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December 21, 2018

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
129th Maine Legislature
Cross Office Building 202
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

The Maine Community College System is providing this letter in accordance with 20-A MRSA §10013. This law requires the Maine Community College System, University of Maine System (UMS), and Maine Maritime Academy (MMA) provide the following information about first-generation college students by January 15th of each year:

- A. Data regarding enrollment of first-generation college students and educational outcomes, including graduation rates for first-generation college students compared with other college students;
- B. 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
- C. Plans for or recommendations regarding new strategies or actions designed to increase enrollment and graduation rates of first-generation college students.

To meet the requirements of the legislation, MCCS worked with the University of Maine System (UMS) and Maine Maritime Academy (MMA) to coordinate data collection and reporting in order to promote a common framework for determining enrollment and educational outcomes of first-generation college students. Additionally, the three institutions agreed that for the purpose of this report, we would define a first-generation student as one with neither parent having completed a college degree. Each institution determined the level of college completion appropriate to its mission. For MCCS, a student is first-generation if neither parent has earned an associate degree. For UMS and MMA, a student is first-generation if neither parent has earned a bachelor's degree. For consistency, we are also providing data on MCCS students with neither parent having earned a bachelor's degree.

The three institutions agreed that questions on applications for admission related to parents' highest level of education should provide students the opportunity to be specific about the degree completed by each parent. Since previously this information had not been consistently requested or collected by MCCS, our colleges revised their applications for new students entering in the fall of 2014.

Enrollment by first-generation college status

Community colleges serve more first-generation students than any other sector of U.S. higher education. Although nearly one-third of students entering two- and four-year colleges in the United States each year are first-generation (as defined by parental attainment of a bachelor's degree), that figure is nearly twice as high at Maine's community colleges where 65% of all entering students meet this definition of first generation.

The percentage of entering MCCS students who are first-generation has declined slightly since we began tracking this data in fall 2014. The following table provides an overview of Systemwide data from fall 2014 to fall 2018.

MCCS Entering Students	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018
Neither parent has an associate degree	49%	51%	47%	47%	46%
Neither parent has a bachelor's degree	67%	68%	66%	65%	65%

Student outcomes

Having begun tracking first generation students in fall 2014, MCCS is now able to report on the three-year (150% time to completion) outcomes of these students by examining their graduation, transfer, and still-enrolled rates using methods consistent with National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reporting. The two years of data currently available to us indicate little change between fall 2014 and fall 2015 cohorts in the percentage of first-generation students who graduated, transferred, or were still enrolled. At the same time, the overall success rate of students who entered in the fall of 2015 and are not first generation increased somewhat over the 2014 cohort, creating a slightly larger gap in the success rate of first-generation students and those whose parents hold a college credential.

[See data on next page.]

Three-year outcomes of fall 2014 entering degree-seeking students

Status	Associate		Bachelor's	
	1 st generation	Not 1 st generation	1 st generation	Not 1 st generation
Graduated	24%	26%	24%	25%
Still Enrolled	12%	11%	12%	11%
Transferred	16%	21%	16%	23%
Not Attending	48%	42%	47%	41%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding error.

Three-year outcomes of fall 2015 entering degree-seeking students

Status	Associate		Bachelor's	
	First-generation	Not first-generation	First-generation	Not first-generation
Graduated	24%	28%	24%	28%
Still Enrolled	11%	11%	11%	11%
Transferred	15%	19%	15%	21%
Not Attending	50%	42%	49%	40%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding error.

The data, disaggregated by first-generation status, are included in Tables 1, 2, and 3 in the appendix to this report.

Targeted strategies

Although it will be another year or two before we can identify any meaningful trends, MCCS is continuing to strengthen and expand the success strategies it targets to first-generation students and others who are at greatest risk of failing to complete their program of study. These strategies include:

- **Achieving the Dream.** All seven of Maine’s community colleges joined the national Achieving the Dream (ATD) network, one of only two state systems of higher education in the nation to do so. The colleges’ ATD efforts are designed to support and sustain a data driven culture of student success across the MCCS and, in so doing, to raise the success rates of specific populations, among them low-income, first-generation students and those who are most at risk of failing to complete a college credential.
- **TRIO Student Support Services Programs** at each of our colleges. These programs are designed specifically to serve low-income, first-generation college students and offer comprehensive, individual support through academic planning, tutoring, financial aid assistance, financial literacy, and guidance in course selection and registration.
- **On-campus employment opportunities** that allow students to build their work schedule around their classes.


- **Intensive college readiness experiences** offered at no cost in the summer before students enroll in a program of study.
- **Mandatory orientation and college-readiness courses.**
- **Accelerated learning programs** that mainstream remedial students using a model of instruction that combines academic support and college-level coursework.
- **New math pathways** that are designed to align math curriculum with the programs of study and career plans of each student, helping to raise math course completion rates and, ultimately, graduation rates.

In addition, through gifts and grants to The Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges, MCCS has expanded the number of college navigators, or advisors, at all seven colleges, to help ensure that students—especially those with little experience of college—have the academic and personal supports they need to persist and complete a college degree.

Finally, we remain committed to making sure our colleges are as affordable as possible. Maine's community colleges continue to offer the lowest tuition and fees in New England.

I would be glad to meet with you at any time to address questions or concerns the Committee may have regarding our students who are the first in their family to attend college.

Sincerely yours,



Derek P. Langhauser
President

cc: Commissioner of Education

Maine Community College System

The source for data in the tables is the MCCS Data Mart. Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included. Data are self-reported by applicants on the application for admission.

TABLE 1: Fall 2018 Entering Degree-Seeking Students by College and by Number and Percentage of First-Generation Students

College	Entering Students #	Neither parent has a(n):			
		Associate		Bachelor's	
		#	%	#	%
CMCC	757	399	53%	524	69%
EMCC	600	262	44%	385	64%
KVCC	489	243	50%	352	72%
NMCC	206	95	46%	144	70%
SMCC	1,324	554	42%	768	58%
WCCC	144	75	52%	108	75%
YCCC	322	137	43%	203	63%
MCCS	3,842	1,765	46%	2,484	65%

Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included in the table above.
Fall 2018 total entering students: 4,309.

TABLE 2: Three-Year Outcomes of MCCS Fall 2015 Entering Degree-Seeking Students by First-Generation Status

Status	First-generation				Not first-generation			
	Neither parent has a(n):				One (or more) parent has at least a(n):			
	Associate		Bachelor's		Associate		Bachelor's	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Graduated	505	24%	701	24%	577	28%	381	28%
Still Enrolled	246	11%	328	11%	230	11%	148	11%
Transferred	325	15%	442	15%	403	19%	286	21%
Not Attending	1,066	50%	1,401	49%	872	42%	537	40%
Grand Total	2,142	100%	2,872	100%	2,082	100%	1,352	100%

Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included in the table above.
Fall 2015 total entering students: 4,530. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding error.

TABLE 3: Three-Year Outcomes of Fall 2015 Entering Degree-Seeking Students by First-Generation Status and College

		First-generation				Not first-generation			
		Neither parent has a(n):				One (or more) parent has at least a(n):			
		Associate		Bachelor's		Associate		Bachelor's	
Status	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
CMCC	Graduated	109	25%	145	25%	107	31%	71	34%
CMCC	Still Enrolled	62	14%	83	15%	41	12%	20	10%
CMCC	Transferred	67	16%	86	15%	54	16%	35	17%
CMCC	Not Attending	190	44%	255	45%	145	42%	80	39%
CMCC	Total	428	100%	569	100%	347	100%	206	100%
EMCC	Graduated	55	19%	91	23%	102	33%	66	33%
EMCC	Still Enrolled	25	9%	37	9%	30	10%	18	9%
EMCC	Transferred	49	17%	59	15%	53	17%	43	22%
EMCC	Not Attending	158	55%	209	53%	124	40%	73	37%
EMCC	Total	287	100%	396	100%	309	100%	200	100%
KVCC	Graduated	104	39%	139	37%	78	33%	43	34%
KVCC	Still Enrolled	22	8%	31	8%	29	12%	20	16%
KVCC	Transferred	19	7%	35	9%	35	15%	19	15%
KVCC	Not Attending	121	45%	166	45%	91	39%	46	36%
KVCC	Total	266	100%	371	100%	233	100%	128	100%
NMCC	Graduated	37	43%	51	41%	44	51%	30	60%
NMCC	Still Enrolled	5	6%	10	8%	8	9%	3	6%
NMCC	Transferred	15	17%	21	17%	12	14%	6	12%
NMCC	Not Attending	30	34%	42	34%	23	26%	11	22%
NMCC	Total	87	100%	124	100%	87	100%	50	100%
SMCC	Graduated	128	16%	176	17%	168	20%	120	20%
SMCC	Still Enrolled	99	13%	125	12%	100	12%	74	12%
SMCC	Transferred	136	17%	181	18%	198	24%	153	25%
SMCC	Not Attending	423	54%	533	53%	374	45%	264	43%
SMCC	Total	786	100%	1,015	100%	840	100%	611	100%
WCCC	Graduated	41	47%	54	48%	34	56%	21	58%
WCCC	Still Enrolled	3	3%	3	3%	1	2%	1	3%
WCCC	Transferred	12	14%	15	13%	5	8%	2	6%
WCCC	Not Attending	31	36%	40	36%	21	34%	12	33%
WCCC	Total	87	100%	112	100%	61	100%	36	100%
YCCC	Graduated	31	15%	45	16%	44	21%	30	25%
YCCC	Still Enrolled	30	15%	39	14%	21	10%	12	10%
YCCC	Transferred	27	13%	45	16%	46	22%	28	23%
YCCC	Not Attending	113	56%	156	55%	94	46%	51	42%
YCCC	Total	201	100%	285	100%	205	100%	121	100%
Grand Total	Total	2,142	100%	2,872	100%	2,082	100%	1,352	100%

Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included in the table above. Fall 2015 total entering students: 4,530. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding error.