

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MAINE MARITIME ACADEMY

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 14, 2015

The Honorable Brian Langley, Chair
The Honorable Victoria Kornfield, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
127th Maine Legislature
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Senator Langley, Representative Kornfield, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

Maine Maritime Academy is providing the attached report on first generation college students' retention and graduation rates and programming in response to Public Law Chapter 166 (126th Maine Legislature), "An Act Regarding Enrollment and Graduation Rates of First-Generation Higher Education Students."

To meet the requirements of the legislation, representatives of Maine Maritime Academy (MMA) worked with colleagues from the University of Maine System (UMS) and the Maine Community College System (MCCS) to coordinate data collection and standardize reporting across all the Maine campuses. The group worked first to define "first generation," and this definition is included in the attached report. Next, the group developed a standardized process for data collection and template for data submission. The working group utilized a standardized procedure of data collection during the admission process for the first year class enrolling in fall of 2014. Data collected previously at MMA regarding first-generation students utilized a definition of first-generation as prescribed by the MELMAC Education Foundation, which specified use of the Federal TRIO Program's definition of a first generation student as a student with at least one custodial parent who did not attain a baccalaureate degree.

Maine Maritime Academy is proud of its high retention and graduation rates for all students and especially for first generation college students who have long been a large contingent of our student body. We are very supportive of this act as we are fully aware of the long-term impact of engaging more first-generation Maine students in the pursuit of higher education. Our commitment to the success of our students is one of the key reasons why Maine Maritime Academy was recently been ranked by MONEY MAGAZINE as the Number 1 public college in America and the 4th best for returning value on the tuition investment. We are very proud of our accomplishments and the very high quality of the educational experience we provide our students

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As a valuable part of the State's higher education partnership, Maine Maritime Academy looks forward to working with you, other members of the

Legislature and our colleagues in other state educational institutions to ensure that we have adequate resources to enable Maine students to be as successful as possible in their academic pursuits, in their careers and in their lives.

I would be pleased to address any questions or suggestions you have upon reviewing this report.

Sincerely,



Dr. William J. Brennan

President

Maine Maritime Academy

Report on Status of First-Generation Students in response to Public Law Chapter 166 (126th Maine Legislature)

Public Law Chapter 166 requires Maine Maritime Academy (hereafter referred to as MMA) and the other public higher education institutions in Maine to provide the following information about first-generation college students by January 15th of each year:

1. Data regarding enrollment of first-generation college students and educational outcomes, including graduation rates for first-generation students compared to other students;
2. A summary of strategies used and activities undertaken to increase enrollment and graduation rates of first-generation college students and any available data indicating the effect of those strategies and activities; and
3. Plans for or recommendations for new strategies or actions designed to increase enrollment and graduation rates of first-generation college students.

Actions taken

July 2013- November 2013- representatives from MMA joined with representatives from the University of Maine System (UMS) and the Maine Community College System (MCCS) to review the legislation and reporting requirements and establish guidelines for consistent collection and reporting of enrollment and outcomes data on first-generation college students. Key decision points: a standardized definition of first-generation college student and clarification that graduation rates are calculated at the 150% standard, which in the case of MMA means graduation within six years (12 semesters) of enrollment.

November 2013 – application materials reviewed to confirm collection of demographic data regarding first generation status of applicants and matriculated students. NOTE: such data are self-reported and presume applicants have accurate knowledge of their parents’ educational achievements. A snapshot of how these data are collected in the on-line application is included in Appendix B.

Fall 2014 – demographic data collected on parental education achievement for the incoming first-year class. These data are available in the table in Appendix A.

Definition

First generation college student is defined as (1) A student neither of whose natural or adoptive parents received a baccalaureate degree; (2) A student who, prior to the age of 18, regularly resided with and received support from only one parent and whose supporting parent did not receive a baccalaureate degree; or (3) An individual who, prior to the age of 18, did not regularly reside with or receive support from a natural or an adoptive parent.

Data collection

Maine Maritime Academy has collected self-reported data regarding first-generation status of enrolled students since the fall of 2008. However, these data were collected based on a broader definition of first generation student than the one described above and that will be used for this report in future years.

The five year average (Fall of 2008-Fall of 2012) percentage of students who had a custodial parent who did not attain a baccalaureate degree* was **53%** of the overall first-time, full-time baccalaureate student population. However, in fall of 2014, the percentage increased to 61% of the incoming class.

The six year graduation rate of first generation students averaged **65.2 %** over the last five cohorts as compared to the overall six year graduation rate of 65.6% for the same period.

Beginning with the class entering MMA in the fall of 2014, data were collected to prepare this report using the data forms in Appendix B and presented in the format displayed in Appendix A. These forms were developed with the working group to provide consistent and comparable data. Therefore, while enrollment percentages are available to include in the report beginning in January 2015, six year graduation rates will not be available until January of 2021.

*Using previous definition of first generation student as one who has a custodial parent(s) who did not attain a baccalaureate degree

Strategies

Marketing and Recruitment

The Admissions staff at MMA aggressively target Maine high school students to educate them about the opportunities offered at MMA. One strategy is high school visits – including visits in fall of 2014 to 105 of the 143 public high schools in Maine. MMA Admissions also participated in New England regional college fairs (at the campuses of USM, UM-A, UMaine, UMM and UMPI) to which high schools based interested students. These strategies bring MMA to the high school students, rather than requiring students to travel to our campus in Castine. This helps first generation students, whose parents may not have the resources or the knowledge to plan travel for college tours. The Admissions staff also offer a program titled ADMISSIONS 101 to interested high schools; presented to high school sophomores, the program introduces students to the admissions process for all colleges. Role playing where the students

serve as the admissions staff for a fictional college and learn what is most helpful in the application process is a feature of this program.

In cooperation with Maine's U.S. congressional representatives, MMA coordinated and hosted two Service Academy nights, fall 2014 in Portland and spring 2014 in Bangor. This program has grown over the past few years and we will continue to conduct this highly informative program. We anticipate this program will continue to attract first generation students who are exploring military service options to fund higher education.

The MMA Discovery Voyage college aspirations program also helps to stimulate students' educational and career aspirations. The highly interactive program challenges students to apply what they are learning in a choice of educational activities. Geared toward math and science, the program offers students a tour of college classes and laboratories, a view of campus life and a meal in the college dining facility. Students participate in activities in the departments of engineering, international business, marine transportation, and ocean studies. All of this is offered at no cost to the student or the sending school. Additionally, a transportation subsidy is possible for schools whose students would not otherwise be able to participate. Besides bringing high school math and science students to campus, the Discovery Voyage program attracts middle school students, Junior ROTC Units, Sea Cadets and other special interest groups such as the Acadia Institute of Oceanography. While not targeted specifically at first generation students, by bringing entire classes and groups to campus and eliminating obstacles such as travel and costs, high school students without parents with college degrees have equal opportunities to experiences as their peers with college-educated parents. The Ellsworth American recently featured the program in this story: <http://www.ellsworthamerican.com/maine-news/waterfront/coastal-high-school-students-talk-green-crab-solutions>

The Academy launched a new website this fall designed to inform prospective students about the many programs at the Academy and to streamline the admissions process. Again, while not aimed solely at first-generation students, the new design provides a more transparent and user-friendly website and application process. This can be of great importance to prospective students whose parents do not have the knowledge to guide them through the college application process.

Financial Literacy Program

For the second year in a row, MMA partnered with a local bank, Camden National, and the Finance Authority of Maine to pilot a financial literacy program for both new and senior students. The first year student program consisted of a required lecture for all entering students and was particularly valuable to first generation college students. Content focused on these topics: credit card debt, the value of a degree, and how student loans have a high rate of return in terms of increased earning potential, and the cost of repaying student loan debt if a student fails to complete their degree. The program was well-received by students once again. The program for senior students explores transitional financial issues such as paying for housing, loan repayment, and a renewed focus on the dangers of credit card debt. MMA is moving toward a partnership with Ever-Fi to institute Transit (an on-line financial literacy

course) starting in the Spring of 2015 for sophomores as well as any others who wish to participate. MMA is examining various options to provide online financial literacy options that will resonate with older students.

Orientation Programs

Due to the unique nature of the MMA student experience, we design orientation programs for both students and their parents/guardians that will give all participants the necessary knowledge to be successful at our unique maritime college. No assumptions are made that the student already has expectations or advice from parents who attended college. In fact, we work to “break down” some of the misconceptions parents may have if they had a traditional college experience.

A key element of the orientation program is a workshop on financial aid and registrar services, as these services are often difficult for first generation students to negotiate without the guidance of parents. Student orientation leaders, assigned to each small group of new students, encourage questions and share key strategies for learning the way around campus and administrative processes from their perspectives. Academic support sessions also emphasize the differences between structured high school instruction and the expectations of college professors.

We designed our parent program to help parents transition from the role of primary decision-maker and caregiver to that of a coach as their students’ progress towards independence. As such, the orientation program is designed to give parents and guardians the tools they need to advise and help their students learn to problem-solve, resolve issues, and make informed choices. For parents who are not college graduates, these programs are particularly informative. Because some first generation students’ parents or guardians do not attend orientation, we make sure any information presented to parents is also presented to students.

To help our students acclimate to the college social environment, they are given both structured and open-ended bonding opportunities. Depending on their assignment as a regimental or independent student, they also receive an opportunity to go on an area trip with one another and relax before the fall term begins. New students in the regiment of midshipmen are required to attend Regimental Preparatory Training prior to the start of the Academic Year. This training program helps new students transition into the regiment and build connections. Independent students (those not in regimental majors) participate in a one-day “INDEX” experience designed to help this group bond and make connections within the class.

Social Media

Social media is an important tool to help new students and their families with the transition to MMA. A Facebook page for parents, hosted by the MMA Parent Association, is a heavily used page where new parents ask the experts (experienced parents) many questions. Administrators monitor the page and provide information where needed. Our admissions staff invite newly admitted students to join a closed Facebook group for their class where student leaders and administrators respond to a plethora of

questions. This helps students in the entering class to make connections and form a group identity prior to the start of orientation. A new admissions counselor has the role of Admissions Social Media Coordinator for MMA. She is working with the campus and communication department to design a social media dashboard to help prospective students, including non-traditional students, learn more about the MMA experience.

Transition Series

MMA hosts a fall Transition Lecture Series, with topics and speakers targeting their message to new students, including those whose parents have not attended college. These lectures are timed to coincide with key decision points for students in terms of behaviors and choices.

Topics for fall of 2014 included:

Antonio Neves: "#BeLessAwkward":
How to use social media appropriately to communicate.

Sex Signals: Sex Signals deals with the issues of social pressures, gender stereotypes, unrealistic fantasies, and false preconceptions all contribute to tensions related to dating and sex. Using semi-improvisational scenes and audience participation, students are asked to explore these issues and make decisions. This program also helps the Academy meet its Title IX obligations for prevention of sexual assault on campus.

DUI Simulator: The DUI Simulator uses an actual vehicle—the student drives onto a computer-controlled road simulator with the help of quickly-attached simulator sensors. Program helps students understand how quickly their driving is impaired by alcohol.

C.L. Lindsay: "Computing & The Law" C.L. is a nationally recognized expert and leader in the field of student rights and academic freedom. He also authored a book on legal problems at colleges: *The College Student's Guide to the Law*.

Wendi Fox: "CELEBRATE SAFE" Celebrate Safe is centered around social safety on college campuses and based on the life lessons of former high-risk drinker Wendi Fox.

Future Plans and Recommendations

Statewide plan

MMA partnered with MCCS, UMS, and the Maine DOE to develop a five-year statewide education and workforce development and plan, as requested by the Joint Select Committee on Maine's Workforce and Economic Future. While not explicitly mentioned as a population, first generation students will benefit from the plan's college recruitment and retention strategies. Key components of this plan of special benefit to first generation students include efforts designed to interest more K-12 students in STEM fields and strategies to increase college persistence and graduation rates.

Maine Maritime Academy Strategic Plan

MMA's Board of Trustees approved a new strategic plan for the Academy in 2014. One of the four goals is to "elevate MMA's profile and stature through thoughtful and effective outreach, brand and communications strategies." An indirect consequence of this goal will be to ensure that all high school students in Maine, regardless of their parents' educational background, will be informed of the opportunities available to them at MMA.

MELMAC Grant - 5/50 Project

MMA received a grant from the MELMAC Education Foundation in fall 2013 to fund an identification and early intervention strategy for at-risk, first-year undergraduate students at MMA, titled the 5/50 Project. The two-year initiative leverages current campus-wide interest in student retention and our ongoing efforts aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates. At MMA, the students with the greatest attrition risk are on "academic probation," as defined by poor academic performance. Their six-year graduation rates, which average 34.8%, are about half those of their entering cohorts. The low rates stand in stark contrast to those of virtually every other demographic (e.g. Pell recipients, first generation, ethnic minority, students with learning disabilities) at MMA. As part of the project, we administered the College Success Inventory (CSI-B) instrument from Noel Levitz to all members of the incoming class and then analyzed patterns among students on academic probation as related to risk factors identified by the CSI-B.

The 5/50 Project aims to increase MMA's overall graduation rate by five percentage points, to about 70%, by increasing the graduation rate of students on academic probation by 15 percentage points, to about 50%. Strategies to attain this goal include:

- Improving the Performance Fostering and Development (PFD) program. Each student on probation is assigned a PFD advisor who meets weekly with him/her to review goals, develop strategies for success, and track progress. Training for the PFD advisor now includes utilizing materials from the Gardner Institute for the First Year Experience.
- Analyzing data gathered via administration of the College Student Inventory (CSI) instrument to all first-year students, to identify risk factors specific to new students at MMA .
- Building statistical models using risk factors highly correlated to student achievement, in order to predict student success upon matriculation.
- Using information learned from the models to design an effective, early intervention program. The program, now under development, will likely utilize Noel Levitz CSI and First Year Experience retention materials.

We began analyzing data with the fall of 2013 entering class and the following findings regarding first-generation students:

- First generation students are under-represented among students on academic probation; only 4 out of 19 students (21%) on probation (spring '14 + fall '14) from this cohort self-reported as

first-generation in the CSI-B. In contrast, first generation students initially comprised 33% of this entering class, also as self-reported on the survey.

- MMA may lose first generation students disproportionately both in the first few weeks of school, and perhaps, as part of the appeals process following academic disenrollment. In the fall 2013 entering class, 28 students overall ended their first semester with a GPA less than 1.6. Of these, 11 were first generation, representing 39% of all new students dismissed. Of the 19 new students with GPAs less than 1.6 in fall 2013 who did not return the next semester, 9 students (47%) were first generation.

In light of these new data, the earliest intervention strategies would seem to be the most helpful to first-generation students, and would ideally start their first semester. We employed two such strategies in fall 2014: specialized tutoring for regimental students during their first six weeks of the semester, and CSI-B advising meetings with experienced tutors. We will analyze the success of these initiatives in January 2015.

As for the data analysis and modeling effort of the Five/50 project, we have learned a lot about our student population but have not yet definitively found a link between known risk factors and prediction of academic failure and probation. While our models predict academic success best for first generation students ($R^2 = 0.284$, versus $R^2 = 0.209$ for all students), they are not the tool we had hoped for.

Summary

In summary, Maine Maritime Academy is committed to improving persistence and graduation rates for all students, while being acutely aware of the unique attrition risk factors for first-generation students. Thus, we will continue to tailor programs and services to “level the playing field” for our students who do not have the benefits of college-educated parents to guide them through the challenges of college admission and matriculation.

Appendices

A. Data Collection form

Cohort	Class Entering	Total Number #							Graduation Rates					
			To 2nd Year		To 3rd Year		To 4th Year		Within 4 Years		Within 5 Years		Within 6 Years	
			#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
First Generation														
TOTAL	2014	106	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2015	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2016	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2017	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2018	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2019	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2020	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2021	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2022	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2023	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
First Generation														
First-time, full-time	2014	87	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2015	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2016	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2017	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2018	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2019	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2020	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2021	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2022	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2023	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
First Generation														
First-time, part-time	2014	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2015	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2016	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2017	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2018	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2019	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2020	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2021	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2022	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2023	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
First Generation														
Transfer	2014	19	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2015	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2016	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2017	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2018	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2019	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2020	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2021	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2022	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2023	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-

B. Snapshot of web application page collecting parental educational levels

	Father		Mother
Prefix :			
First Name :	<input type="text"/>	*	<input type="text"/>
Middle Name :	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Last Name :	<input type="text"/>	*	<input type="text"/>
Suffix :	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Address Line 1 :	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Copy"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 2 :	<input type="text"/>	***	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 3 :	<input type="text"/>	***	<input type="text"/>
City :	<input type="text"/>	***	<input type="text"/>
State :	<input type="text"/>	***	<input type="text"/>
Zip Code :	<input type="text"/>	***	<input type="text"/>
Country :	<input type="text"/>	***	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number :	<input type="text"/>	***	<input type="text"/>
Phone Type :	<input type="text"/>	***	<input type="text"/>
Occupation :	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Job Title :	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Employer :	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Deceased :	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Year : <input type="text"/>	*
College Background :	<input type="text" value="Select..."/>	*	<input type="text" value="Select..."/>
College(s) Attended :	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Degree Earned :	<input type="text" value="Select..."/>	*	<input type="text" value="Select..."/>
Other Degree :	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> I choose not to respond		<input type="checkbox"/> I choose not to respond