



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
323 State Street, Augusta, ME 04330-7131
(207) 629-4000 | Fax (207) 629-4048 | mccs.me.edu

December 20, 2019

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
c/o Hillary Risler, Esq.
Office of Policy and Legal Analysis
13 State House Station
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 (MCCS), 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 and Maine Maritime Academy 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 education¹. 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 64% of all entering students meet this definition of first generation.

The percentage of entering MCCC 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 2019.

MCCC Entering Students	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
Neither parent has an associate degree	49%	51%	47%	47%	46%	46%
Neither parent has a bachelor's degree	67%	68%	66%	65%	65%	64%

Student outcomes

Having begun tracking first generation students in fall 2014, MCCC 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 three years of data currently available to us indicate an increase in the graduation rates of first-generation students who entered our colleges between fall 2014 and fall 2016, from 24% to 26%. This increase has reduced the gap in graduation rates between 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.

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.

Three-year outcomes of fall 2016 entering degree-seeking students

Status	Associate		Bachelor's	
	First-generation	Not first-generation	First-generation	Not first-generation
Graduated	26%	28%	27%	27%
Still Enrolled	11%	12%	11%	12%
Transferred	15%	20%	16%	20%
Not Attending	49%	41%	47%	40%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

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 and state appropriations, 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,

David Daigler
President

cc: Pender Makin, Commissioner, Department of Education
Bethany Beausang, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor

Maine Community College System

The source for data in the tables is the M CCS 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 2019 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	853	450	53%	594	70%
EMCC	560	242	43%	360	64%
KVCC	510	249	49%	356	70%
NMCC	212	103	49%	151	71%
SMCC	1,385	562	41%	785	57%
WCCC	106	61	58%	80	75%
YCCC	297	131	44%	182	61%
MCCS	3,923	1,798	46%	2,508	64%

Only first-time and transfer-in students with reported parental education levels are included in the table above.
Fall 2019 total entering students: 4,510.

TABLE 2: Three-Year Outcomes of M CCS Fall 2016 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	510	26%	738	27%	618	28%	390	27%
Still Enrolled	208	11%	294	11%	259	12%	173	12%
Transferred	285	15%	425	16%	430	20%	290	20%
Not Attending	953	49%	1,273	47%	898	41%	578	40%
Grand Total	1,956	100%	2,730	100%	2,205	100%	1,431	100%

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. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding error.

TABLE 3: Three-Year Outcomes of Fall 2016 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	96	26%	142	27%	108	29%	62	30%
CMCC	Still Enrolled	34	9%	52	10%	42	11%	24	11%
CMCC	Transferred	46	13%	77	15%	68	18%	37	18%
CMCC	Not Attending	189	52%	253	48%	151	41%	87	41%
CMCC	Total	365	100%	524	100%	369	100%	210	100%
EMCC	Graduated	89	27%	124	26%	111	30%	76	33%
EMCC	Still Enrolled	30	9%	43	9%	30	8%	17	7%
EMCC	Transferred	49	15%	80	17%	79	22%	48	21%
EMCC	Not Attending	166	50%	225	48%	147	40%	88	38%
EMCC	Total	334	100%	472	100%	367	100%	229	100%
KVCC	Graduated	82	33%	128	36%	87	37%	41	33%
KVCC	Still Enrolled	30	12%	43	12%	28	12%	15	12%
KVCC	Transferred	26	10%	39	11%	39	17%	26	21%
KVCC	Not Attending	113	45%	150	42%	81	34%	44	35%
KVCC	Total	251	100%	360	100%	235	100%	126	100%
NMCC	Graduated	46	43%	71	44%	49	43%	24	41%
NMCC	Still Enrolled	5	5%	6	4%	3	3%	2	3%
NMCC	Transferred	13	12%	15	9%	15	13%	13	22%
NMCC	Not Attending	43	40%	69	43%	46	41%	20	34%
NMCC	Total	107	100%	161	100%	113	100%	59	100%
SMCC	Graduated	125	19%	160	19%	169	20%	134	21%
SMCC	Still Enrolled	85	13%	117	14%	136	16%	104	16%
SMCC	Transferred	114	18%	163	19%	188	22%	139	21%
SMCC	Not Attending	324	50%	412	48%	360	42%	272	42%
SMCC	Total	648	100%	852	100%	853	100%	649	100%
WCCC	Graduated	30	48%	46	48%	37	53%	21	57%
WCCC	Still Enrolled	4	6%	5	5%	1	1%	0	0%
WCCC	Transferred	1	2%	4	4%	6	9%	3	8%
WCCC	Not Attending	28	44%	41	43%	26	37%	13	35%
WCCC	Total	63	100%	96	100%	70	100%	37	100%
YCCC	Graduated	42	22%	67	25%	57	29%	32	26%
YCCC	Still Enrolled	20	11%	28	11%	19	10%	11	9%
YCCC	Transferred	36	19%	47	18%	35	18%	24	20%
YCCC	Not Attending	90	48%	123	46%	87	44%	54	45%
YCCC	Total	188	100%	265	100%	198	100%	121	100%

		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	
Grand Total	Total	1,956	100%	2,730	100%	2,205	100%	1,431	100%

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. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding error.

¹ More information on First Generation students can be found at: <https://pnpi.org/first-generation-students/#>