

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MAINE MARITIME ACADEMY

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 11, 2016

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."

As noted in previous reports, 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. A standardized procedure of data collection during the admission process was implemented for the first year class enrolling in fall of 2014. While MMA has been collecting data regarding first-generation students for some time, we previously utilized a different definition of first-generation as prescribed by the MELMAC Education Foundation.

First generation students, especially Mainers, have long been a large contingent within our student body and continue to be a priority for us in recruitment. Maine Maritime Academy is proud of its high retention and graduation rates for all students and especially for first generation students as we understand the significant impact college attainment can have not just on the first generation college student but his/her entire family. We continue to be proud supporters of this act as it aligns well with both our strategic plan goals and our mission to serve the state of Maine and its citizens. 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.
- 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.
- Spring 2014 and Fall 2015 – programmatic initiatives to aid in retention of all students continued and expanded.

- Summer/Fall 2015 – MMA transitions to SLATE Admissions software and the Common App which will include data collection regarding first generation status. A sample of the data captured through the Common App regarding parental education levels is included in Appendix B.
- Fall 2015 – demographic data collected on parental education achievement for the incoming first-year class and included in the table in Appendix A.
- Fall 2015 – data collected regarding retention of first generation students in the Fall 2014 cohort. These data are presented 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.

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.

44.1% of the incoming class in the fall of 2015 met the definition of first generation college student. The percentage of first generation college students increased from 36% of the incoming class in fall of 2014.

89% of the Fall 2014 cohort of first-generation college students persisted to the second year at MMA. All first generation transfer students in the Fall 2014 cohort persisted to the second year.

*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 focus on Maine high school students to educate them about the opportunities offered at MMA. One strategy is high school visits – including visits in fall of 2015 to 119 of the 143 public high schools in Maine. MMA Admissions also participates in New England regional college fairs (at the campuses of USM, UM-A, UMaine, WCCC 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 in 2015 in Portland and Bangor. This program has grown over the past few years and we will continue to conduct this highly informative event. 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 Coastal Studies for Girls and the Acadia Institute of Oceanography. While not specifically for first generation students, the program, by bringing entire classes and groups to campus and eliminating obstacles such as travel and costs, provides high school students whose parents do not have college degrees equal opportunities to college experiences as their peers with college-educated parents.

The Academy launched a new website in Fall 2014 designed to inform prospective students about the many programs at the Academy and to streamline the admissions process. While not aimed solely at first-generation students, the new design provides a more transparent and user-friendly website.

MMA selected to participate in the Common Application exclusively this year. This choice makes the application process more thorough and streamlined, providing the ability to apply to over 500 colleges

with one application. This can be of great importance to prospective students whose parents do not have the knowledge to guide them through the college application process. MMA coordinated the Common App initiative with an advanced recruitment software system that has reduced application processing time and allows us to make admissions decisions and notifications in a more timely manner.

Financial Literacy Program

MMA continued to offer the popular Financial Literacy workshop to first year students in partnership with a local bank, Camden National, and the Finance Authority of Maine. The lecture was required for all entering students and was particularly valuable for first generation college students. Content focused on the following topics: credit card debt, purchasing a car, and spending responsibly. Another program held this semester featured finance expert Peter Bielagus, who shared his knowledge of saving money with a mixed crowd of underclassmen, upperclassmen, and some members of the faculty and staff. In his lecture, "How to Put More Money in Your Pocket *Today*: A College Personal Finance Boot Camp," Peter offered "start now" strategies to help students manage debt, control spending, protect their identities, and increase their credit scores.

Orientation Programs

MMA first generation students may be at less disadvantage at MMA than at more traditional institutions due to the unique nature of our curriculum. First, students are considered the "client" and the Academy works less with our parents than our peer institutions do. More importantly, we have extensive orientation and training for all of our students as our institution, curriculum and requirements are so unique – thus a parent's educational background, unless a MMA recent alumni, is not much of an advantage. Finally, because we traditionally have served so many first generation college students, we do not assume that any of our students have the advantages provided by a parent with a college degree. MMA Orientation programs for both students and their parents/guardians are designed to 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 may need to correct some of the assumptions 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 who attended college. 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.

The parent program is designed 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. 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 frequently visited 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 worked 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 2015 included:

Mental Health & Substance Abuse: Ross Szabo

Ross uses personal experience and research to offer students information about the complexity of mental health issues and how substance abuse can factor in.

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.

12 Steps to Appreciating Diversity: Mohammed Bilal

Mohammed uses rap, personal experience, and research to educate students about diversity and how to explore diversity within your own life and community.

Banking 101: Camden National Bank & David Leach

David and members of the local Camden National Bank present students the issues that may arise when purchasing a car, opening a credit card, and taking out a loan.

Computing & the Law: C.L. Lindsay

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*.

Financial Literacy: Peter Bielagus

Presented over 500 times at colleges all over the country, Peter leads students on a hilarious tour of the money maze. In this interactive program, Peter serves up a bunch of “start now” strategies that help students manage their debt, control their spending, protect their identities and increase their credit scores, all without ever getting a credit card.

Statewide plan

MMA partnered with MCCC, 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. The Academy completed all action steps proscribed by the plan in its first year and is in the midst of year 2 of the plan.

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 leveraged current campus-wide interest in student retention and our ongoing efforts aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates. Though the grant ended in spring 2015, we have continued several aspects of the project including data collection.

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.

With the project we began longitudinal studies in 2013 of the retention characteristics of various student populations including first generation students. Our latest data show:

- The number of all students on academic probation at Maine Maritime Academy continues to trend downward. For example, in fall 2015, only 11 students were on academic probation, representing 1.1% of all enrolled undergraduates at Castine. Five years prior (spring 2010), 70 students, or 7.6% of all enrolled undergraduates, had this same status.
- Among students matriculating in fall 2013 or 2014, first generation students are less likely to be on academic probation than students overall. These new data are consistent with data we reported last year. In the 2015 calendar year (spring and fall 2015), 30.0% of students on academic probation and who matriculated in fall 2013 or 2014, were first generation students, compared to the 35.0% of first generation students in these class years overall.

First generation students may struggle more than other students on academic probation, though the numbers are still too small to be conclusive. Of the 25 students on academic probation during the 2015 calendar year, six were dismissed for poor academic performance. Of the six, four were first generation students.

Summary

In summary, Maine Maritime Academy remains 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 assist 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 of Students Entering #							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	89	84.00%	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2015	115	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	70	80.50%	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2015	89	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	19	100.00%	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
	2015	26	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.

Data Captured in the Application Process Regarding Parental Education Levels:

Parent 1 type:Father
Is parent 1 living?Yes
Prefix Mr.
First/Given name the man
Middle initial c
Last/Family/Surname wright
Former last/family/surname (if any)
Suffix
Country of birth United States of America
Preferred email cikket@myfairpoint.net
Preferred phone Home
Preferred phone number+1.207-667-1XXX
Parent 1 address is the same as my home address
Occupation (former occupation, if retired) College administrator/staff
Employment status Employed
Position/Title director
Parent is employed by or retired from a college or university Yes
Employer lookup Maine Maritime Academy Pleasant Street Castine, ME 04420USA2-year or community college
CEEB Code: 3505
Education level Graduated from college/university
Total number of institutions attended 1
College lookup University of Maine168 College Avenue Orono, ME 04469USA
4-year college or university CEEB Code: 3916
Number of degrees your parent received from this college 1
Degree received Bachelors (BA, BS)
Year received1980

Education Level dropdown includes:

None
Some grade school
Completed grade school
Some high school
Graduated high school
Some trade school
Graduated Trade school
Some college
Graduated College
Graduate school

IF **Education Level** = Graduated college:

dropdown asks:

Degree Received:

AA/AS BA/BS MA/MS JD MD PhD etc