

Seattle Maritime Academy (SMA) Business Plan

Over the 2022-2023 academic year, each of the four workforce programs suggested for closure at Central are developing action (Business) plans that incorporate external funding, community and industry partnerships, and internal redesigns to create a sustainable funding plan. In collaboration with Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members and college employees, a preliminary SMA Business Plan has been created. This is an iterative process; updates will be provided as new versions are developed.

Executive Summary

Training seaworthy mariners since 1968

For more than 50 years, Seattle Maritime Academy (SMA), part of Seattle Central College, has been training the next generation of professional mariners to fill vital roles in commercial and passenger transportation, commercial fishing, deep-sea sailing, and the workboat industry. It is the only school of its kind in the state of Washington, providing an educational experience that is affordable, accredited, and US Coast Guard (USCG) approved.

Much has changed since Seattle Maritime Academy welcomed its first students in 1968; but over the years, maritime has remained a vital industry. And the events of recent years have created an unprecedented demand for qualified mariners—both in Washington and throughout the country.

Currently SMA offers two, one-year programs for new mariners to obtain ratings endorsements to work aboard merchant vessels in the United States. Regardless of the program, all SMA graduates get an introduction to basic shipboard skills on deck and in the engine room.

The Marine Deck Technology program prepares students to work as Able Seaman/Seafarer (AB). Courses include Seamanship, Navigation, Vessel Maintenance, Survival Craft, Use of Tools, and Vessel Handling, as well as many others and culminate with a 90-day at-sea internship aboard a merchant vessel. Some additional sea time is required before receiving a USCG endorsement as Able Seaman/Seafarer. In addition to the national endorsement as Able Seaman/Seafarer, graduates receive the STCW (international) endorsement as Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch.

The Marine Engineering Technology program prepares students to work as Qualified Members of the Engineering Department (QMED). Courses include Introduction to Diesels, Auxiliary Machinery, Steam, Refrigeration and Electrical systems. In addition to extensive laboratory time while at the school, students complete a 90-day at-sea internship. Graduates earn both the national QMED endorsement and STCW endorsement as Rating Forming Part of the Engineering Watch.

The Problem

Despite this widespread workforce shortage across all sectors of the maritime industry, which has resulted in extremely attractive salaries for entry level positions, maritime training schools like Seattle Maritime Academy face several major challenges:

1. **Operating Costs.** Training mariners is inherently expensive. The cost of operating and maintaining training vessels and heavy equipment cannot be covered by tuition and fees alone.
2. **Awareness.** Historically, maritime jobs were passed down from one generation to the next. This, combined with the 'invisible' nature of maritime work, means that it is not top-of-mind when individuals are considering career paths. There are also misconceptions about maritime jobs that may be preventing more people from pursuing these vital careers.

3. Diversity and Inclusion. For a variety of reasons, the maritime workforce is predominantly male and white. Although many employers are making great strides in recognizing the value of having a diverse workforce, access to education and opportunity is not always equitable.
4. Professional Advancement. Career progression in the maritime industry occurs through the accrual of sea time and taking US Coast Guard-approved courses that result in an upgraded endorsement or credential. Demand for these courses in Washington State is high, however the process of obtaining Coast Guard approval for them is lengthy and onerous.

In summary:

- Skilled mariners are vital to the economy of Washington state and the nation.
- There is a severe shortage of qualified mariners across all sectors of the industry.
- Entry-level skilled mariners are in great demand and can make attractive salaries.
- Seattle Maritime Academy is Washington state's only public maritime training school.
- The cost of training skilled mariners exceeds the revenue generated by state allocation, tuition, and fees.
- There is a widespread lack of awareness and understanding of maritime careers, especially among historically underrepresented individuals.
- There is a state-wide lack of educational opportunities for mariners seeking professional advancement.

The Solution

The current workforce crisis facing the maritime industry did not arise overnight; nor did it result from a single root cause. Instead, it took shape over many years and at the convergence of a variety of societal events—an aging workforce, a change in attitudes about post-secondary education, a pandemic.

Similarly, the solution will be neither an overnight fix nor a silver bullet. Rather, it will be a multi-year, multi-pronged effort that involves educators, private individuals, industry representatives, community leaders, and legislators.

Below is a summary of activities and initiatives Seattle Maritime Academy is currently undertaking to ensure the long-term viability of its singular training programs. Each item primarily addresses one of the four challenges: Operating Costs, Awareness, Diversity and Inclusion, Professional Advancement.

Immediate Activities (present through FY2024)

City of Seattle Office of Economic Development (OED)

Seattle Central College and the City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development have finalized a \$1 million dollar partnership that will invest in educational opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), support enrollment at the Seattle Maritime Academy and help build a more inclusive regional workforce. This grant will allow Seattle Maritime Academy to:

- Develop a recruiting strategy to increase awareness of maritime opportunities and Seattle Maritime Academy programs that includes outreach to BIPOC communities through events, marketing, promotions, and other engagement activities.
- Provide wrap-around services that support enrollment, retention, and completion of SMA programs through community partnerships.
- Engage community-based organizations and industry partners to create more inroads into SMA programs and support for SMA graduates as they launch their careers.

Washington State Ferries

Codify relationship with Washington State Ferries (WSF) to establish Seattle Maritime Academy as the primary training facility for the largest ferry system in the US. (OPERATING COSTS)

Legislative funding for 2023-2025 Biennium:

- \$855,000 of the workforce education investment account—state appropriation is provided solely for the Seattle Central College/Seattle maritime academy. Seattle Central College must enter into a memorandum of agreement with Washington State Ferries. The memorandum of agreement must address:
 - The shared use of training and other facilities and implementation of joint training opportunities where practicable;
 - Development of a joint recruitment plan aimed at increasing enrollment of women and people of color, with specific strategies to recruit existing community and technical college students, maritime skills center students, high school students from maritime programs, foster care graduates, and former juvenile rehabilitation and adult incarcerated individuals; and
 - Development of a training program and recruitment plan and a five-year operational plan.
 - » The joint training program and recruitment plan and the five-year operational plan must be submitted to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the legislature by December 1, 2023.

Existing training relationships with WSF are primarily focused on existing employees. These include simulator training for both engineers and deck officers (40-60 annually). Recent efforts have added use of classroom space at SMA for new employee orientation.

Future training projects being discussed include Able Seaman/Seafarer training for existing WSF employees, ongoing simulator training for all Mates and Captains, and additional Qualified Member of the Engineering Department (QMED) training for existing WSF employees. If scheduling allows for distribution of these courses over the non-summer months, we can accommodate up to 30 deckhands and up to 100 mates and Captains per year. An additional 18 QMED candidates per year is reasonable.

SMA also provides training to WSF in partnership with the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) for current Able Seaman/Seafarers who are pursuing licensing as Mates. This accounts for seven weeks of training at SMA for cohorts of 12 students, 2-3 times per year over the next several years. After that, we anticipate one cohort per year in perpetuity.

Maritime High School (MHS)

Collaborate with the newly established Maritime High School (MHS) to provide Running Start opportunities for high school students. (OPERATING COSTS and EQUITY AND INCLUSION)

- The Maritime High School draws from a diverse population. By creating a pathway for those students to complete the SMA program during high school (through Running Start), we create a pathway for students from historically underrepresented communities to enter the maritime workforce with little-to-no out of pocket expense.
- Students in their junior and senior years of high school may choose the Vessel Operations track at the MHS, during which they will complete either the deck or engineering program at SMA. The goal is to include a paid internship on a vessel between Junior and Senior year so that students are through most of the required at-sea internship on high school graduation. If successful, students will graduate from HS

ready to receive either an AB or QMED endorsement and be employable with any of our partner maritime companies.

- First cohort tentatively in Fall 2023, identified as either a deck or engine cohort. The goal is between 12 and 18 students. Students will be on campus two days per week. Beginning senior year (deck or engine specific classes) instructors will deliver lecture portions of classes at MHS the remaining 3 days/week while students also complete remaining HS graduation requirements.
- Long-term goal is to run a full deck and engine cohort each year (18 students each). The total number of MHS students at full capacity will be 72.

Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI)

Work with SJI to provide entry-level training for individuals seeking employment with Washington State Ferries, emphasizing recruiting from underrepresented communities. (EQUITY AND INCLUSION)

- The training is to give individuals a picture of what working for the ferries might be, as well as to prepare them to face the initial challenges of the work. The training program is designed as three weeks of training. The Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) is contracting to provide one of the three weeks (Coast Guard approved Basic Training). SMA is contracting with SJI to provide the remaining portions of the training.

Partnerships

Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) allow for broader community engagement and allow SMA to learn from and serve the needs of a broader community while addressing the industry's need for more mariners. Collaborative partnerships with CBOs will allow SMA to (EQUITY AND INCLUSION):

- Organize outreach events and marketing campaigns to increase awareness of maritime opportunities in BIPOC communities and increase enrollment in SMA programs.
- Provide services to students to enter the program and be retained through the program.
- Provide support for program graduates as they launch their careers post-graduation.

SMA is exploring partnerships with Maritime Blue, The PolyTech, and the Urban League to expand outreach and recruiting. SMA will coordinate efforts of various groups expending money and time to recruit BIPOC youth to the maritime industry to deconflict those efforts.

Facility use (existing and new projects)

- Marine Deck Technology Program (15 students per cohort)
- Marine Engineering Technology Program (17 students per cohort)
- Continuing Education—Recreational Boaters (95 students per year, 184 students per year last two years)
- Simulation
 - Washington State Ferries (29 per year, 54 per year last two years)
 - Coastal Transportation (9 per year last three years)
 - Seattle Fire Department (6 per year last three years)
 - Other Mariners (5 per year)
- Professional Mariner training
- Lindblad/Unccruise Adventures (26 this year)
- WSF Able Seaman/Seafarer to Mate (24 per year this year)

- New: SJI – 16 students per cohort (anticipate 2 cohorts per year)
- New: Maritime HS – 18 students for 2023-2024 school year
 - Anticipate 36 additional students (total of 54 students) for '24-'25 school year
 - Anticipate 72 students for '25-'26 school year

Recruiter/Liaison

Utilizing funding from the contract with the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development, Seattle Maritime Academy will hire a Recruiter/Liaison to collaborate with community-based organizations in developing and implementing a strategic plan for direct outreach, targeted marketing, and community-led engagement to youth (and families/caretakers) and young adults.

Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for SMA is being rebuilt. Representatives from various sectors of the maritime industry will serve on the committee. Because the curriculum at SMA is primarily driven by USCG requirements, the focus of the TAC will be on recruiting efforts, internship support, fundraising, and any additional corporate maritime training needs.

Seattle Colleges Foundation

Work with the Seattle Colleges Foundation to craft an annual appeal to individuals and industry representatives to generate financial support for Seattle Maritime Academy's ongoing operations. (OPERATING COSTS)

Washington State Legislature

See above with Washington State Ferries

Next Step Activities (FY2025 – 2026)

- Work with Seattle Colleges grant writing team to identify opportunities to develop tools and activities that increase overall awareness and promote understanding of maritime careers. (AWARENESS)
- Work with Seattle Colleges grant writing team to identify opportunities to develop tools and activities for underrepresented communities that increase awareness of maritime careers, identify prospective students, and support them on their educational journey. (EQUITY AND INCLUSION)
- Work with Seattle Central College's Veterans Services team to develop a clear pathway for military veterans to transition to maritime careers in an expedited fashion. (EQUITY AND INCLUSION)
- Work with US Coast Guard and industry representatives to offer a roster approved courses for mariners seeking to advance their careers. (PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT)
- Work with local housing providers and government agencies to provide affordable housing for students who do not live within commuting distance. (EQUITY AND INCLUSION)

Long-Term (7+ years)

- SMA is fully functional, serving students
- Adequate funds have been procured to maintain opportunities for student learning
- New plans are in place to address emerging and changing demands