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December 21, 2017

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
128th 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 are 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 2017. The tables on pages 5 and 6 provide a breakdown of the data by entering cohort by college.

	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017
Neither parent has an associate degree	49%	51%	47%	47%
Neither parent has a bachelor's degree	67%	68%	66%	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 students who entered in 2014 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.

Although, nationwide, first generation students are more likely to be minorities, older, and poorer than their peers and less likely to graduate over time, our data indicate that first-generation MCCS students who entered in the fall of 2014 have graduated at just slightly below the rate of their peers whose parents completed either an associate or bachelor's degree, and three years after entering, they remain enrolled at slightly higher rates than their peers. At the same time, the data suggest that they are considerably less likely to transfer from one institution to another and are therefore more likely to have left school before completing a degree. (See the summary table on the following page.)

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%

The data, disaggregated by first-generation status, are included in Tables 5 and 6 on pages 7 and 8.

Success strategies

MCCS student success strategies are targeted to first-generation students and others who are at greatest risk of failing to finish their programs of study. They 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.

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

Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 appear on the following pages.

Maine Community College System

TABLE 1: Fall 2017 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	723	385	53%	514	71%
EMCC	649	294	45%	417	64%
KVCC	511	271	53%	380	74%
NMCC	229	93	41%	142	62%
SMCC	1,395	612	44%	839	60%
WCCC	134	71	53%	106	79%
YCCC	335	138	41%	187	56%
MCCS	3,976	1,864	47%	2,585	65%

*Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included in the table above.
Fall 2017 total entering students: 4,486

TABLE 2: Fall 2016 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	734	365	50%	524	71%
EMCC	701	334	48%	472	67%
KVCC	486	251	52%	360	74%
NMCC	220	107	49%	161	73%
SMCC	1,501	648	43%	852	57%
WCCC	133	63	47%	96	72%
YCCC	386	188	49%	265	69%
MCCS	4,161	1,956	47%	2,730	66%

*Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included in the table above.
Fall 2016 total entering students: 4,571

TABLE 3: Fall 2015 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	775	428	55%	569	73%
EMCC	596	287	48%	396	66%
KVCC	499	266	53%	371	74%
NMCC	174	87	50%	124	71%
SMCC	1,626	786	48%	1015	62%
WCCC	148	87	59%	112	76%
YCCC	406	201	50%	285	70%
MCCS	4,224	2,142	51%	2,872	68%

*Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included in the table above. Fall 2015 total entering students: 4,350

TABLE 4: Fall 2014 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	629	345	55%	460	73%
EMCC	477	198	42%	312	65%
KVCC	392	185	47%	272	69%
NMCC	190	98	52%	133	70%
SMCC	1,669	831	50%	1,065	64%
WCCC	106	69	65%	87	82%
YCCC	454	210	46%	311	69%
MCCS	3,917	1,936	49%	2,640	67%

*Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included in the table above. Fall 2014 total entering students: 4,483

TABLE 5: Three-Year Outcomes of MCCS Fall 2014 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	457	24%	645	24%	506	26%	318	25%
Still Enrolled	240	12%	322	12%	226	11%	144	11%
Transferred	302	16%	433	16%	423	21%	292	23%
Not Attending	937	48%	1,240	47%	826	42%	523	41%
Grand Total	1,936	100%	2,640	100%	1,981	100%	1,277	100%

*Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included in the table above.
 Fall 2014 total entering students: 4,483.
 Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding error.

TABLE 6: Three-Year Outcomes of Fall 2014 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	
College	Status	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
CMCC	Graduated	85	25%	120	26%	79	28%	44	26%
CMCC	Still Enrolled	46	13%	61	13%	30	11%	15	9%
CMCC	Transferred	41	12%	57	12%	52	18%	36	21%
CMCC	Not Attending	173	50%	222	48%	123	43%	74	44%
CMCC	Total	345	100%	460	100%	284	100%	169	100%
EMCC	Graduated	44	22%	72	23%	69	25%	41	25%
EMCC	Still Enrolled	24	12%	33	11%	21	8%	12	7%
EMCC	Transferred	38	19%	61	20%	55	20%	32	19%
EMCC	Not Attending	92	46%	146	47%	134	48%	80	48%
EMCC	Total	198	100%	312	100%	279	100%	165	100%
KVCC	Graduated	70	38%	94	35%	79	38%	55	46%
KVCC	Still Enrolled	22	12%	33	12%	21	10%	10	8%
KVCC	Transferred	21	11%	37	14%	35	17%	19	16%
KVCC	Not Attending	72	39%	108	40%	72	35%	36	30%
KVCC	Total	185	100%	272	100%	207	100%	120	100%
NMCC	Graduated	44	45%	61	46%	44	48%	27	47%
NMCC	Still Enrolled	8	8%	11	8%	7	8%	4	7%
NMCC	Transferred	10	10%	14	11%	16	17%	12	21%
NMCC	Not Attending	36	37%	47	35%	25	27%	14	25%
NMCC	Total	98	100%	133	100%	92	100%	57	100%
SMCC	Graduated	130	16%	188	18%	167	20%	109	18%
SMCC	Still Enrolled	105	13%	136	13%	116	14%	85	14%
SMCC	Transferred	157	19%	209	20%	216	26%	164	27%
SMCC	Not Attending	439	53%	532	50%	339	40%	246	41%
SMCC	Total	831	100%	1,065	100%	838	100%	604	100%
WCCC	Graduated	36	52%	43	49%	18	49%	11	58%
WCCC	Still Enrolled	1	1%	2	2%	1	3%	0	0%
WCCC	Transferred	8	12%	10	11%	4	11%	2	11%
WCCC	Not Attending	24	35%	32	37%	14	38%	6	32%
WCCC	Total	69	100%	87	100%	37	100%	19	100%
YCCC	Graduated	48	23%	67	22%	50	20%	31	22%
YCCC	Still Enrolled	34	16%	46	15%	30	12%	18	13%
YCCC	Transferred	27	13%	45	14%	45	18%	27	19%
YCCC	Not Attending	101	48%	153	49%	119	49%	67	47%
YCCC	Total	210	100%	311	100%	244	100%	143	100%
Grand Total	Total	1,936	100%	2,640	100%	1,981	100%	1,277	100%

*Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included in the table above.
Fall 2014 total entering students: 4,483
Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding error.

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 about parents' levels of education are self-reported by applicants on the application for admission. The analysis presumes that applicants have accurate knowledge of their parents' educational achievements.