MHEC
MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

2019 Performance Accountability Report Maryland Public Colleges and Universities

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MSAR #709 2019 Performance Accountability Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this edition of the Performance Accountability Report (PAR), the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) focuses its analysis on three primary questions of interest to the Commission and the State.[1]

- Is the State on track to meet its 55% degree attainment goal by 2025?
- Are educational disparities among underrepresented racial and ethnic groups shrinking?
- Are Maryland's public colleges and universities affordable and are students graduating with less debt?

In short, trends in enrollment, retention, transfer, and completion data provide a strong indication that the State is on track to meet its 55% attainment goal by 2025. Despite this positive trend, academic achievement gaps exist such that there are vast disparities regarding who will benefit most from these educational outcomes. Most striking is the persistent gap in retention, transfer, and graduation rates when comparing African American students to other student populations. There is some evidence that institutional efforts may be shrinking these gaps, but more needs to be done to ensure all students have equitable opportunities to meet their academic goals.

Overall Maryland's colleges and universities are maintaining modest rates of tuition and fee increases and are trying to keep net prices lower for those students who are from lower-income families. Most undergraduates earning an award at Maryland's public colleges and universities have low to modest student debt upon completion, and almost half, in any given year, are funding their education without financial aid or loans.

The issues identified and explored in this year's report are complex and interrelated. As such, they require sustained attention and ongoing discourse. By their nature, these issues are less likely to be solved by simple, efficient, and short-term actions and may demand a greater allocation of strategic resources (e.g. funds, staffing, and infrastructure) to help address them. In the coming year, the Commission staff will continue to use statewide data to help answer questions tied to affordability, student success, and degree completion. 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

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[1] The contents of this report precede the current COVID-19 pandemic. Analysis of trends in enrollment, retention, completion, and other higher education metrics should be considered with caution due to the fluid and highly unpredictable nature of postsecondary education in the state and the nation.

demonstrated by their ongoing efforts to provide detailed and high-quality reports to the Commission each year. This is the 24th accountability report published by the Commission.[2]

Volume 1 of the report includes the following:
- An analysis of institutional performance[3]; and
- Institutional responses to the Commission's **questions tied to student equity gaps.[4]**

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[5] 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[6] 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.

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[2] For a history of the accountability process in Maryland, please see earlier reports found here: https://mhec.state.md.us/publications/Pages/research/index.aspx

[3] Institutional submissions for the 2019 Performance Accountability Report reflect performance in the 2018 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.

[4] For the 2019 Performance Accountability Report submission, each institution was asked to respond to the same prompt; this was a question tied to the 2019 *Completion Summit.* See responses, in full, within Volume 1 of this report.

[5] These are Allegany College of Maryland, Anne Arundel Community College, Baltimore City Community College, Carroll Community College, Cecil College, Chesapeake College, College of Southern Maryland, Community College of Baltimore County, Frederick Community College, Garrett College, Hagerstown Community College, Harford Community College, Howard Community College, Montgomery College, Prince George's Community College, and Wor-Wic Community College.

[6] These are: Bowie State University, Coppin State University, Frostburg State University, Morgan State University, Salisbury University, St. Mary's College of Maryland, Towson University, University of Baltimore, University of Maryland, Baltimore, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, University of Maryland, College Park, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and University of Maryland University College

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.

ASSESSMENT BY THE MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

This report focuses on three primary questions of interest to the Commission and the State.
- Is the State on track to meet its 55% attainment goal by 2025?
- Are educational disparities among underrepresented racial and ethnic groups shrinking?
- Are Maryland's public colleges and universities affordable and are students graduating with less debt?

Each question is explored in detail below.

Is the State on track to meet its 55% degree attainment goal by 2025?
The State of Maryland's attainment goal establishes that at least 55% of Maryland's residents age 25 to 64 will hold at least one degree credential by 2025. Since the goal was established in 2013, Maryland's institutions have helped the state meet (and exceed) annual projections.[7] According to the most recently available data, Maryland's attainment rate is 49.1%, and the 55% goal is within reach.[8][9]

Sustaining momentum relies on several key factors including ensuring undergraduate enrollment stays stable, maintaining strong retention rates and graduation rates, and continuing strong degree productivity. Each are briefly discussed below:

Undergraduate Enrollments:
Over the past ten years, unduplicated 12-month undergraduate enrollment at Maryland's public institutions has increased almost 7% from 2009 to 2018 (Figure 1). In that time, community college enrollment has decreased 10.7% and public four-year enrollment has increase 30.8%.[10] The primary driver of the public four-year enrollment growth is the sizeable enrollment of students at UMGC.[11]

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[7] The State's progress in meeting its 55% degree attainment goal is explored more thoroughly in the annual *Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal*. The December 2020 Report will discuss the possible ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic on enrollment, degree completion and progress to the attainment goal.

[8] 2018 American Community Survey (ACS). U.S. Census Bureau.

[9] The Lumina Foundation's *Stronger Nation* Maryland report notes the state's attainment rate is 52.5% if high-quality certificates are included.   https://luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/2020/#nation

[10] Community college enrollment figures do not include those enrolled in continuing education/non-credit courses; these students constitute approximately 200,000 additional enrollments each year (Source: institutions' Performance Accountability Report)

[11] Without including UMGC, public four-year institutions' undergraduate enrollment growth was a more modest 5.9%.

Figure 1: 12-month Unduplicated Undergraduate Enrollment at Maryland's Public Colleges and Universities: 2009 to 2018
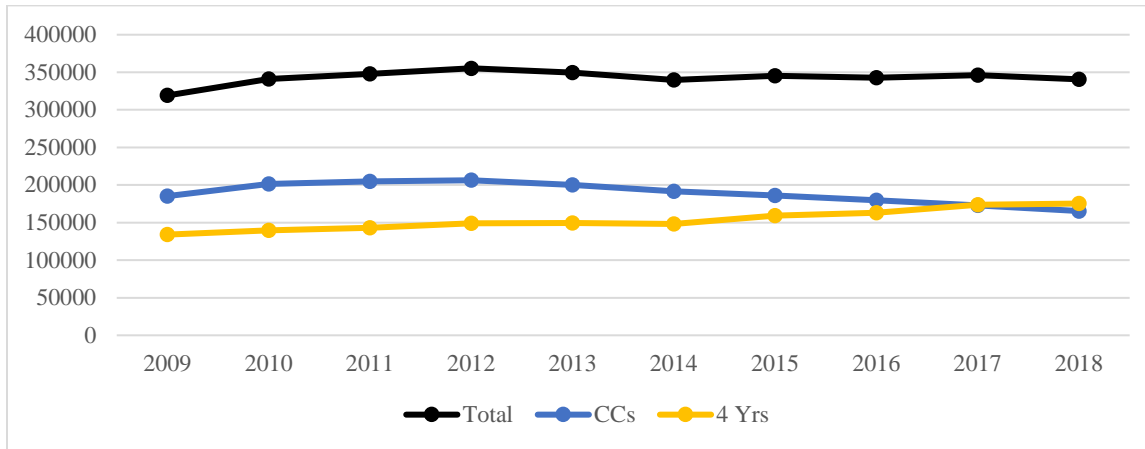
Source: 12-month Unduplicated Headcount (Part-time and Full-time) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
Note: Data include UMGC stateside and overseas enrollment

These data show that undergraduate enrollment statewide has returned to the pre-Recession levels, but that the distribution of undergraduates has shifted, with fewer undergraduates enrolled at the community colleges and more at the public four-year institutions.

Retention:
Measuring the retention of students from the first to second year of enrollment is a key metric used to help track student progression toward completion.

Data show (Table 1) that for part-time and full-time students at Maryland's public institutions, retention rates have stayed relatively constant over 10 years. That said there are differences among institutions. The community colleges, for the most recent cohort saw almost half their part-time students return for a second year and almost two thirds of their full-time cohort of students return.[12] Public four-year institutions have maintained high retention rates for their full-time students, but only four in ten part-time students return for a second year.[13]

Table 1: Part-time and Full-time Cohort Retention Rates at Maryland Public Colleges and Universities: 2009 and 2017

	2017 Fall Cohort Retention Rate - Returned Fall 2018			2011 Fall Cohort Retention Rate - Returned Fall 2012		
	Full-time	Part-time	Overall	Full-time	Part-time	Overall
Community Colleges	64.2%	47.1%	56.9%	59.3%	42.9%	54.0%
Public 4-Year Institutions	84.1%	37.0%	82.9%	82.8%	20.8%	80.0%

Source: IPEDS Retention Rates
Note: All cohort data include first-time degree-and certificate-seeking students.

[12] Nationally, two-year public institutions had a 2017 Fall Cohort retention rate of 62.1% for full-time students and a rate of 44.9% for part-time. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18_326.30.asp
[13] Nationally, public four-year institutions had a 2017 Fall Cohort retention rate of 81.3% for full-time students and a rate of 53.9% for part-time students. It is important to note that the cohort size for the public-four year part-time cohort is quite small (n=414 for 2017 cohort), which can make the retention rate volatile.

Graduation, Transfer, and Degree Completion:
Degree completion can be discussed using several different metrics. One consideration is timely progress toward degrees. This is often measured using graduation rates, most commonly six-year graduation rates for public four-year institutions and four-year graduation/transfer rates for the community colleges. Another metric is degree completion, which measures the number of degrees awarded in a given year.

Graduation and Transfer Rates
In Maryland, 68.8% of full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a Maryland public four-year institution in fall 2012 completed a degree within six years. This rate is the highest on record for the state and is part of a larger 20-year upward trend. It is also well above the national rate of 60%.[14]

Figure 2: Six-year Graduation Rates for Full-time Cohorts Enrolled in Public Four-Year Institutions: 2008 Cohort to 2012 Cohort
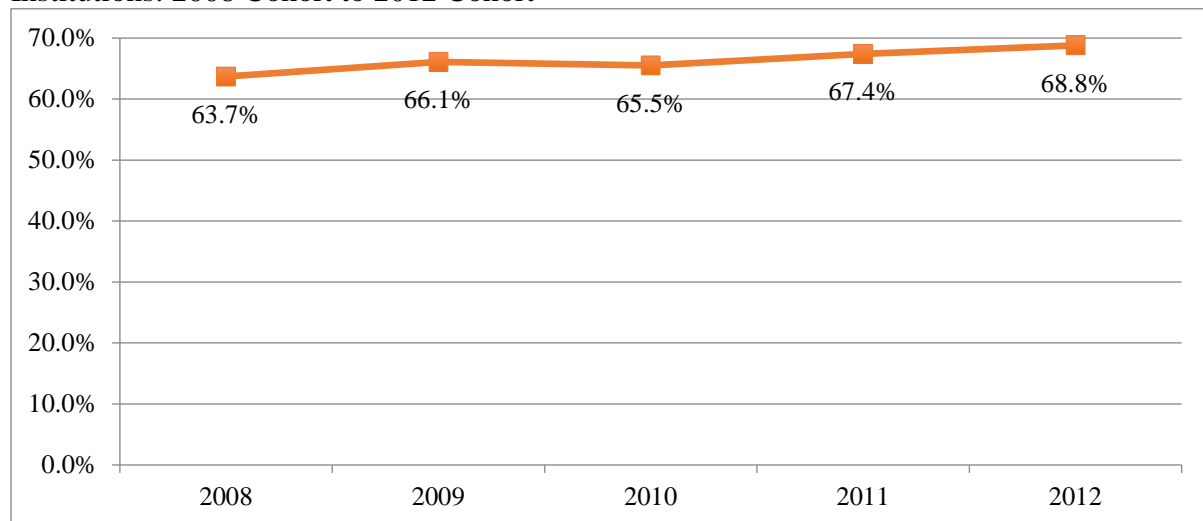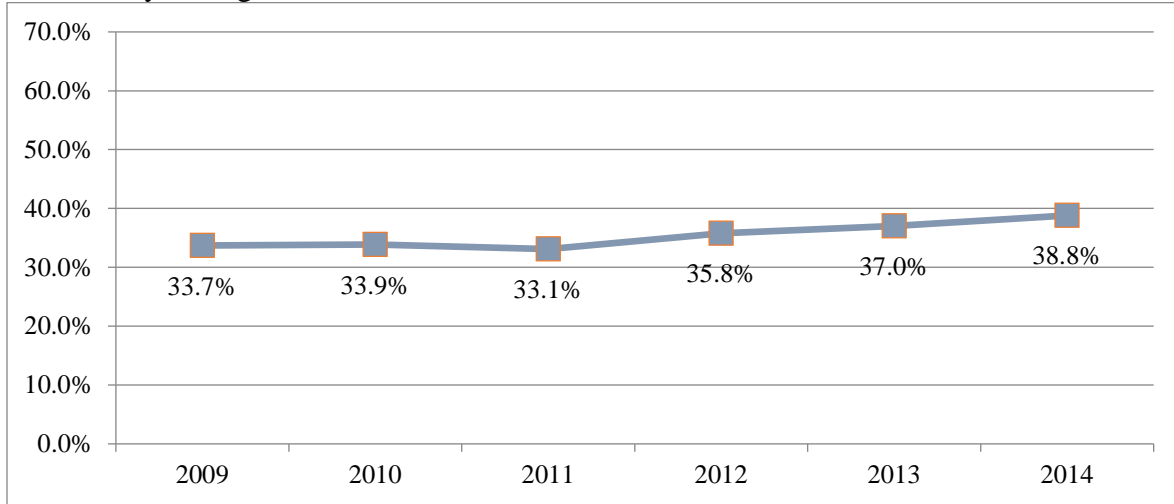

Source: MHEC Retention and Graduation Rates at Maryland Four-Year Institutions Report

Maryland's community colleges' (Figure 3) four-year metric, tracking those full-time students who graduate or transfer to a four-year institution within four years, shows increases over time as well. For the most recent cohort, those who enrolled full-time in 2014, almost four in 10 graduated or transferred within four years. This, too, is the highest rate on record.[15]

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[14] MHEC's graduation rates include undergraduate students who persisted at and graduated from the campus at which they initially enrolled, as well as those who transferred to and then graduated from any of the four-year colleges or universities, including independent institutions, in Maryland. The national measure only includes those students who graduated from the institution in which they first enrolled.
[15] There is not a known comparable national figure that combines graduation and transfer at four years for community college students. The national figure captures graduation only.

Figure 3: Graduation/Transfer Rates within Four Years for Full-time Cohorts Enrolled in Community Colleges: 2009 Cohort to 2014 Cohort
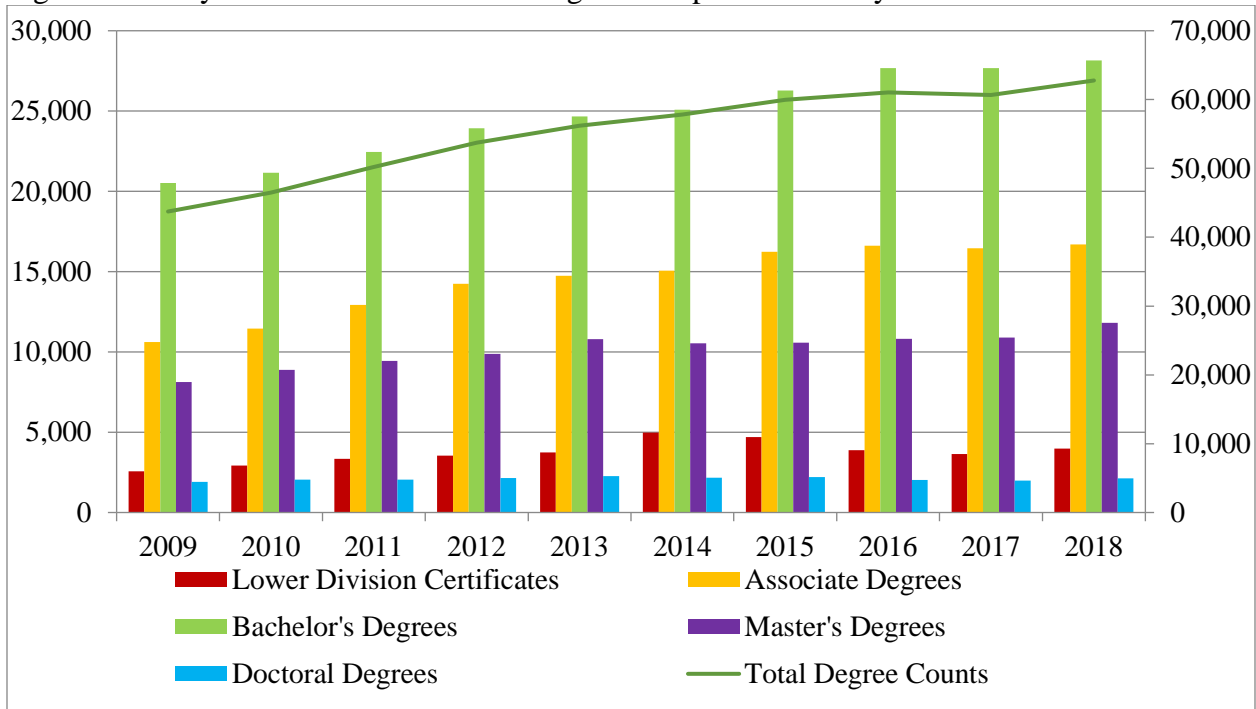

Source: MHEC Retention, Graduation, and Transfer Rates at Maryland Community Colleges Report

Degree Completion
Another way to assess progress toward the state's attainment goals is to look at the rates of awards earned each year. These data show that Maryland's public colleges and universities have increased the number of awards overall by 25.0% in the past 10 years, with the highest rates of growth in the awarding of associate degrees and bachelor's degrees. These are important areas of growth, as they are the focus of the attainment goal established by the state.

Figure 4: Ten-year Trend in Award and Degree Completion at Maryland's Public Institutions

Source: MHEC Degree Information System

Summary

Based on the enrollment, retention, graduation, and degree completion data, Maryland appears on track to meet its 2025 attainment goal. Some factors should be considered by the state and among the campuses to ensure continued success:

- In the short term, the pipeline of recent high school graduates will stay fairly strong. Because Maryland is projected to have continued short-term growth in the number of high school graduates[16] and continues to see high college-going rates for traditional-age students[17], it is likely Maryland's institutions will continue to maintain fairly stable enrollments of recent high school graduates throughout the years of the attainment goal.
- Both the community colleges and the public four-year institutions have seen improvements in their retention and graduation rates. This means that, even with flattening enrollments, the number of students persisting to completion of their degrees will stay stable and may continue to increase.
- Programs such as the College Promise Scholarship may play a role in stabilizing and increasing undergraduate enrollment, but there is a risk that enrollments will be redistributed from the public four-year institutions to the community colleges.[18]
- Although there often is a focus on enrolling traditional-age students, those institutions that are successful at enrolling and graduating adult students can help the State to meet its attainment goal. Adult students make up approximately 1/3 of undergraduates enrolled in Maryland's community colleges and public four-year institutions. The challenge is that a sizeable percentage of these students attend part-time, which may deter or slow progress to a degree.[19]
- Programs like the One Step Away grants and the Near Completers initiative allow students who have college credit but no credential to re-enroll in a college or university to complete their work; this can help the state meet its completion goal, as well.

According to institutional PAR submissions, institutions' activities tied to retaining and graduating their students include:
- Using data systems to obtain early alerts on students who may be facing impediments to progress.
- Providing students with myriad support services such as advising, tutoring, life skills and financial literacy.
- Supporting students through summer bridge programs and learning communities, both of which encourage engagement and create connections at key transition points (point of entry, first and second year).

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[16] The US Department of Education projects that Maryland will see a 12.6% increase in high school graduates over the coming seven years (2027). After this short-term "bubble," the projected number of high school graduates is expected to flatten.

[17] In Maryland, approximately 75% of high school graduates enroll in college within five years; of them, approximately 73% enroll in a Maryland college or university; from Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center "Initial Postsecondary Enrollments - In-State vs. Out-of-State" dashboard. https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/

[18] See "What does free community college buy? Early impacts from the Oregon Promise." https://ogurantz.github.io/website/Gurantz_2019_OregonPromise.pdf

[19] Among adult undergraduate students in Maryland, 84.3% attend community college part time and 70.9% attend public four-year institutions part time.

- Creating articulation agreements and other pathways to ease the way for student populations (dual enrollment, transfer students, etc.).
- Offering institutional aid to students including scholarships to specific student populations (e.g., transfer students, high school graduates, returning adult students, near completers).
- Dedicating physical space and staffing to provide more comprehensive wrap-around services (such as daycare, advising, and tutoring services).

Are educational disparities among underrepresented racial and ethnic groups shrinking?
Maryland's colleges and universities continue to serve a more diverse student body. Of the almost 400,000 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in Maryland's community colleges and public four-year institutions, almost half (49.5%) identify as a minority race/ethnicity[20], which is an increase of approximately eight percentage points in 10 years. With increased diversity comes a continued focus on equity outcomes for student populations.

The achievement gap – disparities in educational outcomes for historically underrepresented populations – is an ongoing concern for Maryland's public institutions. For their Performance Accountability Reports, 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 other student groups; these measures include second-year retention rates, four-year transfer rates, and graduation rates of minority students.[21]

The following figures outline the trends in second-year retention, six-year graduation, and four-year graduation and transfer rates for first-time, full-time cohorts at Maryland's public colleges and universities[22]; the data represent the outcomes for the state's four largest ethnic and racial groups. These data reflect that, while overall outcomes on these measures have improved (as reported in the previous section of this report), some student populations continue to face disparities.

Second-year Retention Rates at Maryland's Public Four-year Institutions:
The data on second-year retention rates for first-time, full-time students enrolled at Maryland's public four-year institutions (Figure 5) show several distinct patterns. First, when looking at each racial and ethnic group over time, their retention rates have stayed relatively stable overall (with within-group differences of 1 to 6 percentage points over time). Second, this relative stability masks the growing gap between the students with the highest retention rates (Asian

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[20] These include: African American/Black, Native American or Alaska Native Two or More Races, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or Hispanic; this does not include white students, students who identify as Foreign/Non-Resident Alien or those students for which their race/ethnicity is unknown. Source: IPEDS 12-month Unduplicated Headcount by Race/Ethnicity 2017-2018.

[21] American Indian/Alaska Native (0.3%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0.2%), and foreign students (5.1%), along with those whose race or ethnicity is unknown (4.3%), are not included in the minority data in Figures 5, 6, and 7.

[22] The University of Maryland, Baltimore is excluded from statewide data because it does not enroll first-time undergraduate students.

students) and the lowest retention rates (African American students). Note the gap has widened over time from 11.7 percentage points to 17.4 percentage points.

Figure 5: Second-year Retention Rates for Minority and White Students at Maryland Public Four-Year Institutions: First-time, Full-time Cohorts from 2013 to 2017
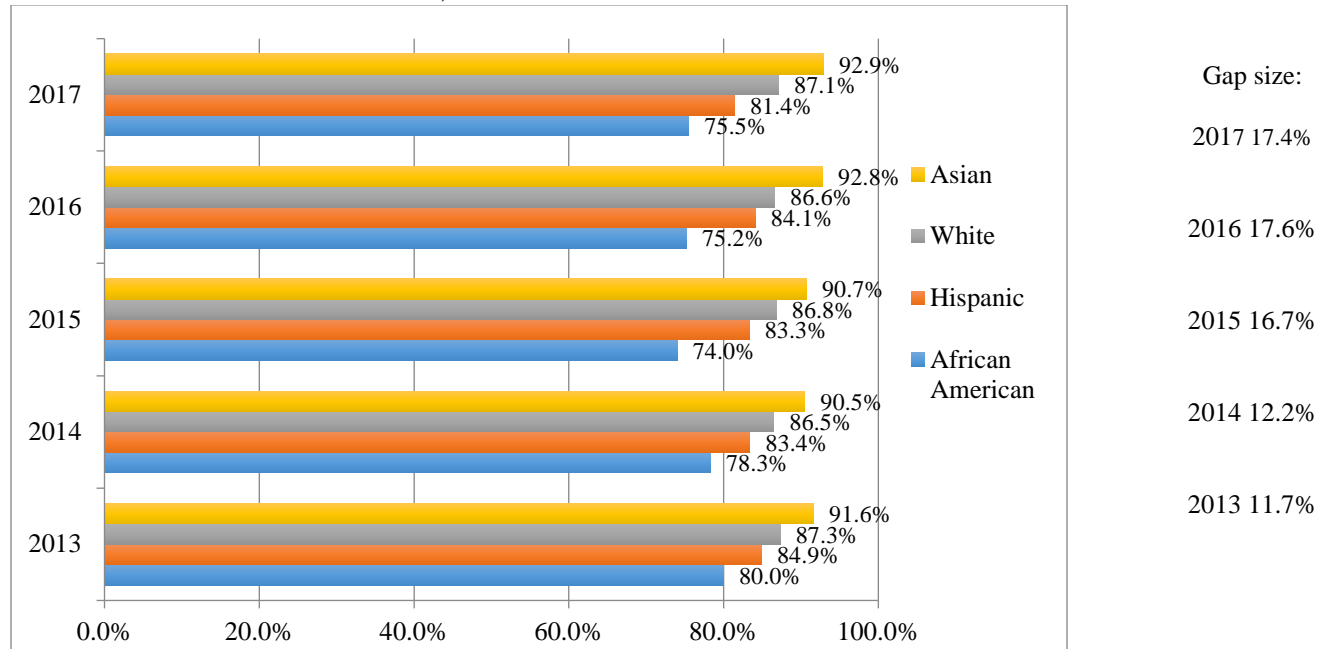
Source: MHEC Retention and Graduation Rates at Maryland Four-Year Institutions Report

Six-year Graduation Rates at Maryland's Public Four-year Institutions:
The six-year graduation trends for first-time, full-time cohorts at four-year public institutions (Figure 6) reveal similar patterns to the retention rates. All student cohort groups' rates have stayed relatively stable over time, with the exception of African American students. They have seen year-over-year improvements, with a 7.4 percentage point increase over five years. Also notable is that the gap in graduation outcomes among student populations demonstrates signs of shrinking. That said, these data show that one out of two first-time, full-time African American students do not graduate within six years yet almost eight out 10 white and Asian students do.

Figure 6: Six-year Graduation Rates for Minority and White Students at Maryland Public Four-Year Institutions: First-time, Full-time Cohorts from 2008 to 2012
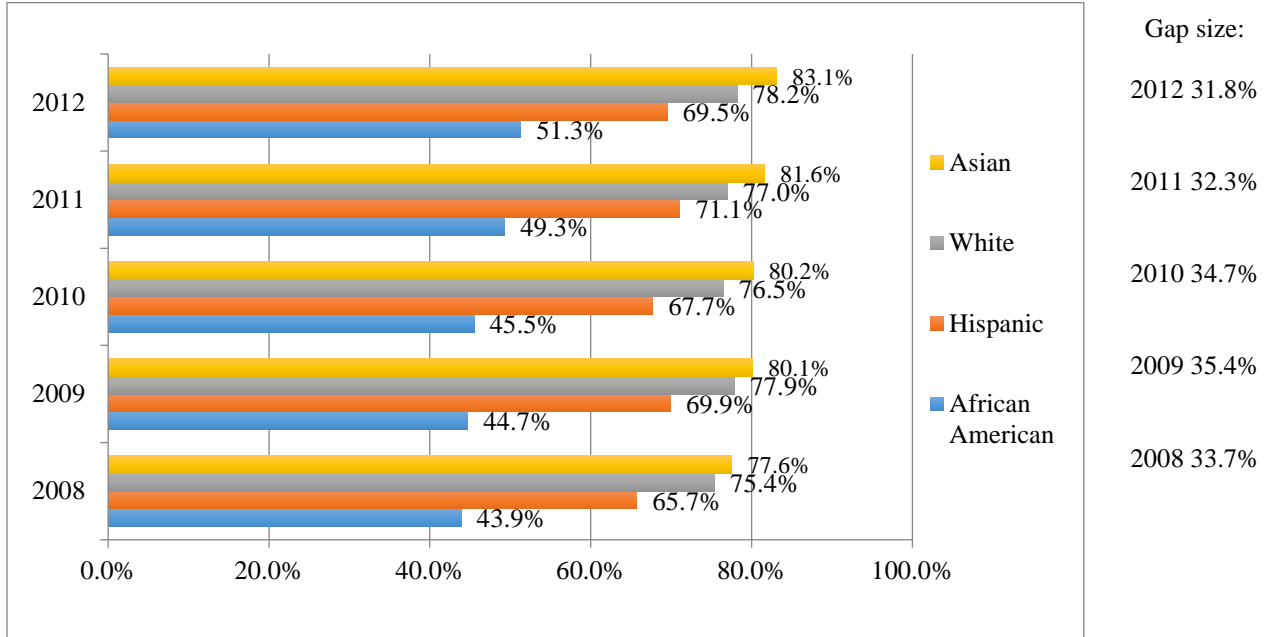

Gap size:

2012 31.8%

2011 32.3%

2010 34.7%

2009 35.4%

2008 33.7%

Source: MHEC Retention and Graduation Rates at Maryland Four-Year Institutions Report

Community College Four-year Graduation and Transfer Rates:
The community colleges' four-year graduation and transfer outcomes for first-time, full-time cohorts show positive trends overall. Each student group cohort represented in Figure 7 has seen improvements in rates of completion and transfer for the five-year trend, and the overall achievement gap is shrinking. Notable, too, is that community colleges have made their greatest strides in increasing the rates of completion and transfer for two key populations; both Hispanic and African American students have seen the highest rates of improvement (6.6 percentage point and 7.9 percentage point increases respectively).

Figure 7: Community College Four-year Graduation and Transfer Rates for Minority and White Students at: First-time, Full-time Cohorts from 2010 to 2014
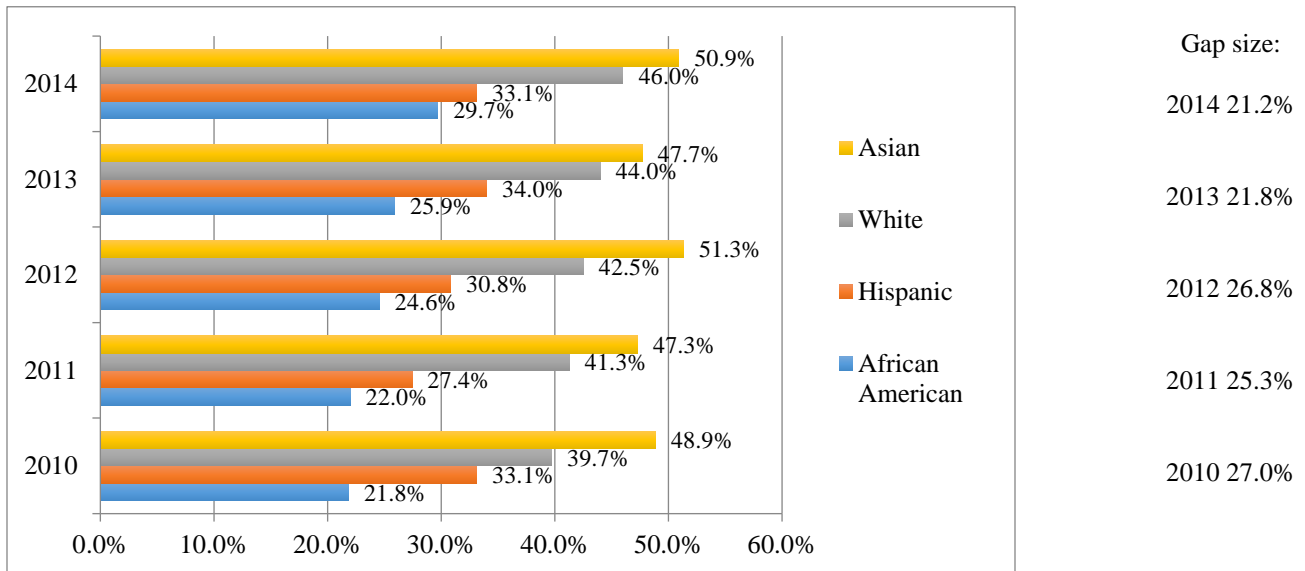
Source: MHEC Retention, Graduation, and Transfer Rates at Maryland Community Colleges Report

It is also important to note that, at the four-year mark, Maryland's African American community college students are more likely to still be enrolled (4.3% of the first-time, full-time 2014 cohort) than their white (1.3%), Asian (2.3%), or Hispanic (1.9%) counterparts. One inference from these data is that African American students may also be more likely to alter their enrollment patterns over time (e.g., begin full time but re-enroll part-time or stop out and re-enroll) or may be slowed by developmental course requirements, which precede credit-bearing courses. [23]

Degree Attainment Rates:
Despite some positive trends overall in retention, graduation, and transfer rates for students at Maryland's public institutions, the results of these ongoing and persistent achievement gaps are reflected in statewide degree attainment data as well. The most recent census data shows that the degree attainment rates for Maryland's population by racial and ethnic group are starkly different. Degree attainment rates for African American and Hispanic students lag behind those of white and Asian students.

[23] MHEC research shows almost 75% of all first-time African American community college students need remedial coursework upon entry to college; From "Remediation in Maryland Higher Education: Remedial Assessment at Maryland Colleges and Universities"
https://mhec.state.md.us/publications/Documents/Research/PolicyReports/RemedialAssessment.pdf

Table 2: Maryland Degree Attainment Rates: Percent of Maryland Residents with an Associate Degree or Higher by Race and Ethnicity

Population	Degree Attainment Rate: Percent of Marylanders with an Associate Degree or Higher
Asian	72. 2%
White	56. 1%
African American	38. 8%
Hispanic	28. 6%
Overall	49. 1%

Source: 2018 American Community Survey, Census Bureau

Summary:
The persistent achievement gaps among Maryland's public institution undergraduates and the subsequent gaps in degree attainment are troubling in light of the need for meeting the State's economic and workforce demands and reducing economic and social inequality. Institutional practices and policy and state policy should focus on degree completion, especially for underrepresented student populations.

Gaps in equitable outcomes for Maryland's college students were the focus of the 2019 Completion Summit. In an effort to sustain the information exchange of that event, MHEC requested Performance Accountability Report responses from the institutions on issues tied bridging equity gaps. Institutions were asked to describe: 1) one or more targeted interventions aimed at at-risk populations, 2) the identified obstacles the students might face, 3) the metrics used to evaluate the intervention(s) and 4) the evidence used to assess and adapt the intervention(s) to ensure its intended effects. All responses are included in Part 1 of this year's Performance Accountability Report.

It is beyond the scope of this report to detail all institutional activities, but it is worth highlighting several emergent themes from their institutional responses, especially around targeted interventions aimed at specific at-risk populations:

- A number of institutions highlighted their advising and coaching efforts as central to their work, especially targeted, frequent and proactive interventions.
- Several institutions reported leveraging summer terms (via summer bridge programs or other enrollment incentives) as a way to provide targeted interventions to students and drive credit accumulation.
- Some institutions in the state discuss that their partnership with one or more national or grant-funded initiatives (e. g., Achieving the Dream, the Lumina Foundation, TRIO programs) allows them to maximize their work addressing the needs of their identified at-risk populations. These resources often increase institution's access to professional networks, to proven and research-based methods of intervention, and to additional funds necessary to pilot innovative programs.
- Most institutions indicated that they continue 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.

- Many institutions report evaluating their remedial program adaptations (such as the co-requisite model) to help determine whether the programs are having the intended effects.

Institutional efforts do show evidence of decreasing achievements gaps, but there is more work to be done. Interventions are not enough. More fundamental change at the institutional level will be required to achieve meaningful increases retention, transfer and graduation rates for underrepresented minorities. And colleges and universities cannot address these equity gaps alone; working with other state partners (e. g., MSDE, local school systems, MHEC) and government leaders is necessary to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education.

Are Maryland's public colleges and universities affordable and are students graduating with less debt?

For students and their families, college affordability centers on the costs to attend (tuition, fees, books, room and board, etc.), the financial aid available (in the forms of grants, scholarships, and loans) to defray costs, and the debt students incur while enrolled in college. Each is explored below.

Trends in Tuition and Fees and Average Net Price:

Over the past ten years, tuition and fees at Maryland's public colleges and universities have risen 34.4% for community colleges and 30.7% for public four-year institutions (or an annual rate of 3.4% and 3.1% respectively). These rate increases are slightly higher than the national figures over time, which increased 2% on average each year. Despite these slightly higher increases over time, Maryland's public institutions' continue to maintain their affordability rankings nationally.[24]

Figure 8: Ten-year Trends in Tuition and Fees at Maryland's Public Institutions
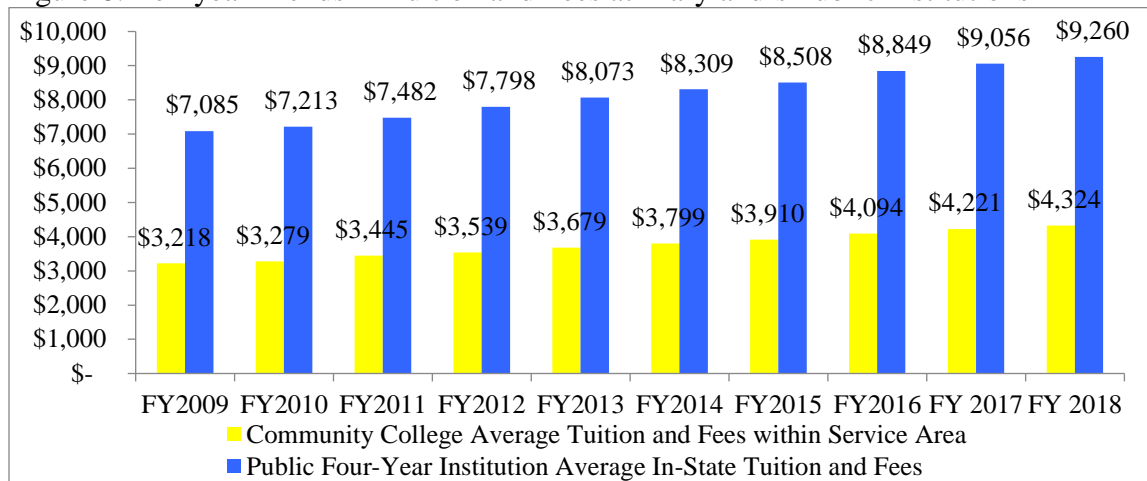
Source: MACC Data Book and Governor's Budget Books

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[24] Nationally, Maryland's community colleges rank 19th most expensive, and public four-year in-state tuition and fees place them as 24th most expensive. These are on par with rankings from past years. Source: College Board https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/college-pricing/resource-library?cat=86

Average net price is the out-of-pocket costs in-state students and their families pay to attend college and is calculated by taking the student's cost of attendance (which includes tuition, fees, books/supplies, housing, transportation, and other costs) and subtracting financial aid that does not need to be repaid (grants and scholarships). This net price represents the funds that full-time students and their families, on average, need to make sure they have to cover college costs annually (using such forms of payment as the family's contribution, student's earnings, and loans).

First and foremost, the data show (Table 3) that average tuition and fees figures mask the additional costs students are expected to pay annually to attend a public college in Maryland. The net price figures are approximately double the tuition and fee costs and include books and supplies (which averages $1,300 per year) and room and board (which averages about $10,000 per year).[25]

The data also show that overall net prices have increased for Maryland's community colleges and public four-year institutions, but the rates of change differ both by segment and by family income level. Overall, this is likely a function of institutions increasing their cost of attendance and financial aid awards (in the form of grants and scholarships) shrinking. The data show that net prices have increased over time, and that wealthier students and their families have seen greater increases than their lower income counterparts.

Table 3: Changes in First-time, Full-time Undergraduate Average Net Price: Overall and by Family Income Level for Maryland Community Colleges and Public Four-Year Institutions: FY 09 and FY 18

	Community Colleges FY 09	Community Colleges FY 18	% change	Public 4Yrs FY 09	Public 4Yrs FY 18	% change
Avg. net price	$7,257	$7,888	8.7%	$12,932	$15,996	23.7%
Avg. net price (income $0- 30K)	$6,077	$6,951	14.4%	$9,900	$11,577	16.9%
Avg. net price (income $30,001 - $48K)	$7,201	$7,673	6.5%	$11,798	$14,903	26.3%
Avg. net price (income $48,001 - $75k)	$8,156	$9,673	18.6%	$14,380	$17,622	22.6%
Avg. net price (income $75,001 - $110K)	$9,714	$11,692	20.4%	$14,717	$21,229	44.2%
Avg. net price (income over $110K)	$9,742	$12,454	27.8%	$16,545	$21,939	32 6%

Source: IPEDS

[25] These are national averages. Source: College Board, Annual Survey of Colleges, Figure 1: Average Estimate Full-time Undergraduate Budgets by Sector.

If net prices reflect the annual costs students must cover with loans, their own funds, or family contributions, these data show that low-income students and their families face a disproportionate burden in that a much higher proportion of their income is consumed by higher education costs. These trends may drive lower income students to work full time while attending college, take out loans, or stop out or drop out of college altogether. So, while these students have net prices that are lower than their wealthier counterparts, they face more risks in trying to pay for college each year.

Undergraduate Student Aid and Borrowing
In 2017-2018, almost half of all Maryland's undergraduates enrolled in the state's public institutions were awarded federal, state, institutional, and local grant and scholarship aid, with fewer students receiving federal loans (Table 4).

Table 4: Percentage of Maryland Community College and Public Four-Year Institution Undergraduate Students Awarded Grant and Loan Aid and Average Award: FY 2018

	% of undergraduates awarded federal, state, local, and institutional grant and scholarship aid	Average amount of federal, state, local, and institutional grant and scholarship aid awarded to undergraduates	% of undergraduates awarded federal student loans	Average amount of federal student loans awarded to undergraduates
Community Colleges	45.0%	$3,442	13.5%	$5,600
Public 4-Year Institutions	48.9%	$7,855	37.3%	$7,088

Source: IPEDS; Loans do not include Parent PLUS loans

The counterfactual data point is that approximately half of the state's undergraduates did not receive aid in the form of scholarships and grants in fiscal year 2018. This may be a function of students not completing the FAFSA (which serves as the means by which most students are identified as eligible for federal, state, local, and intuitional aid), students attending part time (many aid programs are contingent on full-time enrollment), and/or students financing their education through other means. In addition, the fairly low rate of federal loan participation may mean that students are not financing their education through loans but instead using their own funds to pay for their educational costs.[26]

Median Debt:
Maryland's community college and public four-year undergraduates carry a median debt of $6,063 to $15,900 respectively upon exiting college[27]. Median debt represents the sum of all undergraduate federal loans over students' college education at the institution for which the

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[26] Although it is possible that students may take out private loans to fund college, almost 92% of all student loans are owned by the Federal government. That said, private loans do not carry the same consumer protections that federal loans do (Trends in Student Aid, College Board, 2019) and are considered riskier for students and their families.

[27] The median debt figures include federal student loans; they do not include private loans or Parent PLUS loans. Sources: Federal Student Aid and College Scorecard.

median debt is reported. For example, if a student received a federal loan for $2,000 for each of eight semesters at one institution, their cumulative debt is recorded as $16,000 for that period of time. The median debt figures only include those who took out federal loans.

The data show that the median debt of Maryland public institution undergraduates who took out loans and earned an award in 2018 ranged between $10,250 and $21,000. This is below the national average of $29,200 for undergraduates who earned a bachelor's degree in 2018.[28]

For those who withdrew in the 2018 academic year, the median debt was substantially smaller. The challenge for these students, and of concern to state and federal policy makers, is that these students took on debt but risk not having advanced their education enough to reap the benefits of postsecondary education.

Figure 9: Median Debt for Undergraduate Cohort Who Graduated or Withdrew in 2017-2018
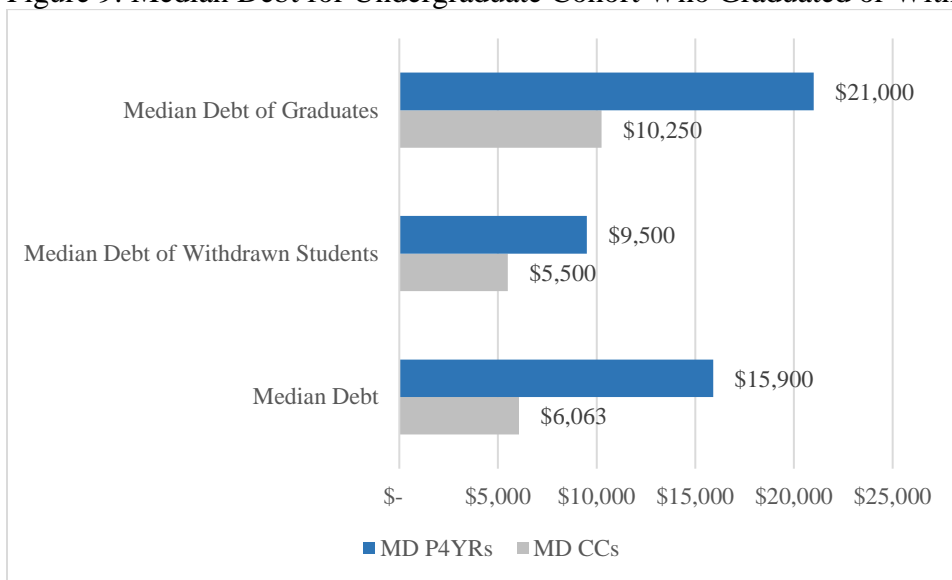
Sources: Federal Student Aid and College Scorecard

What is heartening is that these data show that most undergraduates in Maryland are taking on low to moderate debt to fund their educations. These data help inform a larger narrative of skyrocketing student debt and can lend perspective that the investment in college, even with student debt, can pay off with a higher standard of living and increased lifetime wages.

Summary:
Overall Maryland's colleges and universities are maintaining modest rates of tuition and fee increases and are trying to keep net prices lower for those students who are from lower-income families. Most undergraduates earning an award at Maryland's public colleges and universities have low to modest student debt upon completion, and almost half, in any given year, are funding their education without financial aid or loans.

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[28] This figure is calculated from survey results analyzed by The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) for their publication "Student Debt and the Class of 2018" https://ticas.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/classof2018.pdf

Some issues to consider regarding college affordability in Maryland include:

- The state's initiatives such as the Maryland student loan debt relief tax credit program, the Near-Completers program, and the Maryland Promise Scholarship help address college affordability for targeted populations.
- While State grant aid overall has increased over time, the per FTE figure has stayed flat because undergraduate enrollment, and the financial aid recipient pool, continues to increase.[29]
- Institutions are controlling college costs by such activities as using Open Educational Resources (OER) for teaching, learning and research, redistributing job responsibilities when vacancies occur, finding energy efficient solutions for their facilities.
- Many institutions target institutional 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.[30]

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.

In the coming year, the Commission will reach out to institutional representatives to explore future indicators that can describe and improve performance in identified areas. This will allow the PAR to serve the people of Maryland by ensuring that their public colleges and universities are continuing to foster personal, educational, and economic growth while addressing significant state needs

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the Maryland Higher Education Commission approve the 2019 Performance Accountability Report and ask the Secretary to forward it to the Governor and the General Assembly as required by law.

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[29] Over ten years, overall state grant aid to public institutions in the Maryland increased 1.1% from $77,938,000 to $78,784,000. This translates, on an undergraduate FTE basis, to $485 in state grant aid in 2017-2018 (a ten-year change of -0.6% of $488 per FTE in 2008-2009). Source: Source: NASSGAP Annual Survey 2017-2018 and 2008-2009. https://www.nassgapsurvey.com/survey_reports.aspx

[30] 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.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES – COMMUNITY COLLEGES

ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

Commission Assessment: The Commission continues to focus its attention on equity gaps in college outcomes among minority college students and their white peers. A central topic of the 2019 Completion Summit MHEC held in April was on college completion and equity. One of the speakers, Dr. Nikki Edgecombe of the Community College Research Center (CCRC), discussed ways institutions can create more equitable and inclusive pathways for students to achieve their educational goals.

The principles she posited include: 1) knowing your students, 2) understanding the obstacles to their success, 3) adopting and adapting responsive policies and practices, and 4) scaling and institutionalizing continuous improvement. In reference to this, she stated "*Targeted interventions are probably one of the more powerful vehicles we have for addressing gaps in attainment. They are not always popular, but universal interventions often times may lift all boats but maintain gaps...*"

For your institution, please describe: 1) one or more targeted interventions and the population(s) served, 2) the identified obstacles the students might face, 3) the metrics used to evaluate the intervention(s) and 4) the evidence used to assess and adapt the intervention(s) to ensure its intended effects.

ANNE ARUNDEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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BALTIMORE CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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CARROLL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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CECIL COLLEGE

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CHESAPEAKE COLLEGE

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COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN MARYLAND

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BALTIMORE COUNTY

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FREDERICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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GARRETT COLLEGE

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HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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HARFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

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PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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WOR-WIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES – PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

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Response

Bowie State University's continuing mission is to provide educational opportunities to a diverse populations of students so that they reach their potential. Understanding the nature of success among students allows the university to understand which students to target for interventions. A study of students who successfully completed their undergraduate program highlighted patterns of success common among many institutions of higher education. For instance,

- Females are more likely to graduate in six years or fewer years than males.
- Students who were classified as part-time during any semester were less likely to graduate.
- Students who live on-campus their first year are more likely to graduate.
- Credits accumulated during the first semester were positively associated with degree attainment. Those students who failed to accumulate at least 12 credits in the first semester graduated at a significantly lower rate, whereas those with 12-14 credits graduated at a rate slightly higher than what we see overall. Those students who accumulate 15 or more credits their first semester graduate at a rate of over 50%.
- Students who require math remediation are much less successful than their college-ready counterparts.
- First-generation students were slightly less likely to attain a degree.
- Pell Grant recipients were somewhat more likely to attain a degree.

This analysis has guided the adjustment of current and new student success interventions over the past five years. A sampling of interventions across the student life cycle are provided below.
Summer Bulldog Scholars Academy

The Summer Bulldog Scholars Academy engages in a continuous improvement cycle and is constantly adjusting the program to better prepare students for the transition to college coursework. The program was redesigned three years ago to help scholars transition from thinking about education as transactional to transformational through a combination of academic and social integration into its programming. Enrollment in the summer bridge program has remained at approximately 80 students since the redesign. Scholars earn more academic credit in the first year, typically have higher first-year GPAs and are retained at a higher rate. The organizers continue to identify program cost and administrative challenges as barriers to scale the program.

New Student Academic Advising
Credit accumulation during the first semester was identified as a predictor of long-term student success. To address the issue of students enrolling in adequate number of credits initially, the Academic Advising Center developed first semester course clusters by academic program. As part of the academic advising session during New Student Orientation, students were provided course clusters with sections already identified to align with the program of study. This eased student anxiety around selecting courses for the first time and had the intended consequence of increased credit hours attempted by new freshmen – over 15 credits on average for fall 2018 and fall 2019.

Second Year Retention of First-time Freshmen
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 have been 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.

Undergraduate Student Re-Enrollment Tracking
For the past four 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. Beginning in FY 2018, retention efforts were expanded to include monitoring of re-enrollment for the next semester. Deans, department chairs, retention coordinators and the Academic Advising Center were provided weekly reports to support unit re-enrollment efforts. Spring to fall undergraduate re-enrollment rates rose from 80% for fall 2018 to 84% for fall 2019.

STEM Student Success

Bowie STEM students are very similar to those nationwide in that STEM students are challenged to meet the rigors of the program from enrollment to graduation. The Ecosystem for Student Success at Bowie State University (ES^2 @ BSU) is supported in part by federal awards from the National Science Foundation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities-Undergraduate Programs (HBCU-UP) and the US Department of Education's First in the World (FITW) Program. The overarching goal of the BSU HBCU-UP is to drastically increase the retention of first and second year STEM students through development of students' science identity. This goal is achieved by building student learning communities; expanding undergraduate research learning opportunities; and providing career-related mentoring by building a critical mass of faculty change agents who provide professional development to other faculty on experiential learning, evidence-based instructional practices and professional learning communities.

The FITW program is a consortium of five institutions (Bowie State University, Central Connecticut State University, Farmingdale State University (lead), Kean University, and SUNY College at Old Westbury). The goal of the consortium is to improve four-year graduation rates by 20% over each institution's baseline for both incoming first-year students and transfer STEM students by providing mentored-research experiences off-campus, concentrated faculty and curricular development, first-year, second-year, and junior-year experience courses, collaborative learning workshops attached to foundational courses, project-based learning, special events, intensive counseling, and hands-on research both on-campus and off-campus.

The data comparing the performance of STEM students supported by the HBCU-UP and FITW programs with other new students provides evidence that these students outperform their peers in average credits earned, attempted/earned credits ratio, year-to-year retention, credits completed in college level mathematics and English. Compared to baseline performance, ES^2 @ BSU outcomes include increased STEM student retention and persistence, increase in the proportion of STEM students on track to graduate in four years, more STEM students engaged in undergraduate research, and more faculty and support services staff committed to the understanding and practice of high-impact strategies to support students learning and success.

New Student Success Programs
The *2019 – 2024 Racing to Excellence 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.

A number of new initiatives are being piloted and assessed during FY 2020 which align with Bowie's strategic goals and those of MHEC's *2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education.* Examples include financial aid micro grants for financially disadvantaged students, adding an entrepreneurship living-learning community, learner analytics and expanding the

Entrepreneurship Academy. These are just a few examples of Bowie State University's long-term commitment to student success and closing the achievement gap for all students.

COPPIN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Institutional Response

Target Interventions

- **Students Eligible, but Not Enrolled -** The four academic colleges, which include the College of Arts and Sciences and Education, Behavioral and Social Sciences, Business, and Health Professions, contact over 300 individuals per semester in a "cohort attack" fashion to ensure students who are eligible to enroll, complete the registration process. General obstacles include outstanding balances from the previous semester, and in some cases, undeclared majors. The colleges monitor the number of students who return each semester, their grade point averages, and assist with progression through plans of study. The strategy is a part of each dean's strategic goals and is measured each semester and academic year.

- **Freshman Seminar Course** – While the required Freshman Seminar course is not a new initiative, the contents of the course have been revised to support the goals of progression and retention. Among efforts that include advisement and registration and content support, all students complete the Beginning (BCSSE) survey that will be used to guide data-supported activities that directly relate to students' identification of expressed need/concerns that could negatively affect their continued enrollment and progression towards the degree. The University reviews the freshman cohort size, individual progression towards intended majors, and utilizes the results of the survey to inform academic advisement and to improve student support services.

- **Reenergizing Individual Student Excellence (RISE)** – This newly established program will support academic coaching and advising that will enable students to develop the academic

skills and study habits necessary to graduate from Coppin. The three targeted subpopulations of students include those who a) have been either on academic alert and/or probation, b) first full-time freshmen whose Cum GPA falls below 2.0, and c) those students who are suspended and dismissed but eligible to return. The University will measure each semester, the number of students identified who re-enroll and their grade point averages. The goal of the program is to coach each student to success through to completion.

- **Project Hope 2.0** – The program will provide proactive, targeted, and collaborative efforts to improve graduation rates among the near completers enrolled at Coppin State University. The three selected objectives are to 1) enhance and improve existing outreach strategies to encourage near completers to re-enroll in college; 2) increase re-enrollment rates of near completers by offering an individualized plan of study to facilitate completion; and 3) increase re-enrollment rates of near completers by offering financial aid resources. This project is funded through MHEC's *One Step Away* grant awarded to Coppin for Fall 2019 implementation.

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Commission Assessment: The Commission continues to focus its attention on equity gaps in college outcomes among minority college students and their white peers. A central topic of the 2019 Completion Summit MHEC held in April was on college completion and equity. One of the speakers, Dr. Nikki Edgecombe of the Community College Research Center (CCRC), discussed ways institutions can create more equitable and inclusive pathways for students to achieve their educational goals.

The principles she posited include: 1) knowing your students, 2) understanding the obstacles to their success, 3) adopting and adapting responsive policies and practices, and 4) scaling and institutionalizing continuous improvement. In reference to this, she stated "Targeted interventions are probably one of the more powerful vehicles we have for addressing gaps in attainment. They are not always popular, but universal interventions often times may lift all boats but maintain gaps..."

For your institution, please describe: 1) one or more targeted interventions and the population(s) served, 2) the identified obstacles the students might face, 3) the metrics used to evaluate the intervention(s) and 4) the evidence used to assess and adapt the intervention(s) to ensure its intended effects.

Institutional Response: Frostburg State University has established several targeted interventions to address gaps in attainment and create more equitable and inclusive pathways for students to achieve their educational goals. Two prominent examples are the Achieve Initiative and the Excellence in Academic Advising (EAA) comprehensive strategic planning process.

The university's Achieve Initiative focuses on a target population of entering students who score a 0 on their mathematics entrance examination and are subsequently required to take a developmental mathematics course. Beginning in the fall of 2019, 49 first-year students elected to enroll in designated pilot sections of Elements of Applied Probability and Statistics, a course that meets FSU's General Education Program mathematics requirement. These students participated in seminars and other activities focusing on just-in-time remediation, reinforcement of course content, and reflection on mindset and metacognition to help them earn college credit for mathematics during their first semester.

Frostburg's Strategic Planning Action Items include "support(ing) student success through comprehensive academic and career services that focus on the needs of students from admission through their years as alumni." An important part of achieving this goal is the Excellence in Academic Advising (EAA) comprehensive strategic planning process.

In the spring of 2019, an Excellence in Academic Advising (EAA) taskforce of almost 100 faculty and staff members drafted an Advising Mission Statement and Goals and completed an analysis of institutional data and evidence. The taskforce also gathered for a day-and-a-half retreat in August 2019, led by an EAA Fellow to synthesize cross-conditional findings and begin drafting recommendation for an action plan to be implemented during the academic year. Co-

sponsored by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and the Gardner Institute, the EAA project will establish standards over the next five years for the institution to evaluate and improve academic advising and acknowledge the central role of advising in promoting student learning, success, and completion.

SALISBURY UNIVERSITY

Commission Assessment: The Commission continues to focus its attention on equity gaps in college outcomes among minority college students and their white peers. A central topic of the 2019 Completion Summit MHEC held in April was on college completion and equity. One of the speakers, Dr. Nikki Edgecombe of the Community College Research Center (CCRC), discussed ways institutions can create more equitable and inclusive pathways for students to achieve their educational goals.

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We believe that a diverse and inclusive campus community brings irreplaceable value to SU's educational experience and strengthens the entire University. We strive to create a truly diverse and inclusive environment where we harness the richness of ideas, backgrounds and perspectives of the community to create student learning opportunities and value for the institution, today and into the future.

National trends suggest that over the next decade, high school graduates will be much more diverse in terms of their race, ethnicity and college preparation. The University will prepare for this trend by developing and implementing targeted strategies to meet the needs of college-bound students and those seeking graduate, professional and continuing education. Our aim, therefore, is continued mentoring and advising in response to the needs and talents of our students. As demonstrated through Objectives 4.1-4.3, SU has been and will continue to be committed to closing the achievement gap. Currently, African American students at SU have second-year retention rates above those demonstrated by our overall incoming student cohort, 84.4% vs 84.2%. Similarly, minority students have similar second-year retention rates, 83.7%, to the overall cohort. We believe we have been able to succeed in closing the achievement gap, in part, due to the ongoing financial support we receive through a U.S. Department of Education TRiO grant and the continued mentorship of our minority students through our Powerful Connections program.

The TRiO ACHiEVE Student Support Services grant has allowed SU to develop programs that specifically target first-generation students with financial need and students with disabilities. Through SU's TRiO ACHiEVE program, eligible students participate in academic coaching, receive financial literacy training, acquire learning and study strategies, and engage in a peer mentoring relationship. For the 2017-18 participants, 93% persisted at SU into their next academic terms. Additionally, 93% of participants completed the academic year in good academic standing.

Another targeted intervention for students from racial and ethnically diverse groups is the Powerful Connections programming. Through the Powerful Connections programs, students are assigned a peer mentor, provided with access to the various services offered through the Office of Multicultural Student Services, and provided with a pre-orientation to the academic expectations and social responsibilities associated with being an SU student. For more than 18 years, the Powerful Connections program has assisted racially and ethnically diverse students in feeling engaged with the campus community and achieving academic success at SU. Minority students who receive mentorship through the Powerful Connections program are retained at higher rates than other minority groups, 81.8% vs 79.7% (five-year average). When first-year grades are compared, Powerful Connections students are comparable to the overall minority cohort of first-time students (2.69 vs. 2.71, five-year average). Over the last five years, approximately 325 first-time students have received peer mentorship through the Powerful Connections program.

TOWSON UNIVERSITY

Commission Assessment
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Towson University Response
The SAGE Community, established in 2014 as a partnership between the Center for Student Diversity and Housing & Residence Life, focuses on academic success, community building, professional development and expanding multicultural knowledge of first year students participating in the SAGE (Students Achieve Goals through Education) program. A strong network supports the SAGE Community residents with academic support, relationships with faculty, staff and peers, various campus services, and peer mentorship. Participants learn about diverse cultural groups, career strategies, and participate in networking opportunities. Community members participate in a five-day residential experience prior to fall move-in.

The SAGE Community recruits first-generation college students, who meet financial aid eligibility guidelines. Two-hundred (200) students enrolled in the first five cohorts of the SAGE Community. These students were mostly female (70%) and racial/ethnic minorities (97%). They generally came from lower-income families, with 73% of community residents receiving a Pell grant.

The Division of Student Affairs and their partners continually assess, adapt, and measure the efficacy of the SAGE community using a number of tools, which include.
- Retention and graduation rates – The one-year retention rate has averaged 93% for the first five cohorts (fall 2014 through fall 2018), which exceeds the TU average of 85%. The four-year graduation rate for the first two cohorts is 41%, which is about seven percentage points lower than the TU average. However, the five-year graduation rate of the first cohort is 74%, which exceeds the TU average.
- Grade point average analysis – Staff monitor the academic progress of SAGE Community students via their GPA. Specific outcome metrics are the percentage of students who

maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0, as well as the percentage who maintain a 3.0 GPA. At the end of their first year, approximately 85% of SAGE Community students maintained a 2.0 or better cumulative GPA, and approximately 50% had a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

- Demographic participation rates – The SAGE Community has been successful in enrolling underrepresented minority students. Thus far, 97% of students have been racial/ethnic minorities, with African-American/Black (68%) and Hispanic/Latinx (21%) students being the most represented. Student Affairs staff have noted that it is challenging to recruit male students to the SAGE Community, with only 30% of students being male, in comparison to approximately 40% of the TU undergraduate population.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

Commission Assessment
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Response: Commissioners expressed concern about statewide gaps in college success and completion comparing African-American student with peers and requested information regarding how institutions are supporting the following objectives.

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.

The University of Baltimore is pleased to report that we have met both Objective 1.4 and Objective 1.6. FTFT (first-time full-time students) retention has increased from 68.1% to 76.6% in 2017 for all students and 76.9% for African-American students. The six-year graduation rate for African-American students has increased by 13.5% in one year and is the highest recorded since the lower division was reinstated in 2007. The six-year graduation rate for African American Students of 38.8% now exceeds that of all students at 37.2%.

Currently, 46.8% of our undergraduate students are African-American, up .9% from the previous year. Our research has shown that students with multiple academic risk factors (i.e., very low SAT Math and SAT Reading scores, Pell eligibility, or does not have at least one parent who has attended college) present significant remediation challenges. 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.

Given our almost equal split of African and non-African American students and the high percentage of economically disadvantaged students (73.9%), Goal 2 of our Strategic plan reads "Close the gap in educational achievement among *all* undergraduates." We 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 leaning, mentors, support groups. We assess student progress and have made strides in mitigating risk factors associated with student progress.

Commission Assessment

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Response: The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) has three bachelor degree programs in the health sciences. Minority students account for approximately 40% of the undergraduate population and each of these programs demonstrate consistent success in graduating students within 150% of the time to a degree regardless of race or ethnicity. Within the last three-year period of analyzed data, UMB's undergraduate programs have a 150% of time to degree graduation success rate near 90% for all minority graduates, a number very close to the majority average of 91%.

BS in Dental Hygiene

The BS in Dental Hygiene program is the only baccalaureate dental hygiene program in the state and enrolls approximately 14 full-time students annually. This program is a 2 + 2 format where students enter as a junior after completing 57 credits of prerequisite coursework. The majority of these students complete their transfer credits at a community college while, on average, four students enter the program annually having a prior bachelor's degree in another field. Recruitment efforts have the goal of achieving a highly diverse applicant pool and dental hygiene class composition to reflect the diversity of patients served in a changing health care delivery system. Obstacles some students may face are ineligibility for federal financial aid (Pell grants) when seeking a second bachelor's degree, the cost of tuition and fees, and the limited information disseminated in the past about transferring to programs in the School of Dentistry.

The metrics used to evaluate recruitment intervention include an assessment of the number of students applying and having successful admissions outcomes into various pathways leading to bachelors or master's degrees. These interventions are deemed successful if they translate into the recruitment of minority college students, especially from HBCU's, who successfully

complete the program.

BS in Medical and Research Technology

The undergraduate program in medical and research technology has no identifiable achievement gaps among minority and majority students as both groups complete the program and attain certification as Clinical Laboratory Scientists from the American Society for Clinical Pathology at comparable rates. Minority students are equally, if not more likely, to receive excellence awards bestowed at annual pre-commencement ceremonies. Program directors have identified deficiencies in preparatory lab skills among some entering students that emerge through pre-semester laboratory skills assessment and training.

During orientation week, all students undergo assessment for their competency in necessary laboratory skills such as pipetting and microscopy. Students deemed not proficient receive one-on-one tutoring with faculty until they reach identified levels of competency assessment for pipetting and microscopy skills. Once enrolled, no differences between minority and majority students concerning academic performance have been observed. When needed, interventions are based on individual academic deficiencies.

BSN in Nursing

In fall 2018, the University Of Maryland School of Nursing (SON) started an emergency fund from philanthropic dollars designed to prevent attrition and support success for the most vulnerable students who were experiencing acute financial hardships. These obstacles could include loss of financial aid, health insurance, housing, basic life needs, or inability to meet their financial obligations to the university. This fund was designed exclusively for students who are unable to procure any additional aid options, which by definition typically applies to students with extreme financial need. The undergraduate population of SON is incredibly diverse with over half reporting they are minority (56%). A majority of nursing undergraduates also is classified as having very high financial need (over 50% depending on the cohort).

While this fund is not exclusive to minority undergraduate students, they have made up the largest users (n=6 or 67%) of the fund. These funds helped to retain 100% of the minority undergraduate students seeking aid, as without this help these students indicated they could not have continued their studies.

Prepared by UMB Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Strategic Planning, and Assessment
October 1, 2019

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY

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Response: UMBC, due to its nationally-recognized scholarship programs (e.g., Meyerhoff, MARC U*STAR), attracts a diverse population of promising students who begin their college experiences aspiring to complete majors in the life sciences and other STEM areas but graduate
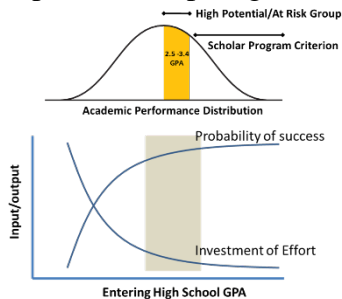
with few STEM career options, switch to non-STEM majors, or leave without earning baccalaureate degrees. UMBC recognized the need to pursue and invest resources in these promising students, both at UMBC and across the nation, who represent a significant potential talent pool for STEM workforce needs, especially in biomedical research.

Building on UMBC's experiences in increasing minority participation, a proposal to implement STEM BUILD at UMBC was funded by the NIH Diversity Program Consortium in 2014 to pilot and refine interventions to inform the creation of a comprehensive, multidimensional model for a public research university to increase the number of undergraduates from all backgrounds completing majors in the biomedical and behavioral sciences and entering graduate school and/or the STEM workforce.

The multi-prong STEM BUILD Initiative, which was recently funded for an additional five years, includes a two-year Active Learning Inquiry Teaching (ALIT) Certificate Program to support faculty development, a Science Education Research Unit (SERU) to innovate the field of STEM education, an eight-week BUILD a Bridge to STEM Summer Internship program that offers BUILD Group Research experiences to visiting community and other college students, and the BUILD Training Program (BTP) for promising UMBC undergraduates pursing STEM degrees. BTP is a research study investigating how to best support and retain promising first-year students. To identify participants, UMBC invites applicants planning to pursue STEM biomedical or behavioral majors (new MSAT $\geq$570 & HSGPA $\geq$3.0), and no other significant

programmatic or scholarship support to complete online applications that include four essay questions. STEM BUILD staff review applications and use randomized control trial methodology to assign eligible applicants to one of three groups: 1) BTP, which includes comprehensive programmatic and financial support; 2) STEM Living and Learning Community or LLC, which offers preferential placement in the LLC with programmatic support and monetary incentives for survey completion; or 3) BUILD Control, with monetary incentives for survey completion but no programmatic support.

The BUILD Training Program participants are required to live in campus housing during the academic year (STEM LLC in the first year) and must participate in an array of activities and coursework during their appointments. BTP Interventions, which are focused on capacity, scalability and sustainability, include:
- BUILD a Bridge to Success in Summer 1 and 2
- FYE 101 – Introduction to a Research University (1 credit)
- SCI 101L – Quantitative Reasoning: Measurement & Skills Lab (2 credits)
- Monthly all-cohort Community Meetings
- Supplementary BTP advising (weekly, biweekly or monthly),
- Support and guidance from BTP staff
- Attendance/Participation in three annual UMBC Research Symposia
- Peer Tutoring and Mentoring
- Classroom-based Undergraduate Research Experiences (CUREs)
- Responsible Conduct of Research Training
- Introduction to Research and Post-Bacc online non-credit curricula

The overarching goal of STEM BUILD at UMBC has been to create a comprehensive new model for a public university to engage students and help them develop the academic foundation, skills, experience and motivation to excel in science, engineering, and mathematics majors. The initiative continues to be conducted as a research investigation under the leadership of Dr. Kenneth Maton and Dr. Shuyan Sun to ensure that the initiative's outcomes can be disseminated, recognized, and utilized by others. The UMBC evaluation team conducts quantitative and qualitative evaluation activities, focused on the BUILD Training Program (BTP) Cohorts; the respective STEM LLC and comparison samples; the BUILD a Bridge to STEM Summer Internship (Affiliates), and UMBC faculty. In addition to the periodic local survey administrations of and focus groups with students, the UMBC evaluation team supports the administration of Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) survey measures through the University of California, Los Angeles.

As of May 2019, 93 direct-entry and transfer students participated in Phase I of the STEM BUILD Initiative with 20 additional direct-entry students recruited for Phase II.
Analyses from Baseline to End of Year 3 data show that:
- BTP serves as an effective pipeline for MARC U*STAR at UMBC with 6 BTP Trainees transitioning to MARC.
- The measures of Research Self-Efficacy and Science Identify of BTP Trainees in Cohorts 1 & 2 were statistically significantly higher than those of the LLC/Comp group ($p = .026$ and $p = .004$, respectively).

- The percentages of Cohort 1 & 2 Trainees with various research activities were statistically significantly higher than those of the LLC/Comp group.

Lessons learned during Phase I emphasized that effective communication between BTP staff and student participants is critical and, also, that direct-entry, first year STEM majors are most suited for BTP recruitment and interventions. Additionally, it was learned that extreme caution is needed when adding any credit-bearing curricula to the existing requirements of STEM undergraduate majors. Other insights were that intra-cohort team-building provides many challenges and supplementary STEM advising is critical. It was also learned that many non-academic issues impact student success and these challenges require specific coaching and support. Most importantly, Phase I identified the STEM LLC with a staff coordinator as a sustainable model of delivering scalable interventions to first-year STEM majors (credit and non-credit bearing curricula, peer mentoring and tutoring, and camaraderie-building social or career-focused programming).

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

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Institutional Response: UMCP is committed to student success and has many programs and services designed to promote it. Targeted interventions include Academic Achievement Programs (AAP) whose mission is to facilitate access and to provide an opportunity for a college education to students who, if evaluated on traditional criteria, might not have access to UMCP. Another is the Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Education (OMSE) whose mission is to provide matriculation, retention, graduation and academic success to multi-ethnic undergraduate students. A third group is students who have earned below a 2.3 GPA and, thus, receive additional support to help avoid academic probation. Identified obstacles students served by these programs might face include a lack of information about the college experience and a lack of mentors. UMCP uses a variety metrics such as tracking retention and graduation rates, deriving student comparison groups to evaluate the impact of interventions, piloting card-swipe data collection to assess the effect of attendance at certain programs on outcomes, a yearly review process, focus groups with students, and student surveys. These efforts are collaborative across the intervention programs themselves, academic colleges, and administrative offices in order to best support students. Evidence used to assess and adapt the interventions are dependent on the specific program and its goals but may include 1-, 2-, or 3-year retention rates; 4- and 6-year graduation rates; success in required courses (such as math and English); and participation in programs such as study abroad or internships. All efforts aim to make the transition into and through UMCP more accessible, supportive, and efficient.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE

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 Response: Two targeted interventions utilized by UMES to enhance student enrollment and success reviewed in the sections below are First-Year Experience (FYE) and the Future Outstanding Cohorts of University Students (FOCUS).

First-Year Experience
       The Center for Access and Academic Success (CAAS) delivers and manages the ***First-Year Experience (FYE)-Hawk Mentor Partnership, called "<u>C</u>omprehensive <u>R</u>etention <u>I</u>nitiatives for <u>S</u>tudent <u>S</u>uccess*" (**C.R.I.S.S**) intervention. This initiative has had a significant impact on the mission of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in facilitating and supporting first-year students with a successful transition into the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES). The mentoring aspect encourages and promotes the personal success of first-year students at the university by establishing collaborative partnerships between new and upper-class students. Students are encouraged to integrate socially and culturally into the campus community, to assist in gaining valuable academic skills through a supportive network of experienced and informed mentors. The mentors' influence, particularly on first-year students and sophomores, assists in enrollment and retention efforts by helping students acclimate to the campus community and identify support resources.
       All first-year students are assigned an upper-class mentor upon entering UMES. Through a series of engagements, mentors meet with first-year students periodically to assess their transition into the campus community. Through carefully crafted engagements such as (1) FYE Seminar course, (2) Academic Retention and Success Strategies (ARSS) course (3) academic skill-building seminars/workshops and (4) group chat sessions ("Real-Talks"), first-year students are provided 1:1 and group intervention critical to the first-year experience. In addition, CAAS conducted a total of 6 forums for all first-year students during the academic year: 1) Study

Abroad, 2) Cultural Self-Awareness, 3) The Freshman Finale Art Showcase, 4) Civic Engagement, 5) Financial Literacy, and 6) Building Your Brand.

In support of the FYE and ARSS courses, 17 peer mentors were assigned to 46 sections of the courses. The mentors attended weekly courses, provided support for class and were liaisons between CAAS and the instructor. The mentors contributed to the success of the course by bridging the gap between students and instructors. Mentors participated in and led discussions, delivered important university and departmental information, encouraged student participation and class attendance, connected students to the CAAS, assisted first-year students with course selection, and supported the overall success of students within the class and beyond by acting as ambassadors of the university and role-models to first-year students. During the semester, one lecture is provided by the FYE mentor on the topic of **"REAL (_Relevant Educational Active Learning_) Talk on the Road".** This session is designed to address student academic and social issues from a peer perspective. Lastly, mentors reach out and connect with students in a personal way. During the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 terms, mentors spent over 1,300 contact hours with first-year students both face to face and through group emails, group texts/text messages, phone calls, letters/post cards, social media, CAAS visits, peer mentoring meetings, and referrals (advising, tutoring, counseling).

As a result of engaging students as cohorts in the FYE courses and having upperclassmen as mentors, the intervention effectively provides peer guidance and support to first-year students. Data collected from the intervention showed that a majority of students (93% in fall 2017and 94% in spring 2018) participating in FYE courses achieved grades of C or better.

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

The Future Outstanding Cohort of University Students (FOCUS) Partnership Agreement is another intervention that is coordinated through the Center for Access and Academic Success (CAAS). This comprehensive program is an extension of retention programs and services offered in the department. The FOCUS program includes the following components:

- Academic coaching/advising – providing students with the chance to work individually with a CAAS coach to enhance their academic skills, gain confidence, discover motivation, and improve performance. Students schedule 30-minute block appointments with a CAAS coach at least twice each semester.
- Facilitating workshops for all students but primarily intended for FOCUS students – Workshops are designed to expand students' knowledge in areas related to: study skills, note-taking, test anxiety, learning styles, time management, and relationship building.
- Providing services such as tutoring and mentoring – providing free tutoring for all students who may need additional assistance outside the classroom. Approved tutors who have demonstrated mastery of certain subject areas assist students with questions and study skills. Peer mentors serve as role models and are a resource for first-year students.

Impact Evaluation

At the beginning of the fall 2017 semester, there were a total of 79 FOCUS students identified. By the end of the semester, the number of registered students reduced to 78 due to one withdrawal from the university. At the start of the spring 2018 semester, there were 179 FOCUS students identified, but at the close of the semester, the number decreased to 164 due to 15 withdrawals from the university.

Study time was the most utilized service by the FOCUS students in CAAS in fall 2017

and spring 2018. For the fall 2017 semester out of 627 visits, 370 (59%) of the visits were for study time, and the number of visits for the spring 2018 increased to 843 (i.e., 128%increase) for study time. For fall 2017, 101 (16%) of the visits by FOCUS students were for academic coaching, with a slight increase to 258 (20%) in spring 2018.

More than half (53%) of the students enrolled in the Academic Retention and Success Strategies (ARSS) course received a satisfactory score for the course outcome and a higher cumulative GPA than those who did not. This indicates that student performance in ARSS 188 course can improve for students who show up for class and complete assignments. Although the average cumulative GPA for ARSS participants and non-participants were not significantly different, comparing the students who achieved academic standing both in and out of the ARSS course, the ARSS students fared better than the non-participants. There was a 16% difference in the average GPA between students in FOCUS than for non-participants.

CAAS' goal is for 100% of the FOCUS students to achieve satisfactory academic standing. Although this goal has not been achieved to date, more than half of FOCUS students (63%) visit CAAS for academic coaching and other center services. Consequently, CAAS' meetings with students provides the Center with opportunities to identify factors that contribute to their social and academic integration and inability to reach their goals. Meeting with the FOCUS students individually enables the coaches to identify strategies that would redirect students on a path to academic success. Additionally, augmenting the academic coaching component with the ARSS 188 course allows coaches to interact with the students in a group dynamic, thus providing additional support via fun and engaging activities.

Academic Quality

Accreditation and Licensure

UMES Physical Therapy students have achieved a 100% pass rate in the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) for five years in a row and the program has recently been reaffirmed by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). The next APTA evaluation visit will be in 2027. UMES has also continued to be successful with its teacher licensure assessments. For twelve consecutive years (i.e., FY 2006 - FY 2017), UMES has reported 100% pass rate on the PRAXIS II examinations for teacher candidates. This is a remarkable performance (see **Objective 1.1).** Such a significant performance in licensure examinations is the result of new and innovative programming to better assist students to prepare for the examination. For example, the teacher education computer laboratory continues to provide all students with an opportunity to review and study in an innovative and conducive environment for learning.

Apart from the reaffirmation of accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, UMES has maintained its reaffirmation of professional program accreditations for Chemistry, Education, Engineering, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Human Ecology, Rehabilitation Services, Golf Management, Technology, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Business Management, Accounting, Marketing, and Finance. In addition, UMES has maintained its Research Carnegie Classification and was upgraded to Doctoral University (High Research Activity) from Moderate Research Activity effective 2019. Consequently, UMES continues to be one of only 335 research institutions out of 4,464 colleges and universities in the nation.

Faculty

Faculty members are key to the success of any postsecondary institution's mission. UMES is fortunate to have academically strong, diverse, and dedicated faculty that are committed to helping students, many of whom are economically disadvantaged and first generation, to succeed in their studies, as well as engaging in scholarly and outreach activities, and leveraging resources to support the work of the University. The proportion of UMES full-time tenure and tenure track faculty with terminal degrees in their respective disciplines was 93% in FY 2019. Evidence of a high quality faculty is also provided by students through the evaluation of instruction survey. For example, in spring 2018 a majority of students (92%) indicated that their instructors made clear what was expected of students in their courses.

UMES continues to make a significant contribution to the State of Maryland by reaching out to first-generation college students and maintaining its commitment to the representation of this group. In the fall of 2017, demographic information on undergraduate students confirmed that 30% were first generation (**Objective 2.1**). Also, 54% of UMES students were economically disadvantaged. In addition, overall student diversity continues to be strong at UMES where over 40 countries are represented (**Objective 2.2**) and 30% of the fall 2018 undergraduate enrollment was non-African American students. UMES also continues to serve a significant number of Maryland residents. In fall 2018, 77.9% of the student population (graduate and undergraduate) was Maryland residents and Prince George's County (22%), Baltimore City (9%), Wicomico County (8%) and Montgomery County (8%) accounted for most of the in-state enrollment. Faculty diversity at UMES is strong. A breakdown of full-time faculty by race reveals that 37.6% are African American, 36.9% White, 14.8% Asian, 4.0% Foreign, 4.0% Hispanic, 0.1% Native Hawaiian, 1.3% two or more races, and 1.3% unknown or other races. UMES has been ranked #2 in instructional faculty members' race and ethnic diversity among 4-year public institutions by the Chronicle of Higher Education's Almanac 2019. Its unique programs (e.g., Hospitality & Tourism Management, Physical Therapy, Engineering, and Pharmacy); and relatively low in-state cost of education (i.e., in-state tuition and fees amounting to $8,558 per annum in FY 2019) continued to be major attractions.

Enrollment in Distance Education and Off-Campus Courses

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore continues to offer a significant number of its students opportunities for taking online and distance education courses (**Objective 2.3**). In the fall of 2018, 1,700 students enrolled in online or distance education courses, a decrease of 9.7% over its fall 2017 enrollment of 1,882. The Office of Instructional Technology utilizes a set of guidelines and standards for fully online courses and continues to provide training and functional assistance for faculty. UMES uses both online and hybrid course formats and a majority of students continue to attend traditional classroom sessions as they have done in the past, but also have WebCT/Blackboard as an additional resource.

Although traditional classroom time is still deemed necessary, students benefit from having more flexible schedules for completing their work, including the development of abstract thinking skills, and from the fulfillment of great technical responsibility, consistent with the needs of Generation Z. Students and faculty will continue to be jointly responsible for using alternative learning and teaching styles consistent with current web technology. The target of 3,000 students taking online courses by 2019 has not been reached, in large part because of declining enrollments (**Objective 2.3**).

Enrollment, Retention and Graduation Rates

For the third year in a row UMES experienced a very significant drop of 8.4% in enrollment of both undergraduate and graduate students from 3,492 (fall 2017) to 3,199 (fall 2018). Reasons for the low enrollment continue to include, but are not limited to turnover in enrollment management personnel, a large number of students who were on academic probation that were unable to improve their academic standing, low second-year retention rate that decreased slightly from 65% (fall 2016 cohort) to 63% (fall 2017 cohort), and unsuccessful efforts at recruiting more transfer students.   In response to these challenges, the President enhanced the UMES organizational structure by creating a new Division of Enrollment Management and appointing a vice president to lead the student enrollment, retention, and success efforts of the university, supported by new directors of Admissions, Financial Aid and the Center for Access and Academic Success (CAAS) and Student Life/Housing. In addition, a revitalized Enrollment Management Taskforce that meets at least once every month will monitor student enrollment, persistence and success. Staffing challenges notwithstanding, increasing enrollment at both undergraduate and graduate levels continues to be a top priority for all divisions and operational units at UMES. (**Objectives 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4**).

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND GLOBAL CAMPUS

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The principles she posited include: 1) knowing your students, 2) understanding the obstacles to their success, 3) adopting and adapting responsive policies and practices, and 4) scaling and institutionalizing continuous improvement. In reference to this, she stated "*Targeted interventions are probably one of the more powerful vehicles we have for addressing gaps in attainment. They are not always popular, but universal interventions often times may lift all boats but maintain gaps...*"

For your institution, please describe: 1) one or more <u>targeted interventions</u> and the population(s) served, 2) the identified obstacles the students might face, 3) the metrics used to evaluate the intervention(s) and 4) the evidence used to assess and adapt the intervention(s) to ensure its intended effects.

Response: In 2017, UMGC launched the Prince George's 3D (PG 3D) Scholars Program in collaboration with Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) and Prince George's Community College (PGCC) to provide a direct and affordable pathway to a bachelor's degree. Prince George's County is among the most racially diverse in all of Maryland. As of September 2018, PGCPS' student population was 57% African-American, 34% Hispanic/Latino, and nearly 5% of other non-white populations. The PG 3D Scholars program thus reaches a population of students historically underrepresented in terms of access to higher education.

The PG 3D Scholars program builds on existing programs in the county targeting affordability and access to higher education, including established dual-enrollment relationships between the public schools and PGCC as well as the Free and Reduced Meals programs through which eligible students can obtain additional financial support to reduce costs their families incur towards college courses. PG 3D-eligible students must be enrolled in PGCPS schools, have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5, demonstrate college readiness, submit an application, a 500-word essay, and two teacher recommendations. The program accepts up to 50 students per year.

Admitted students begin taking PGCC courses as high school juniors and seniors, with the goal of earning 30 college credits by high school graduation. Graduates then transfer to PGCC to complete the remaining 30 credits toward their associate degree before enrolling at UMGC to complete the last 60 credits and earn their bachelor's degree. Leveraging the existing dual-enrollment agreements in the county and a UMGC scholarship upon transfer to UMGC, PG 3D scholars can earn a bachelor's degree for a total cost of less than $10,000.

Dedicated staff in PGCPS schools provide comprehensive support to students while in high school and make a warm handoff to PGCC advisors to ensure a seamless transition from high

school to PGCC, and from PGCC to UMGC. Each 3D scholar receives individual advising about courses and degree requirements, and they are exposed to the online classroom environment as part of their pathway to prevent the transition from face-to-face to online courses from becoming an obstacle to degree completion.

The members of the first cohort in this program graduated from high school in June 2019 and are now attending PGCC for the Fall 2019 term, with expected enrollment at UMGC in Fall 2020. The partner institutions are tracking attrition rates/reasons, milestone achievement, GPA, and percent of Pell-eligible students succeeding in the program. Because this program is in its infancy, long-term success cannot yet be measured. However, any amount of time students participate in the program and any number of college credits they earn serve to save them both time and cost toward a degree, irrespective of where they ultimately enroll and complete.

MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Institutional Response:

Morgan is providing information on two targeted interventions.

The Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) CASA Academy

The CASA Academy is an alternative admissions program sponsored by the Center for Academic Success and Achievement at Morgan State University. Transitioning high school students who have applied to Morgan State University, but fail to meet the requirements for regular admission, are referred to the Center from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and invited to apply to the summer program. The students profiles are described using two

tiers: (1) SAT 920-880/ACT 16 and a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or (2) SAT 870-840/ACT 15 and it is based on the qualifying criteria. All participants who successfully complete the program are guaranteed admission to the University for the subsequent fall semester.

One of the obstacles that students face when they are referred to the CASA Academy program is a feeling of inadequacy and being underprepared for college. The CASA Academy program is designed to ease the transition from high school to college for students whose academic profile and performance suggest the need for early intervention to improve their potential for success in college. Upon acceptance to the Academy, participants must enroll and successfully complete (earn a grade of C or better) a sequence of three non-credit courses designed to strengthen the student's background in English, mathematics, and reading comprehension and vocabulary development.

Students are also introduced to a Strengths-based orientation seminar as well as a common reading experience with the book club that meets once each week. StrengthsQuest is a program developed by the Gallup Organization which helps students identify their natural talents. A student's strengths quest – your quest to achieve excellence and become all you can be through your own natural talents – is really a quest to help students discover, develop, and apply who they are. A strengths quest is a revolutionary approach to achieving. Adopting a strengths perspective to one's life and fully embracing it can have a radical impact on one's motivation. Through the Strengths-based orientation seminar, taught by the CASA team of academic advisors, students learn that their overall academic experience can be greatly enhanced by the perspective and direction they take in setting goals and making key decisions.

Additionally, to enhance the Strengths-based orientation seminar, CASA students are introduced to the customized version of Thriving in College and Beyond, designed specifically for historically Black colleges and Universities. The text is designed to introduce students to the culture and excellence that defines HBCUs while at the same time introducing students to learning skills fundamental to success in college.

The common reading experience for CASA Academy students focuses on a relevant theme for students each summer. Some of the themes and issues we have covered are HIV/Aids, violence in the community, and socio-economics and social justice.

The CASA Academy is an academically intense and rigorous program. It is offered for a six-week period during the summer. Courses are held Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Additional supplemental instruction, as well as academic, personal, and leadership development seminars are held in the evenings between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Participants' primary purpose and goal of participating in the CASA Academy is to improve their skill development in the identified core areas in order to gain admission to the University.

Students in the CASA Academy must agree to meet the following standards:
• Successfully complete all CASA Academy courses with a grade of C or better
• Attend all scheduled CASA Academic classes and sponsored activities

- Participate in all mandatory seminars, workshops, activities, etc.
- Adhere to the University's Code of Student Conduct
- Adhere to the CASA Academy Code of Student Conduct

During the CASA Academy program, students are hired to serve as peer tutors/mentors. Peer tutors/mentors (Strengths Leaders) are provided training prior to the beginning of the program. CASA Academy participants are required to attend tutoring every day for each of their courses. In addition to the tutors/mentors, the program hires supplemental instructors to provide assistance to students in the developmental math course that is offered.

The successful completion rates (average 95%) are the metrics used to evaluate success of this program. Additionally, the Office of Institutional Research has found that students who participate in the CASA Academy program have comparable retention and graduation rates to those students who enter the University through regular admission.

Second Year Experience (SYE)

Morgan State University was awarded a Lumina Grant in 2017. A significant component of this grant was the designing and planning for implementation of a Second Year Experience (SYE) program which is being coordinated through the Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA). The SYE program will be designed to engage and support students and help drive them to personal and academic success in the second year. The targeted population for this program is all returning first-year full-time students.

Several obstacles were identified for our second-year students. One of them is the indecisiveness about deciding on a major and an awareness of career/professional opportunities post-graduation. Often the literature uses the term "sophomore slump", a time when second-year students feel lost, unmotivated and confused or undecided about their majors.
One of the high impact practices of SYE programs that has been shown to have a positive influence on second year engagement and retention includes activities that enhance career readiness. A major part of the SYE program at Morgan is providing second-year students with opportunities to engage in experiential learning experiences. Well-planned, supervised and assessed experiential learning programs can stimulate academic inquiry, promote interdisciplinary learning, civic engagement, career development, cultural awareness, leadership, and other professional and intellectual skills.

Academic advising is the centerpiece of the SYE program. Research shows that interaction with advisors, both formal and informal, is a predicator of student success. The SYE program at Morgan State is making it a priority to create an environment in which advisors and students develop meaningful academic and intellectual engagement. Academic advisors will have the opportunity to enhance the experiential learning experiences of their advisees by assisting them with the selection and fulfillment of their experiences: internships, research projects, community service, service-learning courses, study abroad, volunteering, and job shadowing. Student participation will be documented through the completion of an Experiential Learning Plan (ELP) which will be completed by the student with the support of

the student's academic advisor. CASA will provide a support mechanism for this endeavor by offering training for advisors in preparation for this responsibility. Beginning in the fall of 2019, academic advisors with the Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) will become the SYE Coaches working with all second-year students to assist them with identifying and engaging in meaningful experiential learning opportunities.

To advance the SYE program, lessons learned through holding focus groups with students are being implemented. Their responses were thoughtful and critical to the success of our SYE program so that it becomes a true partnership. The metrics used to evaluate the implementation of the SYE program are second to third year retention rates.

Additionally, the evidence being used to assess/adapt the intervention are the number of students who complete an experiential learning plan (ELP). This plan has two reporting mechanisms and an app for students to access with their phones has been developed. Part 1 of the ELP, "Explore", asks students questions that provide demographics/profiles of the students as well as identifying goals they hope to achieve through their participation in the opportunity. Part 2, "Engage", asks students to describe what they are dong as part of their experiential learning opportunity. Part 3, "Reflect" requires students to reflect on the skills they have learned and what they have learned about themselves.

Of the 859 second-year students who entered the fall of 2018, 59.6% completed ELP 1, 9.9% completed ELP 2, and 8.6% completed all three components of the plan including ELP 3 the reflection. Through expanding the types of opportunities in 2019, it is expected that the number of students who participate in the SYE program will increase. Also, "campus to career" field trips were added last year and it was, by far, the most popular experiential opportunity in which students participated. The student focus group suggested that field trips be advertised according to specific majors or areas of study. Also, the program is training a group of third-year students who participated in the program to become SYE Ambassadors in the fall of 2019. As the SYE program enters its second year, it is anticipated that the University will reach its goals of increasing second to third year retention rates.

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

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Institutional Response
DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program (DBSP)

The DBSP, established in 2007, is SMCM's flagship program for underrepresented students. First-year and transfer students are invited to apply to the DBSP based on interest, high school accomplishments, and leadership potential, and are interviewed by the Program Director prior to being offered enrollment in the program. DBSP students attend a pre-matriculation summer bridge program, receive intensive advising, are enrolled in the same first year seminar as other DB Scholars (to facilitate cohort building), and carry out a campus-wide leadership project. Funding from the state has allowed for the expansion of the DBSP from its initial focus on the first year to a four-year, developmentally appropriate program designed to support students through graduation.

> *Populations Served:* Students from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education, including students belonging to ethnic minority groups; first generation students; students eligible to receive Pell grants; students with disabilities; or students from rural or urban communities.

> *Obstacles Faced:* Since DBSP students are often the first in their families to attend a four-year institution, they may not possess the same knowledge of academic study skills, campus life, and general college expectations as their peers who are not first-generation. Additionally, students who have attended under-resourced high schools may struggle with the increased academic rigor of college coursework, especially at an honors college, and may need assistance with time management. Both of these issues are addressed in the DBSP via the first year seminars, which are taught in special sections limited to DBSP

students, as well as through intensive advising. Finally, DBSP students may face obstacles related to their low-income status. In response, DBSP students are offered generous financial aid packages whenever possible, and receive laptop computers for their personal academic use upon entry to the program.

Metrics: Several quantitative and qualitative assessments are in place. The retention and graduation rates of each successive DBSP cohort are closely monitored. Beginning with the Fall 2015 cohort, these rates have been evaluated against aspirational targets set by the State of Maryland. The program has met each one of these success goals, including increasing first-to-second year retention from 80% to 88%; increasing first-to-third year retention from 68% to 80%; and increasing the four-year graduation rate from a low of 32% in the first year to 71% for the most recent year, effectively closing the completion equity gap between participating DBSP students and all SMCM students. In addition, DBSP students are surveyed following the summer bridge experience to assess how well prepared they feel for college, and to solicit suggestions for improvements. DBSP alumni are periodically surveyed to assess the impact of the program on their college experience and post-baccalaureate professional lives.

Evidence: On survey responses and in individual consultations and advising meetings, DBSP students expressed a number of academic concerns, including study skills, time management, understanding of transfer credits, requesting and using academic accommodations, and degree planning. In response, the DBSP partnered with several offices on campus, including the Registrar and the Office of Student Support Services, to offer workshops specifically tailored for DBSP students to address these concerns. For example, major-specific workshops focusing on multi-year degree planning are now being offered to assist students in understanding how to effectively and efficiently complete their major requirements within four years.