



# **Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal**

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## **Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress Toward the 55% Completion Goal**

### **Executive Summary**

The 2022 Joint Chairmen's Report issued a charge to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to report on the State's progress toward its goal to have at least 55% of Maryland residents ages 25 to 64 holding at least an associate degree by 2025. This report, the 2022 Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal, provides an update on progress toward the established degree targets, as well as a compilation of institutional submissions on reports of best practices.

Increasing the percentage of Marylanders with at least an associate degree is affected not just by our colleges and universities, but also by such things as in-migration, out-migration, employment opportunities, and other dynamics that are tied to educating, attracting, and maintaining a talented workforce.

For the 2021-2022 reporting year, Maryland's public institutions, which serve as a key source of degree holders for this goal, had year-over-year positive trends and exceeded the model's goals by almost 5100 degrees. Even though the institutions are exceeding their degree targets, degree production by institutions is not the sole contributor to overall degree attainment rates in the state.

For 2022, the degree attainment rate for Maryland is an estimated 50.1%.<sup>1</sup> Based on Census data from the American Community Survey, over the course of the model, the average annual degree attainment rate of change per year in Maryland has been 0.5%. Therefore, if Maryland were to maintain that trend, by 2025 the degree attainment rate would be 52.1%, which is below the goal set.

The state continues to see persistent gaps in degree attainment by race and ethnicity. Institutions should continue their diversity, equity and inclusion efforts to try to shrink completion equity gaps over the coming years.

<sup>1</sup> These calculations use U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 2019, and 2020 American Community Survey, One-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Five-Year Estimates Detailed Tables. Based on Lumina Foundation analysis (contained in the Stronger Nation state profile at <https://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/#/progress/state/MD>) and the average growth rate per year has been .5% from 2012 to 2019. Maryland's degree attainment rate was 49.6% in 2020, and using an average rate increase of .5%, the estimated degree attainment rate for 2021 was 50.1%.

## **Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress Toward the 55% Completion Goal**

### **Introduction**

The April 2022 Joint Chairmen's Report issued the following charge to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC):

The committees understand that in order to meet the State's goal to have at least 55% of Maryland's residents age 25 to 64 holding at least one degree credential by 2025, accurate and timely information on degree progression and best practices is needed to ensure that the State is on track to meet the goal. The committees request that the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) annually collect and analyze student- and transcript-level data on progression, graduation, and other relevant metrics from each public institution of higher education, including community colleges and regional higher education centers. MHEC should submit a report by December 15 each year that analyzes the data and shows each institution's progress toward the State and institutional goals in 2025. The report should also include a summary of best practices and findings on the effectiveness of institutions' programs as well as any concerns regarding lack of progress or best practices that are not being implemented by institutions. (pages 196-197)

In light of this mandate, this report aims to do the following<sup>1</sup>:

- Report progress towards the established targets leading to achievement of the 55% goal;
- Provide an overview of the degree attainment model developed to set degree targets for reaching the 55% goal;
- Discuss student progression and graduation in the state; and
- Provide institutional reports on best practices implemented by Maryland's public institutions.

This report summarizes retention data from Fall 2021 and graduation outcomes for those who completed in the 2020-2021 academic year. The degree counts that inform the model are taken from a preliminary 2022 degree file.<sup>2</sup> The data provided in this report, as well as the submissions on best practices supplied by institutions, reveal that institutions continue to contribute to the statewide goal.

### **State and Institutional Goals and Targets**

#### *What is degree or educational attainment?*

Degree or educational attainment refers to the highest level of education an individual has completed. Degree attainment data, collected by the Census, reflect the educational attainment levels of the adult population. Many states, including Maryland, have established degree attainment goals with the aim of ensuring more and more of its citizens obtain a post-secondary degree or other high quality credential. Research shows that those with a post-secondary

<sup>2</sup> The 2022 Degree Information System file reporting the degree data for the public colleges and universities and the state-aided independent institutions was validated and released to MHEC research staff in advance of this report. The data from the private institutions (faith based, etc.) are preliminary and are not final nor fully validated.

credential have higher lifetime earnings, lower odds of unemployment and better health outcomes.<sup>ii</sup> Maryland law established a goal in which “...at least 55% of Maryland’s adults age 25 to 64 will hold at least an associate’s degree by the year 2025.”<sup>iii</sup> This goal relies on 1) ensuring Maryland residents who enroll in higher education complete an associate’s degree or higher, 2) ensuring educated Maryland residents continue to live and work Maryland, and 3) attracting educated residents from other states to live and work in Maryland.

*How are Maryland’s colleges and universities contributing to the State’s degree attainment goals?*

The State’s ability to meet the 55% degree attainment goal continues to be buoyed by years of steady and increasing degree production (see Figures 1 and 2, next page and Table 1, page 5). In the 2021-2022 reporting year, Maryland’s public institutions, which serve as the primary source of degree holders for this goal, had both year-over-year positive trends and exceeded the model’s goals. Concurrently, the state-level data reflects ongoing stability in retention and graduation rates, which contribute to the state’s overall success. Taken in isolation, these indicators would bode well for the state’s overall ability to meet its goal.

Despite the institutions’ successes in undergraduate degree production, trend data shows that the “surplus” of degrees (actual degree production that exceeded the model’s targets in previous years) is shrinking. See Figure 1. Yet, the overall, cumulative degree production (Figure 2) shows a sustained trend of exceeding the targets of the model. See Table 1 for additional data.

Figure 1: Trends in Annual Actual and Target Undergraduate Degree Production among Maryland Colleges and Universities

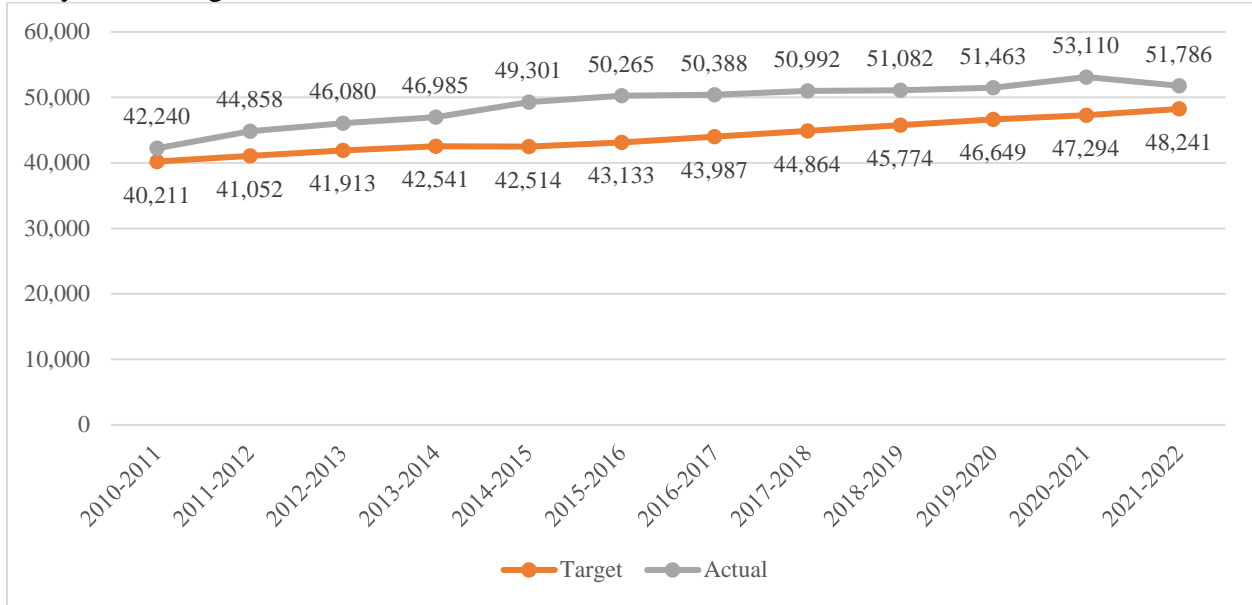
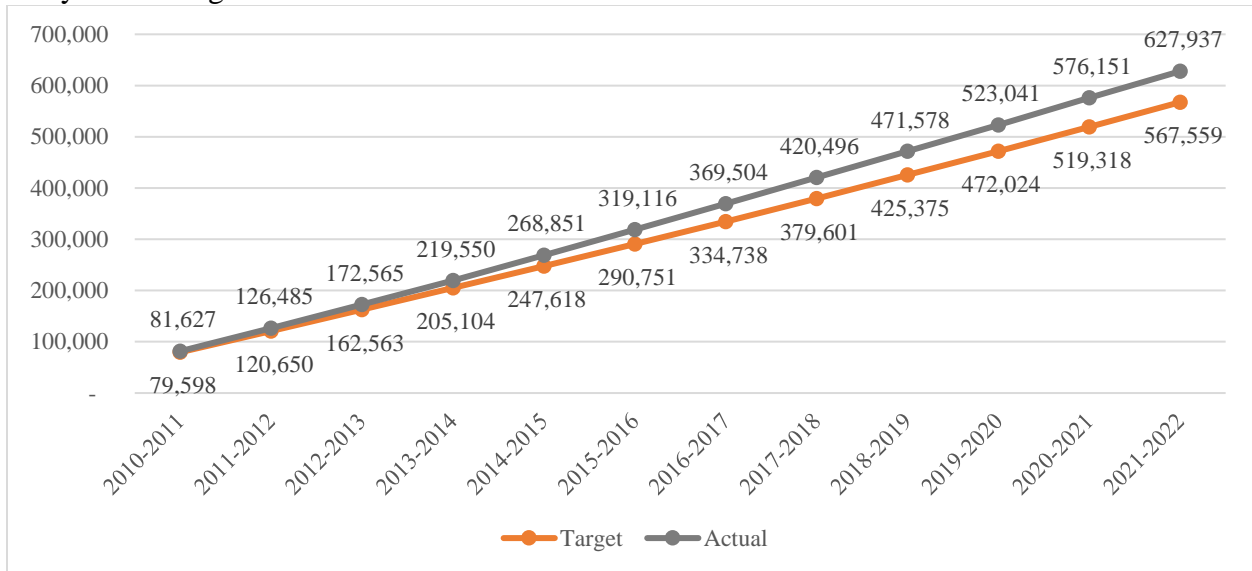


Figure 2: Trends in Cumulative Actual and Target Undergraduate Degree Production among Maryland Colleges and Universities



Tables 2, 3 and 4 on pages 13 to 15 provide detailed information for each public community college and four-year institutions as well as targets for the entire period. Table 5 on page 16 shows targets and actuals for all sectors of higher education in the State. These tables are updated annually and reflect the institutions' contributions to the 55 percent goal.

Table 1: Target and actual undergraduate degrees awarded, 2009-2010 through 2021-2022

Institutional Sector		2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
		(base-line)												
Community Colleges	Target		11,386	11,614	11,846	12,083	12,325	12,571	12,823	13,079	13,341	13,608	13,880	14,157
	Actual	11,163	12,637	13,852	14,269	14,541	15,133	15,138	14,919	14,932	14,897	14,472	15,053	14,239
	+/-		1,251	2,238	2,423	2,458	2,808	2,567	2,096	1,853	1,556	864	1,173	82
Four-Year Institutions	Target		21,876	22,301	22,736	23,179	23,630	24,091	24,561	25,040	25,529	26,028	26,374	26,891
	Actual	21,458	22,735	24,331	25,136	25,606	27,365	28,569	29,194	29,921	30,241	31,263	32,334	31,914
	+/-		859	2,030	2,400	2,427	3,735	4,478	4,633	4,881	4,712	5,235	5,960	5,023
Independent Institutions	Target		6,281	6,469	6,663	6,863	6,225	6,136	6,269	6,410	6,570	6,680	6,706	6,859
	Actual	6,098	6,174	6,303	6,442	6,395	6,572	6,327	5,991	5,915	5,644	5,576	5,581	5,474
	+/-		-107	-166	-221	-468	347	191	-278	-495	-926	-1,104	-1,125	-1,385
Other Private Institutions	Target		668	668	668	416	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	334
	Actual	668	694	372	233	443	231	231	284	224	300	152	142	159
	+/-		26	-296	-435	27	-103	-103	-50	-110	-34	-182	-192	-175
<i>Annual Total</i>	<i>Target</i>		<i>40,211</i>	<i>41,052</i>	<i>41,913</i>	<i>42,541</i>	<i>42,514</i>	<i>43,133</i>	<i>43,987</i>	<i>44,864</i>	<i>45,774</i>	<i>46,649</i>	<i>47,294</i>	<i>48,241</i>
	<i>Actual</i>	<i>39,387</i>	<i>42,240</i>	<i>44,858</i>	<i>46,080</i>	<i>46,985</i>	<i>49,301</i>	<i>50,265</i>	<i>50,388</i>	<i>50,992</i>	<i>51,082</i>	<i>51,463</i>	<i>53,110</i>	<i>51,786</i>
	<i>+/-</i>		<i>2,029</i>	<i>3,806</i>	<i>4,167</i>	<i>4,444</i>	<i>6,787</i>	<i>7,132</i>	<i>6,401</i>	<i>6,128</i>	<i>5,308</i>	<i>4,814</i>	<i>5,816</i>	<i>3,545</i>
<b>Cumulative Total</b>	<b>Target</b>		<b>79,598</b>	<b>120,650</b>	<b>162,563</b>	<b>205,104</b>	<b>247,618</b>	<b>290,751</b>	<b>334,738</b>	<b>379,601</b>	<b>425,375</b>	<b>472,024</b>	<b>519,318</b>	<b>567,559</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>39,387</b>	<b>81,627</b>	<b>126,485</b>	<b>172,565</b>	<b>219,550</b>	<b>268,851</b>	<b>319,116</b>	<b>369,504</b>	<b>420,496</b>	<b>471,578</b>	<b>523,041</b>	<b>576,151</b>	<b>627,937</b>
	<b>+/-</b>		<b>2,029</b>	<b>5,835</b>	<b>10,002</b>	<b>14,446</b>	<b>21,233</b>	<b>28,365</b>	<b>34,766</b>	<b>40,895</b>	<b>46,203</b>	<b>51,017</b>	<b>56,833</b>	<b>60,378</b>

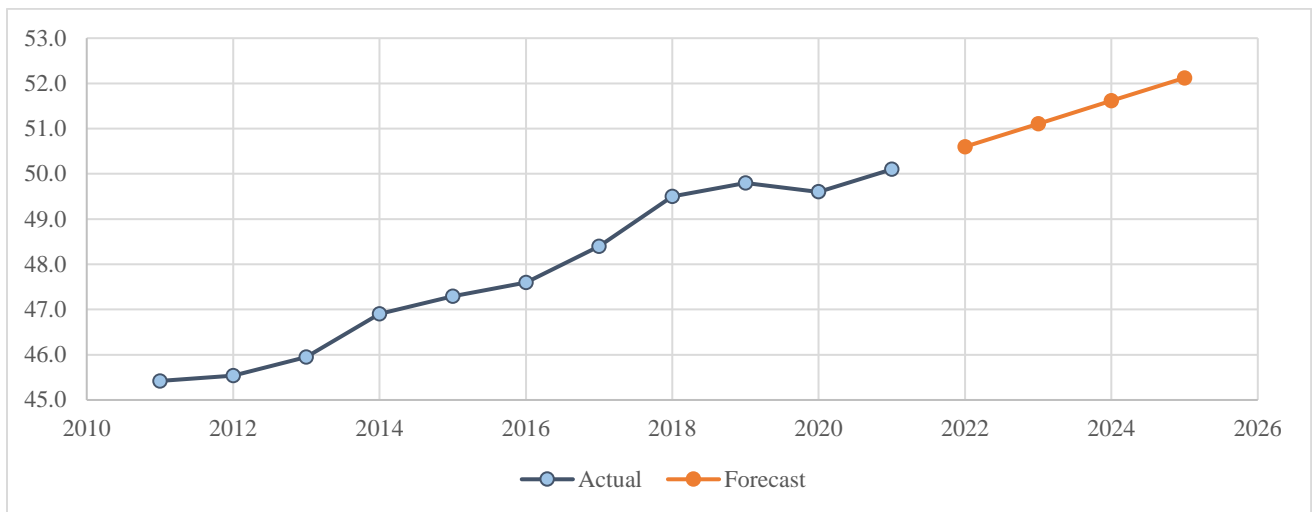
*Is the State on track to meet the 55% goal?*

For 2021, the degree attainment rate for Maryland is an estimated 50.1%.<sup>iv</sup> Based on Census data from the American Community Survey, over the course of the model, the average annual degree attainment rate of change per year has been 0.5%.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, if Maryland were to maintain that trend, by 2025, the degree attainment rate would be 52.1%, which is below the goal set (see Figure 3 for a representation of this trend).

Even though Maryland’s public colleges and universities are exceeding their mark, as exhibited in Figures 1 and 2 and Table 1, degree production by institutions is not the sole contributor to overall degree attainment rates in the state (see Figure 5 page 9 for model components). Having a population that has a degree attainment level of an associate’s degree or higher is also affected by such factors as in-migration, out-migration, employment opportunities, and other dynamics that are tied to educating, attracting, and maintaining a talented workforce.

Factors that could have a positive effect on the trend and result in higher year-to-year rates might include increases in undergraduate enrollments and policies and practices at the institutions that would ensure undergraduate retention and timely completion. In addition, such factors as employment opportunities, strong K-12 education, and affordable housing can maintain both current populations and attract new members to Maryland’s educated workforce.

Figure 3: Actuals and Estimates of Annual Statewide Progression toward 55% Goal



Notes: Forecast assumes a standard .5% increase each year; this is based on the average, annual increase in the attainment rate for Maryland since 2011 (ACS Community Survey, Census data). The 2021 data, while reported as an actual, is calculated using 2020 Census data.

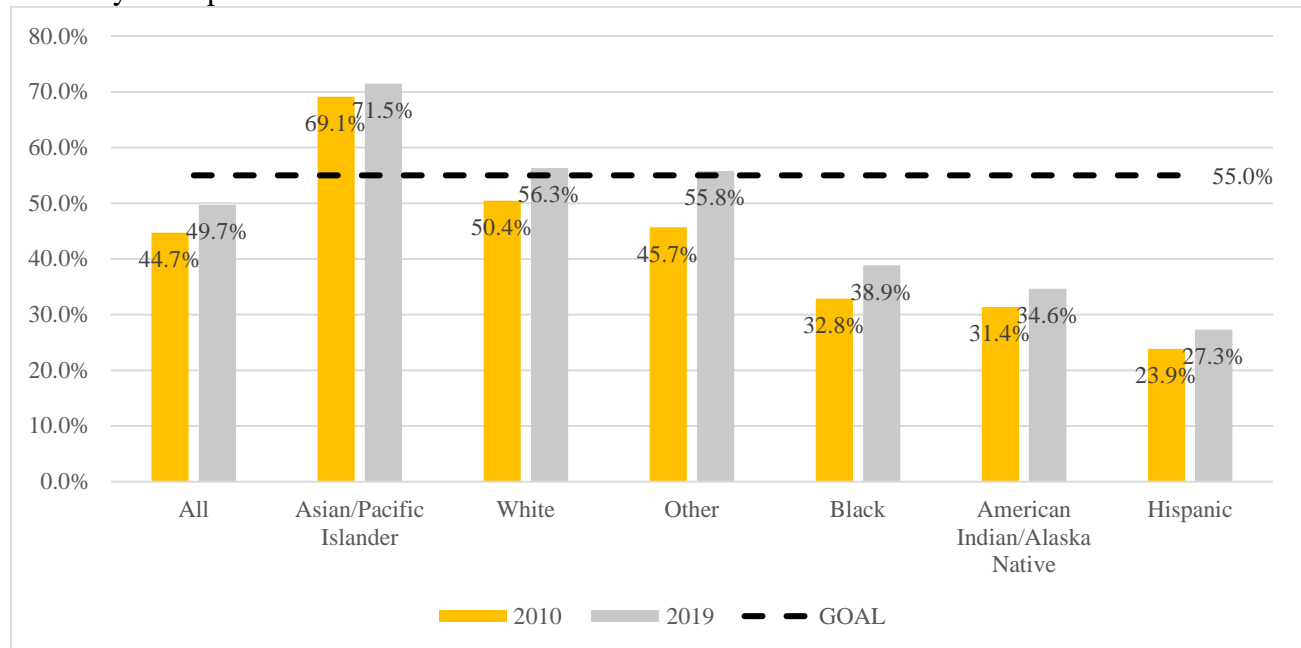
<sup>3</sup> Degree attainment calculations rely on population data and educational attainment data from the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) One-Year Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS), which relies on a sample of respondents and calculations to provide estimates. Degree attainment data from the US Census for Maryland is calculated by dividing the number of those who have earned an associate’s degree or higher (ages 25 to 64) by the overall state population of those ages 25 to 64. The rate change of 0.5% for Maryland over time reflects changes to these two populations and therefore changes to the rates.

As the model demonstrates, it relies on: 1) a stable and educated Maryland population, 2) attracting additional people to move to the State who hold an associate’s degree or higher, 3) Maryland institutions graduating students who earn an associate’s degree or higher and 4) in-migration, especially of educated people, that exceeds out-migration. It is possible that such factors as the economy, the COVID 19 pandemic, the job market, housing costs, and other significant, and highly variable elements are contributing to the model in ways that are affecting the overall population of working-age adults holding at least an undergraduate degree in the state.

*Are there equity gaps regarding degree attainment in Maryland?*

Maryland continues to face challenges in ensuring equitable racial and ethnic outcomes for its diverse citizenry (see Figure 4). In this context, equity would be visualized by each racial and ethnic groups having at least a 55% degree attainment rate within that specific population. Figure 4 highlights the racial and ethnic disparities in obtaining 55% degree attainment within a specific population. As the state quickly approaches 2025, equitable degree attainment does not seem possible by that time but institutions should continue to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion and the State should ensure it is advancing equitable opportunities for education and employment for all.

Figure 4: Degree Attainment Rates among Maryland Adults Ages 25 to 64 by Race and Ethnicity: Comparison: 2010 to 2019



Source: Lumina Foundation Stronger Nation (<https://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/#/progress/state/MD>)

Note: 2019 is the most recent year the Census reports degree attainment by race and ethnicity; therefore this figure reflects older data and does not align with the data in other sections of this report.



*Are there avenues for Maryland to explore to achieve its degree attainment goals?*

Many states have established attainment goals that include additional high-quality credentials like lower division certificates. These are seen by national organizations like the Lumina Foundation and the National Skills Coalition as valuable contributors to establishing and growing an educated workforce. Lumina estimates that if Maryland included these high-quality credentials in the Progress to 55% goals, the state would have reached an attainment rate of 55.9% in 2019.<sup>v</sup> Recent reports from the Maryland Longitudinal Data Systems Center (MLDSC) and the Center for Workforce Development (Georgetown) discuss the positive educational and workforce outcomes tied to high-quality credentials like certificates.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Maryland's 55% Degree Attainment Model**

In response to the Joint Chairmen's charge, in 2012 MHEC developed a model that set initial state and institutional degree targets to reach the goal of 55% of adults holding degrees by 2025. In 2014<sup>vii</sup> the model was revised to reflect additional input from Maryland colleges and universities as well as additional information on migration patterns within the State and increased degree output at independent colleges and universities in Maryland.

In 2017, the model was reexamined again.<sup>viii</sup> This assessment included an analysis of the trends in actual degree awards and the data that inform the model. MHEC also sought input from Maryland colleges and universities regarding the model's institutional targets. Additional details about the initial and revised models are provided in the 2012, 2014, and 2017 Best Practices reports.

At the time of the original 2012 model, the State's higher education attainment rate was 44.7%.<sup>ix</sup> To meet the 55% attainment goal, Maryland will need a total of 1,828,420 individuals (55% of the 3,324,400 Marylanders between the age of 25 and 64, using population estimates)<sup>x</sup> to hold at least an associate degree. MHEC estimates that in 2025, 903,511 people aged 25 to 49 who held associate degrees in 2010 will have aged 15 years but will remain in the target group (between the ages of 25 and 64)<sup>xi</sup>. Therefore, based on the original model's assumptions, Maryland will need to have an additional 924,909 degree holders by 2025 to meet the State's goal.

- *Public institutions:* In the current model (revised in 2017), the total degree production from the community colleges is projected to be 208,070, and the contribution from Maryland's public four-year institutions is estimated to be 397,572<sup>4</sup>, for a total of 605,642 undergraduate degree holders.
- *Independent and other private institutions:* The total degree production from the independent and other private sectors for the whole period is projected to be 112,567.
- *Migration from other states and nations:* In 2017, MHEC revised the model's numbers including the estimated net migration of additional degree holders; with this revision, the total is projected to be 275,088.<sup>xii</sup>

<sup>4</sup> This figure was revised in 2021 due to St. Mary's College of Maryland's request to decrease their degree targets within the model. This revision reduces the overall target by 826 degrees.

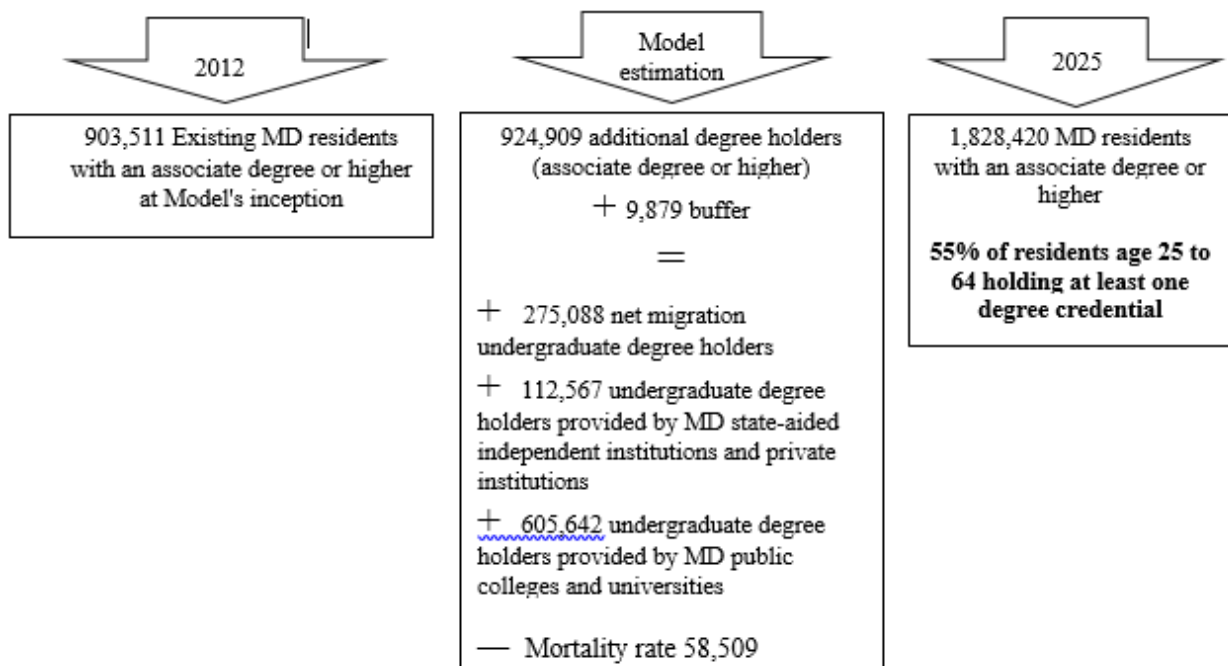
Finally, the model also considers mortality. As of revisiting the model in 2017, indicators from the Maryland Department of Health suggested an annual average mortality rate of 0.2% as a reasonable estimate. This rate would remove 58,509 degree holders from the state total during the period.<sup>xiii xiv</sup>

Taken together, the contributions from migration to Maryland, public, independent, and other private institutions minus estimated mortality will provide 934,788 of the degree holders needed, exceeding the 55% degree attainment goal by almost 10,000 degrees.

Figure 3 outlines the main components of the model. Table 2, on page 13 shows a matrix with annual targets for each public institution. The data included in this report provide a blueprint based on conservative estimates to enable the State to achieve the 55% degree attainment goal. These figures can also be used to gauge progress toward that goal.

MHEC revisited the model in 2022 and found that several key data sources needed to review (e.g., population projects based on the 2020 Census, American Community Survey 1 year estimates). As of the preparation of this report, the results of the 2020 Decennial Census were not available for use for components of the model but should be available in 2023. MHEC will again revisit the model at that time to assess the assumptions and figures used.

Figure 3: Progress toward 55% Completion Goal Model



### Data on Enrollment, Progression, and Graduation

Statewide undergraduate and graduate student enrollment data decreased 3.5% from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021.<sup>xv</sup> This overall rate masks differences; undergraduate enrollment declined 5.3%

and graduate enrollment grew 3.5%.<sup>5</sup> Despite the decrease in undergraduate enrollment, and the possible ongoing impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic, colleges and universities are seeing stable retention and completion data for undergraduate students.

The first-to-second year retention rate for the 2020 cohort of first-time, full-time students at the state's public four-year institutions was 84.0% and state-aided independent institutions' retention rate was 81.2%. Both are consistent with a 10-year stable trend.<sup>xvi</sup> The six-year graduation rate for the 2015 cohort at the public four-year institutions was 69.3% and it was 70.4% for state-aided independent institutions, both of which are consistent with long-term trends.<sup>xvii</sup>

A community college metric for success is the four-year graduation and transfer rates for first-time, full time undergraduate students. For the 2017 cohort, the most recent entering cohort, the graduation and transfer rate was 41.6%. Most notably, this represents the highest graduation and transfer rate on record since MHEC began reporting these data.<sup>xviii</sup>

Community colleges also rely on another means of measuring student success; the Degree Progress Analysis measure. While the calculation of graduation and transfer rates, noted above, establishes a cohort based upon full-time students, this cohort-based Degree Progress Analysis tool aids in accounting for the large number of part-time students at community colleges. The strength of this is that it identifies the predominant community college student – those who enroll part time, who are not captured in metrics that focus solely on full-time students.<sup>xix</sup>

Among those students included in the most recent Degree Progress Analysis cohort, the Fall 2016 cohort, 52.6% had graduated or transferred within four years; this is a notable rate and one of the highest on record. However, this overall statewide rate masks differential achievement rates across developmental groups - those students who entered the community college “college ready” and those students who were assessed to need remediation and completed the necessary courses. Both student groups graduated or transferred at higher rates than the statewide rate: 71.0% for college ready students and 56.1% for those who completed their developmental coursework. In contrast, those students identified as needing remedial courses and who did not complete them, have a much lower rate (27.5%).<sup>xx</sup>

### **Best Practices**

Since the inception of the 55% completion goal, institutions can report annually to MHEC on the programs and initiatives aimed at student success and completion. These best practices are included as comprehensive compilation in appendices to the 2012 and 2014 reports.<sup>xxi</sup> These supplements encompass a number of topics, and the thematic index provided can assist institutions and other interested readers in discovering which institutions are using practices effectively in each area. Institutional practices presented in these reports focus on efforts to support degree completion.

As a complement to the comprehensive reports collected in earlier years, MHEC required for the 2022 reporting cycle, institutions to submit reports indicating their 1) three most effective

<sup>5</sup> More current, Fall 2022 Opening Fall Enrollment Data was not available at the time this report was written.

initiatives tied to student success, sharing the evidence of effectiveness and 2) two initiatives that were implemented in the past five years that, upon measuring effectiveness, showed little to no impact. Fifteen institutions submitted reports, which are included in the Appendix of this report. These are presented unedited by Commission staff.

The vast majority of institutions responded to the required prompts in full. Of them, common themes arise both in the kinds of programs or initiatives that have had positive effects and the means by which effectiveness is measured. Several institutions reported changes to their remedial/developmental courses have led to successful outcomes as well as alterations to advising, increasing distance education offerings, and other student-centered initiatives. All institutions report using data to inform decision making.

In Fall 2022, MHEC conducted a statewide survey on evidence-based best practices tied to college completion. Results of that survey are forthcoming, as of the date this report was written. MHEC will amend this report to include the results of the survey in the coming months.

## Conclusion

The Commission will continue to report annually on the progress toward the degree attainment targets. The Commission will also continue to coordinate and support efforts to promote degree completion, in concert with colleges and universities and other stakeholders, in pursuit of the State's educational goal.

<sup>i</sup> The 2022 Joint Chairmen's Report requests information on the contributions of regional higher education centers (RHECs) to progression and completion. Although these entities serve their local communities by hosting classes offered by multiple institutions of higher education, these entities do not report directly to MHEC. Instead, the institutions operating at the RHECs include their data together with that of students on the main campus.

<sup>ii</sup> Bachelor's Degree Attainment in the United States: 2005 to 2019 American Community Survey Briefs. February 2021. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2021/acs/acsbr-009.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Maryland Education Article [§10-205](#)

<sup>iv</sup> Using U.S. Census Bureau data from the American Community Survey, One-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Based on Lumina Foundation analysis ([Stronger Nation state profile](#)), and the average growth rate per year has been .5% over the span of the past nine years. Maryland's degree attainment rate was 49.6% in 2020, and using an average rate increase of .5%, the estimated degree attainment rate for 2021 was 50.1%.

<sup>v</sup> States differ in how they define high-value certificates and some states have no definition. Data on certificate completion are limited, as the primary source for attainment data (the American Community Survey of the US Census) does not include certificates in its traditional measure of educational attainment... The Lumina Foundation has estimated certificate attainment, counting only certificates whose holders are employed in the field in which they received their credential to ensure that their attainment rates only count credentials that have economic value (based on Stronger Nation analysis <https://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/#/progress/state/MD>)

<sup>vi</sup> See Exploring Postsecondary Certificates and Their Relationship to Earnings: High School Graduates at Age 25, Supplement to More Jobs for Marylanders Report, 2017 <https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/MJFMCerts.html>, Career Preparation Expansion Act Reports <https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/CenterReports.html>, and The Overlooked Value of Certificates and Associate Degrees <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/subba/> for more information.

<sup>vii</sup> Maryland Higher Education Commission, December 2014, "Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress Toward the 55% Completion Goal."

[https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/AnnualReports/2014BestPracProgressCompletionGoal\\_020615.pdf](https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/AnnualReports/2014BestPracProgressCompletionGoal_020615.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> Maryland Higher Education Commission, December 2017, "Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress

Toward the 55% Completion Goal.”

<https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/AnnualReports/2017BestPractices.pdf>

<sup>ix</sup> Using U.S. Census Bureau data from the American Community Survey, One-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), and the average growth rate per year has been .5%. According to the Census, Maryland’s degree attainment rate was 49.6% in 2020, and using an average rate increase of .5%, the estimated degree attainment rate for 2021 was 50.1%.; Census has not released 2020 ACS data as of the production time for this report (December 2022); therefore data from 2020 onward are estimates using the .5% average rate of change.

<sup>x</sup> Although population estimates decreased from the 2012 figure of 3,324,400 to the 2017 figure of 3,262,748, which would shrink the pool of needed degree recipients, MHEC decided to maintain the original figure to mitigate any losses caused by adjustments to migration figures and to adjust for possible degree recipient duplication.

<sup>xi</sup> This number is an estimate based on the percentage of Marylanders ages 25-49 within the 25-64 age group (65%), and that percentage multiplied by the number of Marylanders ages 25-64 with a degree. This model assumes a flat rate of degree attainment across age brackets and recognizes that this number is only an estimate.

<sup>xii</sup> The original model used an estimated Census annual net migration gain of 15,430 and the 2014 model used a revised figure of 18,968.

<sup>xiii</sup> This value was calculated by taking the average mortality rate of Maryland residents in 2012 between the ages of 25-64 (0.2%) and then multiplying this by the estimated total number of Maryland residents with degrees in this same age range in 2025 (1,828,420).

<sup>xiv</sup> It is important to note that this mortality rate was implemented in 2017; the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic may change this mortality rate. This will be determined when the model is assessed in the future.

<sup>xv</sup> See enrollment data from Fall 2021 at MHEC’s website here:

<https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Pages/research/index.aspx> see Enrollment Reports

<sup>xvi</sup> The retention rate reflects first time, full time cohorts of students who enroll in a given year and return to the same Maryland four-year institution they enrolled in the prior year; the graduation rate reflects these cohorts’ graduation from any Maryland four-year institution.

<sup>xvii</sup> Additional data and analyses, including institutional tables, can be found in the dashboard “Retention and Graduation Rates at Maryland Four-Year Institutions” published on the Commission website.

<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiNWQ1ZTRkNmYtYWQyMC00NjllLTk4ZjctMzA0NmVhMzU4ODllIiwidCI6IjYwYWZlOWUyLTQ5Y2QtNDliMS04ODUxLTY0ZGYwMjc2YTJlOCJ9>

<https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Pages/research/index.aspx>

<sup>xviii</sup> Additional data and analyses can be found in the dashboard “Retention, Graduation, and Transfer Rates at Maryland Community Colleges” published on the Commission website

<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiNmVmZDBiMjAtYjA5Yi00OTY4LWJjNjMtYWYwYTU4NzkwZTE0IiwidCI6IjYwYWZlOWUyLTQ5Y2QtNDliMS04ODUxLTY0ZGYwMjc2YTJlOCJ9>

<sup>xix</sup> The Degree Progress Analysis examines students who complete at least 18 credit hours within their first two years of enrollment and identifies students as successful if they have graduated, transferred to a four- year institution, or are still enrolled with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better.

<sup>xx</sup> Additional data and analyses, including institutional data can be found in the Degree Progress Analysis dashboard published on the Commission webpage

<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiOGVmZjYzZjEtYjBiNi00NDNiLThiZDEtZDQzMjE1MzFmNzZhIiwidCI6IjYwYWZlOWUyLTQ5Y2QtNDliMS04ODUxLTY0ZGYwMjc2YTJlOCJ9>

<sup>xxi</sup> Maryland Higher Education Commission, December 2014, “Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress Toward the 55% Completion Goal – Appendix.”

[http://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/2014Studies/2014\\_Best\\_Practices\\_Appendix.pdf](http://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/2014Studies/2014_Best_Practices_Appendix.pdf)

and Maryland Higher Education Commission, December 2012, “Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal – Appendix”.

<https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/2012Studies/2012BestPracticesAppendix.pdf>

**Table 2. Degree targets for public institutions, by institution (2.0% annual growth\*)**

Institution	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Total
<b>COMMUNITY COLLEGES</b>																	
Allegany College of Maryland	572	583	595	607	619	632	644	657	670	684	697	711	725	740	755	770	10,662
Anne Arundel Community College	1,336	1,363	1,390	1,418	1,446	1,475	1,505	1,535	1,565	1,597	1,629	1,661	1,694	1,728	1,763	1,798	24,902
Baltimore City Community College	411	419	428	436	445	454	463	472	482	491	501	511	521	532	542	553	7,661
Carroll Community College	466	475	485	495	504	515	525	535	546	557	568	579	591	603	615	627	8,686
Cecil College	190	194	198	202	206	210	214	218	223	227	232	236	241	246	251	256	3,541
Chesapeake College	230	235	239	244	249	254	259	264	269	275	280	286	292	298	303	310	4,287
College of Southern Maryland	822	838	855	872	890	908	926	944	963	982	1,002	1,022	1,042	1,063	1,085	1,106	15,321
Community College of Baltimore County	1,703	1,737	1,772	1,807	1,843	1,880	1,918	1,956	1,995	2,035	2,076	2,117	2,160	2,203	2,247	2,292	31,743
Frederick Community College	682	696	710	724	738	753	768	783	799	815	831	848	865	882	900	918	12,712
Garrett College	96	98	100	102	104	106	108	110	112	115	117	119	122	124	127	129	1,789
Hagerstown Community College	442	451	460	469	478	488	498	508	518	528	539	550	561	572	583	595	8,239
Harford Community College	611	623	636	648	661	675	688	702	716	730	745	760	775	790	806	822	11,389
Howard Community College	675	689	702	716	731	745	760	775	791	807	823	839	856	873	891	908	12,582
Montgomery College	1,919	1,957	1,997	2,036	2,077	2,119	2,161	2,204	2,248	2,293	2,339	2,386	2,434	2,482	2,532	2,583	35,769
Prince George's Community College	690	704	718	732	747	762	777	793	808	825	841	858	875	893	910	929	12,861
Wor-Wic Community College	318	324	331	337	344	351	358	365	373	380	388	395	403	411	420	428	5,927
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>11,163</b>	<b>11,386</b>	<b>11,614</b>	<b>11,846</b>	<b>12,083</b>	<b>12,325</b>	<b>12,571</b>	<b>12,823</b>	<b>13,079</b>	<b>13,341</b>	<b>13,608</b>	<b>13,880</b>	<b>14,157</b>	<b>14,441</b>	<b>14,729</b>	<b>15,024</b>	<b>208,070</b>
<b>FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</b>																	
Bowie State University	606	618	630	643	656	669	682	696	710	724	739	753	769	784	800	816	11,295
Coppin State University	378	386	393	401	409	417	426	434	443	452	461	470	479	489	499	509	7,046
Frostburg State University	768	783	799	815	831	848	865	882	900	918	936	955	974	993	1,013	1,034	14,315
Salisbury University	1,661	1,694	1,728	1,763	1,798	1,834	1,871	1,908	1,946	1,985	2,025	2,065	2,107	2,149	2,192	2,235	30,960
Towson University	3,625	3,698	3,771	3,847	3,924	4,002	4,082	4,164	4,247	4,332	4,419	4,507	4,597	4,689	4,783	4,879	67,567
University of Baltimore	516	526	537	548	559	570	581	593	605	617	629	642	654	668	681	694	9,618
University of Maryland, Baltimore	379	379	380	380	381	381	381	382	382	382	383	383	384	384	384	385	6,110
University of Maryland, Baltimore County	1,915	1,953	1,992	2,032	2,073	2,114	2,157	2,200	2,244	2,289	2,334	2,381	2,429	2,477	2,527	2,577	35,694
University of Maryland, College Park	6,569	6,700	6,834	6,971	7,110	7,253	7,398	7,546	7,697	7,851	8,008	8,168	8,331	8,498	8,668	8,841	122,441
University of Maryland Eastern Shore	463	472	482	491	501	511	521	532	542	553	564	576	587	599	611	623	8,630
University of Maryland Global Campus.	3,365	3,432	3,501	3,571	3,642	3,715	3,790	3,865	3,943	4,021	4,102	4,184	4,268	4,353	4,440	4,529	62,721
Morgan State University	772	787	803	819	836	852	869	887	905	923	941	960	979	999	1,019	1,039	14,390
St. Mary's College of Maryland	441	445	450	454	459	463	468	473	478	482	487	330	333	337	340	343	6,784
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>21,458</b>	<b>21,876</b>	<b>22,301</b>	<b>22,736</b>	<b>23,179</b>	<b>23,630</b>	<b>24,091</b>	<b>24,561</b>	<b>25,040</b>	<b>25,529</b>	<b>26,028</b>	<b>26,374</b>	<b>26,891</b>	<b>27,418</b>	<b>27,956</b>	<b>28,504</b>	<b>397,572</b>
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>32,621</b>	<b>33,262</b>	<b>33,915</b>	<b>34,582</b>	<b>35,262</b>	<b>35,955</b>	<b>36,663</b>	<b>37,384</b>	<b>38,120</b>	<b>38,870</b>	<b>39,635</b>	<b>40,254</b>	<b>41,048</b>	<b>41,859</b>	<b>42,685</b>	<b>43,528</b>	<b>605,642</b>

\* The projected annual growth for UMB and St. Mary's College of Maryland is less than 2%. Totals for University of Maryland Global Campus include both associate and baccalaureate degrees.







**Table 5. Cumulative targets and actual degree awards for all sectors.**

Institutional Sector		2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Total
Community Colleges	Target		11,386	11,614	11,846	12,083	12,325	12,571	12,823	13,079	13,341	13,608	13,880	14,157	14,441	14,729	15,024	208,070
	Actual	11,163	12,637	13,852	14,269	14,541	15,133	15,138	14,919	14,932	14,897	14,472	15,053	14,239				
	+/-		<b>1,251</b>	<b>2,238</b>	<b>2,423</b>	<b>2,458</b>	<b>2,808</b>	<b>2,567</b>	<b>2,096</b>	<b>1,853</b>	<b>1,556</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>82</b>				
Four-Year Institutions	Target		21,876	22,301	22,736	23,179	23,630	24,091	24,561	25,040	25,529	26,028	26,374	26,891	27,418	27,956	28,504	397,572
	Actual	21,458	22,735	24,331	25,136	25,606	27,365	28,569	29,194	29,921	30,241	31,263	32,334	31,914				
	+/-		<b>859</b>	<b>2,030</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>2,427</b>	<b>3,735</b>	<b>4,478</b>	<b>4,633</b>	<b>4,881</b>	<b>4,712</b>	<b>5,235</b>	<b>5,960</b>	<b>5,023</b>				
Independent Institutions	Target		6,281	6,469	6,663	6,863	6,225	6,136	6,269	6,410	6,570	6,680	6,706	6,859	7,022	7,189	7,365	105,805
	Actual	6,098	6,174	6,303	6,442	6,395	6,572	6,327	5,991	5,915	5,644	5,576	5,581	5,474				
	+/-		<b>-107</b>	<b>-166</b>	<b>-221</b>	<b>-468</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>-278</b>	<b>-495</b>	<b>-926</b>	<b>-1,104</b>	<b>-1,125</b>	<b>-1,385</b>				
Other Private Institutions	Target		668	668	668	416	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	6,762
	Actual	668	694	372	233	443	231	231	284	224	300	152	142	159				
	+/-		<b>26</b>	<b>-296</b>	<b>-435</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>-103</b>	<b>-103</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>-110</b>	<b>-34</b>	<b>-182</b>	<b>-192</b>	<b>-175</b>				
<i>Annual Total</i>	Target		40,211	41,052	41,913	42,541	42,514	43,133	43,987	44,864	45,774	46,649	47,294	48,241				718,209
	Actual	39,387	42,240	44,858	46,080	46,985	49,301	50,265	50,388	50,992	51,082	51,463	53,110	51,786				
	+/-		<b>2,029</b>	<b>3,806</b>	<b>4,167</b>	<b>4,444</b>	<b>6,787</b>	<b>7,132</b>	<b>6,401</b>	<b>6,128</b>	<b>5,308</b>	<b>4,814</b>	<b>5,816</b>	<b>3,545</b>				
<b>Cumulative Total</b>	Target		79,598	120,650	162,563	205,104	247,618	290,751	334,738	379,601	425,375	472,024	519,318	567,559				718,209
	Actual	39,387	81,627	126,485	172,565	219,550	268,851	319,116	369,504	420,496	471,578	523,041	576,151	627,937				
	+/-		<b>2,029</b>	<b>5,835</b>	<b>10,002</b>	<b>14,446</b>	<b>21,233</b>	<b>28,365</b>	<b>34,766</b>	<b>40,895</b>	<b>46,203</b>	<b>51,017</b>	<b>56,833</b>	<b>60,378</b>				

## CECIL COLLEGE

### Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal 2022

The following three initiatives have proven to be the most effective at Cecil College:

**Developmental Education Sequence:** Based on recommendations in research studies regarding developmental courses, the College has implemented changes to both math and English developmental education sequences. The developmental education sequence for math has been decreased to a single course for most students, with an optional week-long Bootcamp for students who need a little bit of help preparing for the course. Imbedded tutors are being added to math developmental courses as needed. This program was piloted in 2021-22, offering three sections in various modalities with various degrees of success. The in-person program offered before the start of the semester had the greatest success, moving test scores from an average of 10.8 to an average of 18.8. A second pilot will be conducted in 2022-23. The developmental education sequence for English has also been decreased to four credits (EGL 093 College Composition, 3 credits, and COL 081 College Success Seminar, 1 credit), with an optional non-credit *Writing and Reading: Keys to Success* course for students who feel they are not ready for the remaining developmental course (EGL 093). In fall 2021, 66% of students enrolled in EGL 093 passed the course. Embedded tutors have been added to the remaining developmental education course as well as to some sections of EGL 101 College Composition.

**Completion Scholarships:** In 2021-22, the College received a grant from Video Lottery Terminal funds, administered by Cecil County Government, that provided scholarships to students in good academic standing within 15 credits of graduation who had stopped out for more than a year. This small, pilot program provided scholarships to four students. Three of those students (75%) completed their degrees; the fourth student has one course remaining. Based on this successful pilot program, the College is earmarking \$10,000 per year for Completion Scholarships that will cover tuition, fees, and books for 4 to 6 students.

**Focus on improving specific academic programs.** Cecil College has made strategic investments in specific academic programs that have resulted in increased enrollment and an increased number of graduates. The College's Cybersecurity program was revised under the guidance of a new faculty member, who subsequently applied for NSA and DHS designation as a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education. In addition, the program was expanded to be offered online as well as face-to-face. As a result, enrollment in the program grew by 69% over a three-year period, and the number of degrees awarded in a year tripled. Growth in the Accounting program has also been noteworthy. The program has focused on making tutoring more available to students, both as tutors embedded in a classroom as well as the increased availability of online tutoring. Faculty have also offered help on resume building and have helped students earn their Quickbooks certification, increasing students' employability. As a result, enrollment in this program grew by 11%, and the number of graduates increased by 33%. The College is seeing early evidence that recent focused improvement in Criminal Justice and Psychology programs will lead to similar results.

The following two initiatives have proven to be the least effective at Cecil College:

**Faculty Guild:** Cecil College used Faculty Guild professional development activities for 11 faculty members across 2 years. Supported by research, this year-long asynchronous program was supported by an experienced facilitator and was designed to support faculty in the development of course work grounded in research and best practices in learning science. Overall, faculty found the Faculty Guild experience positive, providing positive feedback on the self-reflection process, the validation of sound pedagogical practices, learning new ideas and best practices, and the collaborative process of improving lessons and methods of delivery. One measure of student success for these changes is DFW rates. Faculty Guild indicated that faculty who attend their year-long seminar would have a reduction of 5-7% in DFW rates (on average). In reviewing the DFW data related to the faculty who attended Faculty Guild, there was not a significant consistent change in the overall DFW rates for those faculty in the two years following their attendance. The College plans to focus on in-house professional development for faculty through activities in Catalyst, a new Center for Teaching and Learning.

**CircleIn:** CircleIn is an app that allows students to develop online study groups with other students in their class. Through the app, they share skills, attack difficult problems, build better study habits, and push each other to succeed. By week 6 of the spring 2021 semester, after a comprehensive marketing campaign and incentives for using the app, 5.7% of Cecil College students (140 users) were using the CircleIn app. Approximately a third of these users (30%) were new to the app. Based on these participation rates and the availability of flexible online office hours with faculty, the College decided to discontinue the program.

# **Carroll Community College 2022 Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal**

## **Successes & Challenges**

Carroll Community College is invested in a number of strategies and best practices that drive progress towards the State's 2025 degree completion goal. Several of these are listed below. This report also contains examples of two initiatives that have not yet produced desired results.

### **Effective Initiatives Tied to Student Success**

#### **1. Starfish as a Retention Tool**

Carroll has some of the strongest retention and completion rates in the state of Maryland. The College continues to improve and foster student success through personalized care, high-touch practices, and student-centered processes. The College strategically employs technology to enhance recruitment and enrollment strategies and track student completion, transfer, and attainment of educational and career goals.

The College utilizes customized technology to further support each student's academic journey. In 2019, the College adopted a comprehensive retention tool called Starfish that allows faculty and staff to communicate directly with students about their academic progress; manage appointments; and connect students to specialized services like career development, financial aid and scholarships, disability support services, and crisis intervention services. The increased communication with students has been vital throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, faculty and staff raised 5701 flags (to alert students to an academic concern) and made 1048 referrals to college services like disability support, academic tutoring, the Math Success Navigator, and financial aid. In addition, 195 students were assisted through a crisis using the Student Concern flag. Current research shows that communication with students early and often in the semester leads to higher engagement levels, as well as an increased sense of belonging. Using Starfish as our early alert system has also helped retention levels of some student sub-populations such as military-affiliated students/families, first-generation students, athletes, and students on academic probation. Using the cohort tool in Starfish, these special populations can receive focused messaging and administrators can collect specific data regarding academic achievement, follow-up on referrals, and information regarding financial aid, if applicable.

Supporting students through their associate degree leads to high levels of engagement and success. Carroll has seen that our students continue their success once they transfer, due to their outstanding preparation while at Carroll.

Table 1. Four Year Associate Degree Completion Rate (Source: Maryland Model)

Benchmark	2012 Cohort	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort	2015 Cohort	2016 Cohort
35%	40.1%	39.3%	42.1%	37.9%	42.5%
Cohort	646	610	553	604	543

Table 2. Fall to Spring Retention Rates

Benchmark	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Full-time = 85%	84.6%	86.9%	85.5%	86.0%	83.1%
Part-time = 65%	67.1%	67.3%	65.8%	63.8%	69.4%

Table 3. First Year Transfers in Good Standing

Benchmark	2012-2013	2015-16	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
85%	87.8%	90.4%	90.9%	88.3%	93.0%
Statewide	82.4%	85.7%	84.5%	85.0%	85.0%

## 2. Course Formats and Success Rates

Carroll has offered online asynchronous and hybrid courses for several years. Like other institutions of higher education, to accommodate students during shelter-in-place orders in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the College quickly pivoted to emergency remote instruction, moving face-to-face courses to a remote synchronous format delivered via Microsoft Teams. Additional course formats were developed by Fall 2020, including mixed online, which blended remote synchronous class meetings with asynchronous online instruction. As the pandemic continued through academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, Carroll engaged in deliberate efforts to identify and maintain best practices in all course formats. In FY2022, very few students enrolled in remote synchronous courses, and many returned to face-to-face instruction. Enrollment trends for this year show students' continued interest in online asynchronous instruction. Prior to the pandemic, Carroll's total distance education enrollments were less than 20%; in Spring 2022, 36% of enrollments were asynchronous online, an increase from 2021. The percentage of students enrolled exclusively in distance education stood at nearly 37% in Fall 2021, a 27-point increase from Fall 2019. An additional 41% of Carroll students enrolled in some distance education courses in Fall 2021.

Moreover, success rates in Carroll's online asynchronous courses are strong, indicating robust student learning opportunities across various course formats. Online courses are developed by faculty in conjunction with the College's Director of Digital Learning and Media and its

Instructional Designer. All courses must meet standards identified as best practices by Quality Matters and SUNY.

Table 4. Percentage of Students Earning A, B, or C Final Grades Based on Modality

Term	All Formats - ABC	Face-to-Face - ABC	Async Online - ABC
Fall 2021	80%	77%	79%
Spring 2022	83%	83%	81%

By focusing on quality instruction in all modalities, Carroll meets student needs and maximizes access to courses. To ensure all students can experience the benefits and flexibility of digital learning experiences, Carroll continued its laptop loaner program, initially launched in spring 2020, throughout FY2022:

Table 5. Number of Laptops and Hotspots Loaned to Carroll Students by Term

	Spring 2020	Summer 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
Computers	39	6	72	33	3	30	29	10
Hotspots	11	2	33	12	3	26	7	1
Total Devices	50	8	105	45	6	56	36	11

*Note: Numbers reflect the term in which the student requested and received loaned equipment. Some students retained loaned devices for multiple terms.*

### 3. Data-Informed Decision Making

Departments across the College utilize data to drive decision-making. In the interest of continual improvement and to promote the success of all Carroll students, academic program leadership and Student Affairs Directors routinely review student and course success data to identify trends and potential action items. Recently, the College imported key data sets into interactive dashboards in Power BI, which are intuitive to use and allow for the best practice of disaggregating data. These dashboards include:

- Course success data: Historically, academic leadership has analyzed data showing course success rates by course, modality, and faculty member at the end of each term. Beginning in FY2022, this data can now be disaggregated by students’ race/ethnicity, sex, age, academic load, and number of credits earned. Chairs and Program Directors use this disaggregated data to identify disparities in subpopulations of students and develop solutions.
- General Education Assessment data: Credit faculty at Carroll assess General Education learning goals every semester. Now that this data is available through Power BI, faculty have the capability to filter institutional learning outcomes results by race/ethnicity, sex, age, academic load, and number of credits completed. This has generated review and discussion by faculty about ways to support success among various student subpopulations.
- Student Progress data: Carroll’s Advising and Retention Office uses disaggregated student data to identify trends for subpopulations of students, including the first in family to attend College,

students who want to pursue selective admissions programs such as Nursing, and those on probation and suspension. After evaluating this data, targeted interventions have been developed to further the success of various student subpopulations.

## Less Successful Initiatives

### 1. New Programs

To attract new populations of students to Carroll and to meet unique workforce needs, the College created several career-focused programs of study over the past five years: Entertainment Technology, Digital Design and Fabrication, Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS), and Data Science. To date, enrollment trends in these programs have not met expectations. The College continues to strategize ways to attract new students into these programs, including enhanced marketing and outreach. The College has established partnerships with Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) to provide pathways for high school students to transition to Carroll. It may take several years before CCPS students graduate and attend the College.

Table 6. Enrollment Trends in Programs Spring 2018-Spring 2022

Program	Spring 2018	Spring 2019	Spring 2020	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
Digital Fabrication		2	15	17	12
Entertainment Technology	5	9	12	2	9
sUAS				0	4
Data Science					1

### 2. College Readiness Course

Carroll engaged in multiple efforts to refine its College Readiness (COL-099) course to best serve its incoming student populations. Originally offered as an optional credit course focused on academic, financial, and time management skills, beginning in Fall 2014 College Readiness was made a transitional course, and any student who placed in a transitional reading, math, or English course was also required to complete COL-099. However, course success data for the transitional version of College Readiness suggested the course did not appreciably boost completion rates of other transitional or credit-bearing courses. In Fall 2018, Carroll piloted sections of COL-099 with integrated math support for students who placed into transitional math courses. These math-focused sections included content in goal setting, solving word problems, and math-specific study strategies, and connected students to the College’s Academic Center for tutoring and test taking workshops. The math-focused version of the COL-099 course did not result in consistently improved student success in transitional math courses, nor did retention rates for pilot students increase. As a result, a revised optional one-credit version of the course, COL-100, Navigating College, was developed for offer to all students beginning Fall 2019. Student interest in this optional course has been very low, though, and the course has not had sufficient enrollment to run to date.

Table 7. Success Rates for Math-Focused Pilot of COL-099 (2018)

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Standard COL-099 Sections SP 2018</b>	<b>Math-Focused COL-099 Sections SP 2018</b>	<b>Standard COL-099 Sections FA 2018</b>	<b>Math-Focused COL-099 Sections FA 2018</b>
Completion Rate: Transitional Math Courses	47%	37%	54%	61%
Retention Rate	50%	43%	77%	76%



## Garrett College

### **FY2022 Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal**

Garrett College (GC) is engaged in a number of strategies and practices that impact the College's and the State's 2025 completion goals. As directed in the July 1, 2022 memo from Dr. Fielder, GC is choosing to submit a narrative providing information on new programs/strategies that we are focusing on to achieve the 55% completion goal. The Performance Accountability Report (PAR) data continues to support that the developmental non-completer cohort is as an area for improvement. The College is taking steps to address this cohort's success by exploring implementing corequisite courses with a supplemental and complementary remedial portion to provide support to those students with developmental needs.

GC has six institutional goals relating to its performance in the following keys areas: Accessibility, Student Satisfaction and Success, Educational Effectiveness, Workforce Development, Community Service, and Effective Use of Financial, Human, and Physical Resources. The institutional goals align with the Maryland Higher Education Commission's institutional performance accountability framework, and the performance measures associated with them are assessed annually. As such, they are relatively fixed and should not be confused with the College's strategic initiatives and goals, although the two are clearly related. Strategic goals of the College's approved FY2021-FY2025 Strategic Plan (SP) align with the 2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education: Student Success with Less Debt.

**GOAL 1:** Provide Garrett College students, credit and noncredit, with innovative, relevant curriculum delivered by dedicated faculty/instructors who remain current in their field of study.

**GOAL 2:** Implement innovative best practices, designed to increase enrollment, improve retention, and enable student success.

**GOAL 3:** Deliver and assess innovative market-driven programs and services to stakeholders, and the community at large, leveraging the assets of Garrett County.

**GOAL 4:** Ensure the sustainability of the College through innovations in managing human, fiscal, physical, and technological resources.

### **Retention Initiatives**

#### *Implementation of a Corequisite Model*

As noted earlier, the College is developing a plan to transition to a corequisite model to both complement and supplement developmental education for students with developmental/remedial needs. The data from the prior year's developmental redesign to an integrated reading and writing course from six to four credits was skewed because of COVID and the instructor teaching virtually due to accommodations. Due to the resignations of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and both the developmental math and English faculty this year will be spent developing the curriculum and determining faculty assignments.

### *The Garrett College Library and Advising & Academic Success Center*

The Garrett College Library and Advising & Academic Success Center collaboratively created the Garrett College Learning Commons. This ongoing effort, strategically launched in 2017, reinvented a long-established traditional library into a cutting-edge, energized learning environment, launching a sustainable investment in learning for future students. The customized learning commons model embraced by the institution includes comprehensive library services, flexible academic support services (tutoring, testing, student disability support), academic advising, and management of the campus electronic bookstore. Not only did this transformation involve reimagining existing physical space and identifying low-to-no-cost solutions, it also included significant staffing modifications to build, empower, motivate, and nurture a cohesive team to support the needs of the institution and the students it serves. This transformation provided generous opportunities to collaborate across traditional departmental lines and ignited an institutional culture shift. As a result, student performance measures are on the rise and the atmosphere in the space has been revitalized.

- Midterm Deficiencies decreased by 25% 2016 to 2021 (Fall 2016: 41.25%, Fall 2021: 30.93%)
- Academic Difficulty (probation and dismissal) decreased by 39.5% 2016 to 2021 (Fall 2016: 19.01%, Fall 2021: 11.51%)
- Fall 2021 marked the lowest academic difficulty rate as a percentage of total enrollment since the college began tracking in Fall 2006
- GC holds state's highest 4-year graduation/transfer rates in all four major categories (*all students, college-ready students, developmental completers, developmental non-completers*)

**Library improvements** - The Library component of the Learning Commons aims to improve services and resources and increase engagement. Recent initiatives include increasing opportunities for information literacy instruction, providing a welcoming and inclusive environment to attract library users, adding interlibrary loan services, utilizing LibGuides and the library web presence efficiently and effectively, hosting library events and activities to engage college community, and leading the campus-wide Online Educational Resources (OER) initiative.

- AY22 visits to the Learning Commons increased 52% over FY21
- AY22 library website and research guides engagement increased 44% over FY21
- AY22 reference statistics increased by 2% over AY21
- AY22 circulation increased by 16.5% over AY21

In alignment with the Learning Commons vision, the Advising & Academic Success Center (which encompasses the academic support services and the academic advising function) has driven a conscious, continuous effort to further enhance academic support services as a whole, and ultimately persistence and retention over the last few years.

**Tutoring improvements** – The AASC introduced flexible tutoring options, enhanced marketing and promotion, improved tutor training and development, collaborated with faculty for tutor recommendations and tutee requests, integrated basic advising and Blackboard (learning

management system) support into tutoring structure, and increased 504/ADA disability collaboration. Prior to COVID-19, student engagement with tutoring had increased substantially. In AY22, services are beginning to rebound following the pandemic.

- In AY22, students are visiting tutoring more frequently and for greater lengths of time as evident by reports on total time spent and duplicated student visits.
- Tutoring effectiveness produced grade improvements between 30-50% (varies by subject) each year; this has increased over time.

**Early Alert improvements** – The AASC increased collaboration with faculty to introduce recommended alert checkpoints, established prescribed interventions, and expanded automated communications to students. In addition, the AASC developed and implemented a data dashboard with support from IT and integrated academic probation tracking into the early alert structure. Faculty engagement with early alerts and student academic performance following an early alert have both increased as a result of these collaborative efforts.

- 37.8% of students that received an early alert achieved some level of grade improvement in AY22.
- Faculty engagement with early alerts has consistently increased since the introduction of the early alert system in 2017.

**Advising Improvements** – The AASC Student/Advisor contact plan outlines proactive and intrusive efforts to mitigate student performance hiccups such as early alerts, low Blackboard engagement, attendance issues, academic attitude concerns, academic probation, and more. In addition, the AASC introduced touchpoints to celebrate student success by recognizing positive performance, established standard email to notify student of advisor name and contact information at beginning of each semester, introduced and enhanced virtual advising/testing to supplement face-to-face communication (significant for New Student Advising for non-local students, i.e. residence hall student population), reinforced continuous advisor professional development (increased faculty advising training for new advisors, faculty actively seeking training for advising), developed AASC Student Resources Blackboard course to disseminate tutoring and advising information to students, established regular events such as Exam Jam, continued to enhance STARS (earn-while-you-learn) Program, implemented student self-registration (2019) to enrich student educational ownership, and introduced effective athletic advising.

- Survey results that assess advising are consistently high; AY22:
  - 69.35% rate the Academic Advising Process as above average or excellent (Student Opinion Survey)
  - 94.4% indicate above average or excellent to the statement “The academic advising process provides me with the information and assistance I need to achieve my educational and career goals” (Student Opinion Survey)
  - 95.9% indicate minimum good ratings for Academic Advising services at the college (Graduate Survey)
- Consistent retention improvements; AY22:

- Enrollment Management Framework (EMF) 2022 findings; fall-to-spring retention (fall 2021 to spring 2022): 77.40% (ideal 76%, acceptable 71%)
- EMF 2022 findings; fall-to-fall retention (fall 2020 to fall 2021): 45.91% FTFT (ideal 56%, acceptable 51%)

**Blackboard** - Student-facing assistance for Blackboard was integrated into the AASC model of student support (previously supported by IT helpdesk and distance learning). AASC staff, including tutors, are proficient in the technology and able to provide basic usage support. Blackboard resources were also absorbed into the AASC Student Resources Bb course (a course all students are enrolled in that provides tutoring and advising details each semester).

Each of the efforts described in this section are a culmination of several years' efforts. Measures are assessed annually and Learning Commons administrators continually seek opportunities to further enhance services to support Garrett College students, faculty, and staff.

### **Cultural Diversity Plan**

Despite the pandemic, the college was able to make progress on several of its equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) goals/strategies in FY22. In an effort to coordinate EDI initiatives, the College created an EDI webpage, began recruitment for an EDI Student Advisory Council, and several employees served on a variety of local and/or state EDI organizations. FY22 also offered increased opportunities for campus and community engagement, through the renewed *Joan Crawford Lecture Series*, student clubs such as American Association of University Women (AAUW) and Genders & Sexualities Alliance (GSA), and a new partnership with the Garrett County chapter of the NAACP. The College continues to examine obstacles to student success and provide support services to students. In FY22, these included student savings of over \$55,000 through OER/no textbook courses and textbook rentals, increased access to resources through the Students in Need Group (SING) Food Pantry, and scholarships to Continuing Education and Workforce Development students totaling over \$43,000. An internal committee of key stakeholders has been established to help continued efforts toward the College's EDI goals and strategies in FY23.

### **Creating clear, well-defined educational pathways**

The SP has an objective under Goal 1 to assess the feasibility of campus-wide career advising and services for credit/non-credit students and alumni via a feasibility study. The Dean of Academic Affairs and the Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce Development (CEWD), in conjunction with the Director of the Advising & Academic Success Center (AASC), recently approved a variable-hour position creating an AASC/CEWD advising partnership. With respect to developing new concentrations under the Professional Technical degree, proposals for Certified Clinical Medical Assistant, Veterinary Assistant, and Welding concentrations have been developed, and will be reviewed by the Dean of Academic Affairs and Dean of CEWD. The Dean of CEWD wrote grants to develop new CEWD programming leading to industry certifications in Culinary and Marine Mechanic along with a Professional Technical Studies

Area of Concentration (A.O.C.) in Machining. The College continues to work on developing credit and noncredit Career & Technology Education dual enrollment opportunities with Garrett County Public Schools.

### **Open Education Resources (OER)**

Garrett College first began using Open Educational Resources and incorporating low-cost textbook initiatives in the fall of 2017. Currently, approximately 53% of GC courses do not require the purchase of a textbook. Prospective and current students are able to search for low-cost textbook/OER course offerings on the GC website. GC closed out its Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) OER Grant in June 2022, resulting in 21 courses being converted to OER.

The Pay It Forward Textbook Scholarship was established by the Garrett College Foundation to assist students pursuing a certificate or degree program at Garrett College. The scholarship is used to purchase all of a student's books for one full academic year. Upon completion of the semester, students return the books, which will then be recycled for other students to use. The Pay It Forward Textbook Scholarship embraces the spirit of philanthropy, providing current scholarship recipients with the opportunity to "pay it forward." The initiative honors the generosity of donors who have made the GC Foundation scholarship awards possible while creating the next generation of philanthropists who will allow the scholarship program to continue.

In conclusion, Garrett College, along with other colleges across the country, continues its efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and the lingering effects. Community colleges appear to have been hit the hardest because of available jobs and a misconception that college is not necessary. The college is actively working on recruitment and retention initiatives to increase enrollment and opportunities to assist with student success support services as well as alleviate barriers to higher education.

## Howard Community College

### Report on Best Practices

#### Successful Initiatives

##### Targeted Outreach and Enrollment Support in High Schools

In Spring 2022, HCC's dual credit program, JumpStart, targeted outreach by providing in person enrollment support at five high schools: Hammond, Howard, Long Reach, Reservoir, and Wilde Lake. These efforts resulted in an increase in enrollment and a jump from 13% to 20% of students who qualify for free and reduced meals (FARM) participating in dual enrollment on HCC's campus in Fall 2022. In addition, 22 students graduated with their associate degree at the same time they earned their high school diploma in 2022. This was an 81% increase from 2021.

##### Removing Financial Aid Barriers

In Fall 2021, HCC removed a financial barrier for students whose Title IV eligibility had been suspended due to not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards by creating a *Back on Track* program to cover the cost of tuition and fees. Data shows that many of the students in the program had extenuating circumstances that contributed to their decline in academic performance. By utilizing the Back on Track program, our student support counselors have been able to work more closely with these students to provide the extra support needed to be successful. This fall HCC eliminated the scholarship application requirement for scholarships with general criteria resulting in \$1.3M of the \$1.4M in available scholarships to be awarded prior to the start of the fall term. Also in Fall 2022, HCC removed financial barriers for students who owe an institutional balance due to the return of Title IV calculation by covering the balance owed so that they can continue their studies.

##### Embedded Pre-transfer Advisors

The office of Admissions and Advising began hosting an embedded pre-transfer Advisor from the University of Maryland at College Park and the University of Maryland Baltimore County in January 2022. The advisors are on campus one day a week at minimum and hold student appointments and provide information for advising staff. They meet with various student groups, including Honors and Silas Craft Collegians, which is a cohort program designed for students who are interested in community engagement opportunities as well as those who might benefit from structured mentor and study support. They also serve as a resource for faculty who have questions regarding University of Maryland at College Park academics. This fall, HCC is hosting a guidance counselor from the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) to aid JumpStart dual enrollment students. These partnerships help students to plan and complete their associate degrees consistent with the transfer requirements of the institutions in which they are interested. The pre-transfer advisors do not advise regarding HCC academic policies and do not challenge our degree requirements.

### **Ambiciones**

In 2015, HCC saw growth in Latino student enrollment, and to provide pathways to academic success created the Ambiciones program. Ambiciones connects Latino students to available resources on campus. It assists students and their families in navigating the entrance process. Ambiciones started with 20 students; in FY22, the program served 115 students.

**Retention Rate Benchmark:** 80 percent of HCC students who participated in Ambiciones during the fall semester will return the following spring semester. In FY22, fall-to-spring retention was 88 percent compared to 66 percent for all credit students.

**Good Academic Standing Benchmark:** 75 percent of students participating in Ambiciones will be in good academic standing for the fall and spring terms. In spring 2022, 93.9 percent of Ambiciones students were in good academic standing compared to 75.9 percent for all credit students.

### **Howard PRIDE**

Howard PRIDE was established to close the achievement gap of African American/Black males, the most "at-risk" population within the institution. The program assists participants in maintaining good academic standing, completing developmental math requirements, and increasing retention, transfer, and graduation rates. Assistance with math, particularly developmental math, is a critical component of the program. In fall 2021, Howard PRIDE served 185 students. In FY22, the program served 222 students.

**Retention Rate Benchmark:** 80 percent of HCC students who participated in Howard PRIDE in the fall semester will return the following spring semester. The Fall 2021 to spring 2022 retention rate was 87 percent compared to all Black males at 64 percent.

**Good Academic Standing Benchmark:** 75 percent of students participating in Howard PRIDE will be in good academic standing for the fall and spring terms. 97 percent of Howard PRIDE students achieved good academic standing for spring 2022 compared to all Black males at 75 percent.

**Success Rate (Dev Ed Math) Benchmark:** 60 percent of the students who receive tutoring will earn a "C" or better grades in their tutored course(s). In spring 2022, 86 percent of Howard PRIDE students received a "C" or better in their developmental mathematics course compared to 50 percent of all Black males. Additionally, in college-level mathematics, 77 percent of the Howard PRIDE students completed their courses in fall 2020, compared to 69 percent of all Black males. In spring 2021, 81 percent of the Howard PRIDE students completed their courses compared to 66 percent of all Black males. In fall 2021, 91 percent of the Howard PRIDE students in college-level mathematics, completed their courses, compared to 65 percent of all Black males. In spring 2022, 82 percent of the Howard PRIDE students completed their courses compared to 70 percent of all Black males.

**Guided Student Placement (GSP).** Data shows that faculty are less likely to place students into developmental courses (8.5%) than the Accuplacer tool is (21%). Faculty are more likely to place students into college level (35%) than Accuplacer (19%).

- **English:** In fall 2021, Students placed by GSP had higher ABC rates than those placed by Accuplacer. Our data shows that GSP students who receive developmental support are more successful in ENGL-121 than students placing directly into ENGL-121 (77% vs. 65% course success rate). Multiple measures have seen the developmental ENGL student population reduce to less than a third of what it had been. Our ENGL-121 ALP success rates have been slowly climbing (from 61% in 2017 to 65% in 2021 with the population remaining the same between 150 and 180 students in fall semesters), with curriculum redesign, increased interventions, and support from a completion specialist. Due to GSP and other multiple measures, more students are placing directly into ENGL-121 where the success rate over the past 5 years has maintained an average around 70%.
- **Mathematics:** With the implementation of the multiple measures for math placement in 2018 we saw an initial drop in enrollment in all developmental courses and this has continued through the fall of 2021. The difference in enrollment from the fall of 2019 to the fall of 2021 were quite dramatic for Basic Algebra and Geometry (MATH-061), Elementary Algebra (MATH-067), Intermediate Algebra (MATH-070), and Mathematical Foundations (MATH-037). The drops were 66 percent, 57 percent, 62.8 percent, and 74.1 percent respectively. This shows that many more students are placing directly into their college level math courses and not having to take any developmental courses or having to take fewer of them. In addition, the success rates stayed steady or improved over this period. For Basic Algebra and Geometry (MATH-061) the success rate was steady at around 60 percent. For Elementary Algebra (MATH-067), it increased from 63 percent to 69 percent. For Intermediate Algebra (MATH-070) we also saw an increase from 55 percent to 70 percent. Our enrollment in first-tier college level classes did increase in some classes and decreased in others from F19 to F20. For Mathematical Literacy (MATH-132) it increased by 34 percent, and for Statistics (MATH-138) it increased by 21 percent. College Algebra (MATH-141) and Pre-calculus I (MATH-143) saw decreases of 19 percent and 23 percent respectively. Of interesting note was the increase in enrollment in Calculus I (MATH-181) during this period; it increased by 79 percent. For all the college level courses mentioned above, the success rates all increased between F19 and F20.

### **Initiatives That Did Not Work**

#### **Self-Service Graduation Application**

In fall 2020, HCC implemented the self-service graduation application for those students who have a degree audit showing complete or pending complete. This removes barriers for students who are eligible for graduation. Unfortunately, the pandemic negatively impacted the number of graduation applications, and we are actively tracking to see if on-time graduation numbers improve.



## **Montgomery College: Contributing to Maryland's 55% Goal**

Since 2015, Montgomery College has engaged in a number of strategies and practices that impact the State's 55% Completion Goal. Increasing retention, graduation and transfer rates were some of the pillars of the College's Strategic Plan MC2020, the Academic Master Plan 2016-2021, and the Student Affairs Master Plan, which reflect that many initiatives were implemented at the same time in order to increase retention and improve graduation and transfer numbers, as well as address the achievement gap for students of color compared with white students. Montgomery College has met the goal given in the State's 55% Completion Goal, and has increased the number of graduates and transfers over the years, with MC's percentages increasing from 14.5 percent in 2014 to 29 percent in 2021 (IPEDS 3-year graduation rate for class beginning 2011 and 2018 respectively).

### **Examples of Successful Initiatives:**

#### **Combining Redesign of Developmental Math with Changes in Alternate Placement Policies**

Developmental math has long been a barrier to degree completion for community college students with many students getting "stuck" and there unable to complete their degree. In addition, many students opted to leave the mathematics course until the end of their college experience which could also leave them struggling to complete. Developmental math, as well as college-level math, were barriers to completion that needed to be addressed. Beginning in fall 2018, the College implemented a co-requisite math model, based on national best practices. The co-requisite math model allows students with developmental needs to start their collegiate careers in college-level mathematics and provided them with built-in academic supports. Around the same time, the College also began utilizing high school transcripts as one of multiple measures to determine math placements resulting in more opportunities for recently graduated high school students to take college-level math in the first year of college.

The results of these two changes are that more students are taking and passing college-level math in their first year. Over a period of four years, Montgomery College has seen the following trends in First Time Ever in College (FTEIC) college-level math completion:

- Overall increase from 23 percent to 38 percent
- African American students' math completion increasing from 14 percent to 31 percent
- Hispanic students' math completion increasing from 12 percent to 38 percent.

In addition, the College has been able to narrow the equity/achievement gap in math compared with White students:

- African American students narrowed the gap from 16 percent to 10 percent
- Hispanic students narrowed the gap from 11 percent to 7 percent
- Hispanic women students narrowing the gap from 12 percent to 2 percent.

These changes also reduce a students' time to degree, since many students do not have to retake courses, and reducing the impact on sequencing of courses.

#### **Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES)**

The mission of ACES is to increase baccalaureate degree attainment and professional success for students who are historically underrepresented in the higher education system. ACES is a collaboration among Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Montgomery College (MC), and the Universities at Shady Grove (USG), designed to provide a structured and supportive pathway to college completion.

Together with our high school partners, community college and university-based coaches, ACES provides academic and college guidance, scholarship support, and the career readiness students need to succeed.

While at Montgomery College, ACES students have the opportunity to access ACES scholarships through the Montgomery College Foundation, participate in workshops geared toward life skills and leadership development, one-on-one academic coaching, transition supports, and much more. ACES at MC is a one-stop-shop for students to receive all the support they need to be successful in the classroom and beyond.

More than 84 percent of our ACES students are from low-income households, and over 85 percent are the first in their families to pursue a college education. Some high school students would not graduate without ACES and many would not make it to college without the individualized support of our ACES coaches and career readiness professionals. As Antony Canales, ACES participant and graduate of the University of Maryland Smith School of Business at USG explains, *“ACES has provided me with an abundance of guidance on how to make myself career ready. Through one-on-one coaching, mock interviews, and building a network with peers within the program, I was able to prepare myself to set myself forward into finding work right after graduation related to my major.”*

As of Fall 2021:

- High school graduation rate: 98 percent of all participants (compared to an 89 percent rate for Montgomery County Public Schools overall).
- Enrollment in post-secondary education: 82 percent of all participants. There are 4,804 ACES current participants are in the MCPS-MC-USG pipeline or attending college elsewhere, primarily in Maryland.
- Collectively, there were 2,087 students identified as ACES from the 2014 Cohort to the 2019 Cohort. By the end of AY2021, Montgomery College produced 688 graduates from the ACES Cohorts, that is, 33 percent of all enrolled ACES students graduated from Montgomery College, while 647 students or 31 percent transferred to four-year colleges and universities, a higher rate than compared to the general population of MC.
- Graduation from a two- or four-year institution: 1,542 ACES students. Of that number, 49 percent earned a bachelor’s degree and 43 percent earned an associate degree. There are 79 students who went on to receive master’s degrees.

### **Academic Program Compliance and Academic Progress (APCAP) Coaches**

This program provides guidance and advising from Academic Program Compliance and Academic Progress (APCAP) Coaches to student financial aid recipients in each campus financial aid office. The coaches review semester course enrollment with students to ensure maximum availability of federal financial aid. They advise students of the financial aid consequences of taking classes outside their declared program of study. This program affects retention, allowing low-income students to keep their financial aid eligibility and remain enrolled so they can eventually graduate. The program is relatively new, and doesn’t have graduation impact data yet.

Coaches work with students at risk of not meeting federal satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards who consequently may lose their federal aid. They advise students on the SAP appeal and academic plan process to encourage students at risk of financial aid suspension to appeal if special circumstances exist.

Three APCAP coaches were hired in spring 2019. From fall 2019 to fall 2021, the number of financial aid recipients with Course Program of Study (CPOS) issues dropped 27 percent and SAP appeals increased 29 percent, which is significant since the greatest challenge has been getting students through mandated hurdles of the appeal process. In the first year of APCAP, 60 percent of the APCAP student contacts in spring/summer 2019 enrolled in fall 2019.

Adjustments were made during the pandemic and coaches met with students virtually from mid-spring 2020 until fall 2021. Coaches continue to meet with students virtually, as well as face to face.

## **Examples of Less Successful Initiatives:**

### **Redesign of Developmental English with Changes in Alternate Placement Policies**

While the redesign of developmental math and the use of high school transcripts for placement greatly impacted students' ability to continue on their degree pathway, those same changes for developmental English were less impactful in terms of the percentage completing college-level English in the first year. In 2018 developmental English was redesigned so that many students can complete the program in one semester, and that for those at a higher developmental level, those students could co-enroll in specific gateway courses. The benefits to students were that they would access and complete their college-level English sooner, and complete additional credit bearing courses while taking developmental English courses. While completion of college-level increased, it was not as dramatic an increase when compared with completing college-level math (above) within the first year, increasing from 54 percent to 59 percent. Those who co-enrolled in college-level courses, passed at higher rates than those who were not co-enrolled. It is also important to note that the achievement gap narrowed for African American students from 12 percent gap to 3 percent compared with white students, and was eliminated for Hispanic students who now exceed white students by 5 percent.

### **Enrollment changes**

Like many colleges across the country, Montgomery College experienced declining enrollment during this time period. Additionally, we have lost full-time equivalencies (FTE) at a higher rate than headcount, meaning that students are taking fewer hours per term. Our enrollment and marketing strategies were designed to help increase student headcount. Our pathways and other initiatives encouraged students to enroll full time in classes within their program of study. These efforts have not garnered measurable impact in increasing the number enrolled students or increasing the number of credits per term. Our graduation rates have risen, but a larger number of students coming to the College would offset the challenges of reduced FTE and likely increase the number of residents who hold degrees.

**Wor-Wic Community College**  
**2022 Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal**

Wor-Wic Community College (WWCC) is engaged in a number of strategies and practices that impact state and institutional 2025 degree completion goals. As directed in the July 1<sup>st</sup> memo from Dr. Fielder, three effective initiatives and two initiatives that resulted in little or no impact are being provided.

**Effective Initiatives**

**Academic Advising Center** - Wor-Wic received a Title III grant in 2018 to focus primarily on academic advising. Academic advising was formerly conducted in a decentralized model with both Student Services and the faculty responsible for advising. The result was ineffective and sometimes inaccurate advising, poor communication, an inability to address barriers to student success and a lack of leadership.

Wor-Wic staff spent 2019 reviewing the literature, exploring best practices, visiting other community colleges and attending professional development workshops. The result was a creation of a model which called for a professional Academic Advising Center to centralize advising, and it was launched during the pandemic in the spring of 2020. A physical location for the Academic Advising Center was completed in the summer of 2020.

The Academic Advising Center supports a holistic advising model in which trained, professional academic advisors meet with students throughout their academic journey. The new advising model requires all students to meet with an advisor at the beginning of their academic journey to create a course plan that will allow students to register on their own each semester. Significant time is spent in the initial meeting in order to create an educational plan and goal attainment strategy for each student. Subsequent appointments are used as check-in meetings, and the opportunity to ensure that a student is on track to meet educational goals, with a final required checkpoint happening near the end of their course plan.

Even though the change occurred during the pandemic, the establishment of the Academic Advising Center has been very positive and demonstrates some initial success. While there were a number of contributing factors, retention for all students rose from 48.7% for the fall 2019 cohort to 52.3% for the fall 2020 cohort. Pell grant recipient retention increased to 49.6% from 43.7% the year before, and developmental student retention increased to 48.8% from 47.3%. Evaluators of the Academic Advising Center report that 83% of students surveyed indicated they had an academic plan.

**Enrollment Coaching** - The college has implemented several major initiatives designed to increase student retention and success. In FY 2022, the second year of new enrollment onboarding processes took place as part of the college's Guided Pathways initiative. The new requirements were designed to assist students in enrolling in an educational program or training that aligns with their career goals and preparing them for their first day of class. Applicants select one of seven learning pathways on the admission application instead of a specific academic program. Their next step is to complete a brief career assessment before meeting with

an enrollment coach. Enrollment coaches then help prospective students choose an academic program or non-credit course of study, determine if placement testing is needed, and register students for placement testing and academic advising meetings. Enrollment coaches also assist students with the financial aid application process. In addition, students must complete an online orientation before starting their coursework.

Enrollment coaching has a number of benefits, all focused on helping students be better prepared. Every new student is required to participate in some career exploration before becoming a student, and we hope that in the future we will see lower rates of academic program change. Students also are assessed for placement during these meetings, and this has resulted in an increase in students who are waived from placement. Students receive basic financial aid information and are better prepared to make financial aid decisions and apply for the FAFSA. The increases in retention described earlier are also a result of enrollment coaching.

**TRIO SSS** - A TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Program grant through the U.S. Department of Education was approved for a second time in the summer of 2020. The grant, which spans a five-year period, is providing 144 students each year with individualized support services to increase persistence, retention, academic standing and graduation/transfer. Participants include at-risk students who are low income, first generation and/or students with disabilities. Support services include a needs assessment, intrusive advising, coaching, personal counseling, tutoring and supplemental instruction in the college's student development course. In FY 2021, the fall-to-spring retention rate for TRIO SSS students was almost 12 percentage points higher than for students who weren't in the program. More than 90% of the TRIO SSS students were in good standing and almost 90% earned a cumulative GPA above 2.0 at the end of the year.

### **Initiatives with Little or No Impact**

**Fundamentals of College Literacy** – Changes were made to the Fundamentals of College Literacy course over the past several years in order to increase student success. This course combines developmental reading and writing into a self-paced, low-cost course. Although this course is non-credit and offered in the college's continuing education and workforce development division, it provides multiple opportunities for students of varying ability to progress at the rate that matches their abilities. It also replaces the previously separate non-credit reading and writing courses which had inconsistent offerings as a result of irregular enrollment. Students now have a continual opportunity to register, which allows them to progress to the credit developmental reading and writing courses more quickly. Since this is a non-credit course, it is not eligible for financial aid.

The Fundamentals of College Literacy course is offered through the college's reading and writing center and is scheduled on a rolling basis to best serve students. Students do not have to wait for a non-credit session to enroll and begin work. They can start when they are ready and receive continual support from the reading and writing center staff.

This initiative is in its early stages and has had little impact to date. Benchmarks for non-credit developmental reading and writing were not met from 2018 through 2021 and were met in 2022.

Preliminary data from the fall of 2022 indicate that a larger number of students than usual were tested and placed into this course and therefore were not ready for the credit developmental reading and writing courses. Wor-Wic is researching this situation and other factors surrounding the non-credit course to determine if it is the right solution or if additional adjustments are needed.

**Accelerated Math** – Three new accelerated mathematics pathways were implemented to allow students to begin taking college-level math a term earlier than in the past. Students who required elementary algebra could take statistics or liberal arts math courses linked with elementary algebra. Students would complete an elementary algebra prerequisite course that focused only those concepts required for the chosen pathway and then move into the college-level course in the same term. These linked course combinations consisted of five total credits.

For students in STEM, business, education or computer science majors, a third accelerated pathway allowed them to take elementary and intermediate algebra in the same term. Students would complete elementary algebra and move into intermediate algebra in the same term. These linked courses together consisted of six credits.

The linked courses were originally offered three days per week, including Friday, due to the amount of classroom time required each week. Due to low enrollment, these linked course formats have been discontinued.

Benchmarks have not been made in Math for the last five years (2018-2022).

However, with the adoption of ALEKS (McGraw Hill) as the software platform for the college's developmental mathematics classes, students are now able to self-accelerate on their own through elementary and intermediate algebra.

A new corequisite model has been implemented for statistics students who require developmental math. Linked pre-statistics and elementary statistics courses are taken concurrently through the term with the same instructor. Algebra skills taught in the pre-statistics course are timed to support the delivery of material in the elementary statistics class. These linked classes consist of five total credits. It is too early to measure the success of this model.

I certify that this information has been updated for 2022.

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**Frostburg State University**  
**Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward**  
**Achieving the 55% Completion Goal**  
**September 2022**

The following is a summary of Frostburg State University's (FSU) best practices that address the following MHEC-identified goals:

- Increasing the number of enrolling students
- Increasing the proportion of enrolled students who persist to the second year
- Increasing the proportion of enrolled students who earn degrees
- Reducing the achievement gap

The three most effective initiatives tied to student success at Frostburg are discussed below as well as evidence of their effectiveness relating to each of the four goals above. The final section of the report summarizes programs that were discontinued over the reporting period.

1. **The TRIO program:** TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) is an academic support program focused on the retention and graduation of disadvantaged students. Of the 275 students it serves annually, at least 67% must be both first-generation and low-income. All participants must demonstrate academic need according to at least one indicator, including high school GPA, placement test results, or college GPA. They are also required to meet with SSS staff members several times throughout each semester to engage in services such as academic advising, financial aid guidance, study skills assistance, tutoring, career counseling, and graduate school preparation. Once a student joins SSS, they remain part of the program until they graduate. The program's staff members closely monitor and track the academic and financial status of each participant.

**Data and Interpretation:** The following data relating to the TRIO SSS program are from the 2020-2021 academic year: the program served 275 students (first-year through seniors). Ninety-two percent of the participants persisted to the 2021-2022 academic year, 94% were in good academic standing, and the six-year graduation rate was 70%. These persistence rates are well above the rates that would be typical of disadvantaged students without this type of support. Participants are assigned to a cohort based on the year they enter the program and six-year graduation rates are tracked by these cohorts. The 2015 SSS cohort's graduation rate (70%) was above the university's overall rate.

2. **The Reup Education program:** In early 2018, Frostburg partnered with *ReUp Education* to re-enroll students who had failed to persist at the university. In an effort to help facilitate paths to graduation at Frostburg, *ReUp* provides coaching to students who have neither graduated from FSU nor enrolled at another institution. Coaches help students to re-enter the university through sessions that identify the challenges or obstacles that caused them to leave school. *ReUp* coaches proactively provide outreach and engagement after re-enrollment at key junctures in the academic calendar, schedule regular meetings, and prioritize students who are likely to benefit from direct coaching at a specific point in time. Most recently,

*ReUp Education* has surveyed the students it works with and identified financial challenges as the main reason that students have stopped out and found that the biggest motivations to return were *to finish what they started* and *job mobility*, followed by *personal goal, a better life*, and *earning potential*.

**Data and Interpretation:** The data below indicate how many terms FSU students have completed as they work toward graduation.

Completed Terms	1	2	3	4	5+
# of Students	32	8	4	7	6

As of summer 2022, a total of twenty-five students have graduated since the partnership began in January 2018.

3. **The ACHIEVE program:** Typically, students at FSU are assigned a mathematics level according to the ALEKS placement exam. The lowest placement is Mathematics Level 0 (ML0), and without the ACHIEVE program, all ML0 students would immediately enroll in Pre-Algebra Mathematics (DVMT 095) before being able to take a credit-bearing mathematics class. In the fall of 2021, Frostburg enrolled 23 ML0 students into a special section of Introduction to Mathematical Problem Solving (MATH 104). These students were selected according to three criteria: 1) MATH 104 satisfies the mathematics requirement of their major; 2) they had a sufficiently high language level placement; and 3) they agreed to be put into the section.

Similarly, ML1 students whose majors required College Algebra (MATH 119) were placed into special ACHIEVE sections of that course. (Non-ACHIEVE students who place at ML1 are required to take Intermediate Algebra (DVMT 099) before they can enroll in MATH 119.)

**Data and Interpretation:** For the fall 2021 semester, 20 out of 23 ACHIEVE students passed MATH 104. For students with the same instructor, same grading scheme, and who started at a higher mathematics level, 20 out of 36 non-ACHIEVE students passed MATH 104. This was statistically significant with  $p=0.021$  and an odds ratio of 5.19. For the spring 2022 semester, there was no statistically significant difference in pass rates for ACHIEVE vs. Non-ACHIEVE students in MATH 119 ( $p=0.85$ ).

The odds ratio for the MATH 104 students suggests that students who passed MATH 104 were five times more likely to be ACHIEVE students than non-ACHIEVE students. A limitation of this analysis is that Frostburg did not compare it only to students who took DVMT 095 (i.e., the university is not comparing ACHIEVE to other ML0 students, but instead comparing ACHIEVE to all other MATH 104 students with the same instructor).



Most significantly, ACHIEVE students' time to graduation was improved by eliminating the DVMT 095 prerequisite, also saving them money and avoiding morale drops from being placed into a developmental mathematics course.

While there is no statistically significant difference in the pass rates for MATH 119, this should be interpreted as a success of the program because the ACHIEVE students did not have to spend an extra semester taking DVMT 099 before they could attempt MATH 119. Effectively, taking the ACHIEVE option did no harm to those students that did not pass MATH 119, but for the ACHIEVE students that did pass MATH 119, they passed MATH 119 one semester earlier than they otherwise would have, improving their time to graduation, morale, and saving them money.

**Two initiatives that were implemented in the past five years that, upon measuring effectiveness, showed little to no impact.**

- 1) The Academic Enrichment Series was discontinued due to lack of participation and student persistence outcome measures.
- 2) Academic coaching was two-year pilot program designed to improve first-to-second year retention. Beginning with the fall 2019 cohort, each first-year, full-time FSU student was assigned a professional academic coach. The retention rate remained constant from the prior year's rate of 74% and decreased to 70% with the fall 2020 cohort. As a result, the program was discontinued.

**Salisbury University**  
**2022 Update to Maryland Higher Education Commission on**  
**Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal**  
**September 19, 2022**

**I. Most Effective Initiatives Tied to Student Success at Salisbury University**

**1) Financial Aid Targeting**

For the 2021-2022 academic year, Salisbury University injected new funding through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) during the spring semester in two rounds. The first round included awards of up to \$1,500 and targeted students who were Pell Grant eligible or had an expected family contribution of \$5,846 or less. The second phase used the remaining portion of HEERF III funding through an application process with a maximum awarded amount of \$2,500 and targeted students who had relevant educational and living expenses.

Salisbury University's financial aid initiative targeted students that needed the financial support the most and sought to release funds quickly. These qualified students not only had higher need, they also represented a higher racial diversity than that of the larger University, with 34.8% identifying as non-White compared to the student-body average of 27.5%.

The University observed strong evidence of success when looking at graduation and persistence rates. Of the 2,693 students awarded funds in spring 2022, 93.7% either graduated or are enrolled in the fall 2022 semester. When reviewing students who were in their first-year at the time of awarding, 85% of those students were enrolled in fall 2022 – higher than the University's overall first-year retention rate of 80%.

**2) Salisbury University's Enrollment Action Team**

Salisbury University implemented an Enrollment Action Team (EAT) in the spring 2022 semester to conduct research and provide recommendations on overall enrollment actions and supporting student success. The EAT is comprised of four subgroups (recruitment, retention, new student & family experiences, and financial awarding), is designed to be action-oriented, and consists of staff and faculty members. Group members are tasked with generating new and creative recommendations to improve enrollment as it pertains to their targeted subgroup.

The EAT groups have identified data needed to provide recommendations to University leadership prior to the summer semesters. This group will continue to function in the 2022-2023 academic year, during which time specific actions will be identified and taken to improve enrollment at Salisbury University.

### **3) New Advanced Learning Strategies Course**

A new course designed to support study and learning skills launched in fall 2021. GENL 103 'Advanced Learning Strategies' is a one-credit seven-week course that introduces students to an array of study strategies and campus resources to help them be academically successful during their collegiate career. Five sections of the course were offered for the first-time in the fall 2021 semester with strong outcomes. More than 90% of students (55/60) improved total score on a Study Skills Inventory (pre-/post-test) that queried effective textbook use, notetaking skills, memory skills, test-taking strategies, concentration, and time management.

As a result of enrolling into GENL 103, students are using at least one strategy from these learning skills or reported high satisfaction with the course (59 exit survey respondents):

- Improved Time Management: 100% Strongly Agreed or Agreed
- Improved Textbook Reading: 97% Strongly Agreed or Agreed
- Improved Notetaking: 100% Strongly Agreed or Agreed
- Increased Knowledge of Library/Writing Center: 90% Strongly Agreed or Agreed
- Increased Test Taking Skills: 97% Strongly Agreed or Agreed
- Increased Stress Management: 96% Strongly Agreed or Agreed
- 100% Strongly Agreed or Agreed that course gave them tools to be a more effective learner
- 100% reported that instructor was approachable
- 100% reported that instructor was organized
- 100% reported that instructor knew the subject matter
- 100% reported that instructor treated students with respect
- 100% reported that instructor displayed an interest in students' learning
- 100% reported that instructor provided a welcoming and inclusive learning environment

Students noted that, "This was an incredibly useful class, and I foresee myself using many of the strategies going forward for the rest of my college career. Without this class I wouldn't have known of many if any of these strategies and my grades would likely have suffered. Thank you," and, "The instructor was fantastic throughout the course, and it was truly felt that they had a desire for students to improve themselves and become better to succeed in the college environment. The structure of the class is conducive to learning and brings excitement and energy that is not present in typical classes, leading to greater participation and enjoyment."

## **II. Initiatives that did not Fully Achieve Expected Outcomes**

### **1) Early Alert Progress Reports**

In the 2022 spring semester, Salisbury University faculty were asked to report on first year undergraduate students in their courses who seemed to be at risk of not successfully completing the course. Faculty were to report the concerning behavior in our advising platform. This approach asked faculty to provide feedback on their list of students at a point (three weeks into the semester) when students may not have had graded assignments. In

spring 2022, faculty response was not sufficiently robust; nor was the response rate of students when outreach was provided.

For AY22-23, data collection has been modified in two ways to increase impact: 1) only students of concern are listed in each section (e.g., probation students, students with a cumulative GPA of 2.0-2.25) and 2) faculty are asked to refer students to the specific support office (based on their specific concerns) or mark them “On Track for Success.” Students identified for “Early Signs of Academic Concern” receive a follow-up from the appropriate office. If the student is on track for success, an automated message is sent encouraging them to keep up the good work. With this new approach in fall 2022, more than 192 faculty provided timely feedback on 442 students. The modified system uses the Navigate platform, which allows for communication with and about students, providing the additional benefit of increasing faculty engagement with this platform.

## **2) Chemistry Support Center**

In fall 2021, the Department of Chemistry opened a Chemistry Support Center in a repurposed space centrally located on campus. In the 2022 spring semester, more than 180 students checked into the center for a total of 1,107 visits. Students in several majors take chemistry courses, something that was reflected in the data of students who sought support. The highest number of student check-ins were students majoring in Biology (30.6%), Exercise Science (24.2%), Pre-Nursing (18.6%), and Chemistry (11.7%).

In spring 2022, less than 10% of the visits to the Chemistry Support Center were by first-year students, indicating vast underuse by students in foundational courses. This may have been due to students thinking there was a fee for this service, not knowing where the center was, or lack of motivation to seek assistance.

To address this under-utilization and to better assess student preparation, in the fall 2022 semester, students in General Chemistry I are required to take an early semester assessment at the Chemistry Support Center. Changes in how the center is utilized by first-year students will be evaluated at the end of the semester.

## **III. Comment on Salisbury University’s performance on degree targets established by the MHEC**

The number of undergraduate degrees awarded last year by Salisbury University (1,664) was less than targeted by MHEC (2,107) for AY21-22. This negative difference reflects the pressures of the pandemic on undergraduate enrollment that the University has experienced. Although the number of undergraduate degrees awarded did not hit the target, the University awarded the second highest number of graduate degrees (349) in its history in AY21-22.

Since 2015-16, Salisbury University has granted degrees to approximately 24-25% of our degree-seeking undergraduate students each year. While SU did not attain the MHEC degree

target, we continued to grant degrees to 25% of our degree-seeking undergraduates during 2021-22. As undergraduate enrollment has decreased over the past three years, SU degree targets have not been modified. However, we have continued to grant degrees to a similar percentage of degree-seeking undergraduate students despite our enrollment decreases.

While SU consistently exceeded the MHEC degree target until 2017-18, it has been challenging to overcome the degree target gap as it compounds each year. Adjustments to the degree target have not been made based on the actual number of degrees being granted. In addition, without adjustments to SU's degree target based on enrollment declines, the gap between SU's degrees granted and degree target will continue to grow.

# University of Baltimore

Fall 2022 Update to the Maryland Higher Education Commission  
Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal  
September 20, 2022

Guided by our strategic plan and aligned with university and college retention and student success plans, the University of Baltimore (UBalt) continues to make strides in student success and degree completion. We carefully track retention, graduation, attrition, and student success rates. We use evidence to guide our initiatives and direct and indirect measures to chart our progress. And, we implement best practices and enhance existing services based on student feedback. Over the past several years, UBalt has implemented many new initiatives while enhancing others in order to strengthen our focus on student success and the student experience. Additionally, the University engaged in the important work set out in the Board of Regents USM/UB Task Force Report. In particular, the Student Experience Workgroup carefully reviewed the student experience at the University and made several suggestions to senior executive leadership that would positively impact recruitment, student success, retention, and degree completion.

## New and/or Enhanced Initiatives

1. **Grant for Primarily Black Institutions (PBI) and Student Success:** Secured \$250,000 per year for five years to support undergraduate student success. Two positions were hired: one to recruit students and another to support them once on campus. In addition, grant dollars are also funding Open Educational Resources (OER), embedded tutors (described below), and software to support students learning in the field of accounting.
2. **Enhanced Credit for Prior Learning:** In addition to expanding the credit options for students to earn prior learning credit, a course was developed to allow students to build a portfolio of work products and documented experiences to be reviewed by faculty to earn credit. The goal is to shorten the degree completion time.
3. **Shortened Credits to Degree Completion:** Several programs have shortened the number of credits to degree while still maintaining excellence in the curriculum and meeting accreditation standards. Health Systems Managements and the MBA are developing 4 by 1 programs to accelerate programs to the master's degree and incentivizing students to complete the B.A.
4. **Provided Enhanced Data Analytics to Guide Degree Completion:** A new data analytic position will be hired to provide data on student's path to graduation, helping to target and thus mitigate points of student's departure prior to degree completion.
5. **Redesigned the Interdisciplinary Degree with Tracks for Degree Completers:** This program is designed to help students who have accumulated a certain number of credits without completing a degree to reformulate credits in tracks that support an area of interest in a multidisciplinary format.
6. **Expanded Mandatory Milestone Advising Initiative:** This initiative requires students to see an advisor at distinct and critical times in their academic careers (45, 60, and 90 credits). Specific advising syllabi are used at each touch point and include topics such as academic progression, support services, career and internship opportunities, financial aid and graduate school preparation. As of 2017, milestone advising includes all undergraduate students. As of fall 2022, this initiative has expanded to include graduate students in specific programs. (Note: This has

been identified as an effective initiative.)

7. **Implementation of Salesforce Advisor Link (SAL) and Development of the Student Success Hub:** In 2017, UBalt initiated a Student Success Team initiative. Each student is assigned an academic advisor and career coach and this information is listed in the student portal. In spring 2021, UBalt implemented SAL, a software platform that focuses on advisor and student success engagement. Students can interact with their academic advisors to make an advising appointment, review and handle academic to-do items, and learn more about their Student Success Team. This is Balt's main student communication platform and system of engagement. Other offices will be incorporated into the platform to improve engagement and communication (Note: This has been identified as an effective set of initiatives.)
8. **Developed a Math & Statistics Center:** The pandemic focus of the renamed Math & Statistics Center (MSC) has been outreach to students and development of online tutoring protocols. In summer 2019, math support services were combined into a single math center within the RLB Library, providing drop-in math tutoring for all quantitative courses. The expansion of services was a response to increased demand. Peer tutors are trained and certified to provide support for general education math and challenging upper-division quantitative literacy courses.
9. **Expanded Embedded Peer-Support Programs:** Peer-based embedded support programs provide scalable academic support from a staff of trained peer tutors, coaches, and writing consultants entering classes and bringing support directly to individual sections of challenging courses. Embedded programs include:
  - a. Supplemental instruction-style review sessions for challenging courses, like statistics and accounting, available in person and recorded for online access;
  - b. Embedded tutoring in quantitative courses expands with the core sequence of psychology course and business statistics courses;
  - c. Coaching in the First-Year Seminar; and
  - d. Writing Fellows in writing-intensive courses.
10. **Expanded Writing Center Outreach and the Writing Fellows Program:** Writing Fellows continue to be embedded in undergraduate courses in all three colleges. Early focus on writing support improves outcomes immediately and reduces writing-related barriers to graduation in future semesters. Data from the first full-year Writing Fellows faculty cohort demonstrated remarkable faculty and student satisfaction and student success. Currently, a new partnership between the Writing Center and Writing Faculty increases collaboration regarding the upper division writing placement to allow for better support of students preparing for that placement process. The Fellows program continues to expand, now serving a high-enrollment general education ethics course that all undergraduate students must complete.
11. **Expanded Use of Open Educational Resources:** With support from the Center for Excellence in Learning Teaching and Technology (CELTT), the Library led a faculty cohort to redesign curriculum incorporating Open Education Resources – free online textbooks. Currently, a team consisting of faculty, staff and one USM representative are representing UBalt in a yearlong AAC&U OER Institute to:
  1. develop a sustainable support system for OER use;
  2. identify and build a database of all OER-related courses;
  3. identify the cost-saving for OER related course text; and
  4. garner continued university-wide support of OER initiatives.
12. **Development of Student Online Learning Preparedness Resources:** In response to the pandemic, RLB Library, CELTT, and Academic Success created the Student Quickstart, an online resource providing students the opportunity to learn about being a successful online

student as well as introductions and tutorials on educational technologies. The Quickstart was redesigned with additional tutorials in spring 2021. Currently, the Quickstart is being redeveloped as an enhanced OER to provide a more structured experience for students requiring support as they embark on online learning, both synchronous and asynchronous modalities.

13. **Challenging Courses:** Continued focus on courses with high D (C for graduate programs) grades and failure rates. Using six-year course by level data, worked with colleges to develop ways to increase success in targeted courses. The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) provides data by semester to look at highly enrolled courses with a high failure rates. Faculty work with instructional designers in CELTT and support services in library to address problem courses that persistently challenge instructional and student success. Early evidence indicates that courses with high quantitative requirements area showing higher success rates.
14. **Graduate CFW Rate:** Since 2018, the average graduate CFW has remained steady, albeit with a modality transition to online learning in Fall 2020. The percentage of classes with a CFW rate of 25% or more reduced by 1%, from 8.2% in fall 2018 to 7.0% in fall 2020, while the overall CFW rate was 12% in 2018 and fell by 1% to 11% in 2020.
15. **New Foundational Math Model:** UBalt developed a partnership with the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) to offer their nationally recognized Accelerated Math Program (AMP) at UBalt in fall 2019. The AMP combines the co-requisite foundational course with the corresponding General Education math course to support student understanding and assimilation of math concepts.
16. **New and Revised Strategies for Financial Aid:** UBalt revised its scholarship model to better support recruitment. This strategy supports more first-time, full-time freshmen with higher academic credentials (3.0 GPA or higher) than prior years. Also, UBalt is developing a new, need-based aid strategy to support recruitment and retention efforts for undergraduate students. These include merit-based Transfer Scholarships for both full- and part-time students. Students with the required cumulative GPAs and a minimum 30 transferable credits are awarded scholarships. Students who have completed an associate's degree are eligible for an additional scholarship. Merit scholarships are incremental to need-based aid. In addition, UBalt continues to offer a Near Completers Grant.
17. **Increased Focus on Financial Literacy:** UBalt implemented a new strategy for financial literacy and payment planning by providing a financial literacy tool to help students understand the best ways to cover expenses and remain in control of their financial health. Financial Literacy: TV [<https://ubalt.financialaidtv.com>] is an online library of video clips, which address popular financial aid questions. UBalt established a Financial Clearance Initiative: An initiative to ensure students can cover their tuition (via direct payment, financial aid or third-party support) each semester. The goal is to encourage students to plan how to cover the cost of education. Also, the Bob Parsons Veterans Center is sponsoring a series of financial literacy workshops in fall 2022. (Note: Need to monitor the current offerings and may need to revise as appropriate.)
18. **Enhance Mental Health and Wellness Resources:** Our Student Assistance Program (SAP) is designed to provide students with an easily accessible, safe and confidential means to assist with issues that may interfere with school, work or family responsibilities 24/7 365 days a year. UBalt's Clinical Case Manager provides on-campus threat monitoring, assessment and response when needed and serves as the on-campus triage resource. In spring 2022, UBalt was awarded an AmeriCORPS VISTA to launch our Bee Well Initiative to enhance health and



wellness resources. In summer 2022, UBalt launched the nationally recognized Mental Health First Aid initiative with a goal of expansion to key staff and faculty groups during AY2022-23. (Note: This is identified as an effective set of initiatives.)

19. **Launch of a Student Mentoring Program:** In fall 2019, UBalt launched a mentoring program – UBalt Connects -- focused on lower division transfer students. Over the past two years, 35-50 mentees each year were assigned a mentor who will meet with them in a mentoring relationship to complement intrusive academic advising and ensure students are on track for timely degree completion. Mentors from around the institution help support our students.
20. **Career and Internship Center's (CIC) Intrusive Outreach Approach:** At the start of the pandemic, the CIC initiated outreach calls to two distinct student populations. The CIC reached out to new students at the University to inquire how their semester was going and also to remind them of the available resources in the CIC. CIC staff also reached out to graduating seniors to inquire about their career plans and to encourage them to take advantage of the resources in the CIC. This practice has continued over the past two years. Also, the CIC continues to work with employers and non-profit agencies to proactively convert unpaid internships to paid opportunities to benefit our students.
21. **Implementation of the LiveChat feature in the Office of Student Support (OSS):** In spring 2022, the OSS implemented this feature to allow students a nearly real-time opportunity to ask questions, connect with resources, and express concerns. OSS team members staff the LiveChat by responding to questions and concerns as soon as they are received. Students simply go to the OSS website and click on the LiveChat icon to engage with a staff member who can assist them.
22. **Convening the Student Support Campus Planning Meeting:** At the start of the pandemic, a group of student service unit leads was convened. The group has met bi-weekly for nearly over the past several years to discuss emerging student needs related to the transition to the virtual environment; service gaps; and areas in need of improvement. Students serve on this task force and often share their experiences. This allows our team to best understand the student experience and modify our services and communications in order to positively impact student success. (Note: This practice may end given where we are in the pandemic/endemic. Other groups are also taking on some of this work.)
23. **The Division of Student Success & Support Services developed a Basic Needs Virtual Resource Center in fall 2022.** The focus of the Basic Needs Virtual Resource Center is to provide every student with real support as they pursue their educational goals. The most important thing we want students visiting this site to know is that there are resources and services available to help meet their needs and that there is a team of individuals committed to providing this support. Important resources such as the Campus Pantry, Career Closet, the UB Student Emergency Assistance Fund, and the Student Assistance Program are featured. The virtual resource center can be accessed here: <http://www.ubalt.edu/basic-needs/>.
24. **Enhanced Integration Between the UBalt CARE Team and Early Alert:** The CARE Team is UBalt's cross-divisional team that focuses on students of concern. The important and sensitive work of this group has been aligned to the University's Early Alert system which is now part of all undergraduate courses. This integration allows for a more holistic approach to working with students who find themselves in difficult personal and academic situations.

## University of Maryland Global Campus

The following information for the *2022 Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal* includes three initiatives developed and partially or completely implemented since UMGC's last submission in 2021. These initiatives show evidence of increasing student success and/or appear to have significant potential for increasing student success in the future.

### 1. Re-Engage Program

Previously, UMGC's Student Affairs unit created a team of success coaches dedicated to re-engaging students who have stopped out for three or more consecutive terms. This Winback Team worked on solution-building with this population to identify a path to return, and a plan to succeed once they did return, with a goal of degree completion. In March 2022, the Re-Engage Team took over the Winback population. The team partnered each student with a success coach to work out a plan for degree completion. The pilot phase of the program led to over 500 of these students enrolling for the Summer 2022 term, and the hiring of 7 additional full-time staff for the Re-Engage Team.

This team has partnered with UMGC's European and Asian Divisions to assist with outreach via call and email campaigns. Once contact is made with a student, a success coach works with the student to co-create a plan for degree completion. On average, 30% of the calls made by this team have led to registration. The team averages over 1,500 calls per day.

In June 2022, another component was added to address student communications. Because students who take a break from enrollment are increasingly less likely to return to UMGC as the break gets longer, re-engaging this population as soon as possible is critical. Consequently, UMGC's Student Affairs unit implemented a multi-pronged student re-engagement strategy by creating targeted reengagement messaging, using high touch enrollment and advising services that focus on returning students, providing an eventual handoff to UMGC success coaches, and hiring specialized, temporary coaches as an extra effort to re-engage segments of the stop-out population.

### 2. Multi-Term Registration

The Multi-Term Registration Project (MTR) started in February of 2021 with an overall purpose of allowing UMGC students to enroll in online stateside classes up to one year in advance. The MTR model is designed to address barriers to retention and success identified in a study conducted in 2018 at UMGC. Specific benefits of MTR include more accurate degree planning, more time to fully secure a means of payment or financial support, avoiding last-minute issues that arise from registering right before classes begin, a longer-term vision of an educational path, and increased commitment and momentum toward degree completion.

MTR also creates an opportunity for success coaches to shift from a transactional to a transformational model of advising. When students enroll in multiple future terms, coaches can focus time and interactions beyond degree planning and registration. This enables coaches to identify the root cause of any problems (i.e., financial burdens, time management, etc.) before

they impede a student's academic progress. MTR creates more opportunities for coaches to understand a student's goals and challenges, and this can increase the likelihood of successful degree completion.

### **3. School of Cybersecurity and Information Technology Initiatives**

The School of Cybersecurity and Information Technology created a Course Success Analysis Worksheet to improve the quality of courses within its programs. This process involves a deep dive into every aspect (content, curriculum design, and quality of instruction) of classes which do not meet established benchmarks for course success. For FY 2021-22, the focus was on 11 high enrollment courses where the success rate did not meet desired benchmarks. At the conclusion of the process, follow-up analysis indicated that in 7 of them, the desired benchmarks were exceeded. Work is ongoing to determine why improvement was not obtained in the remaining four courses.

Micro-credentials such as industry-standard IT certifications can be a key factor in promoting the success of students as they seek better jobs, but these micro-credentials can also help students progress with their educational goals. The School of Cybersecurity and Information Technology has increased course alignment to industry certifications from 32 alignments to 54 alignments. Students who have any of these unexpired certifications can receive credit for the classes that align to those certifications. This approach provides students yet another pathway for obtaining the credits needed to graduate from a program and thereby improves access to degrees.

In addition, the School has continued to evaluate trainings offered by leading vendors such as Google, SkillSoft, Microsoft, Springboard, Revature, etc. and award credit for those trainings towards a degree program. These credit pathways also allow students to progress more quickly towards a degree at UMGC.

## **Updates to the MHEC "Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal" Report Morgan State University**

Morgan State University has increased its graduation rate from 28% (2005 cohort) to 46% (2016 cohort), the highest graduation rate on record for Morgan State University. This record achievement is directly correlated to Morgan's ongoing student success and retention efforts largely housed under the Division of Enrollment Management and Student Success (EMASS). Beginning with the Fall 2010 freshman cohort, Morgan has achieved retention rates above 70% for eleven consecutive years.

Morgan State University has a well-established approach to enhancing student success, including: a six-week summer bridge program for students with demonstrated potential but whose SAT scores and/or GPA do not meet the University's criteria for admission (CASA Academy); a summer bridge program for incoming freshmen majoring in Engineering (PACE) designed to increase their likelihood of successful and timely degree completion; an early alert and response system for faculty to alert students and advisors to students showing signs of being in jeopardy (Starfish); Degree Works, the University's degree auditing system; a Tutoring Center that offers one-on-one peer tutoring; and a mandatory four day summer freshman orientation experience (Access Orientation). Two years ago, EMASS launched the Academic Advising Hotline, a resource to help students resolve academic advising concerns or request additional assistance for academic advising matters. The EMASS team manages the Academic Advising Hotline website and forms and responds to all of the Academic Advising Hotline emails sent to [advising@morgan.edu](mailto:advising@morgan.edu). The Advising Hotline serves as a resource for students who do not know who their advisor is, are unable to reach their advisor, or who have a complaint or concern about their advisor.

The Office of Student Success and Retention (OSSR) has implemented aggressive and comprehensive tracking of the six-year graduation cohort, the cohort that determines our graduation rate. The 5th and 6th year cohort students with 85+ earned credits are communicated with throughout the year. The course schedules of the students who are registered for each Fall semester with 85+ earned credits are compared to what is in Degree Works and a report is sent to the Registrar with any and all concerns including missing courses and outstanding requirements; notes from the OSSR are kept in a Google document in reference to any concerns. The six-year cohort students with 85+ earned credits who are not registered in Fall courses are asked to immediately register for courses before late registration ends; notes are left in the Google document in reference to why students had not yet registered for classes. The OSSR fully vets the financial clearance list to work exclusively with 5th and 6th year cohort students with 85+ earned credits to make sure that students' bills are cleared before the last day to attend classes without an excuse from the Registrar. The Graduation Cohort Coordinator in the OSSR reaches out to cohort students at the end of the 4th year, before their 5th year begins to ensure that students who don't finish in four years have two full academic years of additional support to help them graduate on-time in six years or less.

The Enrollment Management and Student Success (EMASS) division has continued with a 4th year of EAB Metrics Mapping. EAB Metrics Mapping utilizes the Advanced Search Filter, Saved Searches, Watch Lists, and Messaging in EAB Navigate to identify, contact, and monitor students in specific subgroups. EAB Metrics Mapping reports and nudges are now a standard component of the Morgan workflow every semester. EAB Advanced Filter saved searches and draft email communications have been created for students with low first semester GPAs, low cumulative GPAs, Pell-eligible students, students who earn fewer than 15 credits per semester, students who have not enrolled for the upcoming term, and students who are eligible for specific scholarship opportunities. Dozens of EAB campaigns are sent to students to encourage them to register for the upcoming semester, especially to students who had stopped-out for one or more semesters. One of our signature innovations is the Reclamation Project, in which we invite students back who left the University in good academic standing (2.0 GPA or better) and earned at least 90 credits to return in their 5th or 6th academic year to finish Morgan "on-time" in six consecutive years or less. These initiatives are aligned with the State higher education goals of ensuring equitable access and promoting student success.

Another best practice is that all first-year freshman students at Morgan are advised by professional staff from the Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) and the Office of Student Success and Retention (OSSR). Holds are placed on every first-year student's account preventing them from making changes to their course schedule without consulting with an academic advisor first. Once first-year students have earned at least 24 credits with a 2.0 minimum cumulative GPA and a declared major, they are reassigned to their departmental/faculty advisor for the balance of their matriculation. All of the notes from first-year advising meetings are saved in Starfish for faculty advisors to refer back to in subsequent advising meetings. Every student has an online advising folder through Starfish.

Morgan State University continues to provide higher education access to a segment of the population which faces financial constraints and challenges which impact our retention and graduation rates. Fifty-three percent of our undergraduates are Pell recipients. However, Pell grants only cover about a third of the cost of attendance for an in-state student. The six-year graduation rate for Pell recipients has increased from 32% in 2017 to 41% in 2022. The University has begun new initiatives to increase the success of our Pell recipients. Special campaigns are undertaken to identify Pell recipients who have not completed their financial aid applications, or registered early for the next term, or have not registered for 15 credits. These targeted initiatives should continue to have a positive effect on Pell recipients' success.

The Morgan State University "50 by 25" Initiative: Getting More Students Across the Finish Line, a campaign to increase Morgan's graduation rate to 50% by the year 2025 has continued into its 5<sup>th</sup> year with emphasis on three central themes: 1) Advising and Degree Planning; 2) Faculty Development and Course Redesign; and 3) Beyond Financial Aid (BFA). The "50 by 25" Campaign includes half-day, check-in meetings once a semester for the cabinet, deans, chairs, and senior administrators to report-out on their progress. The Beyond Financial Aid (BFA) Work Group reached all three of its established goals: 1) unveiling of BFA campaign logo, slogan and theme; 2) development of a comprehensive BFA website; and 3) publication of the BFA print brochure for campus-wide dissemination. In November 2019, more than 1,500 print brochures were distributed to offices campus-wide with an overview letter explaining the BFA initiative. The BFA website can be viewed at <https://www.morgan.edu/bfa>.

Morgan's Second Year Experience (SYE) program is designed to engage all students returning to Morgan for the second year in out-of-classroom (experiential) learning opportunities to enhance their career readiness skills. By engaging in experiential learning opportunities such as internships, job shadowing, campus to career field trips, study abroad, etc. students are able to acquire the soft skills employers desire. Second-year students are asked to engage in at least one out-of-classroom activity/experience. This activity can include a study abroad trip, volunteer work with community partners, an internship through the Center for Career Development, or a campus to career field trip during the fall, winter, spring, or summer of students' second year. The SYE aims to engage Morgan students in a high impact experiences as early as possible in an effort to increase their retention and completion rates.

Beginning in 2020, out of concern for the unknown consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on enrollment, several rounds of emails to students were added to the withdrawal process for students who request to withdraw from their classes. The emails offer financial support and explain various academic support options for their matriculation. Many students respond to the emails with detailed reasons for their decision to withdraw including mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety, medical conditions such as COVID, death and/or sickness of family members, financial hardship, housing insecurity, conflicts with work schedules, and problems with remote learning. Morgan has been able to help a good number of students to stay enrolled as a result of the changes to the withdrawal process; the new process will continue indefinitely.

The University has also continued sending its Morgan Supports You email to all students periodically through the year. Launched in summer 2020, the Morgan Supports You email provides brief descriptions and weblinks to the many financial, mental health, academic, and career resources available to support students.

## **Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal**

St. Mary's College of Maryland  
September 2022

St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) appreciates this opportunity to update MHEC on its initiatives that are likely to assist in reaching the State's 2025 completion goal.

### ***Effective Initiatives***

#### 1. Milestone Analysis

Students who successfully persist to graduation at St. Mary's College of Maryland often share some common academic experiences (milestones) during their four years. Examination of achievement of these milestones can be used to identify and provide support for students who are at risk for falling behind on degree completion.

The SMCM Retention Strategies Committee undertook a comprehensive analysis of potential academic milestones among first-time first-year students at SMCM. The analysis revealed that the milestones that have the strongest positive impact on student retention and completion are:

- Attempting at least 16 credits per semester in the first year (16 credits per semester puts students on track to earn the 128 credits required to graduate at SMCM)
- Earning at least 32 total credits in the first year
- Declaring a major by the end of the sophomore year

Below are the quantitative impacts that each milestone has on retention and graduation for various groups of students. The impact is the difference in retention or graduation rates, in percentage points, between those who did and did not complete the milestone. For example, students who did not attempt 16 credits in the first semester were retained to the second year at an average of 81%, while students who did attempt 16 credits were retained at 87%, a difference (Impact) of 6%.

Milestone	Impact (Difference in percentage points)		
	Second Year Retention	Four-Year Graduation	Six-Year Graduation
Attempted 16 credits in first semester	6%	17%	10%
Attempted 16 credits in second semester	7%	25%	18%
Earned 32 total credits in first year	18%	35%	27%
Declared major by end of second year	--	16%	9%

These milestones have even greater impact upon persistence of students from historically underrepresented and/or marginalized groups, such as students of color, first generation students, and low-income students.

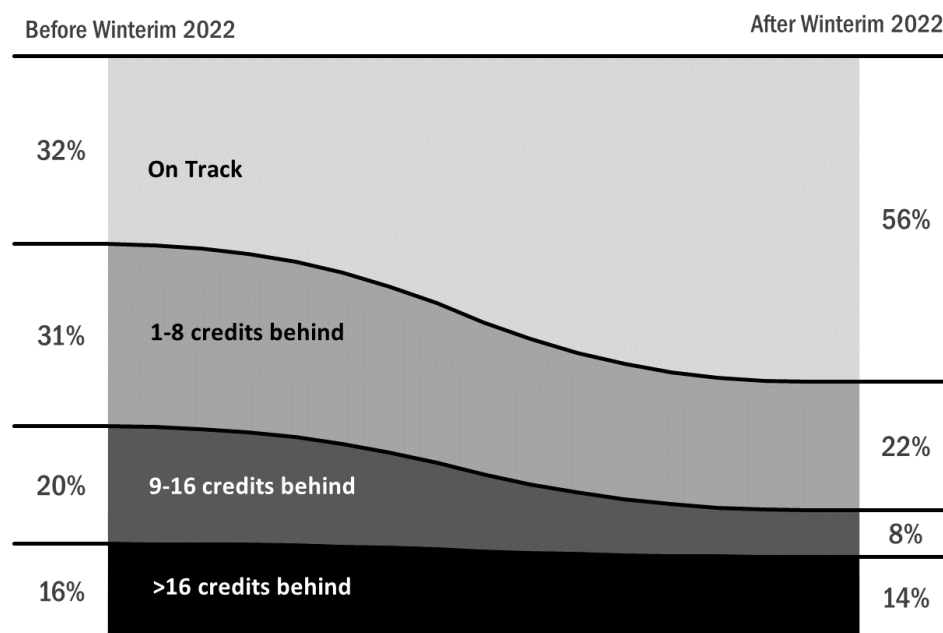
Once these milestones were identified, they were shared broadly with faculty and staff, along with encouragement to incorporate discussion of the milestones into advising meetings with students. Faculty, staff and students are reminded regularly, via email messages, announcements, town hall meetings, and other communication methods, of the importance of meeting these milestones, particularly attempting 16 credits each semester to facilitate timely degree completion. Each semester, academic advisors receive a comprehensive data set on each of their advisees that includes information on their progress toward meeting each milestone.

2. Winterim Term and Online Courses

The pandemic-induced shift to remote instruction in 2020, while sudden and disruptive, provided significant opportunities to increase access that have become a permanent part of the College's academic offerings. Online instruction, particularly between standard academic terms, allows the College to aid students in making timely degree progression.

Remote courses have now been offered for two winter (Winterim) terms and three summer terms. The Winterim term in particular provides an excellent opportunity for students to catch up on credits and fulfill missing requirements, due to its condensed timeline (courses are three or four weeks in duration) and its remote nature. Analysis of students who enrolled in Winterim supports its success in advancing degree completion. As shown below, the percentage of students who were on track for graduation increased after Winterim 2022, while the percentages of students up to 16 credits behind decreased. Similar results were seen after Winterim 2021.

## Progress Toward 4-Year Graduation



Although SMCM remains a heavily residential campus dedicated to the face-to-face instructional experience, we will continue offering online courses during off-session terms (Winterim and Summer) to assist students in catching up on credits and completing their degree.

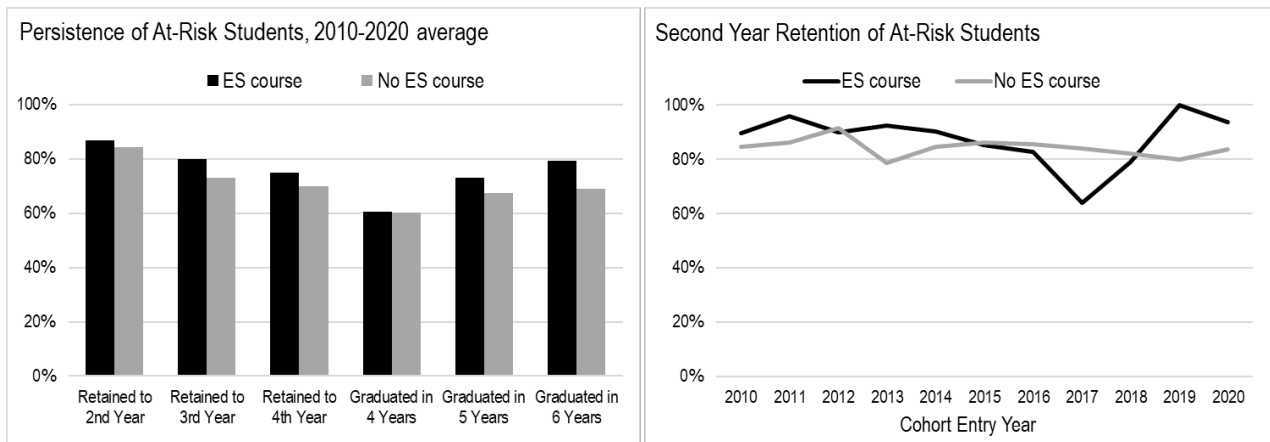
### 3. Emerging Scholars Courses

Each of the traditional STEM fields at SMCM (mathematics, computer science, biology, chemistry/biochemistry, physics) has established Emerging Scholars (ES) courses to enhance and support student performance in their gateway courses. Students from one or more historically underrepresented and/or marginalized groups (including African-American, Latinx, first generation, and low-income students) are invited to participate in the 1-credit courses, which typically consist of evening problem-solving seminars to complement and extend the regular course. Social activities also help students create social networks that support their interests in STEM fields. Anecdotally, the ES courses foster supportive social relationships and build cohorts that enhance students' experiences not only in the linked introductory courses, but which transfer to other upper-level and elective courses as well.

Examination of outcomes among students enrolled in ES courses supports their effectiveness, particularly for students from one or more underrepresented groups as described above. Below, persistence data from all at-risk first-year students enrolled in at least 2 STEM course credits in their first year is shown (left graph). Over a 10-year period, students from one or more



historically underrepresented and/or marginalized group who enrolled in an ES course in their first year have been retained at higher rates than comparable students not enrolled in an ES course. These effects appear to be fairly long-lasting as seen in the positive impacts on five-year and six-year graduation rates. The effect on four-year graduation is less clear. However, as shown below on the right, second-year retention rates among ES students decreased for the 2016-2018 cohorts but have rebounded strongly in the last few years, suggesting that these upcoming cohorts are more likely to successfully complete their degrees.



***Discontinued Initiatives***

We have not discontinued any initiatives previously identified as contributing toward the State’s completion goal. All of the activities and strategies described in SMCM’s last two full reports (2015 and 2021) are still active.

***Comments on SMCM Degree Targets***

We thank MHEC for resetting our degree targets last year and do not have any further comments.

## **AY 22 Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal**

Goucher College is committed to student success, and to this end, the college has implemented initiatives aimed at improving the completion rate of undergraduate students. Described below are several programs that have improved the percentage of students re-enrolling and graduating from Goucher College.

### **The Launch Network**

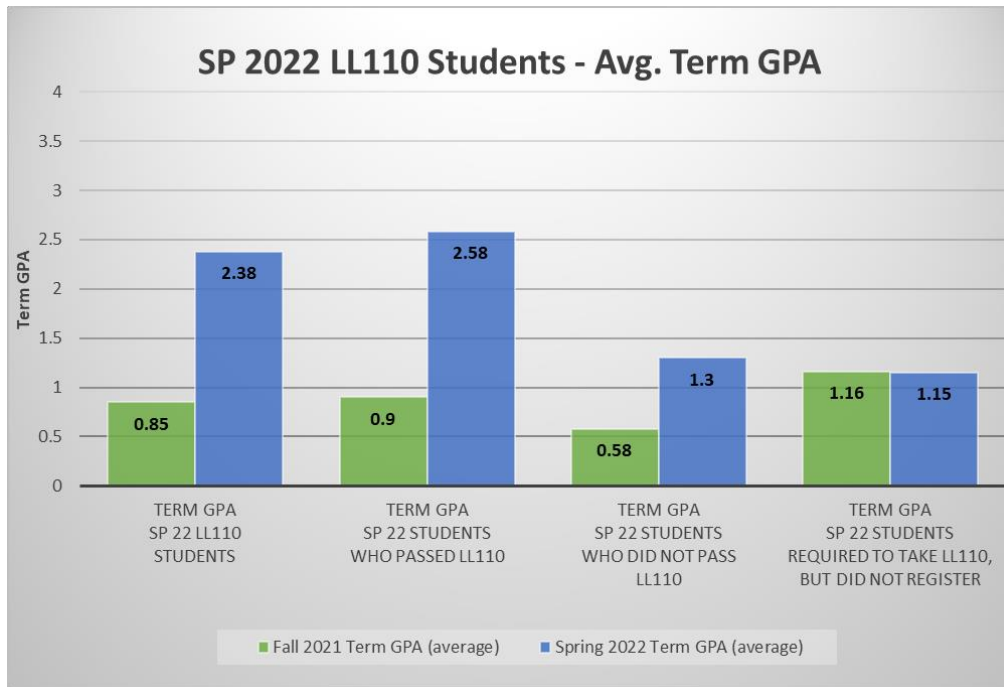
The LAUNCH Network is designed to offer historically underrepresented Goucher-bound students, e.g., Pell Grant eligible and first-generation students, the support services, skills development, and community building opportunities that will contribute to their success as a student and their progress toward earning a degree. LAUNCH is a cohort-based, integrated, four-year program that begins two weeks before the fall semester in the first year. In the summer program, students have an opportunity to connect with campus resources, to learn methods and best practices in study skills and time management, to complete college-level writing and math mini-courses, and to learn about the Goucher curriculum.

Assessments of the impact of the Launch Network on student success show that persistence rates are higher among students who participated in the program than a similar group of students who did not participate. In addition, those students who participated had higher cumulative GPAs than those who did not participate in the program.

### **Learn-to-Learn Course for Students on Probation**

Students placed on probation are required to enroll in a 2-credit Learn-to-Learn course the following semester. Learning specialists in our academic center for excellence administer the program and teach the course. In the course, students practice cognitive-based study strategies and informed decision making to support their academic success and personal growth. Students learn essential skills for success in college and apply what they learn to their other classes. As part of the course, students are asked to craft a “statement of learning philosophy” that will serve as a compass for their future academic work.

As shown in the table below, preliminary assessment data indicates the course has a positive impact on grade point average for students who successfully completed the course. Even among students who did not pass the course, there is a marginal improvement in their grade point average compared to no change in GPA for those students who did not take the course.



## Student Success Teams

As part of The Goucher Edge, our distinctive approach to undergraduate education, every student at Goucher is assigned a success team that includes a success advisor, a career advisor, a first-year mentor, and beginning sophomore year, a global education advisor and a faculty advisor within the major. Each member of the success team guides the student through the milestones associated with their academic journey.

Goucher's Success Advisors assist students with academic planning and navigating the resources and expectations that accompany being a successful student. The role of the success advisor is to help students identify their passions, goals, and interests and to coach students in developing and deepening their academic life skills. Success advisors also support their advisees when facing academic, financial, or personal challenges, making referrals as appropriate, and engaging in ongoing contact with faculty and staff as needed.

## Registration Follow-up

The Office of Retention & Student Success has a process in place for following up with all students who are eligible to register but do not complete this process during the designated registration period. This process involves success advisors (who are professional staff) as well as faculty advisors, email reminders, and special “alerts” set up within our student success software. The Office of Retention & Student Success problem-solves for various “holds” that

might be on a student's record – particularly for billing holds. As part of our process, the Retention & Student Success Team meets with key personnel in Student Financial Services and reviews those students with billing holds.

This past semester, in the four-week period following the registration period, an additional 50 students registered, representing 32% of those who had not originally registered. Members of the Retention & Student Success team meet with personnel in Student Financial Services on a periodic basis to review a list of students with billing holds. At the beginning of the 2021-22 academic year, these two offices had identified several groups of students who would be eligible for COVID relief funding through the American Rescue Plan. As the year ended, the offices re-convened to assess student need and award unused monies to students with billing holds, assisting in their re-enrollment.

### **Expanded opportunities for near completers**

Several new developments at Goucher have expanded opportunities available for near completers as follows:

- Expanded course options during non-traditional terms such as in January, June, and July will provide near-completers an opportunity to finish a needed course or two at a reduced rate, and potentially online.
- A new relationship with Acadeum provides access to an expanded array of courses in an online environment.

Goucher will continue to assess these initiatives and to make adjustments to ensure the success of our students.

## **Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress toward the 55% Completion Goal**

Notre Dame of Maryland University's ("NDMU" or the "University") mission is to "educate leaders to transform the world." As a part of that mission, the University's student success initiatives focused on the retention and graduation of students are paramount.

NDMU's Trailblazers Program provides ongoing, essential support to help first-generation Women's College students be prepared for success in a college environment and earn their degrees. The Trailblazers program is focused on data supported retention and academic success initiatives, including programs on FAFSA completion and financial aid, financial planning, time management, academic planning, career services, etc. Year-after-year, Trailblazer participants demonstrate positive impacts from their participation in the program and these positive outcomes are seen in higher retention and higher graduation rates when compared to other first-generation students who do not opt into the program. For example, for the 2017 cohort, participating first-generation students retained at 70% compared to 55% for non-participants.

NDMU received a Title III Strengthening Institutions Program Grant via the U.S. Department of Education beginning October 1, 2019. NDMU has utilized the funds with a focus on student retention and completion. As a part of the grant, NDMU has developed and enhanced our internal data systems and reporting capacity, as well as implemented a student retention and engagement system, Navigate. The system provides students, advisors, and other offices a single portal and interface for student engagement, academic supports, advisement, retention related analytics, and more. This includes Early Alerts and flagging at risk students for interventions by student retention staff and other University offices.

In Fall 2021, the University opened a new Student Success center on campus to serve as a centralized location for student academic support. In addition to serving as a physical location for students to study individually or in small groups, the Student Success center provides peer tutoring and writing support on a variety of subjects. Student Success Center staff also host several face to face and online academic support workshops throughout the year on topics such as study skills, time management, overcoming procrastination, etc. The University is tracking student engagement with the Student Success Center to identify the impacts of the program.

In prior years, the University offered an "Academic Pathways" program for less academically prepared students to be provided with pre-enrollment and/or first semester academic supports. The program has undergone several iterations and also during this time the University went test-optional. As a part of the University's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, the University is reviewing the Academic Pathways program to identify best practices prior to reimplementing the program.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Greg FitzGerald, Chief of Staff, at (410) 532-5109 or [gfitzgerald@ndm.edu](mailto:gfitzgerald@ndm.edu).

### 2022 Report to the Maryland Higher Education Commission — September 20, 2022

Stevenson University supports and contributes to Maryland’s 2025 completion goal. Prior to 2021, the Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) submitted a report on behalf of its member institutions. Stevenson’s 2021 report provided a sampling of initiatives and practices underway in support of student success and degree completion. This 2022 report reviews three of our most effective initiatives tied to student success and two initiatives that showed little impact. Stevenson shares the State’s goal of expanding educational access and attainment for all Marylanders.

#### Initiatives that Proved Effective in Supporting Student Success

1. **Transfer Plans:** In order to facilitate seamless transfer to Stevenson, the University has more than 90 articulation agreements in place with Maryland Community Colleges. To support timely completion for transfer students, Stevenson has implemented *Transfer Plans* that enable students to see exactly which courses and how many credits they must take to earn their degree. The plan also provides a visual map depicting how students can obtain their Bachelor’s degree in four semesters.

Since the last reporting cycle, nine articulation agreements (6 renewals and 3 new) were ratified and 33 agreements are in-progress and 8 of them are final and ready for signatures. Nine of the expired agreements are with CCBC, a community college that is moving away from Articulations and will no longer do them. Instead, they are doing Dual Admission. Stevenson is in line to be one of the first private institutions to be considered for a Dual Admissions program with CCBC. Anne Arundel Community College is highlighting Stevenson as a ‘top’ transfer institution and has developed a featured Stevenson transfer web page with AACC/SU co-branding.

2. **Finish-in-Four Campaign:** Completion of an undergraduate degree in a timely manner contributes to reducing student loan debt and facilitates student progression to wage earning careers or to graduate/professional school. Stevenson’s Finish-In-Four Campaign introduces students to graduation requirements as well as opportunities to maximize their undergraduate education through “Design Your Degree” options at Stevenson. Students are encouraged to create a four-year graduation plan tailored to meet their academic needs and interests. This plan enables students to explore unique curricular options in their personal academic plan, including options to study abroad, add a minor, or prepare for graduate/professional school, and to graduate on time.

An important component of this campaign is the use of the Student Planning platform that allows students to plan out multiple semesters in advance so they can progress toward graduation. At the writing of this report, 95% of current students have planned at least one of their courses for future semesters. Combined with other similar strategies, the Finish in Four Campaign proved to be a successful initiative that resulted in steady increases in the 4-year graduation rate over the past 5 years.

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
51%	51%	58%	60%	61%

3. **Creation of a Foundational Studies Team:** The recently established Foundational Studies Team is charged with providing thought leadership in the area of support and intervention strategies for students in co-requisite and foundational math and English. Their task is to recommend and implement practical, evidence-based practices shown to be effective in promoting student learning. More precisely, the team works together to further develop and assess a portfolio of support and intervention strategies that foster student success in co-requisite and foundational English and Math courses.

In FY22, the Foundational Studies Team worked to evaluate the effectiveness of the current placement testing protocol, examined the enrollment trends and pass rates of credit-bearing math courses, and made recommendations on how to best support students in foundational coursework. One of the strategies to support students in this area is the ability to take co-requisite courses at Stevenson. This approach enrolls students in a credit-bearing parent course along with a supplemental course that provides additional support and guided practice to facilitate student success. Co-requisite courses are currently offered in mathematics to improve skills in specific content areas (quantitative reasoning, statistics, and college algebra). These co-requisite courses emphasize practical applications of concepts and skills that appear in the parent courses. Placement into co-requisite courses is determined using the ALEKS Math Placement Assessment.

For Math, students enrolled in co-requisite courses passed at similar or higher rates than those students who enrolled in the credit-bearing course without the co-requisite. These data highlight the impact of the co-requisite courses given that students with lower scores on the placement assessment are passing these courses at similar rates to those who scored high enough to place out of the co-requisite requirement.

	Course Only	Course with Co-Requisite
MATH 135	81%	78%
MATH 136	81%	85%
MATH 137	81%	89%

Based on the work of the Foundational Studies Team, Stevenson has implemented multiple new strategies to continue to support students in foundational coursework. Examples include integration of Study Strategies Tutoring into the First-Year Seminar course and the creation of a new 1-credit course, Strategies for Academic Success, to support the academic success of underprepared students. Evaluation of these new initiatives will be ongoing for FY23.

4. **The John L. Stasiak Academic Link Learning Center:** The Academic Link Learning Center serves the Stevenson University campus community with free and comprehensive academic services that enable students to optimize their learning potential and persist in their studies towards degree completion. This student-oriented center offers peer and professional content and writing tutoring in online and in-person formats. The Academic Link Learning Center holds a Level III International Tutor Training Program Certification (ITTPC) by College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). Tutoring services include one-to-one sessions as well as group peer support through Peer Assisted Learning (PAL). PAL provides targeted support for historically challenging courses in which upper-level students facilitate weekly collaborative learning sessions.

One of the new offerings piloted by the Academic Link in FY22 was the implementation of a new peer tutoring initiative called Study Strategies Tutoring (SST). During Spring Semester 2022, 20 students attended 33 SST sessions. Seven students attended multiple sessions. The most common reasons for seeking SST were a desire to learn new study techniques (n=9) and to better plan and organize assignments (n=7). Other reasons cited included improving focus and memory, procrastination, motivation, and test anxiety. Upon completion of their sessions, students were asked to complete an evaluation form where scores were high for both their satisfaction and feeling as though SST contributed to their academic success.

	Mean (0 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree)	Standard Deviation	N
I am satisfied with my tutoring experiences this semester	3.7	.48	10
Attending tutoring contributed to my academic success this semester	3.7	.48	9

In light of these results, the SST program is being expanded in FY23 and SST sessions are being integrated into the First-Year Seminar courses as well as First-Year residence hall programming.

### *Low Impact Initiatives*

1. **Outreach to Students on Hiatus:** Stevenson University uses an official “Withdrawal from the University” form to understand if students intend to withdraw permanently from the university or to return in a future semester. If students indicate that they plan to return after a hiatus, Stevenson staff members reach out to students with instructions on how to reactivate their programs and refer them to an advisor or department chair to register for classes.

In FY22, 80 students requested a hiatus from the university (34 Fall, 46 Spring). Individual outreach to each of these students by the Center for Student Success enabled us to provide tailored academic advising to support students in their return to the university. However, the response rate to our outreach emails was low and of those students who did respond, fewer than 25% reactivated their programs at the time of outreach.

2. **Student Success Workshops:** The Center for Student Success offers a number of sessions during August to help new students 'jumpstart their semester' prior to beginning classes. Topics include, but are not limited to: How to Prepare for Your First Week of Classes, Syllabus Hacks, Introduction to Pre-Medicine, and more. Both live and pre-recorded webinars are available for students. During the fall semester, the Center for Student Success hosts ‘Registration Preparation Week’ to assist all new students (freshmen and transfer) with course registration for the spring semester. Sessions hosted during this time include information on changing your major, navigating Student Planning, declaring minors/professional minors, and long-term planning for students.

Despite the assumed need for these specialized programs, they were poorly attended, which greatly reduced their potential impact. For example, the Gearing Up for Fall workshop was specifically designed for first-year athletes during their fall pre-season to assist them in preparing for the semester and setting themselves up for success. The program was offered as an option to the coaches of all sports teams, and only one sport participated. Similarly, workshops offered by the Office of Academic Support were poorly attended. We have had far greater success with



individualized outreach and one-on-one appointments. For example, during our drop-in clinic for walk-in advising during add/drop week, our advising team conducted 278 individual appointments.

Stevenson University remains committed to meeting all students where they are and supporting them in their efforts to earn a degree. We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of our student support initiatives.