

ST MARY'S
COLLEGE *of* MARYLAND

The National Public Honors College

St. Mary's College of Maryland
Cultural Diversity Report

2022

Section 1: A summary of the institution's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)-explicit initiatives or efforts for the following four populations: (a) student, (b) faculty, (c) non-faculty staff, and (d) administration.

(a) Students

DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program

In 2008, the College created the DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program to promote the availability of a liberal arts education to underrepresented students in higher education. The program provides a highly structured college experience to promote student success. Before beginning their first year, students are eligible to attend a two-week summer bridge program, consisting of coursework taught by College faculty where students are introduced to the rigor of our institution. Students also receive intensive advising (meeting every 3 weeks), participate in the same first-year seminar as other DeSousa-Brent Scholars (to facilitate cohort building), and in their second semester, enroll in a leadership seminar where they carry out a campus-wide leadership project. In addition, students in their sophomore through senior years participate in various academic and social support programs and initiatives, including leadership development, graduate school preparation, selecting a major, a fall retreat to remain engaged during mid-semester, degree audits, stress/time management, and social programs to build community with other students in the program. Since its inception, 554 students have participated in this program. The DeSousa-Brent Scholars program is available to underrepresented students who are first generation college students, eligible to receive Pell Grants, ethnic minorities, disabled, and/or from rural or urban communities.

Sum primus

Established in 2017 by President Tuajuanda Jordan, a first-generation student herself, *Sum primus* enables students who are the first in their families to attend college to be part of a network of support including their parents and other first-generation students and faculty. The program seeks to increase retention and four year graduation rates for first generation students. As part of the *Sum primus* program students can attend a summer bridge program that will immerse students in campus. A first year living/learning center allows students to consider the important balance between curricular and co-curricular experiences at the College. Students then continue on to a first-generation peer-to-peer mentoring program between students, staff, and faculty. Currently there are over 50 students, staff, and faculty members who have registered to be part of mentoring. During the summer, alumni mentors will be included in *Sum primus* programming to provide professional development opportunities beyond St. Mary's. Through in-depth advising and on-campus networking, *Sum primus* programming will provide students more access to high-impact experiential practices as well.

Additional Initiatives

In addition to these programs, the College has partnered with the District of Columbia College Access Program (DCCAP) and TheDream.US Scholarship program (Dreamers) to increase the access of first-generation and marginalized students to the College. Our partnerships with these two programs seek to increase the enrollment of Latinx students. Once enrolled at St. Mary's College of Maryland, students are financially supported through the work of *Sum primus* and the DeSousa-Brent Scholars programs.

(b) Faculty

In fall 2021, St. Mary's College of Maryland began the first phase of a two-year cluster hire process. Our goal with the Ross Fellows program is to actively center inclusive diversity in all parts of our educational practice. With the launch of the initiative in AY2022, the College will build and foster a network of promising new faculty whose expertise across their diverse fields of specialization will further elevate our research profile, and whose pedagogical practice will improve the educational experience of underrepresented students. To enhance recruitment and retention, the Ross Fellows will be supported by supplementary research and/or salary funding, targeted professional development and mentoring, and community support from the Division of Inclusive Diversity, Equity, Access, and Accountability (IDEAA) and other campus partners.

In addition to the launch of the Ross Fellows program, the College entered into an agreement with the National Registry of Diverse and Strategic Faculty to post all of the College's faculty positions. The REGISTRY is a national database of diverse and strategic candidates seeking ladder-rank employment as faculty members at institutions of higher education. As a subscribing member, the College is able to search from among over 1,500 candidates consisting of diverse and strategic faculty and doctoral students seeking jobs in higher education.

In an effort to retain new diverse hires, IDEAA is working with Human Resources and Academic Affairs to make the College's onboarding process and new faculty orientation more culturally responsive. This has included working on a cultural engagement guide that spotlights local resources and businesses that would be of interest to our marginalized employees. Additionally, IDEAA continues to sponsor its annual Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) luncheon for faculty and staff. This event affords those who attend the opportunity to meet in an environment in which they can support and mentor one another.

(c) Non-Faculty-staff

The Inclusive Diversity, Equity, Access, and Accountability (IDEAA) unit and Human Resources (HR) have been working to expand the diversity of the applicant pools for non-faculty and administrative positions. HR has well-established Affirmative Action protocols associated with searches. As part of their protocols, HR fails searches if the candidate pools are not representative of the campus community.

In the spring of 2022, HR and IDEAA partnered with a vendor who specializes in broadening the diversity of applicant pools via a range of group-targeted employment boards. These groups range from racial and gender to veteran status and ability. In addition to their own boards, the company partners with national organizations such as the Urban League and Council for Latino Workplace Equity (CLWE) to place information about the jobs. IDEAA and HR are working together to develop additional ways to increase the diversity of applicant pools.

The cultural engagement guide, referenced above, is also disseminated to newly-hired staff. The information listed for faculty is the same for staff.

(d) Administration

The approaches presented in the “Non-faculty Positions” section are also used for administrative searches for both those searches performed “in-house” and those for which an external search firm is retained. Additionally, the College places advertisements in publications that target diverse job-seekers.

Section 2: A description of the governing, administrative, coordinating bodies, and institutional offices, if any, that exist on campus that are solely dedicated to DEI.

Beginning in 2015, the College formalized its equity work with the creation of the IDEs (Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity) office. In the Fall of 2020, IDEs was relaunched as IDEAA (Inclusive Diversity, Equity, Access, and Accountability). The work of IDEAA is done through innovative programming and the coordination of initiatives and resources. IDEAA focuses on implementing inclusive and equitable practices to achieve academic and/or professional success for all campus community members. IDEAA is a reflection of the College's commitment to providing an inclusively diverse campus community where all students, staff, and faculty can thrive.

IDEAA's mission is to lead campus-wide efforts to create and sustain policies, initiatives, and resources that ensure that the College is a welcoming, transformative, and empowering institution. To ensure that this goal is achieved, IDEAA has worked in partnership with several offices to review equity data. IDEAA is currently working on an accountability structure to provide feedback to faculty and staff on student related issues. The accountability matrix will include not just academic achievement, e.g. retention and graduation rates, but include climate information to further inform the work of IDEAA and the partnering offices.

The work of IDEAA spreads beyond data collection and analysis to programming and partnerships with student and staff/faculty organizations. The office has partnered with several student organizations to provide diverse programs for the College community. These programs include a documentary screening and writing workshop during Hispanic Heritage Month, performances to celebrate African American History Month, and support for Lavender Graduation, an event to recognize the accomplishments of LGBTQ graduates. Throughout COVID, IDEAA has been able to bring together BIPOC staff and faculty to provide them with opportunities to fellowship and find support amongst individuals that are similarly situated.

The IDEAA's work is informed by the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) "Framework for Advancing Anti-Racism on Campus" (2021). NADOHE's framework outlines ten (10) priority areas that each campus needs to review in an equitable manner to address the legacies of racism that remain in their systems. To address these priority areas, IDEAA employs the Shared Equity Leadership (SEL) model developed by the American Council on Education (ACE). SEL moves equity work from one person's responsibility to everyone's responsibility and multiple campus stakeholders collectively share leadership for equity. This process makes equity an ingrained part of campus culture instead of an additional program or process.

Section 3: A description of the institution's DEI data or metrics (including, but not limited to, Equity Scorecards, Equity Audits, Campus Climate Surveys). Please do not include actual data; include only a description of the data or metrics. This should also include a description of how these data assist in driving the institution's actions and interventions to eliminate educational diversity, inclusion and equity gaps.

As part of its equity work, St. Mary's College of Maryland embarked on several initiatives to intentionally review the effectiveness of the equity and access programs it has implemented.

The IDEAA Division is currently in the process of an equity audit of policies, procedures and data. Launched in summer 2021, IDEAA has led a policy equity work group of staff, students and faculty members to review all the policies and procedures through an equity lens. The work group gathers and reviews all College policies to identify, and makes recommendations to address any discriminatory or inequitable effects. In addition, the work group must determine whether additional policies are needed to promote a more equitable living, learning, and working environment.

In addition to auditing the policies and procedures for their equitable impacts, IDEAA is reviewing data that affect equity for staff and students. For students, student success measures such as retention rates, graduation rates, and time to degree are disaggregated by race, gender, first-generation status, and low-income status. Academic milestones that are known to impact retention and graduation (such as attempted credits in the first semester, earned credits in the first year, and completion of a college math course in the first year) are also monitored for the same sub-populations of students. Added to these markers, IDEAA has worked with partnering units to look at disaggregated class and department data to identify areas of success and improvement. Identification of equity gaps assists in driving the design of programming and interventions to support students and maximize their success. These conversations have led to changes in the way gateway classes are taught and, in some instances, modifications to course structure/classroom policies.

Section 4: A description of how the diverse perspectives and voices of all students are captured and utilized in informing the campus's DEI efforts.

In addition to surveys and meeting directly with various student groups, the College has established two student groups to inform its diversity policies and work. The first group is the Affinity Leadership Council (ALC). The ALC is composed of the leadership of the different affinity groups, e.g. Black Student Union (BSU), Asian Pacific American Club (APAC), St. Mary's Triangle and Rainbow Society (STARS), etc., on campus. These students come together once a month to meet and discuss the different issues that members of their groups are facing, support one another in programming efforts, and work on ways to address the different issues that they are facing. To ensure a shared leadership approach, the group is convened by the IDEAA senior student intern. With a peer convening the group, students speak more freely. The information shared during these meetings is summarized and shared with the Chief Diversity Officer, a member of the rest of the IDEAA staff. These sessions have proven to be invaluable in addressing student concerns and in enhancing the College's diversity training.

The second student group that assists in directing diversity and inclusion on the campus is the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Student Services Advisory Committee whose charge is to establish programs and services for the LGBTQ student community at St. Mary's College of Maryland. The goals of the committee are to promote the safety and success of students and to facilitate and support a collaborative approach to establishing programs and services for LGBTQ students. The committee meets on a monthly basis and provides guidance on the issues that affect this community, and works directly with the leadership of Student Affairs in addressing identified issues. The membership is composed of students, staff, faculty and administration.

In addition to these two and other active ways of discussing DEI policies and providing student voices, the IDEAA unit, in close collaboration with leadership in Student Affairs, has enhanced the bias reporting and support program. This initiative has increased training for specific units, generated media awareness campaigns, and other activities to create a more positive college community.

Appendix

Cultural Diversity Plan St. Mary's College of Maryland Academic Year 2021-2022

Inclusive Diversity at St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) is a foundational tenet of the overall institutional mission. Our work is marked by our intention to “foster... a community dedicated to honesty, civility, and integrity” as stated in the SMCM mission statement. In Fall 2020, the Office of Inclusive Diversity and Equity (IDE) was reimagined as the Division of Inclusive Diversity, Equity, Access, and Accountability (IDEAA), reflecting a broadened scope of responsibility and renewed commitment to equity and diversity while also holding our community accountable for our efforts. IDEAA is committed to engaging the entire campus with a robust slate of activities aimed at program design, curriculum reform, alumni engagement, policy creation and general campus climate reform. Additionally, promoting and embracing cultural diversity and cultural competence among SMCM constituents is essential to the success of the institution as the nation's public honors college; hence, inclusion, diversity, equity, accountability and access are prominent themes that recur throughout the College's last [Strategic Plan](#).

During the 2021-22 academic year, as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, SMCM will reinvigorate our strategic planning efforts with the goal of crafting a new multi-year plan to begin in Fall 2022. In the meantime, the IDE-related objectives in the current Strategic Plan will serve as the foundation of College's Cultural Diversity Plan, which is as follows:

- **Goal 1:** *Attract intellectually ambitious students who thrive in and respect a diverse, collaborative learning community.* This will be partially accomplished through increasing diversity among the student body (Objective 1); diversifying course offerings related to wellness, diversity, leadership, and financial literacy (Objective 2); and enhancing the academic and social integration of students in the campus environment (Objective 3).
- **Goal 2:** *Engage students in a rigorous, experiential, flexible, and innovative academic environment that capitalizes on our unique geographical location.* This will be partially accomplished by promoting a community and academic environment that embodies the principles of diversity and inclusion on which we were founded (Objective 4). In doing so, the campus will create a system for developing additional academic opportunities/offerings and a long-term plan for institution-wide IDE efforts. In particular, IDEAA will focus on collaborating with other campus units to offer workshops, outreach, and communications in response to local, state, national, or world events.
- **Goal 3:** *Attract and retain a diverse staff and faculty who achieve excellence across the liberal arts in the teaching, scholarship, creative works, and practice of their disciplines.* Toward this end, SMCM will increase its efforts to recruit/hire a diverse employee population (Objective 1) along with expanding efforts to create an inclusive environment that values and optimizes the strengths of a diverse workplace while supporting employees' professional excellence, personal well-being, and ability to thrive on campus (Objective 2).

- **Goal 4:** *Graduate prepared, responsible, and thoughtful global citizens.* To accomplish this, SMCM will promote inclusion, diversity, and equity (via increased IDE initiatives and professional development opportunities) to engage students in (and assist employees in working with each other and students while) challenging and abating injustice consistent with the St. Mary's Way (Objectives 3 and 4).
- Increase the four-year graduation rate for underrepresented (racial/ethnic minority and first-generation college) students. Note: Although this objective is not explicitly listed in the Strategic Plan, SMCM is committed to supporting efforts aimed at enhancing retention and graduation rates of these student populations. In particular, IDEAA will review existing data, develop evaluation processes, and establish metrics to assess progress on this goal.