

2023 Cultural Diversity Report

St. Mary's College of Maryland Cultural Diversity Report 2023-24

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Division of Inclusive Diversity, Equity, Access, and Accountability (IDEAA) is to lead campus-wide efforts to create and sustain policies, initiatives, and resources to ensure that St. Mary's College of Maryland is a welcoming, transformative, and empowering institution where all students, faculty, and staff can thrive. IDEAA has continued working with different campus units to create opportunities to support the recruitment and retention of diverse student, staff, and faculty populations.

Section 1: SMCM focuses on serving a diverse student and employee population through infusing inclusion, diversity, and equity into all aspects of SMCM. The diversity and inclusion related objectives in the plan follows along with a timeline and suggested funding sources. To have meaningful and impactful results, IDEAA must establish a presence in every office, program, and function at the institution. DEI can no longer be viewed as an "office" within the institution, but rather a conscious thought/consideration in every task we do. Support for diversity and inclusion must be fully embraced by all members of the College. Training for all, programming that represents every constituency, and institutional support for these areas will clearly demonstrate St. Mary's College of Maryland's commitment to cultural diversity.

Goal 1: Create an innovative, distinctive and competitive academic identity that attracts and retains talented students, faculty and staff: The College will identify potential opportunities to include research-driven holistic wellness in, but not limited to, coursework, personal growth, professional development, and develop DEI concepts into the current curriculum. SMCM will increase diversity among the student body and create curricular and programmatic offerings that are attractive and innovative. The College will further develop resources for all students especially those with physical limitations, those who come from low income families, those who are first generation, and those who are neurodiverse. In addition to enhancing the academic and social integration of students in the campus and world environment, SMCM will provide leadership and professionalism opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.

Goal 2.: Empower all students for success: We will engage students in a rigorous, experiential, flexible, and innovative academic environment that capitalizes on our unique geographical location. In doing so, the campus will create a system for developing additional academic opportunities, offerings, and support that will include a long-term plan for institution-wide DEI efforts in these areas. In particular, IDEAA will focus on collaborating with other campus units to offer workshops, outreach, and communications to reflect the evolving diversity landscape. SMCM will increase the four-year graduation rate for historically underrepresented and/or marginalized students and close the current achievement gap in all areas including race/ethnicity and gender.

Goal 3: Build a sustainable, vibrant and diverse student body that exemplifies an inclusive institution: This will be done by attracting and retaining a diverse student body who achieve excellence across the liberal arts in a variety of disciplines. This will be partially accomplished by promoting a community and academic environment that embodies the principles of diversity and

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inclusion and reflects the increasing racial/ethnic demographic diversity of the state of Maryland. SMCM also will increase its efforts to recruit diverse students beyond the state borders. We will expand efforts to create an inclusive environment that values and optimizes the strengths of a diverse campus and as a result will help everyone thrive. The College will make the current Policy Equity Review Committee (PERC) a permanent free-standing committee. PERC will ensure campus policies and procedures are equitable through a systematic and ongoing review process and it will catalog all public facing policies in a consistent and reliable website.

Goal 4: Become a sought-after and engaged community resource: To accomplish this, SMCM will promote inclusion, diversity, and equity between the campus and the local community as well as the broader community. This will be accomplished via increased initiatives and opportunities along with targeted engagement on campus and in the community with the surrounding diverse communities. Targeted work will be done to provide integrated opportunities for all campus and community members regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender or any other protected class. We will create community based seminars, workshops, and certifications for faculty, staff and students as well as similar opportunities for the local community to obtain certification in a variety of areas including those related to DEI.

Campus Statement of the Process for Reporting Hate-Based Crimes

Hate crimes may be violations of SMCM's [Student Code of Conduct](#) or [Employee Handbook](#) as well as violations of the law. SMCM encourages anyone who is the victim or who witnesses a hate crime to report it to the Office of Public Safety, which will respond to the incident in conjunction with local law enforcement. Any crimes that are reported to SMCM that meet the definition of a hate crime under the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092, et.seq. (1990) ("Clery Act"), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681, et. seq. (1972) ("Title IX"), and the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act of 2013, are reported monthly to the Maryland State Police via the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system, and reported in the [Annual Security and Fire Safety Report](#) in accordance with the Clery Act. The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office ("Sheriff's Office") may take the lead on investigating hate crimes.

The College's Timeline and Funding Sources for the 2023-24 Plan

The plan being presented is one that can be implemented immediately with work already discussed or begun in several areas. Completion of most of what is outlined can certainly happen during the one-year period. Some of the goals will be ongoing and will require updates and modifications as the implementation progresses. Close monitoring of progress made (and setbacks should they occur) will be part of the simultaneous evaluation process that will accompany this work. These goals will certainly be supported by existing College resources and will be augmented by additional financial resources from the College. However, state and federal grants as well as other outside sources of funding will be required to fully achieve the overarching goal of recruiting, retaining, and graduating a culturally diverse student population.

Section 2: Description of efforts to increase the numerical representation of traditionally underrepresented groups among students, administrative staff, and faculty

The College has continued working to create opportunities and enhance the recruitment, retention, and support of diverse student, staff and faculty populations. Through these actions, SMCM is working toward ensuring that the campus is inclusively diverse and supportive.

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(a) Students

DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program

The DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program (DB) continues to strive to meet the State-legislated graduation metrics defined in the grant requirements. The previous 10 months has witnessed a change in program leadership with the goal to better achieve the state metrics. Our current first-year cohort (2022) is made up of 61 first-year students, the largest incoming group of DB scholars to date. This aberration was the result of the late addition of students from the DC-CAP (see below). The current retention rate for the 2022 cohort (first-to-second semester) is 94.9 % with encouraging trends beginning to surface for all DB scholars.

D.C. College Access Program (DC-CAP)

The College entered Memoranda of Understanding with DC-CAP and Dream.org to bring students to SMCM. The Fall of 2022 welcomed the initial DC-CAP cohort (six students). These students are required to participate in the DeSousa-Brent Program. The transition for half of the group has been fairly successful as several of the students have become quite engaged in leadership roles on campus. A couple of the students have struggled with the remote/rural nature of the College and furthermore have not done as well academically. All of these students have been afforded mentoring and constant guidance and advice.

Sum Primus

The first-generation student-focused program, *Sum primus* (Latin for “I am first”) has been transformed into a four-year program. The program seeks to increase retention and four-year graduation rates for students who will be the first in their immediate families to graduate from a four-year degree program. Eight students were welcomed with a brief residential program prior to the start of the Fall semester. Three of the eight students also joined the DB program. All students have received mentoring and additional guidance and support.

National Hispanic Institute

In July of 2022, the College hosted the National Hispanic Institute with its 250 high school students from the US, Central America, and South America for their inaugural visit to St. Mary’s College. This week-long youth leadership experience featured legislative sessions and skill building. Featured during their visit was a college fair as well as opportunities to fully explore the SMCM campus. As a result of a successful experience, the program will be returning to the College this summer.

Table 1. Characteristics of entering students, Fall 2017 through Fall 2022

	FA17	FA18	FA19	FA20	FA21	FA22
Entering first year class who identify as historically underrepresented racial groups (Goal: 33%)	27%	25%	33%	31%	30%	31%
Entering first year class from first-generation households (Goal: 20%)	25%	21%	23%	25%	21%	25%

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Entering first year class receiving Pell Grants (Goal: 20%)	20%	17%	22%	23%	18%	19%
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(b) Staff and Faculty

Ross Fellow Program

In fall 2022, we began the second and final year of our Cluster Hire initiative, a coordinated effort by Academic Affairs to center diversity and inclusivity in all parts of our educational practice. Known as the Ross Fellows, four new fellows were recruited in AY22 to join two Ross Fellows hired last year. Together, these scholars are united by expertise and experience in their pedagogical practice designed to improve the educational outcomes of underrepresented students as well as educate all students on the necessity for inclusive excellence. As of March 2023, the full cohort of Ross Fellows has been successfully hired across six different departments. The Cluster Hire Initiative/Ross Fellows Program is an institutional project with campus-wide backing that aligns with the Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Goals of St. Mary's College of Maryland.

HR Recruitment Efforts

SMCM has contracted with an external vendor, Professional Diversity Network (PDN), to assist in the recruitment of candidates from historically underrepresented communities via targeted job boards/recruitment sites. Unfortunately, the vendor's application tracking software was not compatible with the College's recruitment software (Interfolio) and statistical data on effectiveness is unavailable. As a result, the College did not renew that contract and is currently researching more suitable recruitment options to attract candidates from these targeted groups. These options also include job placement ads in recognized diversity journals and with diverse academic organizations.

Table 2. Characteristics of Full-time Faculty and Staff, Fall 2017 through Fall 2022

	FA17	FA18	FA19	FA20	FA21	FA22
Percent of all full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty who identify as historically underrepresented racial groups (Goal: 33%)	17%	16%	14%	15%	18%	19%
Percent of newly hired full-time tenure-track faculty who identify as historically underrepresented racial groups (Goal: 33%)	43%	0%	0%	–	57%	33%
Percent of all full-time staff who identify as historically underrepresented racial groups (Goal: 33%)	27%	29%	27%	27%	30%	27%

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Section 3: Efforts designed to create positive interactions and cultural awareness among students, staff, and faculty.

International Education and Study Abroad

Study Abroad opportunities have been underutilized, especially by first generation and Pell Grant students. IDEAA is partnering with the Office of International Education to break down misconceptions and misgivings by these students about such opportunities. The DeSousa-Brent students will be particularly encouraged to participate, as will others.

Awareness Month Programming

The Multicultural Programming Office and various units across campus hosted awareness month programming to celebrate the various diverse identities of St. Mary's College of Maryland. During Latin American Heritage Month, the Center for the Study of Democracy hosted Maria Hinojosa for the Inaugural Gwen Ifill Lecture. LGBTQ Student Services hosted a Coming Out Day and Trans Day of Visibility. In January, the Asian Pacific/Pacific-Islander American Culture Club organized a Lunar New Year Celebration.

In February, a new Coordinator of Multicultural IDEAA Programming was hired, which immediately increased the breadth and depth of awareness programming. Black History Month programming included a Kick-off, Step Afrika! and Black History Month Trivia at a Basketball game. Women's History Month featured a Mix the Movement Painting event, a keynote speaker who addressed Roe v. Wade and a women's shelter supply drive.

Cultural Celebrations and Performances

The IDEAA Division has supported/sponsored a wide variety of cultural events aimed at broadening perspectives, entertaining, and educating. Recent events include the Descendant Panel Discussion (Historic Sotterley and Center for the Study of Democracy), Step Afrika!, Language Fest, Commemorative Panel Discussion (SCUP), MLK Prayer Breakfast,

Staff and Faculty of Color Luncheon

Hosted in the spring of each year, the staff and faculty of color luncheon is designed to build community, support networks, and create belonging. The luncheon is one of the most popular events among historically underrepresented and/or marginalized staff and has proven to be an effective tool in creating community.

Get Inclusive

SMCM launched the Get Inclusive virtual platform during the summer of 2022 with an aim to provide diversity, Title IX and wellness training for faculty, staff and students. As of April 19, 2023, 412 first year students (86%) completed the Voices for Change Comprehensive Curriculum, which includes a module on Identities and Inclusion. Twenty-three faculty and staff members (5%) completed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the Workplace: all remaining employees will be assigned this training program during the summer of 2023.

Collaborations

In an effort to embed DEI principles and practices into all areas of the college, IDEAA staff have sought out collaborative opportunities throughout the institution. This includes having a diversity representative assigned to DEI Committees in Athletics, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association, and the Programs Board. IDEAA works in conjunction with a host of

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student service units including Career Services, Student Success Services, the Wellness Center, and more. Further collaborative programming also exists with all of the Vice Presidents and their respective units.

LEAD Curriculum

SMCM's [LEAD Curriculum](#) was implemented in Fall 2020, the first revision to our general education curriculum in 13 years. LEAD includes two requirements that are key to enhancing cultural diversity as a component of the educational experience. One of these is coursework in International Languages and Cultures — a subject taught at St. Mary's College in such a way as to embed language study in a study of culture. This requirement has been expanded under LEAD, in that students now complete a language course to at least the second semester level (e.g., 102) or beyond. This ensures that students' experience with the language is developed enough to provide the intercultural experience that the requirement is meant to support. The second requirement is now called "Cultural Literacy". Like the previous Cultural Perspectives requirement, this new category includes classes designed to help students better recognize the ways their own culture shapes their thinking and the ways in which culture more generally shapes an individual's world view. The revised category, however, makes more explicit how such differences are connected to socioeconomic and other forms of inequality. Such courses might examine theories of race and ethnicity or investigate diverse issues related to immigration or globalization.

Section 4: Description of emerging populations that are currently underrepresented in higher ed (not traditionally underrepresented):

In Fall 2022, SMCM witnessed a solid number of first year, first-generation students, that is, students for whom neither parent earned a bachelor's degree. Twenty-five percent of the incoming first year class were first-generation. As such programs like Landers Scholars, Sum Primus and DeSousa Brent will see more applicants. Additionally, support services of a variety of types will have to address the unique needs of this population. The number of students receiving accommodations has increased, which includes students with physical disabilities and neurological/mental disabilities. The former group has become quite outspoken in their desire to make sure that the campus has the proper accessible accommodations for their navigation of the campus. As a campus with a number of older facilities, this has been a challenge to fully address, but following a detailed audit of existing facilities, improvements were made where necessary and possible. Address of additional deficiencies is ongoing. The latter group has grown significantly with a large increase in the number of students identifying as neurodivergent. Accommodations for these students are made on an individual basis through the Office of Accessibility Services. However, the small staff in this office makes it a real challenge to address all accommodations in a timely manner.

Section 5: Description of other initiatives that are central to the cultural diversity plan not captured in section 2, 3, and 4.

Policy Equity Review Committee (PERC)

The PERC was established in 2021 in support of the College's commitment to diversity, access, and affordability, as stated in the College's mission statement. The committee of eight (8) members consists of students, staff, faculty, and administration and is charged with gathering/reviewing all College policies to identify and make recommendations to address any discriminatory or inequitable policies or procedures. To date, the PERC has reviewed over 271

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policies and identified 70 policies requiring further review, edits, or rewrites to address equity policy or policy language.

Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Diversity and Equity Campus Climate Survey

The College joined the HEDS consortium in fall of 2022 and began collaborating on a climate survey focused on reviewing the perceptions of students, staff, and faculty in regards to how SMCM supports diversity and equity, as well as experiences with discrimination and harassment at the institution. Over 50% of the campus community participated in the survey. Survey responses/data is currently being analyzed and the results will be used to inform and improve support, policies, and practices at SMCM for all who attend, work, or visit the campus.

MHEC Hunger-Free Campus Grant and initiatives

In September 2022 the College was awarded an MHEC Hunger-Free Campus Grant to address and combat food insecurity on campus. A Hunger Task Force has been created consisting of members from the Office of Student Financial Assistance, IDEAA, Student Activities, and the Wellness Center. Results of the grant include increased free food options, education about healthy eating on a budget, community resources to assist with hunger, and other resources to ensure a hunger-free campus. As part of the grant and as a need to provide a more suitable location, the pantry will be relocated and rebranded later this semester. These changes align with a stated objective of addressing more students in need and better educating the entire campus community of available resources

Bias Prevention and Support

The Bias Prevention and Support Team (“The Team”) is a group that engages in a prompt, consistent, and sensitive process to respond to bias-related incidents. Bias-related incidents are acts that demonstrate bias on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

The Team complements and works with other campus entities to connect students, faculty, and staff who have been affected by bias-related incidents to the appropriate support and resources. The Team reviewed 32 reports from September 1, 2022 to April 19, 2023.

CONCLUSION

St. Mary’s College of Maryland remains committed to the pursuit of an inclusively diverse and equitable campus community, which aligns with best practices in higher education. Our mission is to ensure that underrepresented students have full access to the SMCM liberal arts, honors college experience. This includes supporting students, faculty, and staff with unique needs so that they can be successful. SMCM recognizes that promoting cultural diversity is essential to the mission of the institution and to its long-term sustainability. President Jordan is firmly committed to improving SMCM’s ability to recruit, retain and enhance the success of a diverse student and employee population. Toward that end, SMCM has implemented new approaches and programs to recruit and retain historically underrepresented and/or marginalized students, faculty, and staff, resulting in increased diversification in all three populations. SMCM will continue to explore ways to ensure inclusion and diversity are infused throughout all aspects of the academic, co-curricular, and occupational experiences for all who engage the College.