutions include:

- A list of their accountability goals and objectives;
- An update regarding their progress toward meeting their goals;
- Objectives and performance measures as submitted to the state for *Measuring for Results* (MFR);
- Five years of trend data for each measure; and
- A summary of their progress toward meeting the goals of the 2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education goals most applicable to four-year colleges and universities.

Volume 2 also includes a summary of the sources of performance measures, guidelines for benchmarking the indicators, and the formats for the institutional performance accountability reports.

HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS

The 1988 Higher Education Reorganization Act established an accountability process for Maryland public colleges and universities. The law, §11-304 through §11-308 of the Education

Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, requires the governing boards of each institution to submit to the Commission a performance accountability plan and an annual report on the attainment of the goals in this plan. The Commission is responsible for approving the plans as well as reviewing and presenting the reports, with recommendations, to the Governor and the General Assembly. Maryland's state-supported independent institutions are not required by the statute to submit reports to the state, but have done so voluntarily each year since 2001.

The original PAR format the Commission adopted in 1996 was based on key benchmarks and indicators that were to be achievable, indicative of progress, based on the performance of similar institutions where possible, and reflective of funding. Each institution sets its own benchmarks, but institutions with similar missions were encouraged to collaborate.

In 2000, major revisions were instituted. The process allows different reporting requirements for the community colleges and the public four-year institutions. Although indicators and benchmarks systems were maintained for each segment, every campus identifies a set of metrics and establishes a performance target for each indicator. The process allows for the examination of year-to-year performance changes while measuring progress toward longer-range goals. The Commission reviews the performance of each institution on the specified measures and objectives. Institutions are evaluated on their progress toward benchmarks and may be asked to address concerns or questions tied to progress. The questions posed by the Commission to the institutions about data reported in the previous year's PAR, along with institutional responses to these questions, are included in Volume 1 of this report. Campus responses generally consist of an explanation of their performance and/or a description of their improvement plan.

Starting in 2006 all institutions began including information in their narrative assessments about how initiatives on each campus contribute to the goals of the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education. This provides colleges and universities the opportunity to describe the variety of programs and initiatives that they offer to serve the people of Maryland.

For several years, institutions reported on their efforts to contain costs. The Commission approved the removal of this requirement from the PAR in 2013. This decision was driven largely by the inability of the institutional strategies for cost containment to be generalized across institutions. While some institutions continue to report voluntarily on cost containment efforts, this section is no longer required by the Commission.

Community Colleges

A set of 34 performance measures frame the community colleges' accountability reports. These performance measures are driven by mission and mandate. These indicators are standard across all 16 community colleges. Each community college may also choose to include additional campus-specific measures.

These indicators are updated every five years in collaboration between community college workgroup members and the Commission. The current cycle will culminate in 2020. For the 2018 PAR, community colleges structured their narrative reports to align with the state goals reflected in the 2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education: *Student Success with Less Debt*.

Four-Year Colleges and Universities

In 2000, the Commission, in collaboration with the four-year colleges and universities, created a single document framework that incorporated the elements of both the Commission's PAR and Maryland's Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) Managing for Results process (MFR). The MFR process accounts for goals established in institutional strategic plans and connects institutional performance to the budgeting process overseen by DBM.

This model streamlined the accountability process, reduced duplicative reporting for the campuses, and provided a more efficient means for policymakers to determine the performance of each of the public four-year campuses. In this framework, each campus develops its own goals, objectives, and performance measures. While the process provides campuses with a great deal of flexibility, the Commission expects the inclusion of objectives that encompass areas of performance accountability, such as quality, effectiveness, and access, and that reflect the goals of the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education. In addition, campuses are asked to include specific objectives related to retention and graduation, post-graduation outcomes, and minority enrollment and achievement.

ASSESSMENT BY THE MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Maryland institutions of higher education are held accountable through myriad mechanisms and measures. These include institutional and specialized accreditation, the state's Managing for Results process, various state and federal reporting requirements and mandates, and such voluntary measures as the Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework and the Achieving the Dream Institutional Capacity Framework.

The Performance Accountability Report (PAR) serves as another complementary mechanism by which institutions are held accountable for establishing and maintaining standards and using metrics to assess the effectiveness of programs, courses, and initiatives in addressing institutional and statewide higher education goals. Institutions use the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education as an important guide in setting benchmarks and reporting their progress.

Maryland's public colleges and universities' 2018 PAR benchmarks, indicators, performance measures, and narrative reports reflect their progress toward helping to achieve the goals of the 2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education: *Student Success with Less Debt*. Institutions identified indicators and benchmarks that reflected their mission and goals and aligned them within the State plan's goals and strategies. The three State Plan goals are:

- Goal 1 - Access: Ensure equitable access to affordable and quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents.
- Goal 2 - Success: Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success.
- Goal 3 - Innovation: Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success.

The 2018 PAR summarizes institutional performance on their progress toward helping the state meet the higher education goals set forth in the Plan. A number of prominent areas have been identified and will be explored in this report; these include dual enrollment, retention and persistence, completion, affordability and the achievement gap.

Before discussing the progress institutions are making and the efforts they are putting forth to meet the goals and strategies of the State Plan, it is important to discuss, in brief, the statewide trends in enrollment, as it sets a foundation for reporting the institutions' progress toward their goals and benchmarks. Trends in enrollment inform institutional and state goals tied to access, success, and completion.

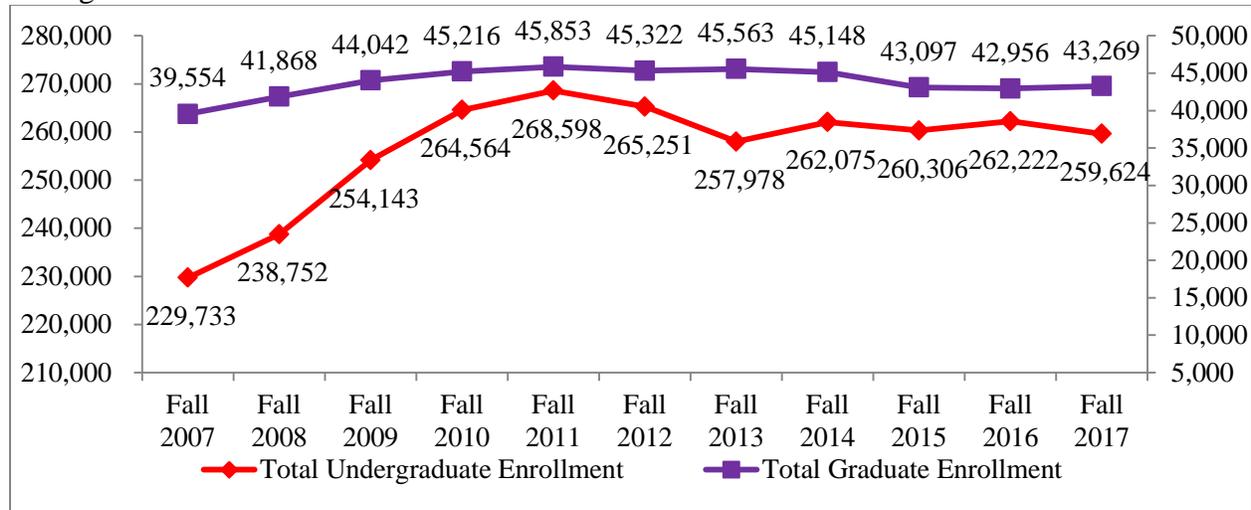
It is important to note that the 2018 PAR reflects the 2017 academic year and/or fiscal year. Where possible, corresponding academic and fiscal year data are included in the analysis, otherwise, the data reflect the most recent year of reported data. In addition, where possible, trend data starts prior to the 2017-2021 State Plan to provide greater context. All data, unless otherwise noted, come from MHEC's data systems.

Enrollment

Overall enrollment¹ at Maryland’s public colleges and universities has stayed relatively flat for the past several years (see Figure 1). This stabilization is likely the result, in part, of a stronger economy. College enrollment often increases at times of economic decline as people seek additional training. As labor market conditions improve, individuals may seek employment as an alternative to higher education or enroll part-time so as to work and attend school simultaneously.²

Graduate student enrollment has stabilized, after peaking in 2011. The gradual increases seen since 2007 are due, in large part, to the increase in enrollment in master’s degree programs. These trends mirror national patterns and may be the result of a growing demand for graduate-level credentials and expertise by employers.³

Figure 1: Trends in Total Undergraduate and Graduate Student Enrollment at Maryland Public Colleges and Universities: Fall 2007 - Fall 2017



Note: Enrollment data from Fall 2014 onward include University of Maryland University College enrollment stateside and overseas; Fall 2013 and before only includes stateside figures.

Figure 2 (next page) shows overall undergraduate enrollment for both the community colleges and the public four-year institutions. One notable trend is that Maryland’s public four-year institutions’ undergraduate enrollment increased 32.1% from Fall 2007 to Fall 2017. The largest contributor to this increase is the University of Maryland University College (UMUC), which accounts for approximately one-third of the undergraduate enrollment at all public four-year institutions (for example, for Fall 2017 overall undergraduate enrollment at the public four-year institutions was 141,252, of which UMUC enrolled 45,604, or 32.3%, of these students, both stateside and overseas). When UMUC is excluded from the trend analysis, the growth in

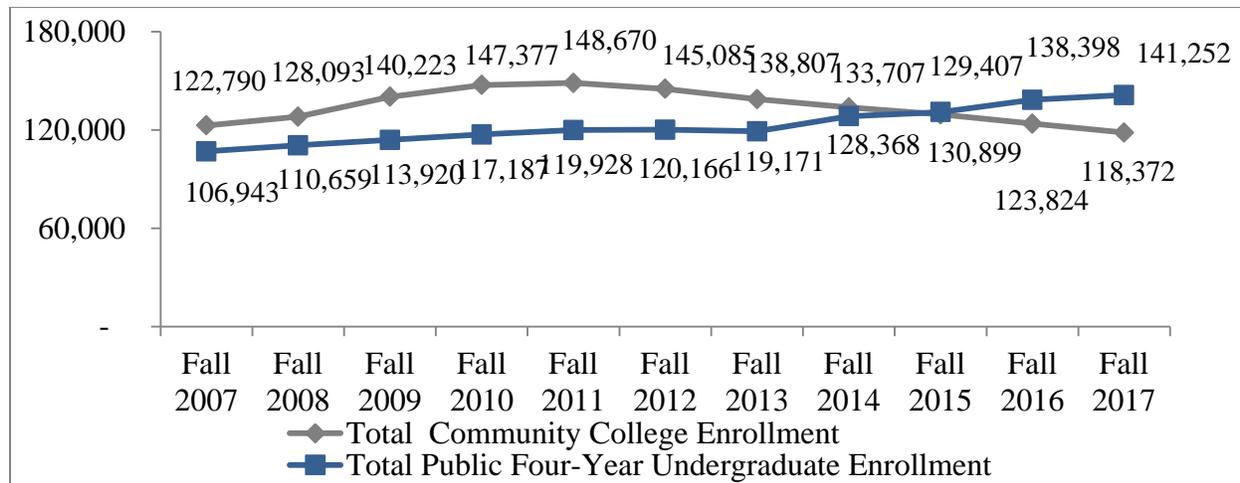
¹ Enrollment figures presented in this section include undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in credit-bearing programs. It does not include dually enrolled students or those enrolled in continuing education courses.

² Schmidt, Erik. “Postsecondary Enrollment Before, During, and Since the Great Recession” *U.S. Department of Commerce United States Census*. (2018) <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2018/demo/p20-580.html>

³ Okahana, Hironao and Enyu Zhao. “Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 2006 to 2016”. Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools (2016). https://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGS_GED16_Report_Final.pdf

undergraduate enrollment at public four-year institutions was a more modest 12.4 % over 11 years.

Figure 2: Trends in Undergraduate Enrollment at Maryland Public Institutions: Fall 2007 - Fall 2017



In Fall 2017, the community colleges faced the sixth year of declining enrollments. In fact, since the enrollment peak in 2011, community colleges have decreased enrollments by 30,298 students and enrollments now align with pre-Recession figures.

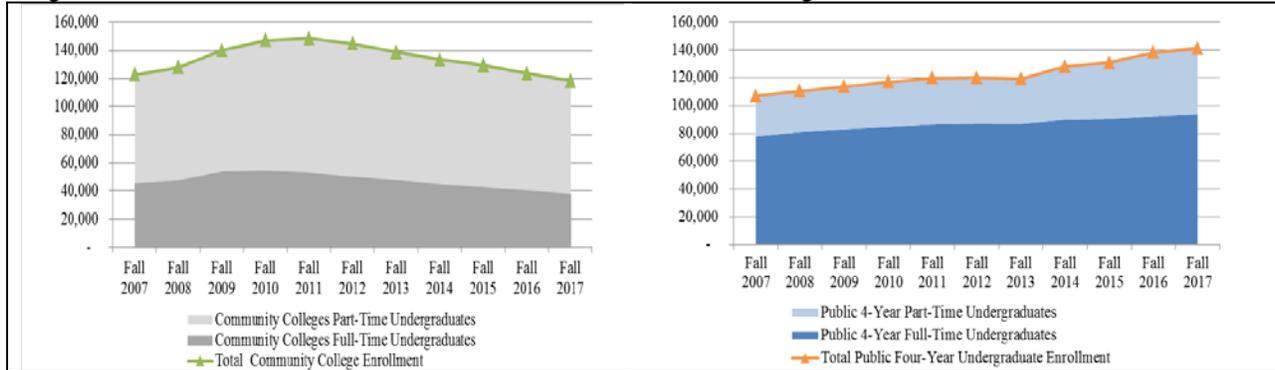
These data mirror national trends, which show an overall decline in undergraduate enrollment at the community colleges and a continued increase in enrollment at four-year institutions. This is due, in part, to an improving economy. Community colleges, frequently a refuge for those seeking higher education in an economic downturn, are often the first to see declines in enrollment when employment opportunities improve. In addition, researchers speculate that another contributor to this trend is the continued popularity of the bachelor’s degree, which is seen as a key component of viable employment and often incentivized in national and state policies.⁴

Further analysis (Figure 3 next page) shows that almost half of all undergraduate students (127,799 or 49.2%) at Maryland’s public institutions are enrolled part-time. While community colleges have a sizeable part-time population (80,249, or 67.8% of all community college enrollment in Fall 2017), public four-year institutions’ part-time enrollment has grown 63.2% in 10 years (from 29,141 in 2007 to 47,555 in 2017).⁵ This trend is not surprising given that part-time enrollment can be desirable to students when the labor market improves, as it can allow them to hold stable employment, rely less on student loan debt, and pursue their educational goals.

⁴ See Valletta, Robert G. "Recent Flattening in the Higher Education Wage Premium: Polarization, Skill Downgrading, or Both?" In *Education, Skills, and Technical Change: Implications for Future US GDP Growth*. University of Chicago Press, (2018) and Perna, Laura W., and Joni E. Finney. *The Attainment Agenda: State Policy Leadership in Higher Education*. JHU Press, 2014.

⁵ These totals include UMUC, which has seen an 84.0% increase in its part-time undergraduate enrollment from Fall 2007 to Fall 2017 (from 18,849 in 2007 to 34,689 in 2017); this may be due, in part, to the fact that since 2014 UMUC has reported stateside and overseas enrollment (prior to that it was only stateside).

Figure 3: Trends in Enrollment of Full- and Part-Time Undergraduates: Fall 2007 - Fall 2017



While the enrollment data for award- and degree-seeking students discussed above is central to institutions’ enrollment patterns, it is worth discussing another source of enrollment for the community colleges: continuing education. Community colleges offer a variety of continuing education courses, which are not-for-credit courses, and students seek them for job training, skill building, or personal enrichment. Colleges tailor these courses and their delivery methods to meet student and workforce needs in the state. Noncredit, or continuing education courses, cannot aid a student in earning a credit degree but can lead to industry certifications and/or certificates. Table 1 (next page) shows that community colleges have faced fairly stable enrollment in almost every area of continuing education over the past four years.

Of note is the growth in contract training courses and online continuing education courses, both of which have been the focus of increased attention by the community colleges. Partnership with local employers to provide customized training and education programs for their employees has been leveraged by the Maryland Worksmart Program, which is a joint initiative between Maryland’s community colleges and the state’s Department of Commerce. In addition, online course enrollment has swelled 60.0% over four years, mirroring a statewide and national trend in the increased use of online classes as a content delivery method.⁶

⁶ See Leaderman, Doug. “Who Is Studying Online (and Where)?” Inside Higher Education. (January 5, 2018) at <https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2018/01/05/new-us-data-show-continued-growth-college-students-studying> and Seaman, Julia E., I. Elaine Allen, and Jeff Seaman. "Grade Increase: Tracking Distance Education in the United States." Babson Survey Research Group (2018) at <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED580852>.

Table 1: Trends in Continuing Education Enrollment - Community Colleges: FY2014 - FY2017

Enrollment	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
Continuing education workforce development courses	110,217	109,542	105,923	104,907
Continuing education basic skills and literacy courses	38,523	38,120	37,838	38,905
Continuing education community service and lifelong learning courses	67,889	68,446	66,663	66,862
Continuing professional education leading to government or industry-required certification or licensure	42,071	42,709	42,812	41,218
Contract training courses	72,831	75,044	74,866	81,593
Online courses - continuing education	13,410	13,860	19,961	21,460

Source: Community Colleges Campus Data, CC-3 and CC 10 reports to MHEC

In sum, enrollment at the public four-year institutions has increased over time, and these institutions are seeing higher enrollments of part-time students; a large driver of these trends is the University of Maryland University College, which is one of the largest online not-for-profit institutions in the nation. Enrollments at the community colleges are fairly stable, with credit enrollments returning to pre-Recession levels and non-credit enrollment growth in online and contract training courses.

Despite projections that estimate enrollment growth over the coming decade⁷, both the community colleges and public four-year institutions acknowledge that the flattening trend of high school graduates and a tight labor market may result in increased competition in enrollments. They acknowledge that decreased enrollments mean fewer tuition dollars and leaner budgets. This will result in a continued focus on reducing the number of students who drop out and strengthened commitment to keeping students and their tuition revenue on campus.

Diversification of the Student Body

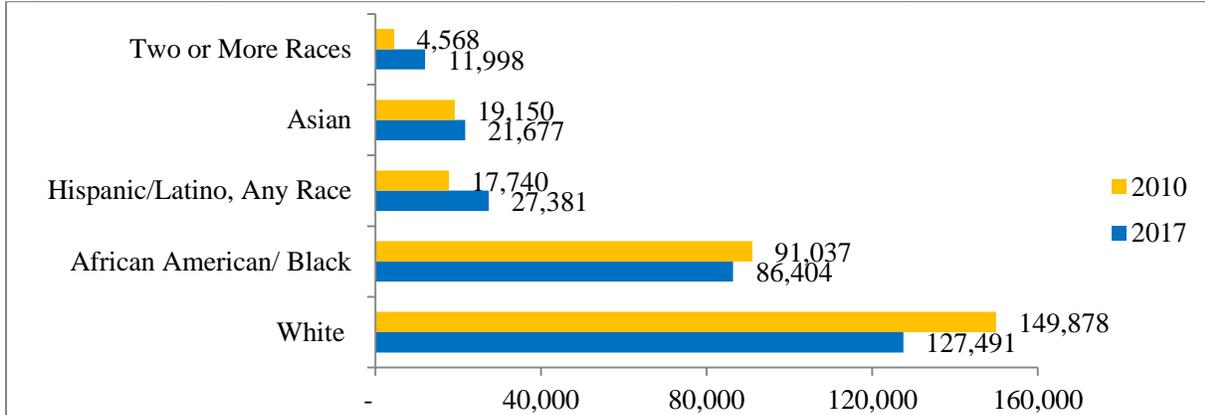
Integral to the state’s and institutions’ goals are efforts to ensure that an increasingly diverse student body is adequately supported to maximize their educational potential and aid them in meeting their education goals. Statewide enrollment trends show that institutions continue to see a greater diversity in their student body. This diversity goes beyond racial and ethnic categories and includes students over age 25, veteran students, and low-income students.

Figure 4 (next page) shows that, while the populations of white students and African American students have decreased over the past seven years, the number of Hispanic students, Asian students, and students who identify as two or more races has increased. In 2017, white students comprised 42.1% of all enrollment and African American students represented 28.5% of overall

⁷ Enrollment Projections 2018 – 2027 Maryland Public Colleges and Universities (Jun 2018) Maryland Higher Education Commission. <https://mhec.state.md.us/publications/Documents/Research/AnnualReports/2018-2027EnrollmentProjections.pdf>

enrollment; Hispanic students (9.0%), Asian students (7.2%), and students who identify as two or more races (4.0%) represent the remaining sizeable racial and ethnic groups on campuses.

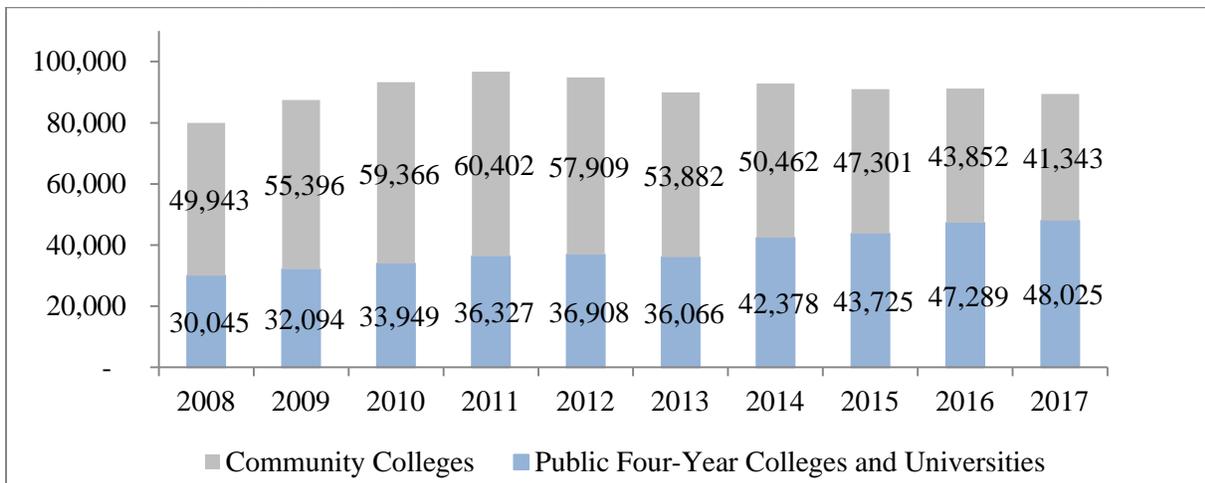
Figure 4: Undergraduate and Graduate Enrollment by Race or Ethnicity: Fall 2010 and Fall 2017



Note: American Indian/Alaska Native (0.3%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0.3%), and foreign students (5.1%), along with those whose race or ethnicity is unknown (4.0%), are not included in this figure.

In 2017, approximately one-third of community college and public four-year institutions' undergraduate enrollments were students aged 25 or older (34.9% for community colleges and 34.0% for public four-year colleges and universities). As Figure 5 shows, the greatest growth in this student enrollment over the past ten years has been at the four-year institutions, which have seen a 59.8% increase. Community colleges have faced a decline in enrollment numbers in the past few years (from 60,402 or 40.3% at the enrollment peak in 2011 to 41,343 or 34.9% in 2017). Although a large contributor to these statewide numbers is the University of Maryland University College, the 25-and-older undergraduate population at several other institutions exceeds 40% (e.g., Baltimore City Community College, University of Baltimore, University of Maryland, Baltimore, Community College of Baltimore County, and Prince George's Community College). It is also notable that three in four (75.7%) of undergraduate students 25 and older are enrolled part-time.

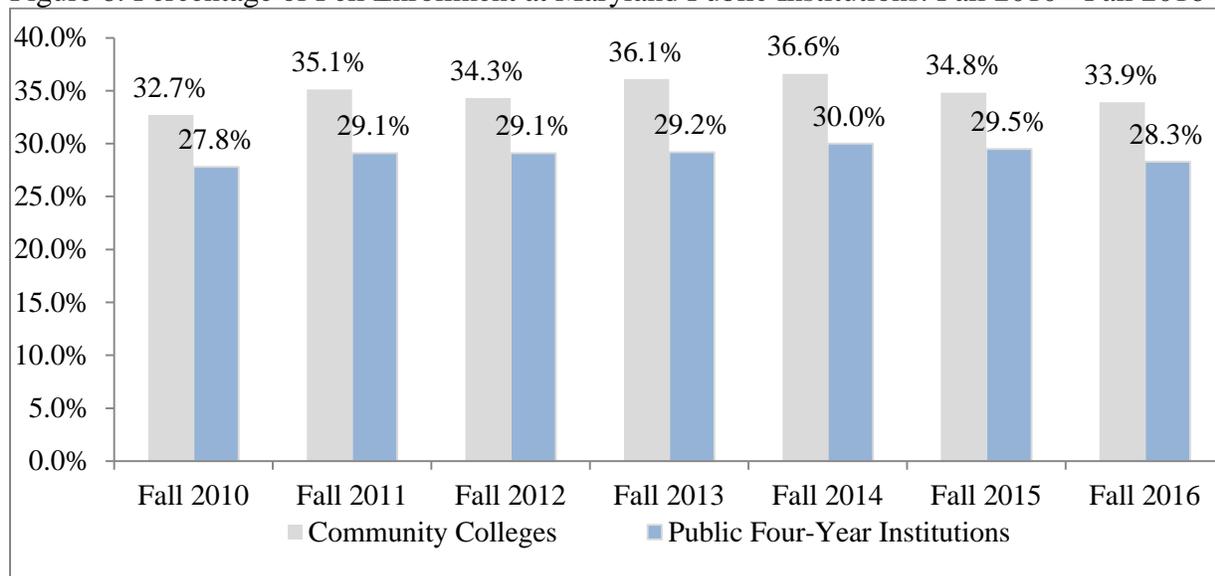
Figure 5: Trends in Enrollment of Undergraduates Age 25 and Older at Maryland Public Institutions: Fall 2008 - Fall 2017



Currently veterans and active and reserve duty members of the U.S. armed forces make up 12.8% (approximately 39,000) of the student enrollment at Maryland’s public institutions. Much of this enrollment is driven by the University of Maryland University College, yet all 29 institutions have active and reserve duty members and veterans on their campuses.⁸

Lastly, it is worth noting that the proportion of low-income undergraduate students statewide, as measured by Pell grant receipt, has flattened at both the community colleges and the public four-year institutions (see Figure 6).⁹ These statewide figures do mask some institutional differences; for example, at some colleges (e.g., Allegany College of Maryland, Garrett College, Baltimore City Community College, Coppin State University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and Morgan State University) more than 55% of students receive Pell grants. This flattening statewide trend line may be a function of a number of factors, including low-income students’ price sensitivity, a strengthening economy (wherein students opt for work versus college enrollment), and/or rising college costs (and the inability for grant aid to cover all costs).¹⁰

Figure 6: Percentage of Pell Enrollment at Maryland Public Institutions: Fall 2010 - Fall 2016



Summary

Maryland’s public colleges and universities have faced notable changes to their student enrollment over the past decade. First, the overall surge in enrollments across all public institutions in 2011 and 2012 has decreased; enrollment at the community colleges (both credit and non-credit) has stabilized, and the public four-year institutions are seeing their highest undergraduate enrollments on record. All institutions have seen increases in the diversity of their students (e.g., by age, race/ethnicity, military status). These changes require institutions to

⁸ All 29 public institutions in Maryland are approved by the Veterans Administration to administer veterans benefits.

⁹ Low-income students are identified as Pell grant recipients in MHEC’s Financial Aid Information System (FAIS). Only students awarded aid are included in FAIS; therefore these students are a subset of all enrolled undergraduate students. Students were identified in a fall entering cohort and received Pell grants any time in fiscal year.

¹⁰ See Hartle, Terry (2015). Where have all the low-income students gone? American Council on Education Higher Education Today <http://www.higheredtoday.org/2015/11/25/where-have-all-the-low-income-students-gone/>

continue to be more agile and flexible in the ways they recruit, retain, support, and graduate their students.

It is within the context of these enrollment shifts and increases in the diversification on college campuses that institutions are working towards the State's higher education goals as put forth in the 2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education. These enrollment trends have a direct effect on their ability to successfully help the state achieve the goals set forth in the Plan. What follows is a discussion of the three goals of the State Plan and highlights of the work institutions are doing to support them.

Goal 1- Access: Ensure equitable access to affordable and quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents.

Efforts to increase access to quality postsecondary education for Maryland residents are tied to several key areas: increasing enrollments, easing pathways to higher education, and maintaining affordability. For most institutions, increasing enrollments and easing pathways center on dual enrollment, workforce training, and/or distance education. These efforts are intertwined; the greater number of ways that institutions help meet the educational and workforce training needs of the citizens of Maryland, the more they will see increased demand through higher enrollments, thereby helping the state meet its access goals.

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment is part of a larger early college access movement, which aims to expose high school students to college courses and position them for post-secondary success. State, county, and institutional policies have been implemented in the past few years to attract high school students to enroll in dual enrollment¹¹, especially low-income, first generation, and minority students.

One area of concentrated focus for the community colleges has been growing the number of high school students participating in dual enrollment. While participation in dual enrollment is a small percentage of their overall student body, these students serve as a bright spot in the community colleges' enrollment picture. As Table 2 (next page) shows, participation has increased dramatically over the past seven years, with enrollments growing by 160.0% from 2010 to 2017. While public four-year institutions also offer dual enrollment opportunities, dual enrollment is primarily the purview of the community colleges (in 2015-2016, 94.0% of all dually enrolled students were enrolled in Maryland's community colleges).¹²

¹¹ The Maryland College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013 (CCR-CCA) sought to expand dual enrollment across the state both by encouraging participation and offering funding to support participation. CCR-CCA established rules so that tuition and fees could be charged to dually enrolled students and created the Early College Access Grant to offer financial support to dual enrollment students. Counties and institutions have established grants and scholarships for dual enrolled students.

¹² MLDS Center. Dual Enrollment in Maryland: Annual Report to the General Assembly and Governor Larry Hogan. Baltimore, MD: Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center.(2018)
https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/egov/publications/CenterReports/DualEnrollmentReports/MLDSDualEnrollmentReport_2018.pdf

Table 2: Trends in Dual Enrollment of Maryland High School Students: AY 2011 – AY 2017

Academic Year	Total Statewide Dual Enrollment Students	% Year to Year Change
2010-2011	4,555	0.00%
2011-2012	4,342	-4.68%
2012-2013	5,347	23.15%
2013-2014	7,256	35.70%
2014-2015	8,606	18.61%
2015-2016	10,308	19.78%
2016-2017	11,843	14.89%

Source: Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center: Statewide Trends in Dual Enrollment in Maryland Public High Schools. <https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/DualEnrollment.html>

Some Maryland community colleges also offer early/middle college opportunities, which allow students to obtain a high school diploma and an associate degree or up to 60 transferrable college credits simultaneously. Four of the 16 community colleges currently offer these programs and several more are poised to begin the programs in the near future. These students are considered dually enrolled and are part of the colleges’ efforts to increase access to high school students and help them achieve the tangible goals of earning a college degree while enrolled in high school. These programs are likely to continue, both with an increase in the number of community colleges participating throughout the state and an increase in the number of options afforded to students within each community college.

Another arm of the dual enrollment movement is Maryland’s PTECH program (Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools), which allows students to blend high school, college, and work experience in one. This model enables students to graduate with a high school diploma and two-year associate degree in a critical STEM field in six years or less, and each P-TECH school includes a partnership among a local high school, a college, and a private sector sponsor. Currently five community colleges have partnerships programs with local high schools, with plans for this program to grow throughout the state.

Transfer

Another means of helping the state meet its access goals is through undergraduate transfer, especially the transfer from two-year to four-year institutions. Since the 2008 academic year, transfer from Maryland’s community colleges to public four-year institutions has increased 18.9% (from 8,582 in 2008 to 10,205 in 2016). This increase is due in part to the strong collaboration between community colleges and public four-year institutions to facilitate smooth transfer. A number of things are in place to help ease the process for students including articulation agreements, ARTSYS, and transfer coordinators on all college campuses. In addition, four-year institutions have implemented scholarship funding specifically targeting transfer students as an additional way to attract and retain these students on their campuses.¹³

¹³ In 2016, the Commission revised regulations to standardize aspects of transfer in Maryland with the aim of continuing to ease the path for students. These regulations went into effect in 2017, the reporting year reflected in this PAR.

Workforce Training

As discussed earlier in the report, workforce training is in demand through the state's institutions. All community colleges and several of the public four-year institutions provide workforce training for Maryland residents. These institutions work closely with local employers to identify training needs and also to provide re-training as needed. Employers can either bring the training to the workplace for customized training or they can send employees to classes at a campus location off site. These programs can assist the state in meeting its access goals (and success goals as well) by ensuring programs are high quality and are tightly coupled with labor market needs.

Distance Education

Another way that Maryland's public institutions are making college more accessible to students is to offer online education. Online education can be a flexible, affordable option¹⁴ for students and allows them to plan their education around the demands of their work and family life. Institutions report investing resources in identifying and developing courses and programs for online delivery, training faculty to create and teach online courses, and ensuring that technological tools are of high quality (e.g., online platform, digital production, and content). Some institutions have seen a return on these investments with increases in enrollment and the establishment of entire programs and pathways of study that can be delivered online.

Institutions recognize that online education can be of particular interest to adult students. Therefore, as Maryland colleges and universities recognize the value of investing in high-quality distance education as a means by which they can increase enrollments and help the state meet its workforce and education needs.

Table 3 reveals that undergraduate enrollment in at least one distance education course has grown over the past six years. All 16 community colleges and 12 of the 13 public four-year institutions offer online education. Of these 28 institutions, 12 of them had 40.0% or more of their undergraduate student body enrolled in at least one distance education course in 2017 (this compares to the only two institutions which offered distance education in 2012).¹⁵

Table 3: Percentage of Undergraduate Students Enrolled in at Least One Distance Education Course: Fall 2012 and Fall 2017

	Proportion of Undergraduates Enrolled in at Least One Distance Education Course	
	2012	2017
Community Colleges	21.4%	31.6%
Public Four-Year Institutions with UMUC	30.3%	40.2%
Public Four-Year Institutions without UMUC	8.8%	17.0%
Total	25.4%	36.3%

Source: IPEDS Fall Enrollment

¹⁴ While online courses are usually priced the same as courses delivered on campus, the other associated costs of higher education (transportation, housing, some fees) are lower or non-existent for online learners.

¹⁵ Ten Maryland public four-year institutions and seven community colleges are authorized, through SARA, to teach out-of-state students via distance education.

Enrollment Management

For the 2018 PAR, a sizeable number of institutions specifically discussed the efforts of their enrollment management staff as key to helping them meet their enrollment and access goals. Enrollment management is the umbrella term for a number of coordinated and targeted activities institutions employ to positively affect student enrollment. Practices include marketing, admissions policies, retention programs, and financial aid distribution. The efforts put forth are both to attract new students and to ensure retention of the students enrolled. The public four-year institutions have employed enrollment management tactics for a number of years and have dedicated staff and resources across the campus to help ensure success; the community colleges are newer to this area of higher education management. They recognize the need to employ enrollment management more fully as they work to address the challenges they are facing with declining student enrollments. As such, institutions report examining current marketing, recruiting, and retention practices with a focus on improving student access and success and the development of a strategic enrollment plan.

Affordability

Maintaining affordable higher education in Maryland helps the state ensure access for all potential students. The state and the institutions share the responsibility to find solutions to rising college prices, ongoing state support, and increased costs. Higher prices mean fewer families have access to the education and training they need to prosper and contribute to the state's workforce needs. Students are at risk of being priced out of higher education and therefore missing the long-term benefits that come from a college education.

While unemployment is low statewide (3.8%) and wages have increased, there are concerns about who is benefitting from this general prosperity. For example, Maryland's unemployment numbers mask wide variation by region; rates range from 3.0% to 6.4%.¹⁶ In addition, overall earnings for people in many communities are quite low.¹⁷

The central focus of the State Plan is “student success with less debt” and this section focuses on several key components that go into the college affordability equation: institutional revenues, institutional expenditures, tuition and fees, and financial aid.

Tuition and Fees

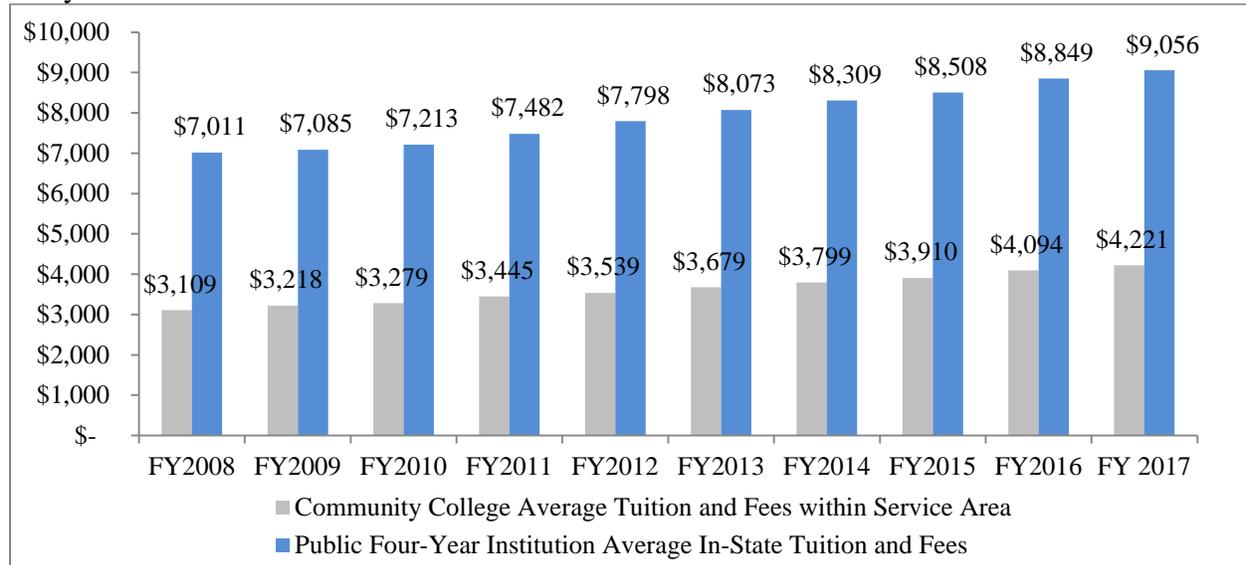
Tuition and fees at Maryland's public colleges and universities have risen over the past decade (Figure 7 next page). From FY2008 to FY2017, tuition and fees at the public four-year institutions have increased an average of 2.9% each year, with a total increase of 29.2% over that

¹⁶ Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) – Workforce Information and Performance. County Unemployment Rate (not seasonally adjusted); Figures reflect October 2018 rates for state and counties. Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/lmi/laus/>

¹⁷ For example, in the 2nd quarter of 2017, 17 of the 24 counties in Maryland reported average weekly wages below the national average of \$1,020.; of them, seven counties reported average weekly wages between \$701 and \$800 and two counties (Garrett and Worcester) reported average weekly wages below \$700. See https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/news-release/countyemploymentandwages_maryland.htm#chart1 for more information.

time.¹⁸ Similarly, the community colleges' tuition and fees have increased an average of 3.6% each year, for a total increase of 35.8%. These averages mask institutional differences; for example, in FY 2017 five of the 13 public four-year institutions charged less than \$8,000 in tuition in fees and four of the community colleges had tuition and fees less than \$3,600.

Figure 7: Trends in Average In-State/In-Service Area Undergraduate Tuition and Fees at Maryland Public Institutions: FY 2008 - FY 2017



Source: Maryland Association of Community Colleges and institutional tuition and fee schedules for community colleges' figures

Despite this trend increase, in FY 2017, the national rankings place Maryland's community colleges as 20th most expensive and the state's public four-year institutions as 24th most expensive.¹⁹ These are fairly consistent with the rankings of Maryland institutions since 2011.²⁰

Revenues and Expenditures

Institutions discuss their increased reliance on tuition and fees as a revenue source. Tuition and fees cover only a fraction of what education costs to the institutions, with institutions relying on

¹⁸ Note that within this ten-year period, Maryland legislators implemented a freeze on tuition at the State's public four-year colleges and universities, followed by a cap on tuition increases; this was not implemented for the community colleges.

¹⁹ Jennifer Ma, Sandy Baum, Matea Pender and CJ Libassi (2018), "Trends in College Pricing, 2018. Trends in Higher Education Series," *College Board* (2018), Table 5. Average Published Tuition and Fees by State in Current Dollars and in 2015 Dollars, 2004-05 to 2018-19. <https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2018-trends-in-college-pricing.pdf> and Jennifer Ma, Sandy Baum, Matea Pender and Meredith Welch (2016), "Trends in College Pricing, 2016. Trends in Higher Education Series," *College Board* (2016), Table 5. Average Published Tuition and Fees by State in Current Dollars and in 2015 Dollars, 2004-05 to 2016-2017. https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2016-trends-college-pricing-web_1.pdf

²⁰ Since 2011-2012, Maryland's public four-year institutions have been ranked between 25th and 28th most expensive and the State's community colleges have been ranked between 21st and 22nd most expensive among all states. National average tuition and fees for 2016-2017 were \$3,460 (in district) for public two-year institutions and \$9,670 (in state) for public four-year institutions.

revenue from state, federal, and local sources along with operating grants to fund the remaining operating costs.

Tables 4 and 5 show that both the community colleges and the public four-year institutions rely more heavily on tuition and fees as a form of operating revenue than they did ten years ago. Operating grants, which includes federal, local/private, and state funds, have decreased for four-year institutions and are a small portion of revenue for community colleges. While appropriations per FTE slightly increased for all institutions, the percentage of operating revenue stayed relatively flat between FY 2008 and FY 2017 for both the community colleges and public four-year institutions.

Maryland institutions’ continuing reliance on tuition and fees as the primary revenue source is part of a larger national trend. SHEEO (State Higher Education Executive Officers) reports that educational appropriations nationwide have increased for five straight years, but state and local appropriations per FTE remain \$1,000 below pre-Recession 2008 levels.²¹

Table 4: Public Four-Year Institution Trends in Operating Revenue per FTE: FY 2008 and FY 2017

Sources of Operating Revenue	FY 08		FY 17	
	\$	% of Total Operating Revenue per FTE	\$	% of Total Operating Revenue per FTE
Tuition and Fees Revenue plus Discounts and Allowances per FTE	\$10,353	36.9%	\$11,950	40.9%
Operating Grants per FTE	\$8,633	30.8%	\$7,810	26.7%
State Appropriations per FTE	\$9,037	32.2%	\$9,490	32.4%
Total	\$28,023		\$29,249	

Note: Source: IPEDS Finance.

Table 5: Community College Trends in Operating Revenue per FTE: FY 2008 and FY 2017

Sources of Operating Revenue	FY 08		FY 17	
	\$	% of Total Operating Revenue per FTE	\$	% of Total Operating Revenue per FTE
Tuition and Fees Revenue plus Discounts and Allowances per FTE	\$4,304	35.0%	\$5,784	36.9%
Operating Grants per FTE	\$654	5.3%	\$679	4.3%
State Appropriations per FTE	\$3,274	26.6%	\$4,018	25.7%
Local Appropriations per FTE	\$4,077	33.1%	\$5,179	33.1%
Total	\$12,309		\$15,660	

Source: IPEDS Finance

Note: The two remaining areas of revenue, Research and Public Service, constitute an additional small percentage (<1.0%)

²¹ State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) (2018) SHEF: FY 2017 – State Higher Education Finance. Boulder, CO. http://www.sheeo.org/sites/default/files/project-files/SHEEO_SHEF_FY2017_FINAL.pdf

Within the context of these revenue streams, institutions face rising costs tied to educational operations. Tables 6 and 7 reflect the primary operating expenditure areas on a per-FTE basis for the public four-year institutions and the community colleges. Public four-year institutions have seen a 6.7% increase in operational expenditures per FTE over a ten-year span; for the community colleges, primary operating expenditures on a per-FTE basis have increased 48.7% over that same time frame.²²

Table 6: Public Four-Year Institution Trends in Operating Expenditures per FTE: FY 2008 and FY 2017

Operational Expenditures	FY 08		FY 17	
	\$	% of Total Operating Revenue per FTE	\$	% of Total Operating Revenue per FTE
Instruction per FTE	\$9,229	41.7%	\$10,219	42.5%
Research per FTE	\$7,061	31.9%	\$7,268	30.2%
Public Service per FTE	\$1,231	5.6%	\$1,179	4.9%
Academic Support per FTE	\$3,099	14.0%	\$3,497	14.5%
Student Services per FTE	\$1,502	6.8%	\$1,908	7.9%
Total	\$22,121		\$24,072	

Source: IPEDS Finance

Note: Totals may differ from figures due to rounding.

Table 7: Community College Trends in Operating Expenditures per FTE: FY 2008 and FY 2017

Primary Operating Expenditure Areas	FY 08		FY17	
	\$	% of Total Operating Revenue per FTE	\$	% of Total Operating Revenue per FTE
Instruction Expenditures per FTE	\$5,562	68.1%	\$7,944	65.4%
Academic Support per FTE	\$1,296	15.9%	\$2,152	17.7%
Student Services per FTE	\$1,309	16.0%	\$2,050	16.9%
Total	\$8,167		\$12,145	

Source: IPEDS Finance

Notes: Totals may differ from figures due to rounding. The two remaining expenditures areas, Research and Public Service, constitute an additional small percentage (<1.0%) of community colleges' operating expenditures

There may be several drivers of increasing expenditures per FTE at Maryland's public institutions. First, higher education is a labor-intensive endeavor, with faculty, staff, and administrators serving as crucial components to the missions of higher education institutions.

²² This dramatic increase in expenditures per FTE for the community colleges appears to be driven by larger than normal overall increases in operational expenditures starting in FY09, which was the start of their enrollment surge. Although enrollment has decreased at the community colleges, operational expenditures continued to rise.

Therefore the kinds of efficiencies that most businesses realize through automation and technological innovation have not led to reduced costs in this sector.

Second, instruction and academic support services (e.g., tutoring, curriculum development, libraries, technology resources), which constitute the bulk of operating expenditures, are costly to administer. But focus on these expenses can have positive effects for institutions and the state. There is research to suggest that spending more per student on instruction and academic support services increases early academic standing, course completions, GPAs, and college completion rates.²³ And trend data on retention and graduation (later in the report) demonstrate this.

In sum, the revenue data in Tables 4 and 5 show state (and local, for the community colleges) appropriations as measured by FTE have increased between FY 2008 and FY 2017. Operating grants shrunk on a per-FTE basis for the public four-year institutions and is a considerably smaller funding stream for the community colleges. Funding from these sources has resulted in an overall net increase in revenue from FY 2008 to 2017 of \$1,226 per FTE for public four-year institutions and \$3,351 for community colleges.

Concurrently, expenses per FTE have increased \$1,479 and \$3,978 from FY 2008 to FY 2017 at public four-year institutions and community colleges respectively. As a result, to address the gap between operating expenditures and state and local grants and appropriations, institutions have had to put a greater burden on students and their families to be the source of revenue to close the funding gap with tuition and fees. This in turn puts more pressure on financial aid to help maintain affordability for Maryland students and families.

Financial Aid

The incomes of many families in the state have not kept pace with growing tuition prices. One measure of this the Commission reports on annually is the percentage of Maryland median family income (MFI) needed to cover tuition and fees. The most current report shows that it would take 11.5% of Maryland median family income (\$78,787) to cover tuition and fees at Maryland public four-year institution and 5.5% to cover community college tuition and fees. These data mask some statewide differences; for example, the median family income for six counties in Maryland and the city of Baltimore is less than \$50,000 per year.²⁴ Given the high cost of college relative to family incomes, at least some amount of financial aid is necessary for most families.

The trends in sources of financial aid over time show (Tables 8 and 9 next page) that federal funding (in the form of federal loans and grants) is the largest source for Maryland's undergraduate college students. Institutional aid and private aid have become the other primary

²³ See Angrist, Joshua, Daniel Lang, and Philip Oreopoulos. 2009. "Incentives and Services for College Achievement: Evidence from a Randomized Trial." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 1 (1): 136–63. Barrow, Lisa, Lashawn Richburg-Hayes, Cecilia Elena Rouse, and Thomas Brock. 2014. "Paying for Performance: The Education Impacts of a Community College Scholarship Program for Low-Income Adults." *Journal of Labor Economics* 32 (3): 563–99 and Page, Lindsay C., Benjamin Castleman, and Gumilang Aryo Sahadewo. 2016, February 1. "More than Dollars for Scholars: The Impact of the Dell Scholars Program on College Access, Persistence and Degree Attainment."

²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, November 2017. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/demo/saipe/highlights-tables-2016.html>

sources of support for undergraduate students. Financial aid from the state has stayed relatively flat over the past ten years. See Tables 8 and 9 on the for ten-year trends in aid.²⁵

In addition, demand for financial aid continues to grow in Maryland; in 2008, there were 139,643 undergraduate financial aid recipients, and, in 2017, that grew 25.2% to 174,769. In addition, in 2017 there were another 18,000 eligible students who applied for state aid but were denied.²⁶

Table 8: Trends in Federal, State, and Institutional Financial Aid Awarded to Undergraduates at Maryland Public Four-Year Institutions: FY 2008 to FY 2017

	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
Federal Aid	\$407.8M	\$504.6M	\$606.7M	\$669.4M	\$687.5M	\$670.2M	\$683.2M	\$708.5M	\$723.1M	\$724.6M
State Aid	\$62.0M	\$64.8M	\$63.6M	\$59.4M	\$56.8M	\$59.2M	\$72.5M	\$67.6M	\$63.5M	\$63.8M
Institutional Aid	\$113.1M	\$120.0M	\$145.4M	\$146.3M	\$135.2M	\$141.5M	\$149.7M	\$181.6M	\$189.8M	\$200.9M
Private Aid	\$111.0M	\$116.1M	\$97.1M	\$97.1M	\$102.0M	\$106.7M	\$110.5M	\$117.7M	\$131.1M	\$136.6M
Total	\$693.9M	\$805.5M	\$912.7M	\$972.1M	\$981.5M	\$977.6M	\$1015.9M	\$1075.3M	\$1107.4M	\$1125.9M

Table 9: Trends in Federal, State, Institutional, and Private Financial Aid Awarded at Maryland Public Two-Year Institutions: FY 2008 to FY 2017

	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
Federal Aid	\$127.9M	\$169.7M	\$255.4M	\$307.6M	\$324.5M	\$314.7M	\$303.9M	\$293.9M	\$274.5M	\$254.8M
State Aid	\$18.4M	\$17.7M	\$15.6M	\$14.8M	\$16.7M	\$16.0M	\$16.8M	\$15.8M	\$14.2M	\$13.2M
Institutional Aid	\$11.4M	\$20.6M	\$25.0M	\$24.7M	\$23.9M	\$24.2M	\$22.8M	\$24.9M	\$24.8M	\$29.3M
Private Aid	\$7.1M	\$6.7M	\$6.7M	\$7.7M	\$8.5M	\$9.4M	\$10.3M	\$10.6M	\$10.6M	\$11.3M
Total	\$164.8M	\$214.7M	\$302.7M	\$354.9M	\$373.6M	\$364.2M	\$353.8M	\$345.1M	\$324.1M	\$295.4M

The commitment institutions have put forth to increase the amount of institutional aid they award to their students is praiseworthy. Institutions report that they are leveraging institutional aid in ways to help attract and retain students. For community colleges, this can take the form of scholarships to local high school graduates or grants targeting part-time students to incentive working adult students to enroll and persist. Public four-year institutions report using aid to assist low- and middle-income students to fill unmet need and to attract and retain price-sensitive community college transfer students who may find the higher tuition and fees a strain on their budgets.

Summary

In sum, institutions are employing a number of strategies to increase access to Maryland students. These include:

- Altering admissions policies, financial aid strategies, and recruitment efforts.
- Focusing on strategic and targeted marketing.
- Diversifying programs and distance education offerings to attract more students and meet workforce needs.
- Creating articulation agreements and other pathways to ease the way for student populations (dual enrollment, transfer students, etc.)

²⁵ Data in Tables 8 and 9 include undergraduate aid awarded; graduate aid is not included.

²⁶ Kolonder, Meredith. "Eligible for Financial Aid, Nearly a Million Students Never Get It." The Hechinger Report. May 23, 2018. <https://hechingerreport.org/eligible-for-financial-aid-almost-one-third-of-students-never-get-it/>

- Offering institutional aid to students including scholarships to specific student populations (e.g., transfer students, high school graduates, returning adult students, near completers).

These efforts, along with such statewide efforts as Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) and Commission oversight of the articulation agreement process among institutions, help ensure equal access to higher education for all Maryland citizens.

Goal 2 - Success: Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success.

Institutions are committed to maintaining and improving retention and academic progress outcomes for all students, with a focus on the long-term goal of improving overall student success. Steps taken to help support the state's success goals include improving academic advising, using data analytics and other technological tools to assess students' needs and address issues before they put the student at risk of departure, and strengthening support services (e.g., counseling, child care, food banks) to help diminish non-academic barriers to completion.

In addition, institutions have committed time and money to instructional resources such as adaptive learning software, distance education courses (both the platforms and the content), and developmental education courses, moving many towards being co-requisite and credit bearing. Institutions also are focusing on career pathways and the use of stackable credentials to drive completions.

What follows is a brief exploration of some key metrics institutions include in their institutional reports tied to student success: remediation, retention, and completion.²⁷ It is also necessary to explore the gaps in outcomes by student populations, most notably the gaps that exist between racial and ethnic minority students when compared to their peers.

Remediation

Institutions recognize that improving developmental education completion can help drive nearly all other student outcomes. This is an area of special attention for the community colleges, where a high percentage (69.3%) of incoming first-time, first-year students needs remediation in one or more subjects.²⁸

Institutions report focusing on the ways they can reduce as many barriers to persistence and completion for remedial students as possible. This includes: altering developmental education pathways, making academic advising more accessible, expanding the means by which the courses are taught (e.g., flipped classrooms, adaptive learning software, co-requisite), and offering flexible course schedules.

Retention

Retaining students from term to term and year to year is central to institutional efforts. A key benchmark and indicator for institutions, especially the four-year institutions, is the second-year

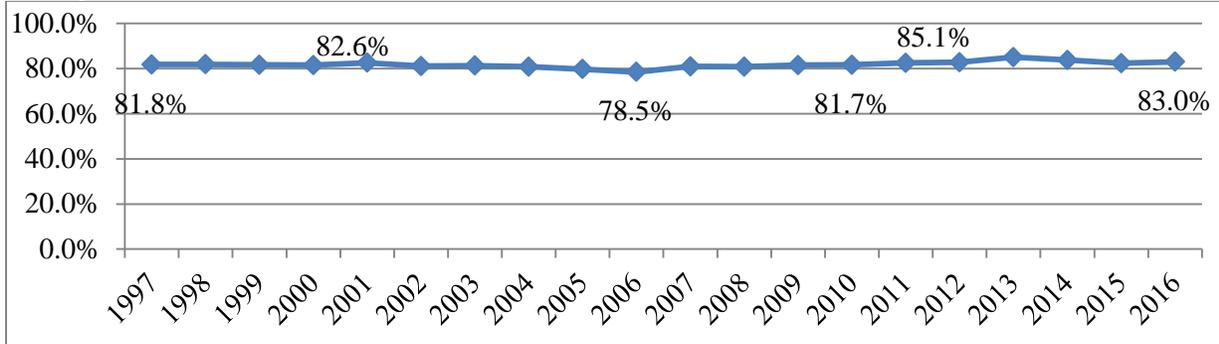
²⁷ Remediation is an issue for both access and success in higher education; in the 2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education there is an emphasis on the role of remediation within the Access goal as well.

²⁸ All 16 of the community colleges and four of the 13 public four-year institutions had remediation rates over 50% in FY 2017.

retention rate. This measure of effectiveness focuses on whether students remain enrolled and persist into the second year and is an important marker in students' success trajectory.

For the 2016 cohort of first-time, full-time students enrolled in Maryland's public four-year institutions, the retention rate was 83.0% (see Figure 8). While this rate is below the 20-year high of 85.1% among the Fall 2013 cohort, it remains part of a long-term positive trend and indicative of the efforts institutions are employing to retain their students.

Figure 8: Second-Year Retention Rates by Entering Cohort at Maryland Public Four-Year Colleges and Universities, Cohorts 1997-2016



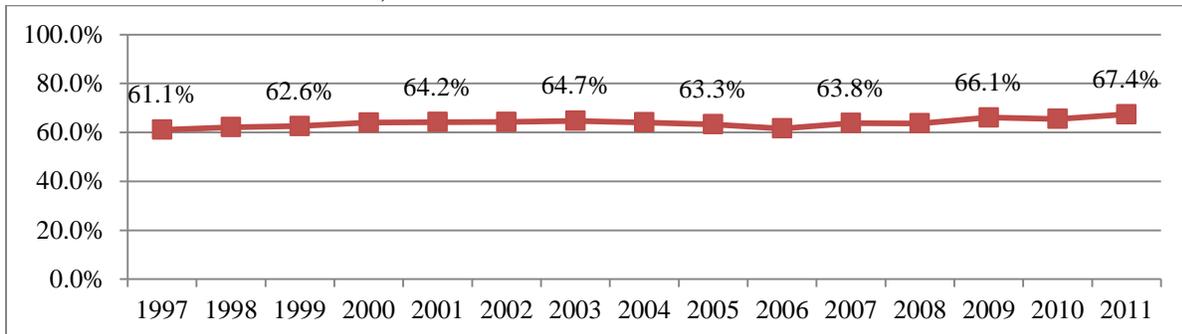
A comparable metric for the community colleges combines both terminal outcomes (graduation and transfer) and persistence outcomes (continued enrollment). This measure is the success rate for entering cohorts of first-time, full-time students after two years. For the most recent cohort for these data, 2015, the two-year success rate was 55.7%, which is consistent with the rate for the past ten years (which has ranged from 52.15 to 55.7%).

Completion

Degree completion at the public four-year institutions is typically measured by graduation rates. Community colleges' measures of completion include Degree Progress Analysis. This measure incorporates graduation, transfer, and persistence, reflecting the diverse education goals for their student body.

The six-year graduation rate for the 2011 cohort enrolled at Maryland's public four-year institutions was 67.4%, which is the highest graduation rate on record (Figure 9). This also continues a long-term trend of increasing graduation rates.

Figure 9: Trends in the Six-Year Graduation Rate by Entering Undergraduate Cohort at Maryland Public Four-Year Institutions, Cohorts 1997-2011

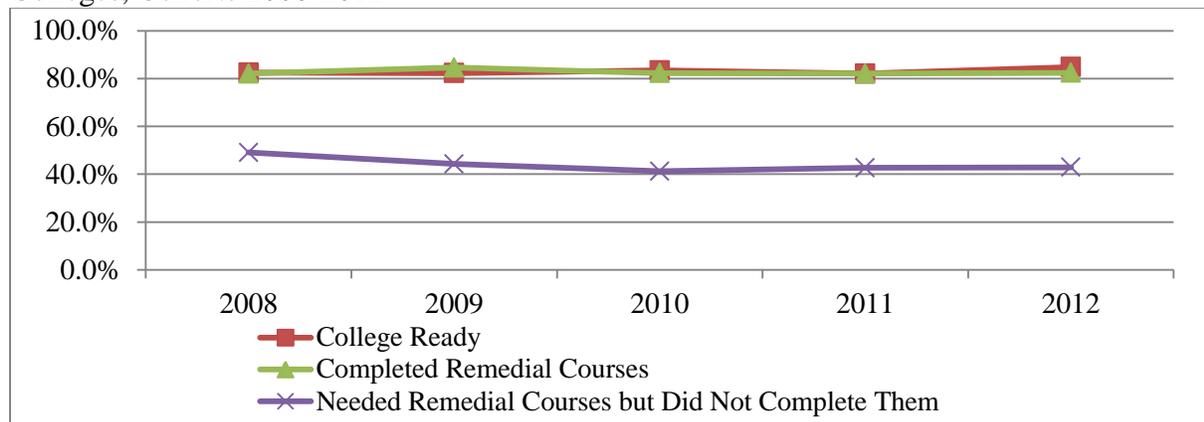


The Degree Progress Analysis is a tool used to measure success and completion at community colleges. It is a model that focuses on students whose enrollment behavior suggests that they intend to complete a degree or to transfer. This model examines student outcomes only for cohorts of community college students attempting 18 credits, including developmental credits, within the first two years of entry to the community college.

Successful persisters within the Degree Progress Analysis model are defined as students who, within four years of enrolling at the community college, completed at least 30 credit hours with a GPA of 2.00 or better, who have graduated and/or transferred, or who are still enrolled at the institution. Institutions report to MHEC the outcomes for all students within a fall cohort, including those who are considered “college ready” (as they did not need to be placed in remedial education based on assessments) and those who are identified as needing remedial coursework and subsequently complete it. There are also students who were identified to need remedial coursework in one or more subjects and did not complete all of the required courses. Figure 10 shows the successful persister rates for five cohorts of these students.²⁹

Figure 10 shows that college-ready students and those who need and successfully complete remedial coursework have rates that are almost identical (e.g., for the 2012 cohort college-ready students had a rate of 84.8% and those who completed remedial coursework had a rate of 82.4%). Conversely, those who were assessed to need remediation but did not complete the required coursework persist at much lower rates (42.9% for the 2012 cohort).

Figure 10: Trends in Successful Persister Rates by Entering Cohort at Maryland Community Colleges, Cohorts 2008-2012³⁰



These data reflect the importance of remedial coursework completion as it relates to community college student success and confirms the colleges’ focus and drive in devoting a great deal of institutional resources to ensure students both access the needed remedial coursework and successfully complete it.

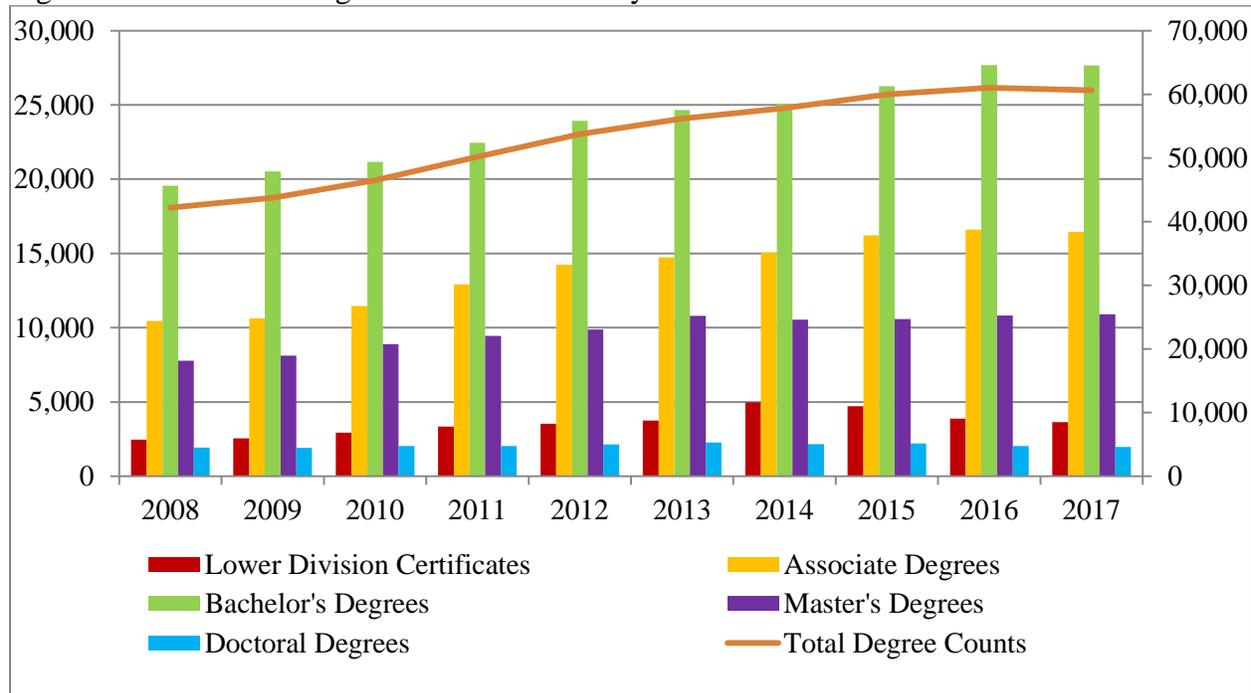
²⁹ Data for the Degree Progress Analysis is provided by the community colleges.

³⁰ Successful persister rates include graduation, transfer, and continued enrollment rates.

Degree Production

A success metric that the institutions and state leaders point to as a means by which to help ensure Maryland has a talented, educated workforce is the 55% degree attainment goal established in 2009.³¹ Institutions are succeeding in helping the state meet this goal. Degree production and completion rates at the public four-year institutions and the community colleges have been trending upward over time, as Figure 11 demonstrates.

Figure 11: Award and Degree Production at Maryland Public Institutions: 2008 - 2017



Achievement Gap

The achievement gap – disparities in educational outcomes for historically underrepresented populations – is an ongoing concern for Maryland’s public institutions. The colleges and universities report on a number of benchmarks aimed at measuring their progress at closing the persistent gaps that exist between minority students (primarily African American and Hispanic students) and all other students; these measures include first-year persistence rates and graduation rates of minority students.

The colleges and universities’ PAR submissions reflect the myriad strategies and programs the institutions are implementing in an effort to increase the persistence and graduation rates of minority students. Many are leveraging student data in new ways and these methods show some promise. Institutions have used “big data” analytics to identify risk factors in students and to inform advising and course selection. Others are using student data to track their students throughout the term, intervening with those who have low grades or have missed classes.

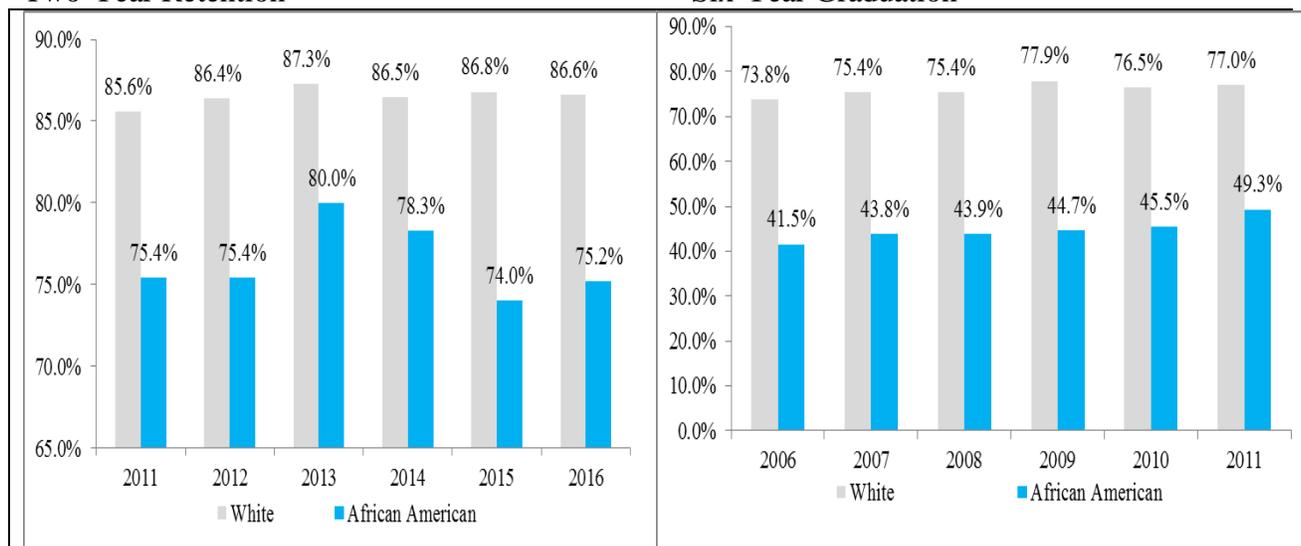
³¹ In 2009 the state established a college completion goal that by 2025 55% of Marylanders between the ages of 25 to 64 will have a college degree. See http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2013RS/fnotes/bil_0000/sb0740.pdf

In addition to using data, institutions are using outside resources to address the achievement gap. Many use the federal TRIO programs, namely the Student Support Services program, which distributes grants to support efforts to increase retention. A number of institutions participate in Achieving the Dream, which is a national nonprofit that works with a network of over 200 community colleges to help them address issues tied to success for low-income students and students of color. Through workshops, conferences, and on-campus support, institutions obtain access to effective and timely research and advice on such topics as data collection and reporting, program evaluation, and academic advising.

Despite institutions’ reported efforts, the gaps in achievement persist. This raises the question as to the effectiveness of the institutions’ endeavors and what new strategies or modifications should be implemented to affect change. To that end, the Commission asked each institution to respond to the specific performance measures marking their progress toward closing achievement gaps, specifically between African American undergraduate students and their peers. The aim of these questions was to begin a deeper exploration into the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps.

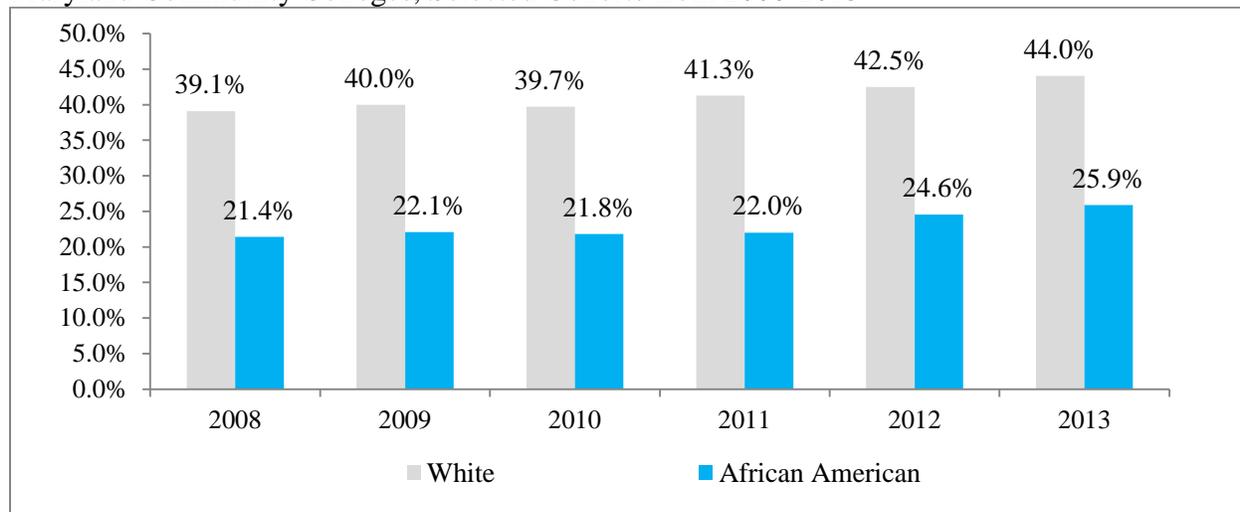
As Figure 12 shows, differences persist in retention and graduation rates when comparing outcomes for African American and white students enrolled at Maryland’s public four-year institutions. These statewide rates mask institutional differences as several institutions in the state are much closer to closing the achievement gap., Analysis of trends reveal that the success of these institutions may stem from such factors as the small size of their overall student enrollment (thereby allowing a more “hands on” approach to interventions) and the resources they have to bear in retaining “at-risk” students. Those institutions with higher retention and graduation rates overall have higher SAT scores for their incoming freshmen. To the extent that SAT scores can be used as a proxy for academic preparation, these institutions are enrolling a greater number of students who are better prepared for college.

Figure 12: Two-Year Retention and Six-Year Graduation Rates: White and African American Undergraduate Students at Maryland Public Four-Year Institutions, Six Select Cohorts



The data for the community colleges (Figure 13) mirror the public four-year outcomes. There are consistent discrepancies in four-year graduation and transfer rates when comparing African American students to white students.

Figure 13: Four-year Graduation-Transfer Rates for White and African American Students at Maryland Community Colleges, Selected Cohorts from 2008-2013



Institutional differences emerge here, as well, with some community colleges seeing much smaller gaps in outcomes among racial and ethnic minority student populations. Reasons for these differences may be tied to resources devoted to transfer and graduation (student services and financial aid), the makeup of their enrollments (size, percentages of minority students overall), and student-level characteristics such as academic preparation and educational aspirations.

An analysis of institutional responses show that many institutions rely on strategies designed to assist all students, rather than targeted initiatives aimed specifically at vulnerable populations. It is understandable to assume that efforts aimed at helping all students (e.g., advising services, mentoring, orientation programs) would, as a result, also aid at-risk populations, but the persistent gaps in retention and graduation rates among populations at many institutions warrant exploration of directed interventions.

As institutions develop and implement these programs and interventions, it is apparent that a culture of evaluation and assessment needs to be strengthened. By embarking on a process whereby questions such as “does the program meet its intended goals and objectives?” and “how does the program affect its participants?” are asked, institutions go beyond executing programs and hoping students’ needs are met. Those institutions that have created an evaluation mechanism for their interventions can be at a distinct advantage when determining the effects of a program and the costs and benefits of continuing it, altering it, or ending it.

These areas of concern would gain from a more effective means of sharing best practices among the colleges and universities. Successful initiatives do exist at a number of institutions but the ability for the successes and lessons learned to be translated to other campuses and other populations is a needed next step.

The achievement gaps occurring at Maryland’s public institutions reflect a larger national issue that is considered one of the “most urgent and intractable problems in higher education” (Bensimon, 2005).³² Nationally, African American students enroll in and persist through courses, transfer, and graduate with a degree or certificate at lower rates than their white peers.

Future editions of the PAR can provide an opportunity to explore a more nuanced understanding of the achievement gaps among student populations. Subsequent analysis of statewide and institutional data, along with additional data and information from the institutions in the 2019 PAR, will allow the Commission staff to more deeply understand this persistent problem and support institutions in their pursuit of solutions to this ongoing equity issue.

Summary

The retention and completion outcomes for the community colleges and the public four-year institutions are generally positive. The institutions’ efforts to address student retention have a carryover effect in helping students persist to completion. Therefore, many of the activities and policies institutions are employing to address retention issues also aid in addressing and meeting their completion goals.

While institutions should be encouraged that the long-term trends are an indicator that their efforts are making a difference, ongoing focus on the intractable issues tied to the achievement gap must continue.

Institutions have employed a number of strategies and actions to help ensure students are successful in meeting their educational goals. These include:

- Continuing to revamp their remedial education programs, using the co-requisite course model to enroll students in remedial and college-level courses concurrently, thereby allowing students to earn credits while address learning gaps.
- Evaluating remedial program adaptations (such as the co-requisite model) to help determine whether the programs are having the intended effects.
- Creating summer bridge and other time- and course-intensive programs to help underprepared students complete basic math and English courses while earning credit and receiving advising and other support services.
- Identifying and reaching out to “near completers” to assist them in re-enrollment and subsequent graduation; institutions report doing this through MHEC’s One Step Away grant program and/or through their own funding.
- Focusing resources on addressing developmental education challenges through such activities as course redesign and altering admissions practices to utilize multiple measures (e.g., high school GPA, standardized test scores) to identify those in need of remediation.
- Identifying, through data analysis, key points of student departure (in addition to the second year metrics) and focusing energy and resources to provide more comprehensive support for at-risk students (e.g., mentoring, advising, course offerings).

³² Bensimon, Estella Closing the Achievement Gap in Higher Education: An Organizational Learning Perspective. In A. Kezar (Ed.), *What Campuses Need to Know about Organizational Learning and the Learning Organization* (Vol. 131, pp. 99–111). (2005). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Training instructional faculty in developing and teaching distance education courses to help ensure the classes meet or exceed the standards held for traditional class instruction.
- Strengthening advising and other academic and student support services to help ease the entry to college.
- Dedicating physical space and staffing to provide more comprehensive wrap-around services (such as daycare, advising, and tutoring services)

Goal 3 - Innovation: Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success.

Institutional activities presented in the college and universities' PAR tied to supporting Goal 3 of the State Plan vary greatly. Despite the variety of approaches in helping the state meet its innovation goals, three broad themes emerge: innovation in teaching and learning, innovation in meeting workforce needs, and innovation in generating new research.

Innovation in Teaching and Learning

With ambitious state degree attainment goals approaching and limited additional state and local revenues, institutions continue to explore innovative ways to provide higher education to more people while containing costs. Many institutions specifically discuss their efforts around credentialing/badging, expanding online education, establishing and strengthening apprenticeships, and creating hybrid courses. These multiply the ways in which institutions teach students and the means by which they award and recognize student progress and success.

Institutions also discuss the mechanisms they have put in place to encourage faculty to innovate through curriculum or instruction redesign. Course development and redesign projects aim to increase student success and promote effective teaching practices across the institution. Often institutions incentivize faculty through such mechanisms as mini-grants and release time in an effort to support the time- and resource-intensive work of development and redesign.

In addition, institutions have created formal educational pathways for students to develop their innovation, leadership, and entrepreneurial skills. Programs expose students to research, mentoring, and formal curriculum aimed at enhancing their skills and contributing to relevant work with faculty.

Lastly, institutions report investing in open educational resources (OER) as a means of providing accessible and relevant material for coursework. OER materials (often in the form of online textbooks and scholarly articles) are free for students. Therefore, students realize significant savings from the use of these course materials.

Innovation in Meeting Workforce Needs

Another performance measure institutions report as a means in aiding the state in meeting its innovation goals is their work to attract and retain students in high demand fields, with a special focus on STEM³³ fields of study. This skilled labor pool has been an area of great attention for a number of years at the state and institutional level. Institutions discuss concentrating their efforts

³³ STEM includes science, math, engineering, and technology majors, including transfer and applied majors at the community colleges; these categories do not include nursing.

in enrolling, retaining, and graduating individuals in a variety of STEM fields. Resources are dedicated to mentoring and internship programs, state-of-the art facilities, tutoring and classroom support, and career advising.

As is indicated in Table 10, the commitment to graduating students from STEM areas of study has grown exponentially over time. The greatest growth has been in the production of associate degrees (128.1%) and bachelor’s degrees (89.5%), which both have been areas of particular focus for the institutions.

Table 10: Trends in STEM Awards: AY2008 and AY2017

	2008 STEM Awards				2017 STEM Awards			
	Lower Division Certificate	Associate	Bachelor's	Graduate	Lower Division Certificate	Associate	Bachelor's	Graduate
Community Colleges	504	893	n/a	n/a	724	2,037	n/a	n/a
Public Four-Year Institutions	n/a	n/a	3,990	1,726	n/a	n/a	7,563	2,219

Institutions also discuss the ways they are addressing workforce needs in other high-demand areas like nursing and teaching. For both fields of study, institutions have established curriculum and other programs to help ensure high pass rate for students’ certification. In addition, they provide financial aid to help attract and retain students, with a special emphasis on those in the education field (as the lower post-graduate earnings in the teaching field can dis-incentivize students). These financial aid programs complement the state’s financial assistance programs (e.g., the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant Program and the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program) that aim to help attract and retain people in fields facing worker shortages.

Innovation in Research

Several institutions in the state serve as leaders in innovative research and development. Their efforts, through technology transfer, commercialization, externally sponsored research and development, and new company formation, help lead the state in positively affecting Maryland’s economy. For example, the USM institutions, combined, rank 8th in federal research and development funding and are home to three research parks and ten business incubator facilities. From this, over 500 companies have been formed over the past five years.³⁴ In turn, these research efforts help stimulate the state and local economy and help attract and retain highly talented workers.

Summary

Institutions’ efforts to foster innovation in research, meeting workforce needs, and teaching and learning are ongoing. What is evident from the institutional PAR reports is that their approaches to innovation take a variety of forms and are tailored to their mission and institutional goals. Regardless of innovative practices employed, innovation at Maryland’s institutions should focus

³⁴ See the University System of Maryland FY2019 budget testimony (February 2018). Maryland House Appropriation Subcommittee on Education and Economic Development. <https://dbm.maryland.gov/budget/FY2019Testimony/R30.pdf>

on advancing the institutional mission and maintaining student success as a central and important outcome.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This report's focus has been on institutional progress toward meeting the State Plan's three primary goals. While institutions made progress in meeting a number of the 11 strategies outlined in the Plan, it is beyond the scope of this report to discuss them all in detail. Institutions should be commended for their work overall in helping to meet the goals of the State Plan and are generally well-positioned to continue to advance them.

From an analysis of the institutional Performance Accountability Report submissions, several recommendations emerge. These recommendations focus on the Access and Success goals, yet Innovation is threaded throughout.

Access

- Institutions should partner with their affiliated K-12 systems to ensure that their dual enrollment programs are high quality and accessible to all students. Dual enrollment can help students graduate on time and reduce college costs. In addition, researchers have found that dual enrollment can improve college readiness and reduce the likelihood that a student will need remedial education upon enrolling in college. Therefore, increasing access to high-quality dual enrollment opportunities can help institutions and the state address issues at the nexus of college readiness, affordability, and college completion.
- Higher education institutions and the state should both focus on maintaining affordability. Through institutional policies and practices aimed at keeping costs contained, stable and reliable funding from the State, and an increased commitment to providing financial aid to those who need it most (preferably in the form of grants and scholarships), students and their families can be assured affordability stays front and center.

Success

- Institutions should leverage opportunities to join statewide or national efforts to address areas of greatest need. These can be in the form of informal partnerships or be through such formal networks as Achieving the Dream or the Predictive Analytics Reporting framework. These kinds of efforts allow for shared resources, expertise and coaching, and advice on establishing and evaluating interventions.
- The Commission should consider partnering with the institutions to identify a means by which to track outcomes for low-income students. Currently the only measure utilized is within a collection limited to financial aid recipients. Commission/institution partnership may be useful as a means to better understand the intersectionality of race and poverty in the state and better identify the factors tied to student completion and graduation.
- Institutions' should consider the use of outcomes-based credentials, which allows students to earn badges for demonstrated mastery of a set of knowledge and skills and are awarded through courses or sequences of courses. These can be awarded throughout the student's enrollment and complement and enhance the award or degree the student earns.

- Institutions should ensure their methods for program evaluation are as rigorous as possible, following standard research protocols so as to increase the validity and reliability of the results. Many program evaluations cited in the reports rely on comparisons of outcomes for the treatment and control groups with little acknowledgement in the risks of such comparisons.
- Institutions that are not already doing so may want to consider establishing targeted programs for their most at risk populations as a complement to broader, campus wide initiatives. Qualitative evidence from institutional reports shows that a set of tailored programs targeting specific populations has been correlated with increases in retention and completion for these groups.
- Institutions should continue to target financial aid (especially through scholarships and grants) to those who are most vulnerable to departure (e.g., low-income students and students with unmet financial need). Research shows that targeted aid can positively affect retention and completion.³⁵

In the coming year, the Commission staff will continue to use statewide data to help answer questions tied to affordability, student success, degree completion, and workforce needs. In addition, there will be continued discourse with institutions around issues tied to equity and achievement gaps among student populations.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the Maryland Higher Education Commission approve the 2018 Performance Accountability Report and ask the Secretary to forward it to the Governor and the General Assembly as required by law.

³⁵ See Goldrick-Rab, Sara, Robert Kelchen, Douglas N. Harris, and James Benson. "Reducing income inequality in educational attainment: Experimental evidence on the impact of financial aid on college completion." *American Journal of Sociology* 121, no. 6 (2016): 1762-1817. and Clotfelter, Charles T., Steven W. Hemelt, and Helen F. Ladd. "Multifaceted Aid for Low-Income Students and College Outcomes: Evidence from North Carolina." *Economic Inquiry* 56, no. 1 (2018): 278-303.

Targeted Indicators and Campus Responses Community Colleges

ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of Black/African American students (Indicator 17a)

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported its successful-persister rate increased over time for all students (66.1% for Fall 2009 cohort to 70.5% for Fall 2012 cohort) and fluctuated for African American students (61.2% for the Fall 2009 cohort, 69.2% for the Fall 2011 cohort and 62.9% for the Fall 2012 cohort). Yet gaps in performance between these populations persist.

Discuss any factors contributing to the performance on these indicators and the methodologies implemented for reversing the decline so as to meet the successful-persister benchmark of 74.0% for all students and 73.0% for African American students for the Fall 2016 (FY2020) cohort.

Response: To fully understand the persister rate and the achievement gap between African American students and other students the overall persister rate must be separated between graduation rates and the transfer rates.

The persister rate for African American students fell mostly because the transfer rates to other colleges substantially decreased. The transfer rates from the Fall 2011 cohort fell from 63.8% to 48.1% in the Fall 2013 cohort. The number of African American students transferring to four-year colleges fell from 25.4% to 20.3% and those transferring to two-year colleges fell from 38.5% to 27.8%. Whereas, the Total Associate and Certificate Graduates for African American students increased from the Fall 2011 cohort at 5.4% through the current Fall 2013 cohort at 12.8%. It is important to note that though the transfer rate to four-year colleges fell it was the decrease in two-year transfer rates that substantially affected the African American persister rate.

When it comes to the achievement gap between African American and other students, African American students perform as well as other students when it comes to transferring to four-year institutions. For example, in the Fall 2011 cohort 20.0% of white students transferred to four-year colleges and 25.4% of African American students transferred to four-year colleges, which is above the number of white students transferring to four-year colleges. It is in the Total Associates and Certificate Graduates where the achievement gap occurs and is the most important for the college to focus on. In the Fall 2013 cohort, 12.9% of African American students graduated whereas the overall graduation rate for the college was 32.2%.

The most potentially beneficial initiative that was undertaken by the college that could have a significant impact on the graduation rate for African American students and all students in general is the newly implemented advising center. The college pursued a Title III grant in 2012-2013 and received funds to set up a central advising center, something which the college had not done before. Advising was primarily done through faculty and was often specific to the instructor's program.

The grant allowed the college to build a centralized advising office and hire additional personnel as full time advisors. The office opened in the Spring of 2014 and has since been evolving and improving year over year. As mentioned previously, the graduation rate for African American students was 5.4% in the Fall of 2011 and 12.8% in the Fall of 2013. The Fall 2013 first time cohort would have likely benefited from the advising center whereas most of the non-persisters of the Fall 2011 cohort exited the college before the advising center opened.

To check for further correlation between the timing of the advising center and increased graduation rates, three year graduation numbers were calculated from the Fall 2011 cohort through the Fall 2015 cohort to check for a trend. (Note: The three year graduation numbers are based on all entering students and do not factor out those not attempting at least 18 credits within the first two years). For the Fall 2011 cohort, the three year graduation rate for African Americans was 3.7%; Fall 2012 cohort – 5.4%, Fall 2013 cohort – 7.0%, Fall 2014 cohort – 7.1%, Fall 2015 cohort – 9.5%. There is a distinct upward trend in the three-year graduation rates for African American students.

Additionally the college had created an Education Master Plan in 2015, one of the core goals of the plan was to create cultural competency across the institution. The institution in Fall 2016 defined cultural competency by adopting the framework of the National Center for Cultural Competency set forth by Georgetown University. In Fall of 2017 the college surveyed the organization to determine the current level of cultural competency based on the adopted definition. From there on, in FY2018 the college has initiated trainings modules through Human Resources, encouraged instructors to adapt cultural competence content in their courses, created instructional best practices, centralized the Diversity Committee's function as the primary contact point for all questions regarding cultural competence.

The college had also begun to adopt student outcome assessment across the institution when the college was placed on warning by Middle States in 2015. Over the next two years the college implemented and is actively carrying out robust student outcome assessment across many disciplines and courses.

Allegany College continues to make efforts to increase its non-white employment percentage. Open positions are marketed in numerous places including relevant industry periodicals with the hope of increasing applications from minority candidates. However, the geographical location and the homogenous county population make it difficult to attract minority candidates from other regions. The Diversity Committee continues to explore different strategies to increase the number of minority staff.

ANNE ARUNDEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College provided an analysis of the factors that may have affected persistence, transfer and graduation outcomes for African American students, noting a number of initiatives recently put in place. Among them was the use of “equity-focused dashboards...that allow users to access achievement gaps college-wide, by programs or by courses. The intent is that data will be widely and easily accessible making the focus on achievement gaps inescapable for the college community.” What are some preliminary findings the College can report on the use of these dashboards to address issues of equity and achievement gaps? How are campus stakeholders using the data dashboards?

Response: AACC continues to address achievement gaps. The college has undergone a major transformation in how data is shared and utilized. Data reflect characteristics of the student body, and its progression to completion can be disaggregated by any combination of race/ethnicity, gender, or Pell status via data visualization software that includes a series of interactive, easily accessible dashboards. The dashboards provide simple visuals for real-time analysis of enrollment, retention, and completion, allowing for mid-course corrections. Because the dashboards are dynamic and allow for visualization of institutional, school, program and course-level data to be examined, all sectors of the college are looking at them as appropriate. As a result of sharing data at the course, program, and institutional levels, faculty, staff, and administrators have found a common purpose and a mutual understanding of the critical need to eradicate pervasive equity gaps. New dashboards also track fourteen institutional key performance indicators, helping to focus the college on disaggregated rates of progression and completion. Dashboards are coupled with training and guidance for faculty and staff, benchmarks are set, and departments work towards achieving these benchmarks. This includes focus on learning outcomes and where improvements must be made down to the course level to better support all students as pass rates are now disaggregated by race across all programs. Further, equity gaps in developmental and gatekeeper courses are better monitored and disseminated widely. Employees are constantly challenged to be informed participants in discussions. Questions about data can be fact checked in real-time during meetings via interactive dashboards. Such an approach has shifted the culture, empowering departments to access and use data to support continuous improvement while also attending to equity in their conversations. The focus on achievement gaps has become inescapable for the college community.

BALTIMORE CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported that its successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates for all students and African American students are almost identical because African American students comprise the majority of the College's credit students; therefore the College does not report any achievement gaps between these populations.

That said, the College has surpassed the benchmarks for all four indicators. To what does the College credit these outcomes and how will this affect future benchmarking on these indicators?

Response: BCCC's overall successful-persister rate for all students in the fall 2013 cohort fell to 52.2% after a sharp increase with the fall 2012 cohort. The developmental completers' rate fell slightly to 77.2% but remained more than double that of the developmental non-completers (Indicator 16). The successful-persister rate for African-American students mirrored the decline of the overall cohort, 51.0% for the fall 2013 cohort (Indicator 17a). The overall four-year graduation-transfer rate decreased for the fall 2013 to 33.0% and to 42.6% for the developmental completers (Indicator 18). The decline in the graduation-transfer rate for African-American students was nearly the same as that for the total cohort at 32.9% for the fall 2012 cohort (Indicator 19a). The primary focus for BCCC remains improving the developmental completion rate which drives nearly all other outcome measures. As discussed, the need for remediation remains high for BCCC students; the College is committed to reducing as many barriers as possible to completing the recommended developmental coursework and all program requirements. Our benchmarking and initiatives will be informed by that focus. The streamlined levels of developmental education in math and reading/English are making a positive impact, as discussed above. The College continues its work to decrease its advisor-to-student ratio, expand its support services to all students, expand course modalities, offer creative scheduling options, increase financial aid literacy, increase students' access to information, increase staff training on transcript evaluation, and implement a reverse transfer application process in AY 2018-19. Student success remains BCCC's number one strategic priority and the College's initiatives will all be planned and implemented with that in mind.

CARROLL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported no benchmarks for indicators tied to performance for African American students due to the small size of this minority cohort. Despite the small number of minority students enrolled, the College reported that its minority population has been growing every year. What does the institution have in place to support minority students and ensure that they persist, transfer and graduate at the same rates as their non-minority peers? How are these programs being evaluated to ensure they are effective?

Response: Carroll Community College has had a slight increase in the percentage of its student body from a racial or ethnic minority over the last five years, though the actual headcount has decreased slightly, coinciding with an overall decline in enrollment. The latest population estimate for Carroll County is that the county is about 89% white; the College student population is about 83% white, so there is greater minority representation at the college than in its service area.

The College has a variety of processes, initiatives, and activities to support students who are educationally at-risk, including students who are racial and ethnic minorities. Listening to feedback from students, Carroll staff individually reach out to students and provide customized support and academic plans, an approach that is welcoming and comfortable for students who might otherwise feel marginalized. This approach of individualized advising also helps address the intersection of race and other risk factors, such as first-generation college students, English-language learners, or other considerations. This advising approach will be evaluated through student satisfaction surveys and student retention data.

In the 2017-18 school year, Carroll Community College worked to highlight race and ethnicity in routine internal reports, such as program reviews, so that faculty and others who work with students have a sense of the relative success of different kinds of students.

This year we have laid the groundwork for providing dual-credit classes in high schools in lower income neighborhoods, starting in fall 2018. Previously, dual-credit students had to come to campus for their classes or enroll in online sections, but now classes will be offered in two county high schools that have a higher population of minority students. We anticipate that this

will both boost dual enrollment of minority and at-risk students and lead them to continuing their education at Carroll Community College after graduating high school.

These new dual-credit classes will be evaluated by Academic Affairs in collaboration with Institutional Research. The plan is to assess student performance in these courses each semester and longitudinally track students' ongoing performance and matriculation, including using National Student Clearinghouse data to look for enrollment in other colleges. Demonstrated success of these classes will include enrollment above our average section size, pass rates at or above college averages, and continued persistence in college as a dual-credit student and beyond high school graduation.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is a recommending body to the President and Executive Team as well as a working committee. The group is further supported by the Associate Vice President of Curriculum and Assessment. A revision to the charge of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee in fall 2017 refined the group's focus and planning efforts. The updated charge states that the committee will:

- Serve as an advisory body, making recommendations to the College regarding the promotion of diversity and inclusion;
- Facilitate acceptance, inclusion, and empathy by promoting social justice and diverse ways of thinking and being in all college activities;
- Address issues related, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, national origin, veteran status, socioeconomic class, religion, and professional status;
- Coordinate educational resources and opportunities that foster global and diversity awareness for students, faculty, staff, and the community.

Furthermore, two faculty members secured internal funding during summer 2018 to research and design learning activities using principles of experiential learning and intersectionality. The goal of this project is to provide evidence-based tools and best practices for committee members planning and overseeing activities related to cultural diversity.

Another summer-grant-funded project will focus on the design and collection of qualitative data about the experiences of students of color on campus. This data will be combined with quantitative data to inform institutional decision-making regarding supports and appropriate interventions for students.

Data on population trends showing increases in the Hispanic population are being used by Continuing Education and Training to develop targeted outreach efforts to populations that might be interested in trade and industry certifications or credentials.

In addition, the College has made efforts to expand access to the college for all potential students, particularly those who are economically or otherwise at-risk, as we will discuss further in the next section.

CECIL COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported no benchmarks for indicators tied to performance for African American students due to the small size of the minority cohort. Despite this small size, the College reported that its minority population has been growing every year.

In response to these demographic changes, the College discusses a number of initiatives, including a mentoring program that was evaluated in the past academic year. What are the findings from this analysis and what actions are being taken as a result?

Response: The College created a mentoring program called “Male Students of Color” in response to gaps in persistence and completion rates when comparing African American students to other students. The program has 7 faculty/staff mentors and 9 student participants. Each semester new students are invited by email and text to participate in the program. This group meets monthly for lunch and to discuss academic progress and other topics of interest. In addition to ongoing meetings, the students attend the annual Maryland “Male Students of Color Summit” and are invited to academic and study skills building workshops facilitated by academic advisors.

Students in the Male Students of Color mentoring program complete an evaluation every semester. The mentors also facilitate ongoing conversations regarding how the College can better support the students’ success. The student assessments have indicated that the students see the need for three things, 1) a more diverse faculty/staff, 2) increased campus dialogue around issues related to diversity and inclusion, and 3) more financial support for some students.

Several improvement plans were put into place to address these concerns. Human Resources has recruited and hired a more diverse faculty and staff. In 2017, there were 163 total faculty and staff of which 20 (12.27%) were minorities. Ten of the 20 were African American. In 2018, there are now 172 total faculty and staff of which 28 (16.28%) are minorities. Sixteen of the 28 are African American.

To address the need for dialogue, the Director of Multicultural Services collaborated with faculty to offer an educational series for the entire campus community entitled, “Black Minds Matter,” consisting of nine educational sessions and discussion groups offered in conjunction with San Diego State University. Examples of topics include assumptions of criminality, foundations of black male research and practice, and holistic support for black male learners. Evaluations of this program were so positive that the College is participating again for the 2018-19 academic year.

To address the financial challenges students face, the College co-hosted an annual Minority Scholarship Night Program with NAACP as well as an Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Banquet, which provides scholarships for minority males attending Cecil College. Additionally, the Multicultural Student Services Advisory Board has made fundraising for scholarships one of their primary goals.

Although students stop in and out of the mentoring program, there were nine core students who consistently participated over the course of past year. Of those nine students, two graduated, two transferred to other colleges prior to earning a Cecil degree (both out of state), and five are still attending. Our analysis of this program is that it is beneficial for the students who participate, but it is not reaching enough students. This past fall we invited 125 new students to the first meeting and only 2 attended. The College will continue to identify ways to help all African American students -- both males and females -- persist and complete. One key effort will be to look at the Cecil Spring 2018 CCSSE data disaggregated by race. We have asked a CCSSE Researcher to conduct a workshop on campus in November for faculty and staff. At that workshop, we will look at our benchmarks and identify ways we can improve academic engagement.

CHESAPEAKE COLLEGE

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported data on these indicators that reveal a growing gap in graduation and transfer between African American students and all students in the cohort. For the Fall 2009 cohort, the College reported a 50.5% graduation-transfer rate for all students in the cohort and a rate of 41.0% for African American students (a 9.5 percentage point gap). For the Fall 2012 cohort, the College reported a 55.4% graduation-transfer rate for all students in the cohort and a rate of 40.7% for African American students (a 14.7 percentage point gap).

Discuss any factors contributing to the performance on these indicators and the methodologies implemented for reversing the widening gap so as to meet the graduation-transfer benchmark of 45.0% for African American students set for the Fall 2016 (FY2020) cohort.

Response: A principal cause of the achievement gap is the fact that the college readiness rates of African-American students are significantly lower than those of White students. Until recently, less than ten percent of African-American freshmen were deemed college ready and approximately two-thirds required remediation in both English and mathematics. Chesapeake College's approach to this situation focuses on two dimensions – helping more new students enter college-ready or with fewer developmental requirements and helping more students with developmental needs complete those hurdles.

The graduation-transfer rate of African-American students has fluctuated widely from year to year. A contributing factor has been the small (and shrinking) number of students in the Degree Progress Analysis. The data for the fall 2014-2016 cohorts shows fewer than minimum 50-person threshold required for reporting. As such, the progress of a few students can sway the results substantially. To illustrate, for the fall 2016 cohort for analysis of 44, some 10 (22.7%) have already graduated or transferred to another institution. Only 10 more are needed to meet the 45% benchmark. However, less than half the original cohort were still enrolled in either the spring or summer, 2018 term. As a result, instead of focusing on a very limited number of students that started in 2016 to meet one specific target, the College has taken a more long term approach to improve success metrics for all students, with an ongoing emphasis on reducing the minority achievement gap.

Internal review has clearly shown that college-ready students progress at much higher rates than do developmental students. The College collaboratively developed with its five support counties

an articulation agreement to employ its Intermediate Algebra course as a transition course for high school seniors who need to improve college readiness in math. Additionally, students have had more opportunities to demonstrate readiness as alternatives to taking the standardized Accuplacer examinations. The most prominent change, fully implemented in 2017, allows qualified recent public school graduates to use high school grade-point average for placement into college-level English and/or mathematics courses. As a result, the college readiness rates for freshmen jumped to a record level in fall 2017. Particularly noteworthy were 1) the more than doubling of college readiness rates of African-American students (to 16.7%) and 2) the halving of the share requiring English and math developmental coursework (to 36.7%). It is expected that subsequent graduation-transfer rates will rise, but it is still far too early to determine the effects. An early student tracking metric is fall-to-spring retention rate. This measure also displays large annual swings for African-American students. And, the encouraging uptick in African-American college readiness has not yet been manifested into retention. The fall 2017 rate fell by 12 percentage points. Because these rates have large annual swings, it is not clear whether this is a one-time incident or the onset of a longer trend. Again, the small number of African-American freshmen lends itself to sizable variation in success rates.

Courses in both English and math piloted redesigns to increase the number of students who successfully complete the course and the subsequent college-level equivalent. The lowest level of developmental math was transformed from a computer-mediated, lab format course to a more traditional lecture supplemented by labs using an online textbook at minimal cost to students (i.e., \$40 compared to over \$200 for the textbook+lab access in the previous curriculum). Developmental English streamlined the curriculum to a single course rather than two in prior years and piloted the nationally recognized Accelerated Learning Program model. Both pilots were successful and were expanded to the full curriculum of both departments. Course success rates have improved as a result, for the college as a whole, but for African-American students in particular. For African-Americans, historic highs were set for in total for all courses, both developmental and gateway English courses, and all but one math course. Based on first-year data, the achievement gaps between Whites and Blacks shrunk to record lows. The college will continue to analyze the results to determine whether this pattern holds true into the future.

The College offers several programs to increase student engagement and success among culturally-diverse students and strives each year to surpass targets. Evidence shows that formal intervention programs yield positive results. The SAIL program (Success And Interactive Learning) gets first-time freshmen actively involved in the college experience. SAIL has several academic and service utilization requirements for participation. Students who complete the program and finish the semester with a quality point average of at least a 2.0 receive a scholarship discount on their spring semester tuition. The director of First-Year Programs oversaw development of the FSC/SAIL classroom, which allowed the director to standardize the Freshman Seminar Course (FSC) experience and provide SAIL participants with a home of their own. This increased cohesiveness of the group and allowed for expansion of SAIL-related activities at one central location. These programs provide invaluable support for first-generation college students, many of whom are minorities.

The FOCUS Group (First-Generation Opportunities for Career and Ultimate Success) is geared for first-generation male students enrolled in a career program and provides them with intense exposure to academic support and career exploration activities during the first year in college.

Finally, TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) Programs, both SSS Classic and SSS-STEM are federally funded programs, helping eligible (first-generation, low-income, or disabled) students stay in school, graduate, and/or transfer to a four-year institution. Services include academic and financial aid advising, career guidance and readiness, science and math supplemental instruction workshops, and cultural and educational events. Students engaged in these programs statistically outperform comparison groups of students who are not in the program in terms of retention and academic performance. Full-time students now meet with faculty advisors for mandatory personalized advising sessions. Engaging and mutually edifying conversations resulted, strengthening faculty-student relationships and helping Chesapeake's numerous first-generation college students navigate through the degree and course selection process. In FY2019, professional advising services will also be expanded, with the goal of ensuring students have developed a personalized plan to achieve their desired major or credential within the first year of college, and eventually within their first semester. This initiative will be followed by expanded "intrusive" advising practices, which stage targeted interventions and key points along students' college journey. The college also has invested in expanded tutoring services in the Academic Support Center that provides a wide variety of tutoring services for students by walk-in and regular appointment.

Health professions licensure/certification examination pass rates is another area for focus. Two programs (Surgical Technology and Cardiac Rescue Technician, State Protocol Exam) had all graduates pass their licensure/certification exams in FY2017, but six programs had pass rates below their benchmark levels, all of which were set at 90% or above. Of those, four programs missed their benchmark because of one student failure: Radiologic Technology, Physical Therapist Assistant, Paramedic (State Protocol Exam), and Cardiac Rescue Technician (Intermediate National Registry Exam). The Paramedic (National Registry Exam) program missed its benchmark by two student failures; thirteen students passed. All five programs are fully accredited and thriving. Radiologic Technology has enjoyed 100% pass rates for 2014, 2015, and 2016. The Physical Therapy Assistant program is part of a three-institution consortium, which serves as a national model for quality, and EMS programs were praised by the 2017 accreditation team for being ahead of the curve in adopting industry best-practices. Program directors continue to improve pedagogy and resources to improve pass rates. Yet, in programs with cohorts of about ten students apiece, targets should be revised to allow for at least one student failure per year. Of greater concern is the 65% pass rate for the Registered Nurse program. This decline follows an administration mandate to reduce application acceptance requirements for enrollment purposes. That mandate has since been rescinded, and nursing is actively recruiting a more robust applicant pool and has adjusted retention strategies to more effectively focus on student learning. These strategies include student mentoring, increased test rigor, and problem-based and experiential learning integrated into the classroom. Results for the 2018 cohort are decisive. With only three students remaining to take NCLEX, the pass rate is above 80%. Maryland Board of Nursing will include some 2017 cohort students in 2018 results, which will lower the overall percentage, but performance of the current cohort demonstrates NCLEX scores are recovering rapidly and the program is moving in the right direction.

The college's Diversity Plan has a goal to, "*Recruit, train and support a diverse workforce.*" Human Resources monitors all employment policies to ensure no barriers exist for employees from diverse backgrounds. Chesapeake's turnover continues to be low, at 10.0%, with minority turnover representing just 2.2% of the total workforce. Exit interview data is also closely monitored to assess whether there are diversity issues or concerns that need to be addressed. No issues were identified in the exit interview data from FY2017 that caused any concern in reference to minority turnover. Human Resources is actively engaged in all search committee initiatives to address the College's commitment to diversity and encourage committee members to consider diversity during the selection process.

Because of the College's small size, overall percentages can be impacted greatly by just a few hires and/or terminations. Additionally, there are less than sixty full-time faculty and their turnover is relatively low. To illustrate, the addition of one additional minority faculty member in 2017 pushed up the minority percentage by 1.7 percentage points to 8.6%. The percentage of minorities in full-time administrative and professional positions rose slightly to 12.4% in 2017. Nevertheless, minority hiring and retention has remained a focus.

COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported data on trends in successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates, both of which are increasing for all students (e.g., from 76.5% to 79.6% for successful-persister rates and 54.1% to 61.6% for graduation-transfer rates). Over this same time, the rates have stayed relatively flat for African American students (72.1% for successful persister rates and 55.0% for graduation transfer rates), which have widened the gap in achievement between these two populations of students.

Discuss any factors contributing to the performance on these indicators and the methodologies implemented for reversing the widening gap.

Response: The rates in the 2017 Performance Accountability Report have been updated to include developmental credits. Previously, developmental credits attempted were not included in the calculation of successful-persister- and graduation-transfer-rates.

The College of Southern Maryland is committed to student success and goal completion of all students. Over the two last years, successful persister rates for all students has increased from 66.9% to 69.6%. Although African American rates are lower, the successful-persister rates have also increased from 54.2% to 61.0%. Graduation-transfer rates for all students has increased seven percentage points from 46.4% to 53.8% over the last four years. African American graduation-transfer rates are lower, increasing seven percentage points from 38.7% to 45.0%. The College is committed to providing a high level of direct support for students to narrow achievement gaps. Program-related activity has created opportunities for minority students, while being available to majority students as well. The college has been awarded a Title III Strengthening Institutions Program grant, with funds to enhance success and goal completion of its students.

African American students enter the college with more remedial work than their peers, CSM has implemented strategies to reduce the rate. Because more than half of recent high school graduates come to college unprepared to do college-level work, mostly in mathematics, CSM in concert with the districts, administers early assessments at the end of the 11th grade to measure students' readiness to successfully perform entry-level credit-bearing postsecondary work. For student not deemed college ready, transition courses are offered during the 12th grade to students

at risk of being placed into remedial math or English in college. Recently, CSM, in concert with other Maryland community colleges and the University System of Maryland, through a *First in the World* grant, restructured pathways for mathematics, which should ensure less remediation and higher levels of mathematics completion across the sector. CSM will continue to work with the local school systems to evaluate the effectiveness of readiness assessments administered by the school systems to determine if they adequately measure and facilitate readiness, as well as college placement and remediation efforts to ensure gateway course and program completion.

Goal completion is an area of focus in the 2018 Student Success and Goal Completion Plan. CSM has deployed a wide range of comprehensive and proactive student support services that have been shown to promote goal completion, facilitate student retention through the second year, graduation, and transfer. The goals center around student's time at CSM and include tactics such as: mandated orientation to guide student decision-making; selection of a major prior to enrollment; prescriptive degree pathways; financial literacy training; expansion of first-year experience program for at-risk students to increase student success, prevent academic probation, and increase retention; providing supported instruction in developmental English courses which include mandatory tutoring and/or instructor assisted; alignment of developmental mathematics pathway to an associate's degree; students who placed into developmental are required to take only one developmental course which has supported skills; intrusive advising; 18, 36, and 45 credit hour checkpoints; guaranteed transfer agreements; identifying and re-enrolling former students with 15 credits or less to earn a credential; and reverse transfer.

Next fall, the college will implement Guided Pathways, a national model of limited and default elective options as well as common first semesters for similar or like programs (e.g., education or business). This ensures that undecided students or students who change majors can stay on track without accruing too many unnecessary credits. Guided Pathways in the following programs, Arts and Humanities, Business and Information Systems, Health Sciences, Education and Public Service, STEM, and Trades, Transportation and Energy, will assist students with goal completion in credit or continuing education. First-time students will be required to enroll in one of these guided pathways, to attend orientation sessions based on these guided pathways, and to register for courses and discuss programs with faculty. First-time students will also be given default schedules which have courses relevant to their program of study.

In addition to the targeted goals, the college has expanded the African American Male Initiative program, Men of Excellence, from one campus to three campuses and will provide more support to students including scholarships. The goal of the Men of Excellence program is to increase retention and graduation rates of African American males. Its mission is to provide a cohesive program model of academic and social tools that support students around assuming a positive attitude to successfully complete classes, elevate their cumulative GPAs, matriculate through each academic level and graduate. Together these goals and strategies will guide African American students toward goal completion.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BALTIMORE COUNTY

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported data on trends in successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates, both for all students and African American students. The gaps in achievement between these students populations has lessened over time but gaps still exist for the most recent cohort (7.8 percentage points for successful-persister rates and 5.2 percentage points for graduation-transfer rates).

Discuss what factors contribute to this gap in performance on these indicators and the steps the College has been taking to shrink them.

Response: CCBC is aware of the achievement gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. For the Fall 2013 cohort, there is a gap of 8.7 percentage points for successful-persister rates and a gap of 7.3 percentage points for graduation-transfer rates. One of the main factors contributing to the achievement gap is the economic and demographic profile of Baltimore County. These profiles show that more of our African-American students come from poverty-level incomes. Students coming from poverty-level incomes may not be able to take a full load of courses due to financial issues. Many of these students work in addition to attending college and are not able to take more than a course or two each year. CCBC has several initiatives in place to help these students and to bridge the achievement gap between African American students and their peers. CCBC offers several accelerated programs for students placing in developmental education courses. The first is the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) which is designed to improve the number of students who pass ACLT 053 and ENGL 101. Students who participate in ALP enroll in designated sections of ENGL 101 while also taking ACLT 053 at the same time as a companion course. The second accelerated program is Academic Literacy. This program provides intensive instruction in critical thinking, reading and writing. The third accelerated program is the Accelerated Math Program (AMP). This program has taken two consecutive math courses and combined the content in order for students to complete two courses within one semester. All of these programs are striving towards allowing CCBC students to complete their developmental education requirements at a quicker pace allowing them to enter credit based courses that count towards their degree in less time. These programs streamline the developmental education course sequence.

CCBC began the Pathways initiative that groups incoming students into one of six Pathways depending on their declared major or area of interest. Once a student is placed in a Pathway they will receive assistance in course selection as well as student success supports and activities. These supports and activities are geared toward successful degree and certificate completion, transfer and career success. Pathways are designed to help students meet their academic goals in a streamlined manner. Students in Pathways are able to focus on the courses that they need to meet their academic goal and should meet that goal in a shorter length of time due to the enhanced academic support services that they receive from CCBC.

CCBC also offers the African American Male Student Success initiative that assigns a success mentor to students participating in the initiative. Success mentors support the student by providing assistance with study skills, note-taking, test preparation, time management, organization and other pressures that may get in the way of academic success. This initiative will help students stay on track and work towards their completion goals.

FREDERICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported data on trends in successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates, both for all students and African American students. The gaps in achievement between these students populations has lessened over time but gaps still exist for the most recent cohort (8.6 percentage points for successful-persister rates and 10.6 percentage points for graduation –transfer rates).

Discuss what factors contribute to this gap in performance on these indicators and the steps the College has been taking to shrink them.

Response: The discrepancy between the placement test statuses of African-American students as compared to all students is one factor that contributed to a performance gap. Per the latest Degree Progress Report for the 2013 cohort, 24% of African-American students who took the placement test were identified as college-ready students as compared to 41% of all students. As a result, the gap existed when their college experience began. Further, the rate of developmental completers was lower among African-American students (25%) than all students (31%). The graduation/transfer rate gap for college-ready African-American students (80%) was smaller compared to all students (83%). The College has implemented several strategies to help students complete their developmental courses in a timely manner and to successfully persist, graduate, or transfer. The result of these strategies will be assessed in future Degree Progress cohorts. Three main strategies to address this gap are discussed below, including: developmental course reforms, expanding access to Multicultural Student Services, and professional development of faculty and staff around culturally responsive teaching.

The process for earning required English and math credits at FCC has changed significantly from FY 2015 to FY 2018. Developmental course reforms enable students to advance to credit courses more quickly and spend less time completing developmental coursework. Streamlining the pathways for students to promote success and completion has been a major focus of the College over the past two years. The Developmental English program underwent a major redesign blending two levels of independent reading and writing courses into a single course, which has minimized the time to prepare students for college-level classes. Students testing into this blended course reduce their course load and costs by four credits from a total of six credits across two courses, to two credits from one blended course. The blended course was designed to close the achievement gap for minority and first-generation students, further enabling them to graduate

and/or transfer at a higher rate. Similarly, a single, blended developmental math course was created by combining an intermediate algebra and a college-level credit math course. The course is designed to shorten the time it takes students to complete their degree and finish their college-level math requirement.

FCC established the Office of Multicultural Student Services (MSS) in 1998 to provide comprehensive support to address the specific needs of underrepresented students of color. MSS interventions consist of academic planning through curriculum pathways, counseling, mentoring, leadership development, and dynamic cross-cultural experiences to ensure the successful transition to college and completion of a college degree or certificate. Using an intrusive advising model, and strategic partnerships with faculty, MSS offers additional assistance to students who may be experiencing academic challenges, having difficulty adjusting to the college environment, or just need a little extra support.

On average, students of color who are engaged in MSS have higher persistence and graduation rates than those who are not. MSS has increased its outreach efforts programmatically in partnership with other units at the College, including the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (ODEI), Center for Student Engagement, and in the classrooms. MSS effectively addresses access and retention for first year students of color through the Partnership for Achieving Student Success (PASS) program and successfully created a partnership with the FCC Foundation to offer a scholarship to PASS participants to increase their retention from year one to two. The College is exploring new ways to address persistence and goal completion through the PASS program.

Multiple units across the College have been also addressing these achievement gaps. For example, the Center for Teaching and Learning offers Culturally Responsive Teaching grants to faculty who want to strengthen their practice. During FY 2018, ODEI offered professional development opportunities including trainings and conferences to strengthen the cultural responsiveness of our classrooms, faculty, and staff. In the summer of 2018, the College offered the first summer institute for faculty to conduct course transformations focused on culturally responsive curriculum and teaching. During FY 2018, the College developed an Academic Master Plan in which diversity, equity, inclusion, as well as academic access, retention, and success were centered. Two of the four main goals involved using resources to strengthen the capacities of faculty to be culturally responsive as well as expanding services and resources to support the “success, persistence, and completion of current and emerging student populations” (FCC Academic Master Plan, 2018). During the FY 2019 year, ODEI and the President’s Diversity Advisory Council are developing a Diversity Strategic Plan and addressing the gap in achievement will be part of the strategic interventions.

GARRETT COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported data on trends in successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates, both for all students and African American students. The gap in successful-persister rates has diminished over time (from 8.9 percentage points for the Fall 2009 cohort to 4.8 percentage points for the Fall 2012 cohort). In addition, the College has eliminated the achievement gap in graduation-transfer between these student populations.

To what does the College attribute these patterns? Does the College anticipate the gap in the successful persister rate will continue to lessen and the similar graduation-transfer rates between student groups to sustain over time? Please explain.

Response: Garrett College data for the fall 2013 cohort have shown that the African-American/Black students' successful-persister rate is actually higher than the successful-persister rate for all students by 5%. However, these data are not necessarily a true reflection of success or persistence for the reason that the transfer rate among the College's African-American/Black students is considerably higher than that of its overall student population. As a result, this has tended to inflate both the successful persister rate and the graduation-transfer rates, while the graduation rate for African-American/Black students has actually decreased. There are two reasons for the higher than normal transfer pattern among African-American/Black students. The first is that a significant number are athletes who transfer before graduation in order to maximize their athletic eligibility at the receiving institution. The other reason has to do with the fact that, unlike all but one other Maryland community college, Garrett has residence halls. The availability of this on-campus housing attracts a relatively large number of out-of-county and out-of-state students, many of whom are African American/Black. However, because of financial difficulties or because of behavioral issues that have resulted in suspension or other sanctions, a significant number of these students end up transferring to community colleges closer to home, which is most often in the Baltimore, D.C. metro, or Northern Virginia areas. Unfortunately, while transfers are generally considered a 'success,' data obtained from the National Student Clearinghouse have shown that many of these students end up never completing.

The College is concerned about the high attrition rate among its resident students and has implemented a plan designed to address some of the pain points that both African-American and all students may experience which inhibit their success.

HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported data on trends in successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates, both for all students and African American students. The gaps in achievement between these students populations has fluctuated over time, but gaps exist for the most recent cohort (12.2 percentage points for successful-persister rates and 9.5 percentage points for graduation –transfer rates).

Discuss any factors contributing to the performance on these indicators and the methodologies implemented for ensuring the gap does not further widen. What does the institution have in place to meet the established benchmarks for the Fall 2016 (FY2020) cohort?

Response: Hagerstown Community College is dedicated in its mission to deliver high quality education at a reasonable cost to meet the needs of all its constituents in its service area. Washington County, the college’s service area, is a rural county in Western Maryland, which in of itself presents distinct challenges in regards to any minority population. Though the region slowly continues to become more diverse, it lacks a significant professional minority population often found in urban and metropolitan areas, which in turn leads to a lack of role models for the increasing minority population. Recruiting full-time faculty and administrators of color remains an institutional priority in an effort to overcome this challenge. This effort has started to see its largest returns in recent years, as the number of full-time faculty and staff that identify as African-American/Black increased to 15 in fall 2017 from 12 in fall 2016.

Another factor contributing to the performance on these indicators, as it relates to the relatively small population of minorities within the service area, is the sample size of the cohort for analysis itself. The cohort for analysis for the College of African-American/Black students is consistently less than 100. This translates into each individual success, or non-success, having a greater impact on the overall rates of the cohort, and is partially responsible for the fluctuations in the gaps noted by the Commission. As an example, the African-American/Black fall 2011 cohort surpassed the successful-persister and graduation-transfer rates of all students.

The College’s commitment to increase student diversity has resulted in an increase in the minority, and more specifically, African-American/Black, student population. Despite sustained overall enrollment declines in recent years, both the total number and percentage of African-

American/Black students has increased (Student Characteristics Indicator H). The College has accomplished this by addressing the needs and minimizing the barriers that exist within the community. For example, in an effort to reduce financial barriers, the Director of Financial Aid holds workshops for select low-income, at-risk upcoming high school graduates to discuss covering the costs of education through state and federal programs. The College's Promise Pathway Program also assists Washington County students lacking all the necessary financial resources to be successful in college with financial assistance and academic guidance.

The College has also taken steps to address both academic advisement and personal guidance of at-risk students by offering both a Job Training Student Resources (JTSR) program and a TRiO: Student Support Services program. Both of these case management programs, which have a large minority participation, provide support services to students who are first generation, low income, and/or have disabilities. In providing these supports, the College provides avenues to bypass the socio-economic barriers minority students face to succeed in post-secondary education.

The College is committed to expanding its diverse student population, all the while upholding positive educational outcomes for every student. Efforts to ensure the performance gap between African-American/Black students and their peers does not widen, but rather shrink, include vigorously recruiting more professional staff and faculty of color to the College, proactively addressing the financial barriers to college experienced by minorities, and providing targeted guidance and support programs to assist with academic and personal needs. By continuing to increase the College's minority population and providing supports to succeed, the College expects the performance gap between minority students and their peers to curtail in the near future.

HARFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported data on trends in successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates, both for all students and African American students. These data show sizeable gaps in outcomes (e.g., a 10.2 percentage point gap in the successful-persister rate for the Fall 2012 cohort and a 13.0 percentage point gap in the graduation-transfer rate for the Fall 2012 cohort).

The College acknowledges the ongoing gaps in persistence, graduation and transfer rates for these student populations, noting that, in response, the My College Success Network program was implemented to support minority students.

The College reports on some outcomes that show this program has promise. What are some preliminary findings the College can report on additional outcomes of this program? Has the College implemented other, complementary programs or strategies to address these gaps in performance?

Response: Harford Community College (HCC) implemented the My College Success Network in Fall 2014 in response to the strategic plan goal of eradicating attainment gaps due to income, race, gender, and ethnicity. The largest attainment gap exists between Black/African American and Caucasian students. The premier service in the Network is academic coaching. New Black and African American students who are 1-3 classes below college level (based on the Accuplacer assessment) are invited to participate in this service, which is a comprehensive first-year experience program offered in the format of two one-credit classes. In the fall semester, students receiving academic coaching are enrolled in SDEV 110: Success in College and Beyond, and in the spring semester are enrolled in SDEV 111: Career and Life Planning. Since the inception of the program, 405 students have participated in academic coaching. Students who receive academic coaching are retained at higher rates and earn higher GPAs than non-participants with similar demographics. For example, in the Fall 2017 semester, new students completing academic coaching earned an average GPA of 2.4 and were retained to spring semester at a rate of 75.8%, compared to non-participants with an average GPA of 2.0 and a fall to spring retention rate of 69.4%. Due to these outcomes, HCC anticipates an upward trend in the successful-persister rate and graduation-transfer rate for the Fall 2014 and later cohorts for Black/African American students.

While the My College Success Network is showing promise in helping to eradicate the attainment gap, further reform is needed to ensure a College-wide approach to addressing this persistent issue. Recognizing the need for further professional development regarding emerging issues in higher education, HCC's President, Dr. Dianna Phillips, organized a speaker series throughout the 2017-2018 academic year. The first speaker, Dr. Tia Brown McNair, Vice President in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Student Success for the Association of American Colleges & Universities, reinforced the need for HCC to focus on being a student-ready college. The engagement and communication strategies she referenced established the expectation for faculty and staff to promote an inclusive, welcoming environment that fosters student success.

Throughout the academic year, HCC researched Achieving the Dream, a comprehensive non-governmental reform movement for student success, and evaluated benefits of joining the national organization. In February 2018, HCC welcomed the second speaker in the series, Dr. Karen Stout, President and CEO of Achieving the Dream, Inc. Dr. Stout spoke of the need for clear pathways specifically designed to help students seamlessly transition into baccalaureate programs or careers that provide living wages. She emphasized that some of the most successful practices in ensuring completion across all student demographics challenge our traditional higher education business models. The final speakers in the series—Dr. Daniel J. Phelan, President of Jackson College and author of *Unrelenting Change: Innovation and Risk: Forging the Next Generation of Community Colleges*; and Dr. Jonathon Gueverra, President of Florida Keys Community College—spoke of the need to be innovative in the programs offered in order to keep pace with the needs of society (Phelan) and to ensure the programs offered are responsive and accountable to the needs of our community (Gueverra).

In June 2018, HCC joined Achieving the Dream. Achieving the Dream is committed to creating, developing, and sharing resources for the student success movement. A particular focus of Achieving the Dream is improving the success rates for low-income students and students of color. Through the *Gathering In* equity and inclusion discussion series sponsored by the Cultural Diversity Committee and an all-faculty presentation entitled *Making Data-Informed Decisions*, HCC became well-versed in momentum metrics tracked through the Voluntary Framework for Accountability, an initiative of the American Association of Community Colleges that supports reporting and benchmarking of success metrics that are created by and for community colleges. When looking at the six-year outcomes for math, of the 173 black students in the main cohort who required developmental math and were new students in the Fall 2010 semester, only 27 completed college-level math within six years. The outcomes were slightly better for English. Of the 138 black students who required developmental English courses in the Fall 2010 semester, 53 completed college-level English within six years.

This past academic year has been a year of knowledge, change, and planning for HCC. By joining Achieving the Dream and unifying student success efforts across the campus and beyond the My College Success Network, HCC is committed to actualizing the strategic plan goal of eradicating the attainment gap.

Additional plans for FY 2019 include scaling HCC's iPrep Scholar Week, a summer bridge program for new students who place into one or more transition courses. Initial findings show

that students who complete this weeklong orientation and refresher curricula in math, reading, and writing, and take the placement exam afterwards, are more likely to either move up into a higher level transition course or directly into a college-level course. Further, HCC plans to work with new GED graduates to support and encourage them to enroll in a certificate or degree program.

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College provided trend data showing that the gap in successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates between African American students and all students in the cohort has widened over time (a 4.4 percentage point gap in the successful-persister rate for the Fall 2009 cohort versus a 9.7 percentage point gap for the Fall 2012 cohort; similarly, a 5.1 percentage point gap in the graduation-transfer rate for the Fall 2009 cohort versus a 11.2 percentage point gap for the Fall 2012 cohort).

The institution acknowledges these trends in its report and states that it “continues to monitor the retention and success of minority and all students, and by implementing initiatives to positively impact these rates, the College seeks to eliminate gaps in persistence, transfer, and goal attainment.”

Please describe these initiatives, how they are evaluated, and what additional steps the College is taking to address this widening gap, especially in light of aggressive benchmarks set African American students in the Fall 2016 (FY2020) cohort.

Response: Howard P.R.I.D.E. was established to help close the achievement gap of Black males, who are the most “at-risk” population within the institution. The program began in fall 2012 and is designed to provide student success services to Black male students in an effort to assist participants in maintaining good academic standing (a minimum of 2.0 grade-point average), to complete developmental math requirements, and to increase their retention, transfer and graduation rates. Assistance with math, particularly developmental math, is a key component of the program. Another significant offering of the program is mentoring. The program helps students develop leadership and personal skills, such as public speaking and interviewing for a job. The program’s Black Male Summit is designed to: 1) listen to students as they describe their experiences at HCC; 2) identify obstacles that may stand in the way of Black male student success at the college; 3) implement suggestions for improving HCC services and offerings; and 4) provide an opportunity for students to network. In academic year 2017-18, Howard P.R.I.D.E. served 205 students.

This initiative is evaluated annually by the office of planning research and organizational development and the associate director of Howard P.R.I.D.E. The performance metrics include

two years after entry retention rates, fall-to-spring retention rates, as well as graduation and transfer rates. As a result of these initiatives, the successful persistence rate gap for African-Americans narrowed to 7.4 percent for the fall 2013 cohort versus a 9.7 percent for fall 2012 cohort. Similarly, there was a decline in the gap of the graduation-transfer rate for the fall 2013 to seven percent versus a 11.2 percentage point gap for the fall 2012 cohort. The graduation-transfer rate for African-Americans for fall 2013 is at 48.1 percent, the highest it has ever been and just less than two percentage points from the benchmark of 50 that was set for the fall 2016 cohort. Successful persistence rate for African-Americans is at 73.2 percent, again at its highest level so far, and it is already exceeding the aggressive benchmark that has been set at 72 percent for the fall 2016 cohort.

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College provided trend data showing that the gap in successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates between African American students and all students in the cohort has widened over time (a 2.3 percentage point gap in the successful-persister rate for the Fall 2009 cohort versus a 5.9 percentage point gap for the Fall 2012 cohort; similarly, a 3.5 percentage point gap in the graduation-transfer rate for the Fall 2009 cohort versus a 7.1 percentage point gap for the Fall 2012 cohort).

The College acknowledges these trends in its report and states that it has reaffirmed its “commitment to what the College has termed its ‘at-promise’ students (not ‘at-risk’).” Among its efforts, the College established its own initiative called “Achieving the Promise.”

Please describe this initiative in greater detail. What specific aspects of it give the institution confidence it can reach its aggressive FY2020 goal of eliminating all achievement gaps? What interim results, if any, support the idea that the initiative will achieve this goal?

Response: The Achieving the Promise Academy (ATPA), created to support underserved and underrepresented students while they complete their degree, provides a highly structured academic program that focuses on the individualized academic needs of each student. The program is open to all interested students. Each student is aligned with a coach who monitors academic progress and assists in problem solving academic challenges. Coaches provided one-to-one coaching to 123 students in fall 2017 and nearly double the number of students in spring 2018, coaching 259 active students. Embedded coaches served 186 sections in the 2017–2018 academic year, including tutoring and support available to over 4,000 students. Preliminary results reveal that ATPA students finished the spring semester with higher GPAs and lower DFW rates than when they first joined the program. The ATPA is relatively new and it is unlikely that the benefits of this program intersected with students from earlier cohort groups. It is the hope of the College that the benefits actualized from this program will be sustainable with students in future cohort groups.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported data on trends in successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates, both for all students and African American students. The trend data show that gaps in achievement between these students group has been quite small over the past four cohorts (e.g., for the most recent cohort (2012) the successful-persister rate gap is 1.9 percentage points and the graduation-transfer rate difference is 1.0 percentage point).

Please provide an analysis of the relevant conditions or factors that may have affected these trends and describe any best practices by the College that might be emulated by other institutions.

Response: Although the College prides itself on providing services and programs to support achievement for all students, the fact that the achievement gap between all students and African American students has remained consistently small may be attributed to the overall makeup of the student population. Approximately 70% of students identify as Black/African American and this trend has remained fairly consistent for the past four years. Subsequently, the gaps between successful-persister and graduation-transfer rates of the full cohort and Black/African American students has maintained a range of ± 0.1 -2.0 percentage points.

With the launch of Pathways in fall 2018, the College is putting in place curricular, onboarding, and advising reforms that will result in a more structured and supportive student experience for all student groups. Additional details on initiatives and best practices are captured throughout the report below. These changes are expected to produce an overall increase in the successful-persister rates and in graduation-transfer rates for all students in future cohorts.

WOR-WIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Successful-persister rate after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 16d)

Successful-persister rate after four years of African American/Black students (Indicator 17a).

Graduation-transfer rates after four years all students in cohort (Indicator 18d)

Graduation-transfer rates after four years of African-American/Black students (Indicator 19a).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported data on trends in successful-persister rates and graduation-transfer rates, both for all students and African American students. The gaps in achievement between these students populations has lessened over time but gaps still exist for the most recent cohort (12.7 percentage points for successful-persister rates and 5.2 percentage points for graduation –transfer rates).

The College acknowledges these trends in its 2017 Report, sharing that a number of grant-funded initiatives are in place to support African American students at the College. How are these programs being evaluated for their effectiveness and what longer-term commitments might the College make to ensure that promising programs continue to get funding beyond the grants' terms?

Response: The five-year TRIO Student Support Services Program grant that began in FY 2016 provides academic and personal support services for at-risk students who are low income, first generation and/or students with disabilities. African-American students have comprised 40 to 45 percent of the cohort each year. The TRIO program is evaluated based on graduation, transfer and persistence rates, as well as academic standing and maintaining a certain level of participation and demographics of the students served (low income and first generation).

African-American veterans made up 30 percent of the first-year cohort for the TRIO Veterans Upward Bound grant. The veterans center provides academic, career and other support services to Lower Eastern Shore veterans who are low income or potential first-generation college students and/or veterans who have a high risk for academic failure. Success of the program is measured by the number of services provided to the veterans.

The college plans to reapply for both of these grant programs and continue offering comprehensive services for these student and veteran populations.

Targeted Indicators and Campus Responses
Public Four-Year Colleges and Universities

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Obj. 2.1: Maintain or exceed the 2012 undergraduate second-year retention rate of 75 percent.

Obj. 2.2: Increase the undergraduate six-year graduation rate from 38 percent in 2015 to 50 percent in 2019.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported that its second-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates for all students and African American students were almost identical. This is to be expected since the University is an historically black institution and African American students comprise the majority of the institution's undergraduate students.

The University noted that it met its second-year retention benchmark (75%) and steadied its six-year graduation rate (approximately 41%), crediting the stabilization of institutional, academic, and financial support systems as contributing factors. Please describe in greater detail how these systems were stabilized and whether the University feels it can maintain these patterns in the long term. Also, please describe the factors the University has identified that affect these trends. Which individual strategies have been most effective at increasing retention and graduation rates, and which have been less effective? Finally, please share what strategies will be implemented to help attain the 50% graduation rate goal for 2019.

Response: Bowie State University has multiple intervention strategies to support second year retention rates including those strategies mentioned above located within our Academic Advising Center (AAC) and with retention coordinators. Since 2012, retention programs developed by AAC and College Retention Coordinators are based upon data generated by the Office of Planning, Analysis and Accountability (OPAA). At least three times a semester, OPAA provides AAC and College Retention Coordinators with targeted information. Current student demographic characteristics, academic program and previous academic achievement are shared at the beginning of the term. At midterm, a list of students failing at least one course is shared. End of term student academic achievement is shared once grades become final. These offices use the data to track student engagement in targeted retention efforts.

For the past three years, annual retention targets have been set by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Targets include spring – fall early re-enrollment rates, second year retention rates for new students (first-time and transfer), and fall to spring return rates. Freshmen GPA and credit hours attempted/earned and developmental education completion are also tracked. In FY 2018, retention efforts were expanded to include monitoring of re-enrollment for the next semester. OPAA shared lists of students who had not re-enrolled on a weekly basis to academic departments, retention coordinators and AAC beginning three weeks into registration.

The academic departments encouraged faculty to reach out to their advisees to discuss barriers to re-enrollment for the next semester and to address academic challenges.

Retention activity reporting now incorporates an evaluative component that is used for future enhancement or discontinuance of efforts. For example, the Academic Recovery program in the Academic Advising Center (AAC) has had limited success due to student commitment to the process. The AAC has refocused its retention efforts on smaller, well-defined groups (athletics, university band and males) and to incorporate more mentoring activities to promote student engagement. The Summer Bulldog Academy was redesigned three years ago to combine academic and social integration into its programming. Enrollment in the summer bridge program has remained at approximately 80 students since the redesign. The organizers are working to identify barriers to and strategies for increasing enrollment. These efforts combined with improvements in financial aid processing have helped stabilize retention efforts.

The first-time freshmen six-year graduation rate goal of 50 percent in 2019 was aspirational in nature when it was set. While progress has been made in increasing first-time student graduation rates, it is estimated that 45 percent of fall 2012 first-time freshmen cohort will graduate from Bowie State University or another Maryland public higher education institution when reported next year when the goal attainment is evaluated. The estimate is based upon tracking internally and through the National Student Clearinghouse.

The University completed a strategic planning process during FY 2018. The 2019 – 2024 Strategic Plan builds on the university’s historical mission and its strengths and outlines five goals in the areas of academic and co-curricular excellence, student success, academic and administrative innovation, a campus culture of diversity, inclusion and civic engagement and long-term institutional viability. Many of the objectives in the *2019 – 2024 Strategic Plan* support long-term growth in retention and graduation rates for first-time freshmen, new transfer students and new graduate students. Institutional effectiveness indicators track retention and graduation rates for each of these groups as well as overall degree production per FTE. Objectives that support MHEC’s *2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education* are shown below. They are examples of the long-term commitment to student success for all students at Bowie State University.

Goal 1 - Provide academic excellence supported by curricular as well as co-curricular experiences. (State Plan Goals: Success and Innovation)

- 1.1 **High-demand, innovative academic programs** - Modify existing academic programs, and create and support new, high-demand programs that will promote the ongoing growth and development of the institution (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 6*).
- 1.2 **High-impact activities** - Integrate and enhance opportunities for students to participate in study abroad, service learning, civic engagement, internships and other experiential learning activities, with University financial support available to assist those with limited means (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 6,7*).
- 1.4 **Cultivate external relationships** - Increase corporate, educational, and government partnerships to help provide career-oriented opportunities for our students and alumni (*State*

Plan: Innovation, Strategy 8).

- 1.5 **Undergraduate education** - Re-examine the undergraduate general education experiences to prepare students for success in their majors, promote lifelong learning, and provide a foundation for personal and professional success after graduation (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 5*).
- 1.6 **Graduate Education** – Re-examine our approach to graduate education and revise as necessary to address the unique needs of the adult learner population and declining enrollment (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 5*).

Goal 2 – Promote a Holistic and Coordinated Approach to Student Success (*State Plan Goal: Success*)

- 2.1 **Enrollment Management Division** – Create a comprehensive enrollment management approach that promotes a student-centered philosophy through a coordinated, consolidated, and streamlined system of enrollment management operations and retention activities using data, information, and program evaluation to inform continuous improvement and long-term strategic enrollment management (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 5*).
- 2.2 **New student experience program** - Develop a comprehensive new-student experience program for all levels that sets standards and expectations of what it means to be a successful Bowie student (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 4*).
- 2.3 **Admission policies and procedures** – Align admission policies and procedures to ensure that the University is honoring its historical mission of access and opportunity (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 4*).
- 2.4 **Financial aid awarding strategy** - Develop a comprehensive financial aid awarding strategy that leverages institutional, private, state, and federal resources to strategically align resources to support student success (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 4*).
- 2.5 **Student retention and progression strategy** - Develop and implement a comprehensive undergraduate and graduate retention and progression strategy by encouraging innovation and collaboration between academic and non-academic units in efforts to support student success (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 5,6*).

Goal 3 – Encourage Academic and Administrative Innovation to Meet Student Needs (*State Plan Goals: Success and Innovation*)

- 3.1 **Faculty experimentation / innovation** – Leverage internal fiscal and physical resources and USM Academic Transformation grants and other opportunities to promote experimentation and innovation. Examine current human resource practices, promotion, and tenure expectations and the faculty merit process to recognize faculty efforts in these areas (*State Plan: Innovation, Strategy 9, 11*).
- 3.2 **Academic programming through alternative formats** - Offer targeted programs through alternative modalities, online delivery, at regional higher education centers, and in the community, in order to meet the needs of all prospective students and of the state, national, and global workforce (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 6 Innovation, Strategy 9*).
- 3.3 **Leverage current and new technologies to support student success** – Assess the capabilities of current technologies to promote efficiency and effectiveness in administrative and academic processes and have a transparent and inclusive process for evaluating new technologies (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 5*).

- 3.4 **Construct an analytics capacity**– Develop a data warehouse that incorporates a reporting tool to provide actionable information to support student retention, progression, and graduation (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 5*).

Goal 4 - Enhancing our Campus Culture of Diversity, Inclusion and Civic Engagement (*State Plan Goal: Success*)

- 4.1 **Community of inclusion** – Sustain our commitment to fostering and supporting a safe, civil and welcoming environment for students, faculty, and staff by being intentional about how our community encourages involvement, respect, and connection among its members (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 4*).
- 4.2 **Culturally responsive pedagogies** - Expand the use of culturally responsive pedagogies through faculty development (*State Plan: Success, Strategy 5, 6*).

Goal 5 - Ensure Long-term Viability of BSU (*State Plan Goal: Innovation*)

- 5.1 **Entrepreneurship/workforce development** – Develop entrepreneurship education for equipping the future workforce with leadership and entrepreneurial mindset required in the twenty-first century economy (*State Plan: Innovation, Strategy 9*).

COPPIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Obj. 3.1: Increase the six-year graduation rate for all students from 16.1 percent in fiscal year 2014 (2008 cohort) to 18 percent in fiscal year 2017 (2007 cohort).

Obj. 3.2: Increase the six-year graduation rate for all African-American students to 23 percent in fiscal year 2017 (2007 cohort).

Obj. 3.3: Maintain a second-year retention rate of 69 percent or greater for all undergraduate students from fiscal year 2014 (2012 cohort) through fiscal year 2017 (2015 cohort).

Obj. 3.4: Maintain a second-year retention rate of 59 percent or greater for African-American students from fiscal year 2014 (2012 cohort) through fiscal year 2017 (2015 cohort).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported that its second-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates for all students and African American students were almost identical. This is to be expected since the University is an historically black institution and African American students comprise the majority of the institution's undergraduate students.

Despite this, the University has detailed a number of structural changes and new initiatives in place aimed at addressing consistently low retention and graduation rates between its students with the anticipation that these endeavors would reverse current trends. Please describe how the institution evaluates the effectiveness of these initiatives, and identify the individual strategies that the University has identified as being most effective at increasing retention and graduation rates. In addition, please discuss how the University uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the established goals.

Response: Institutional retention and graduation rates of undergraduates have been increasing and continue to increase, due to newly implemented structures and program initiatives. Those are described in detail below:

1. Enrollment Action Team – The President of Coppin State University has an active role in monitoring retention and graduation rates with the campus. A team established during the FY 2016 year is comprised of members of the president's cabinet and members from key areas such as Admissions, Financial Aid, Information Technology, Records and Registration, and Academic Affairs. Once per week, usually on Wednesdays, the team works tirelessly to review data and respond to the needs of students during registration periods. The team targets specific groups of students (new, eligible but not enrolled, continuing, graduate, and transfers) in order to impact current enrollment and four-and six-year graduation rate cohorts. The team meets in the president's conference room and

is provided specific assignments guided by the outcomes of the data. Evaluation of the effectiveness of this group is conducted within the team by looking at past data trends, whether staffing levels/assignments are appropriate, and ultimately, the impact on the student groups. The disaggregation of the groups allows the action team to effectively target groups with additional customer relation strategies such as nudges for registration or counseling for financial services.

2. Academic Success Centers – The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs fully implemented the Academic Success Centers concept, supported by Title III funds. In the spring of 2017, all colleges were required to identify space and staff to establish and academic success centers within their units. After receiving training from the Provost’s office, staff within the Centers were able to fully execute their responsibilities of intrusive advisement, success coaching, and early recommendation for intervention services, such as tutoring in Mathematics, English, and other subjects. Each semester through the Student Hold system, students are required to meet with their advisor in the program major or in the designated College Academic Success and Retention Centers. The Academic Success Centers also manage and track student progression through their academic majors by monitoring cohorts. This activity facilitates improved and accurate advisement and allows for more interaction with students. Customer relations become a priority and students form ongoing relationships with their advisors becoming more familiar with requirements needed for completion and success. So far, using an evaluative lens, the Centers appear to be successful in their roles and are having positive impacts on retention. Each advisor within each center has a target list of students from their college for which he/she is responsible, along with specific retention (enrollment for continuing students) goals. 100% of the students now receive contact from advisors and are guided towards services that help them reenroll and progress through the university. Unfortunately, not all students are able to return due to financial constraints.

3. Use of Data Democratization – Data on campus have been decentralized. All employees of the university have access to live data at their desktops. Data available include enrollment, demographic information on students, cohort tracking, and other key data elements essential to student success. Retention and graduation, theoretically, is the job of everyone on campus. Having immediate access to data informs programing and any need for mid-course changes in processes and/or policies. Data may be used to extend deadlines for targeted groups of students or even prioritize service to some students or student groups before others, based on demography of other attributes that are predictive of behaviors and experiences on campus.

Through monitoring usage of the dashboards, the university is able to see an increase in use by staff members. In fact, members of the university community have requested specialize dashboards be created to assist them in monitoring student success data. As a result, specific and live data on retention metrics by college level are now available to certain staff members. Usage is increasing and strategy development continues to increase as it relates to the dashboards.

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Objective 2.1: Increase the second-year retention rate of all undergraduates from 77 percent in 2014 to 78 percent in 2019 and the six-year graduation rate from 56.0 percent in 2014 to 61.7 percent in 2019.

Objective 2.4: Maintain the second-year retention rate of African-American students at a level equal to or greater than the 2014 level of 80 percent.

Objective 2.5: Attain and preserve a six-year graduation rate of African-American students at 54 percent through 2019.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported that its second-year retention rate for African American students (78.2%) exceeded that of the total student population (76.7%). Yet, the University also reported that its six-year graduation rate for African American students (48.8%) lagged behind the rate for the total student population (55.2%). This gap in graduation rates is the largest (6.4 percentage points) the University has seen over the past five years and reverses an upward trend in graduation rates for all.

Describe the factors the University has identified that affect both these trends: the success in retaining African American students at rates comparable to all students and the challenges faced in sustaining enrolled students to graduation. What strategies are in place to maintain success and reverse a growing gap?

Response: Frostburg State University seeks to create a welcoming and safe environment that promotes the understanding of diversity, both domestically and internationally (**MHEC Strategy 4**). Its student population, being nearly 50% white and 50% underrepresented minority, is one of the most diverse in the University System of Maryland. In its Cultural Diversity Program, FSU includes strategies that focus on effective recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students from traditionally underrepresented groups. The university continues to explore possible reasons for lower persistence and graduation rates, particularly for its minority student population, and devise initiatives to address retention from sophomore year forward.

As mentioned previously in this report under Goal 3, Frostburg hired a Vice President for Enrollment Management in August 2018. This newly-created position was established to help the university recruit more students from Maryland and the region and, most importantly, to coordinate its services so that FSU students succeed and graduate on time.

Frostburg currently has several support programs and services in place to help enhance student success and increase African-American student persistence and graduation rates. These include a

required course for first-year students (Introduction to Higher Education), the student success services available through the Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR), opportunities to participate in off-campus leadership and diversity retreats, intrusive advising, student early-warning systems (Beacon and the First-Year Student Progress survey), and utilization of the HelioCampus analytics platform.

The required Introduction to Higher Education course includes activities that help students to engage in extracurricular activities of the university and achieve academic success. Instructors act as official academic advisors, beginning in students' first semester and ending when students are ready to move to an academic department advisor. Course requirements include an introduction to a National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) workshop that covers living in a diverse community and respecting and celebrating others' differences. Overall participation in the workshop has increased to 90% in fall 2017 (up from 85% fall 2016).

The Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR) continues to support retention and intervention efforts for targeted student populations - first year, undeclared, academic recovery, students in transition between majors. The Student Success Peer Mentoring program was revised September 2017 with a new training regimen and evaluation process. The START academic probation program increased the number of students (from 71 students to 111 students) served by both its recovery seminar and individual meetings with academic counselors.

Student Support Services (SSS), a federal TRiO program, is an educational opportunity project that helps low-income students, first-generation college students and students with disabilities to achieve their academic and personal goals. As an advocate for qualified students, SSS provides programs and services that help students develop the academic, interpersonal, and social skills needed for success at Frostburg. Over the last five years, the grant-based TRiO Upward Bound Program has served 156 participants, and 18.6% of these self-identified as minorities.

Wider implementation and increased use of *HelioCampus*, an analytic software platform that provides the University decision makers with up to date information and visualizations to understand and manage enrollment and retention, academic program success and productivity, and other key metrics across the University to ensure institutional effectiveness continued in FY18. Access to this information also allows users across each division of the University to make data-informed decisions that will improve student outcomes and success. The information provided by *HelioCampus* is critical across divisions to address questions about the student lifecycle, from prospect to graduate.

As of September 2018, all vice presidents, academic deans, and faculty leadership have received presentations on the use of *HelioCampus*, conducted by the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research. Data validation, model building, and technical and analytical staff training represents the foundational efforts thus far completed with the implementation of each platform. The first dashboards utilized by functional users are focused on enrollment issues. Department chairs regularly use dashboard to manage the academic programs within their purview and make decisions regarding section management, identify and address obstacle courses, and understand student flow from course to course or from entry program to other programs or graduation.

Because the university experiences a gender-based retention gap within the African-American student population and many African-American male students participate on athletic teams, and the Academic Success Network (ASN) and the Athletics Department collaborate on several initiatives. Athletics provides detailed playing and practice schedules for each sport to advisors working with first-year students to assist with academic planning. In addition, each sport sends a list of recruited athletes planning to register so advisors are aware of them. ASN, in turn, connects coaches to Beacon and provides the results of the First-Year Student Progress Survey to coaches so they know about any alerts their athletes receive through each of the early-alert systems.

Frostburg State University has identified a number of obstacles that may contribute to the gap between African-American and overall student graduation rates. These include finances, low velocity (number of credits earned per term compared to the ratio achieved by graduates), and low earned-credit ratios.

The university created a grant program for students experiencing financial hardship. The Unfinished Business grant is intended for students at the sophomore academic level and beyond who are having difficulty paying their student bill and exhausted their financial aid for the year.

Frostburg has also initiated a number projects to address low-credit accumulation. It encourages students to take at least 15 credits per semester, beginning their first term. In addition, the university has revamped its approach to working with students on academic probation, using protocols that Frostburg is piloting for the Stanford University College Transition Collaborative. The Tutoring Center has begun contacting students regarding the effectiveness of tutoring and working directly with departments that have courses with high DWF rates. Utilizing Starfish Course Explorer, the ASN staff is identifying courses that appear to have higher DFW rates for African-American students relative to other students and look for possible, unintentional barriers that could be eliminated (e.g. cost of materials, course policies, or access to support resources).

By working with each academic department, the Center for Academic Advising and Retention has established eight-semester plans for each major and concentration. Academic advisors extensively use these plans to help guide students as they select courses for the upcoming term and gauge their progress toward degree completion.

SALISBURY UNIVERSITY

Objective 4.1: The second-year retention rates of SU first-time, full-time freshmen will increase from 82.5 percent in FY 2014 to 86.3 percent in FY 2019.

Objective 4.2: The second-year retention rates of SU first-time, full-time African-American freshmen will increase from 85.0 percent in FY 2014 to 89.0 percent in FY 2019.

Objective 4.4: The six-year graduation rates of SU first-time, full-time freshmen will increase from 73.2 percent in FY 2014 to 75.0 percent in FY 2019.

Objective 4.5: The six-year graduation rates of SU first-time, full-time African-American freshmen will increase from 62.0 percent in FY 2014 to 68.1 percent in FY 2019.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported that its second-year retention rate for African American students (83.8%) was almost identical to that of the total student population (84.7%). Yet, the University also reported that its six-year graduation rates for African American students (70.5%) and all students (74.6%) have stayed relatively flat over time.

The University credits a number of initiatives with helping all students succeed, including an American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) program entitled “Re-Imagining the First Year of College,” an early warning program targeting first- and second-year students, and first-year advising program. It appears that these initiatives are having a positive effect on first- and second-year retention. However, the graduation rate remains flat. Please discuss any factors that the University has identified affecting students’ progress toward graduation, and describe any steps the University is taking to address these factors.

Response: The “Re-Imagining the First Year of College” project began in 2016. While SU continues to be involved in this initiative, the first cohort of students that would be impacted by the initiatives that were included in it were admitted in fall 2016. As a result, it will take six years, with students graduating in 2022, to see the effect of these strategies on the PAR graduation rates. A further examination of the graduation rates presented in the 2017 PAR revealed that it was the rate at which SU students graduated from another four-year institution within Maryland that declined, from 8.5% (2016 PAR) to 7.0% (2017 PAR). By comparison, students that started and graduated from SU within six years increased between 2016 and 2017, from 66.6% to 67.7%. Additionally, SU’s overall six-year graduation rate increased two percentage points for the current year. These gains in SU’s graduation rate are again the result in increasing the percentage of students graduating from SU, 70.1%, rather than another four-year

institution within Maryland. Even more impressive was the growth in graduation rates for African-American and minority students, each yielding more than a four percentage point gain, 4.2 and 4.6 percentage point increases, respectively.

The University is excited that our current second-year retention rates seem to indicate the success of our participation in the “Re-Imagining the First Year of College” initiative. For the second consecutive year, SU’s overall retention rates have increased, from 84.0% (2014 cohort) to 84.9% (2016 cohort). While the USM’s average second-year retention rate declined two percentage points during this time period, SU was one of only two USM institutions that increased their retention rates. Moreover, SU improved its second-year retention rate for African-American students 2.4 percentage points during the same time period. As a result, the University is optimistic that our participation in the “Re-Imagining the First Year of College” initiative, along with the adoption of the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC) will also yield improvements in six-year graduation rates.

TOWSON UNIVERSITY

Objective 3.4: Increase and maintain the African-American undergraduate second-year retention rate to 85 percent or above through fiscal year 2019.

Objective 3.6: Increase and maintain the African-American undergraduate graduation rate to 72 percent or above by fiscal year 2019.

Objective 4.1: Maintain the second-year retention rate of TU undergraduates at or above 87 percent through fiscal year 2019.

Objective 4.2: Maintain the six-year graduation rate of TU undergraduates at or above 72 percent through fiscal year 2019.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported that its second-year retention rate for African American students (89.7%) exceeded that of the total student population (87.3%). Yet, the University also reported that its most recent six-year graduation rate for African American students (69.0%) lagged behind the rate for the total student population (74.2%). This graduation rate gap has fluctuated between 7.0 percentage points (2013) and 3.8 percentage points (2015), sustaining at 5.2 percentage points the past two years.

Describe the factors the University has identified that affect both these trends: the success in retaining African American students at rates comparable to all students and the challenges faced in sustaining enrolled students' progress to graduation. What strategies are in place to maintain success and address graduation gaps?

Response TU's Closing the Achievement Gap Committee identified several factors associated with lower graduation rates for African-American students, including:

- insufficient financial resources result in students working, reducing study time and campus connections, and leading to "stop out" periods and difficulty returning and graduating.
- poor advising may lead to extended semesters of study and additional costs.
- insufficient inclusiveness, welcoming, and/or support may lead students to drop classes, resulting in extended semesters of study and additional costs.

TU has programs addressing retention and graduation rate gaps including:

Students Achieve Goals through Education (SAGE) Peer Mentoring Program.

Entering freshmen are invited to participate in a voluntary peer mentoring program. The 2017-2018 SAGE cohort was 430 students, 277 (64%) of whom were African-American. Seventy upper class student mentors, trained and supported by Student Success Programs staff, hold

weekly gathering focused on academic success strategies, multicultural awareness, personal development, and career development.

SAGE Residential Learning Community.

Forty-six first-generation students and 10 SAGE peer mentors live in this community. They annually participate in a 5-day pre-orientation experience focusing on academic persistence, gaining knowledge of campus academic resources and campus support networks, community building, and expanding multicultural knowledge.

Community Enrichment and Enhancement Partnership (CEEP) Award.

CEEP supported 115 students (75 African-American students) during 2017-2018, and focused on academic persistence, campus engagement, community service, leadership development, multicultural knowledge, faculty relationship development, post college employment preparation, graduate study preparation, and internship experience.

African-American Student Development (AASD) Program.

AASD supports, promotes, and enhances the academic, social, and personal development of students of African descent and heritage within a welcoming and nurturing environment.

University Sponsored Student Organizations.

Over 350 recognized student organizations allow students to make campus wide connections. Over 25 recognized African-American/Black/African Diasporic organizations create social connections, leadership development, engagement, and peer-to-peer support opportunities.

Leadership & Professional Development.

The Black Student Leadership Conference builds resiliency and empowers student leaders. Presentations and workshops prepare students for graduation and professional life.

Ujima Black Student Solidarity.

Ujima brings together student leaders from Black identity student organizations to strategically organize ways to uplift, empower, and educate the Black/African Diasporic community.

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

Objective 1.4: Annually maintain the second-year retention rate of all students and African-American students at 70 percent or greater.

Objective 1.6: Annually, UB will exceed the national benchmark six-year graduation rate for similar selective institutions of first-time, full-time degree seeking for all undergraduate students and African-American students.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported trend data showing that its second-year retention rate for African American students has fluctuated over the past five years, sometimes exceeding the rate for all students. Yet, the University also reported that its most recent six-year graduation rate for African American students (30.9%) lagged behind the rate for the total student population (36.1%). This graduation rate gap has fluctuated between 12.6 percentage points (2015) and 5.2 percentage points (2017).

Describe the factors the University has identified that affect both these trends: the success in retaining African American students at rates comparable to all students and the challenges faced in sustaining enrolled students' progress to graduation. What strategies are in place to maintain success and address graduation gaps?

Response: The University of Baltimore endeavors to give every admitted student an optimal opportunity to be successful in completing a UB degree. In this respect, the University provides services to a full range of students who qualify for additional educational support—including tutoring, collaborative learning, mentors, support groups, etc. Notwithstanding these efforts, our research has shown that for students with multiple academic risk factors (i.e., very low SAT Math and SAT Reading scores, Pell eligibility, or not having at least one parent who has attended college) significant remediation challenges are likely to remain. This is demonstrated in the higher failure rates in remediation coursework, and, consequently, lower retention rates as early as the second year. We acknowledge that these risk factors are more often associated with students in the minority student achievement gap groups.

The University is making progress in assisting students at risk to complete successfully the first year. The ratio of hours attempted to hours completed in the first year is rising sharply. Issues of student finances, however, present a different challenge to ameliorate, and this continues to be a challenge in retention. We have found that even if we can successfully assist the student in continuing to the 2nd year, the 3rd year retention proves challenging and we continue to identify barriers both financial and academic that impede student success.

As a consequence of this trend, the University is moving towards admitting students within its own ability to provide successful triage through academic support services. This will mean some reduction in admissions for some high-risk applicants to the University of Baltimore, but we believe that such an adjustment will provide for better and fairer academic opportunities for all students.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND – BALTIMORE

No response required.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND – BALTIMORE COUNTY

Objective 4.2: Maintain a retention rate of African-American students at 90 percent or greater through fiscal year 2019.

Objective 4.3: Increase the graduation rate of African-American students from 67.3 percent in fiscal year 2014 to 70 percent in fiscal year 2019.

Objective 5.1: Maintain a retention rate of UMBC undergraduate students at 90 percent or greater through fiscal year 2019.

Objective 5.2: Increase the graduation rate of UMBC undergraduates from 68.8 percent in fiscal year 2014 to 70 percent in fiscal year 2019.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported that its second-year retention rate for African American students (87.6%) exceeded that of the total student population (87.1%). Yet, the University also reported that its six-year graduation rate for African American students (61.9%) lagged behind the rate for the total student population (68.2%).

Describe the factors the University has identified that affect both these trends: the success in retaining African American students at rates comparable to all students and the challenges faced in sustaining enrolled students to graduation. What strategies are in place to maintain success and close existing gaps?

Response:

Differentials in retention and graduation rates between African American students and the total student population are largely driven by fluctuations in the rates for African American students due to the relatively small population size. In addition, MHEC and USM published rates tend to undercount the number retained and graduated because of reliance on Social Security numbers for tracking. Using our campus identifier, we generally have a few students more than MHEC reports, and with the small population of African Americans, a few students more can make a noticeable difference in rates.

UMBC continues to focus on student success for all students, both new freshman and new transfers, as described in our section on Retention and Graduation above. Improvements in these areas should benefit all students, thus addressing any race/ethnicity gaps that currently exist. Investment in analytics and initiatives supporting student success is a key part of our current strategic plan. Indeed first focus priorities of the plan are 1) to increase degree completion and

shorten time to degree for undergraduate and graduate students, and 2) systematically improve the quality and consistency of academic advising and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students. First steps in the plan implementation in support of these areas included launching the Undergraduate Student Success (UGSS) and Persistence Committees, base-funding analytics tools, and launching some of the initiatives described in our MFR narrative (e.g., Finish 15 Campaign, Degree Planner, and the Guide, to name a few). Next steps in the coming years include continued analysis of the impact of degree pathways and course scheduling on time to degree, retention, and graduation rates; analyzing and taking action toward UGSS committee goals; and identifying bottlenecks in course planning and scheduling and work with departments to design and assess interventions.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND – COLLEGE PARK

Objective 1.4: Maintain the second-year student retention rate of all UMCP students between 94.7 percent in 2014 to 95 percent or higher by 2019.

Objective 1.5: Increase the six-year graduation rate for all UMCP students from 84.1 percent in 2014 to 85 percent by 2019.

Objective 1.8: Maintain the second-year retention rate of African-American students from 93.6 percent in 2014 to 95 percent by 2019.

Objective 1.9: Increase the six-year graduation rate for UMCP African-American students from 77.4 percent in 2014 to 79 percent by 2019.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported that its second-year retention rate for African American students (94.9%) was almost the same as that of the total student population (95.3%). Yet, the University also reported that its six-year graduation rate for African American students (81.1%) lagged behind the rate for the total student population (86.6%).

In its Report, the University acknowledges that achievement gaps exist between its student populations and describes several initiatives aimed at helping ensure students meet their educational goals. The University states it “cataloged programs aimed at closing the achievement gap and conducted a pilot of an ID swipe system [and]... started to catalog living learning and other special programs and began to conduct in-depth reviews of these programs.”

Please discuss any preliminary results from this analysis and share any best practices that may be replicable at other institutions.

Response: UMCP undertook several initiatives aimed at helping students meet educational goals. Building a comprehensive list of programs aimed at closing the achievement gap organized by theme and target population allowed administrators to review overlaps and gaps in student services. Piloting an ID swipe process set the foundation for further program evaluation based on student participation. Initial efforts to incorporate ID swipe records into program evaluation will continue in the coming year and more data will be available at that time. In-depth review of living learning and other special programs included piloting a new, more structured process involving program staff, faculty, students, and review team members. Though last year’s process did not review programs specifically aimed at closing the achievement gap, it provided a conduit for thinking deeply about inclusion and diversity within the living learning programs reviewed and set the foundation for a successful program review process.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND – EASTERN SHORE

Objective 4.1: Increase the second-year retention rate for all UMES students from 73 percent in 2014 to 80 percent in 2019.

Objective 4.2: Increase the six-year graduation rate for all UMES students from 39 percent in 2014 to 50 percent in 2019.

Objective 4.3: Increase the second-year retention rate for all African-American students from 73 percent in 2014 to 80 percent in 2019.

Objective 4.4: Increase the six-year graduation rate for African-Americans from 38 percent in 2014 to 50 percent in 2019.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported its second-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates for all students and African American students are almost identical. This is to be expected since the University is an historically black institution and African American students comprise the majority of the institution's undergraduate students.

However, both the second-year retention rate (63.0%) and the six-year graduation rate (43.0%) are well below the 2019 benchmarks established by the institution (80.0% and 50.0% respectively). The University acknowledged in its Report a decline in undergraduate enrollment and a corresponding decline in retention rates and flattened graduation rates. In response, the University discussed several efforts, including the President's commitment to sustain student retention and graduation as a central strategic priority. The University also states "several programs have been put in place to reestablish and sustain the upward trajectory of the retention and graduation trends." Please detail these programs, providing information on how they are evaluated for their effectiveness at helping the University meet its aggressive goals. Which individual strategies have been most effective at increasing retention and graduation rates, and which have been less effective?

Response:

Background

For two consecutive years (fall 2016 and fall 2017) UMES has experienced significant enrollment declines including non-returning first-time, full-time students. In addition, serious declines have also occurred in retention and graduation rates. This has partly been due to staffing instability in enrollment management and less effective enhancement of onboarding and orientation processes. To help address this, new staff have recently been hired, including directors of Admissions and Financial Aid and a First Year Experience (FYE) coordinator.

Retention Rates

UMES is committed to sustaining an upward trajectory in student persistence and success and continues to include these priority outcomes in its strategic plan. To achieve its aggressive objectives for increasing its second-year retention rate to 80% (2019) for all students and African American students from 73% (2014), several interventions have been implemented. These interventions include, but are not limited to (i) Enhanced First-year Experience-Hawk Mentor Partnership program, (ii) Future Outstanding Cohort of University Students (F.O.C.U.S), (iii) Tutorial services, (iv) Modified onboarding and orientation processes, and (v) Implementation of the Starfish Retention Solution.

First Year Experience

The enhanced First-Year Experience (FYE)–Hawk Mentorship program is a combination of courses and services to support academic and social integration of first year students. In AY 2016-2017 over 40 First-Year Experience courses were offered to freshmen by faculty, staff, and Hawk mentors, under the leadership of a newly-appointed FYE coordinator. FYE programming also included workshops and forums addressing such topics as Civic Engagement and Financial Literacy. The value added by students' participation in the FYE–Hawk Mentorship program is confirmed by grades at mid and end of semester. While 81% of participants scored a C grade and above at mid-term, 93% did so at the end of the semester in the fall of 2016. Since high academic performance increases chances of a student's retention (Nyirenda and Gong, 2010), students' participation in FYE courses and student support services/activities will continue to be encouraged and a systematic retention analysis between FYE and non-FYE retention rates will be conducted to assess the exact impact of FYE on second-year retention.

The FOCUS (Future Outstanding Cohort of University Students) Academic Probation Program

Students participating in FOCUS receive academic coaching/advising, facilitated workshops, tutoring and mentoring. Additionally, the FOCUS program includes an Academic Retention Success Strategies course, ARSS 188. This is a non-credit course in which all students on academic probation are encouraged to enroll and successfully complete the course. Those students who received a 'satisfactory' score in ARSS 188 received a higher cumulative GPA than those who did not receive a 'satisfactory' score. Also, there was a 16% difference in the cumulative GPA of all identified probationary students at the end of the fall 2016 semester.

Academic probation programming helped more students improve their academic standing during the 2017-18 academic year. This led to a higher percentage of students retained for the following semester. Academic coaching/advising provided students the chance to work individually with academic coaches to enhance their academic skills, gain confidence, discover motivation, and improve performance. Students scheduled 30 minute block appointments with their academic coaches at least twice each semester. In addition, facilitating workshops for all students but primarily FOCUS students was a strategy designed to expand students' knowledge in areas related to: study skills, note taking, test anxiety, learning styles, time management, and relationship building. In addition to offering services to the general student population, the Center for Access and Academic Success (CAAS) in the future will also systematically offer services to students with specific needs using a cohort model so that they can assess the impacts of different strategies on student retention more effectively including the retention of first-time, full-time student cohorts.

Starfish Retention Solutions

The acquisition and implementation of this leading enterprise student success system provides a comprehensive system that reinforces and enhances processes used to identify at-risk students, manage interventions, and build campus-wide collaboration. This will further support advising, student success initiatives, and consistency in retention practices, and will positively impact graduation rates.

Graduation Rates

In an effort to increase graduation rates at UMES, academic departments and academic support staff implemented a 90 credit hour review. This support strategy requires that academic advisors in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar review the academic degree audits of students with 90 credits or more to ensure that the student is on track for graduation and is meeting all the requirements for degree completion. This strategy has assisted the university with catching missed or incomplete requirements, thus allowing students to complete their degree requirements without additional semesters of enrollment. Another effort to increase progression and graduation rates is the *C* program which encourages students to take 15 credits per semester in order to complete the standard 120 credit hour degree program within four years. This is a win-win for both students and UMES. Students participating in ***Take 15*** typically graduate with a bachelor's degree in four years and significantly reduce their debt burden. The higher the four-year graduation rate, the greater the likelihood for UMES to achieve a higher six-year graduation rate.

For the upcoming academic year, additional programming will be put in place to reestablish and sustain an upward trajectory of retention and graduation rates that includes the use of predictive analytics to make data-informed decisions and provide attainable solutions to help prevent attrition and promote student completion. Other efforts include a revision of UMES' retention plan inclusive of a guided pathways approach that will monitor students' academic career from connection, entry, progression, through completion and full implementation of the Starfish Retention Solution (MFR Objectives 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4).

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND – UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Commission Assessment (not tied to a specific indicator): In 2017, the University enrolled 11,959 African American undergraduate students, which is approximately 7,000 more African American undergraduate students than the largest historically black institution in Maryland.

Despite this sizeable enrollment of African American students, the University does not report on its retention and graduation rates of African American students for the Performance Accountability Report. Therefore, please describe what success and completion data the University collects on its students and what, if any, achievement gaps it identifies within its student populations. If there are gaps, please discuss what initiatives and efforts are in place to ensure all students enrolled at the University meet their educational goals.

Response: By virtue of its mission, UMUC serves a diverse and highly non-traditional population of students. As of Fall 2017, more than 86% of UMUC undergraduates are transfer students; more than 67% are military-affiliated; 19% are military veterans; 75% work full-time; just under 50% have children under the age of 18 living with them; their median age is 31 years old; and they take as long as 6, 8 and 10 years to complete degrees. Thus, the monitoring of student success and completion is in the context of these unique student attributes. These include 6-year and 8-year graduation rates for stateside enrolled student groups:

Graduation Rates for Undergraduate Subgroups	% of Cohort	Stateside	
		6 year rate (150% time)	8 year rate (200% time)
New to UMUC, all undergraduates, fall 2009 <i>(All full time and part time degree-seeking students (new freshmen and transfers) who are new to UMUC and starting in the Fall)</i>	100.00%	24%	26%
New to UMUC, re-enrolled undergraduates, fall 2009 <i>(All full time and part time degree-seeking students (new freshmen and transfers) who are new to UMUC and starting in the Fall and reenrolled in the Spring semester)</i>	63.70%	35%	38%
First time FT, fall 2009 <i>(First time, full time, degree seeking students who are new to college and started in the Fall)</i>	2.7%	8%	9%
First time FT + PT, fall 2009 <i>(First time, full time and part time, degree seeking students who are new to college and started in the Fall)</i>	18.30%	6%	7%
Transfer students transferring more than 60 credits, re-enrolled, fall 2009 <i>(New fall transfer students with more than 60 transfer credits who re-enrolled in the Spring)</i>	25.50%	54%	57%
Veterans (Undergraduates), fall 2009 <i>(Veteran students who started in Fall)</i>	7.6%	32%	34%
SOC (Service Member's Opportunity College) - Military transfer students, FY2009 <i>(Undergraduate bachelor-seeking military students who transferred 9 credits or more, completed the 3rd 3-credit course in FY 2009 with the previous two courses completed no earlier than FY 2008, and earned a cumulative GPA of 2 or more)</i>	N/A	46%	51%

Those students most successful at UMUC are clearly those who bring transfer credit and who are successful in an online modality (as indicated by reenrollment in the following term). UMUC has initiated development of a comprehensive retention and success strategy, beginning with two complementary strategic hires in summer 2018, one each in Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs. A long-term retention and completion strategy, informed by business analytics, is under development to improve retention and graduation across all student groups of the university.

MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Objective 1.1: Increase the graduation rate of Morgan undergraduates to 40 percent by 2017.

Objective 1.3: Increase the second-year retention rate of Morgan undergraduates to 78 percent by 2017.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported its second-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates for all students and African American students are almost identical. This is to be expected since the University is an historically black institution and African American students comprise the majority of the institution's undergraduate students.

The University reported that retention and graduation have received a great deal of focus and attention in recent years, noting that the rate has sustained at or above 70.0% for the past several years. Six-year graduation rates have also sustained at a rate of 30.0% or above over the same time frame. Describe the factors the University has identified that affect these trends. Which individual strategies have been most effective at increasing retention and graduation rates, and which have been less effective? What strategies are in place to help the University achieve its aggressive benchmarks?

Response: Beginning with the fall 2010 freshman cohort, Morgan has achieved retention rates above 70% for seven consecutive years. This was achieved through a combination of early intervention strategies, systematic tracking and monitoring, and academic coaching and mentoring. The Office of Student Success and Retention (OSSR) staff spend most of their time monitoring and tracking students' finances and satisfactory academic progress. The OSSR works to produce graduates of Morgan State University who are well prepared to meet the challenges of internship, graduate school, professional school, and career following their successful matriculation and graduation from the institution. As a result of grants from the Lumina Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Maryland Higher Education Commission, Morgan has invested in new technologies including the Education Advisory Board's (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC), Hobson's Starfish Retention Solutions, and Ellucian's Degree Works. These tools have assisted the OSSR with strategic tracking and monitoring, auditing and degree planning, academic coaching and mentoring, course redesign, and predictive analytics. Our intrusive, intentional student success initiatives have helped Morgan gain national recognition for our efforts, winning the 2017 Hobsons Education Advances Award for Student Success and Advisement, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' (APLU) 2016 Turning Points Award, and the 2015 APLU Project Degree Completion Award for our outstanding efforts to increase retention rates and promote student success; Morgan State University is the only HBCU to ever have won these national awards.

One successful strategy to increase retention and graduation rates is first-year advising. In collaboration with the Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA), the Office of Student Success and Retention (OSSR) has utilized Starfish to assist with the academic advising of all first-year freshman students. All first-year freshman students are advised by CASA and OSSR staff. Departmental liaisons have been identified to provide additional curriculum details and advising strategies for the CASA and OSSR staff. Holds are placed on every first-year student's account preventing them from making changes to their course schedule without consulting with an academic advisor first. Once first-year students have earned at least 24 credits with a 2.0 minimum cumulative GPA and a declared major, they are reassigned to their departmental/faculty advisor for the balance of their matriculation. All of the notes from first-year advising meetings are saved in Starfish for faculty advisors to refer back to in subsequent advising meetings. Every student has an online advising folder through Starfish.

Every semester, Morgan averages more than 30,000 tracking items in Starfish. As a result of two Spring 2018 Starfish Progress Surveys and manually raised tracking items, Morgan had 35,077 flags or tracking items in Starfish from the Spring 2018 semester alone including 18,309 faculty raised flags + 7,314 kudos + 142 referrals + 29 to-do's + 9,283 system raised mid-term & final grade flags. Additionally, 65,501 attendance records were taken, 402 profiles were created, 305 faculty/advisor office hour blocks were added, and 2,657 appointments were created in Starfish between January 22, 2018 and May 11, 2018. We now have more than 300,000 unique data points in Starfish since its adoption in January 2014. Once per year, our Office of Institutional Research completes a comprehensive evaluation of Starfish to include both quantitative data and qualitative data from faculty and student surveys. A Spring 2015 analysis of Starfish (IPAS) from Spring 2014 through Spring 2015 by the Office Institutional Research at Morgan found that: 1) the majority of D's at mid-term were raised to C or better by the end of each semester; 2) the mean cumulative GPA of students with concern flags has been above 2.0, with about 75% of these students ending the semester with GPAs at or above 2.0; and, 3) results of the annual University Student Satisfaction Survey indicate that student satisfaction with advising increased from 2.4 to 2.6 on a scale of 0 (F) to 4 (A) from Spring 2014 to Spring 2015.

A Fall 2016 analysis of Starfish (IPAS) by the Office Institutional Research at Morgan found that: 1) 28,289 of the 32,037 Fall 2016 undergraduate grades had corresponding Starfish tracking items (flags, kudos, referrals, or to-do's); 2) the majority of D and F grades at mid-term (9,272 grades below C at mid-term) were improved to grades of C or better with the help of Starfish (5,166 grades below C at final); and, 3) of the 3,748 grades that did not have corresponding Starfish tracking items, 39 had grades of D and F at mid-term and that increased to 117 grades of D and F at final. For the first time, the correlation between Starfish and mid-term and final grades can be observed in both directions: with Starfish grades are likely to improve from mid-term to final, and without Starfish grades may slip from mid-term to final. Starfish Retention Solutions (by Hobsons) continues to operate as an invaluable, comprehensive, and transformative advising, tracking, and monitoring tool for Morgan State University.

For the OSSR staff (advising and counseling staff), Starfish, Degree Works, and EAB SSC have greatly reduced the hours of time spent identifying cohorts of students to be contacted manually. Also, Starfish has allowed for seamless intervention by the OSSR staff for identified cohorts of students, especially the early alerts triggered by instructional faculty. The result has been

automated, individualized emails and messages to students from OSSR staff. For students, Starfish has provided access to one online resource where all academic coaching and mentoring as initiated by OSSR staff, academic advisors, and faculty can be obtained and acted upon. Students' response rates to interventions including the scheduling of appointments has increased and facilitated more engagement with faculty, staff, and student support offices.

Integrating the Degree Works and EAB SSC (Education Advisory Board Student Success Collaborative) tools into the existing iPASS initiative at Morgan provides synergy and a “360 degree” approach to student success innovation. Together, Starfish Retention Solutions, Degree Works, and EAB SSC provide a seamless strategy to support students from matriculation to graduation to include education planning, counseling and coaching, and targeting risk and intervention. In 2016, Morgan State University was awarded the Lumina Foundation’s HBCU Student Success Grant. This three year project assists three HBCUs (Morgan State University, Howard University, and Dillard University) in implementing promising institutional policies and practices in order to 1) increase attainment for all students and 2) reduce attainment gaps. Utilization of the EAB SSC predictive analytics tool is at the heart of the activities and strategies we are employing to produce the expected outcomes. A secondary strategy for the Lumina HBCU grant, flowing out of the first, is the implementation of a second-year experience (SYE) program. Membership in EAB-SSC has allowed Morgan to more effectively utilize institutional data and comprehensive analytics to assess students’ academic progress, predict potential challenges, and develop highly targeted strategies that support their success. EAB-SSC is a three-pronged integrative approach to addressing student success through technology, research and consulting. The first prong, SSC-Campus, is a comprehensive student analytics and support technology platform that integrates analytics, interaction and workflow tools. SSC-Campus has expanded OSSR advisors’ access to individual and collective academic performance data, facilitate communication among academic advisers and academic support offices, and generate institutional reports in real time. By identifying and exploring factors that have the potential to positively inform curriculum, academic support, academic policy, and administrative process decisions, this tool has significantly improved our capacity to retain and graduate our students. Especially noteworthy is the utilization of the platform by the entire university community, including professional and faculty advisers, provost, deans, department chairs, enrollment management, student support offices, student affairs, institutional research, and assessment staff.

In 2016, in an effort to enhance and sustain increases in retention in graduation rates, Morgan’s President, Dr. David Wilson, hosted a "deep dive" retreat for his cabinet, deans, chairs, and senior administrators. Dr. Timothy Renick, Vice Provost and Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success, presented in-person an exciting example of strategic, systemic, and evidence-based change at Georgia State University set the tone for the introduction of a proposal for a new strategic campaign to increase Morgan State University’s graduate rates: The Morgan State University “50 by 25” Initiative: Getting More Students Across the Finish Line, a campaign to increase Morgan’s graduation rate to 50% by the year 2025 has continued into its second year with emphasis on three central themes: 1) Advising and Degree Planning; 2) Faculty Development and Course Redesign; and 3) Beyond Financial Aid (BFA). The “50 by 25” Campaign includes half-day, check-in meetings twice per year in April and November for the cabinet, deans, chairs, and senior administrators to report-out on their progress. The adoption

of Starfish, Degree Works, and EAB SSC support the 50 by 25 Campaign to continue gains in student success.

ST. MARY’S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

Objective 2.2: Achieve and maintain 4-year graduation rates for all students (70 percent), all minorities (59 percent), African-American students (51 percent), Hispanic students (70 percent), all first generation students (65 percent), and all students with a Pell Grant disbursed during their first semester (58 percent). Maintain 6-year graduation rates for all students (80 percent), all minorities (74 percent), African-American students (71 percent), Hispanic students (80 percent), all first generation students (78 percent) and all Pell Grants disbursed during their first semester (68 percent).

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the College reported that its four-year graduation rate for African American students (48.7%) was lower than that of the total student population (67.4%). And similarly, the College also reported that its six-year graduation rate for African American students (55.8%) lagged behind the rate for the total student population (77.8%). The gap in both the four- and six-year graduation rates has widened over time.

Describe the factors the College has identified that affect these trends. What strategies are in place to reverse growing gaps and achieve the College’s aggressive benchmarks?

Response: As mentioned as part of the discussion of Objective 2.2 above, an analysis of historical factors contributing to retention and persistence was recently undertaken by the SMCM Retention Committee. The approach was to identify characteristics (“milestones”) that, if met, were linked to higher retention and graduation rates over the past several years. These characteristics were also investigated for their potential differential impact on students from underrepresented groups including students of color, first-generation students, and Pell grant recipients.

Several milestones were identified that both strongly impacted student retention and persistence, and also appeared to be actionable in terms of influencing student behavior. For African American students, the three most impactful factors appear to be the following. All numbers are derived from at least 2 years of data.

Milestone/ Characteristic	Percent of AA Students	Four-Year Grad Rate	Six-Year Grad Rate
Earned 32+ credits in first year	41%	68%	63%
Earned <32 credits in first year	59%	34%	52%
Declared a major by the sophomore year	70%	70%	85%
No major declared by sophomore year	30%	42%	56%
Enrolled in STEM Emerging Scholars Program	27%	68%	81%
Not enrolled in STEM Emerging Scholars Program	73%	43%	48%

1. Not surprisingly, earning 32 credits in the first year (timely progress toward a four-year degree) is strongly associated with higher four-year graduation rates, and less strongly with higher six-year graduation rates. A majority of African American students over the past several years have not reached this milestone. We plan to implement advising strategies aimed at encouraging all students, and particularly African American students, to enroll in 32 credits in the first year (16 credits per semester) whenever possible. We will continue to offer academic workshops and additional intrusive advising to provide further support. To this end, we recently created a new Student Support Specialist position in the Office of Student Support Services to create and coordinate additional academic support programming.

On a positive note, four-year graduation rates are projected to increase for African American students to 57% in FY19 and 56% in FY20, for students in the Fall 2015 and 2016 cohorts respectively, based on current earned credits and progress toward the degree. Both of these rates would surpass our target for African American students, and would narrow the gap relative to the all-student population to within 10 percentage points. Interestingly, there appears to be a concurrent trend for more students in the later cohorts to complete 32 credits in the first year. Among African American students in the Fall 2010-13 cohorts, 62% did not complete 32 credits in the first year. This proportion is slowly declining, with 60% in Fall 2014, 57% in Fall 2015, and 44% in the Fall 2016 cohort failing to complete 32 credits. These historical data provide further support for our intention to focus on advising African American students to attempt and complete a full 16-credit load each semester.

2. Having declared a major by the fourth semester (end of the sophomore year) is associated with a nearly 30% gain in four-year and six-year graduation rates among African American students. Again, this suggests an opportunity for a wide range of advising-based interventions. It is unclear whether undeclared students have not chosen a major because they are indecisive, or are uninformed about their options. Proactively offering extensive and varied information about the different major programs at SMCM could be helpful in encouraging students to explore alternative majors that they may not have previously considered, and may increase persistence by strengthening their commitment to the college and to an academic “home”.

3. Among African American students taking gateway science or math courses their first year, those enrolled in an accompanying Emerging Scholars Program (ESP) course have persisted at substantially increased rates. Although enrollment in ESP courses is limited by resources and pedagogy (small class sizes), these data suggest it would be productive to explore ways to expand ESP offerings to additional students if possible.