

## SU Launches Diversity Initiatives

From launching new partnerships with area high schools and community colleges to creating scholarships, adding new staff positions and expanding international efforts, President Janet Dudley-Eshbach signaled her commitment to turning the corner on Salisbury University's reputation as a "white" school.

In an open letter to the campus and a public press conference, Dudley-Eshbach outlined seven major initiatives to bolster minority enrollment of students both immediately and in the years ahead.

"We are the least racially diverse of the traditionally white institutions within the University System of Maryland. This past fall our freshman class included only 36 African-American students ... out of 856 new enrollees. Only 19 (or 6.9 percent) of our full-time teaching faculty are minority."

The initiatives are:

1. Allocation of \$76,000 for a Partnerships for Success program to immediately recruit a more diverse incoming freshman and transfer class for fall 2001. Highlights include outreach to local high school or community college students, a minimum \$1,000 scholarship annually, additional financial aid and special mentoring by students and faculty.
2. Creation of a new position of minority student achievement specialist to be filled by current affirmative action officer Leon Burks. This new position will provide on-campus assistance in the transition to college and then in retention through graduation.
3. A national search for the position of special assistant to the president for diversity initiatives/affirmative action.
4. A continuing series of meetings with African-American and Hispanic leaders to further discuss diversity actions.
5. With 10 percent of the region's population being Hispanic, the initiation of proposals to serve that population including joint efforts with Wor-Wic Community College and a possible "Hispanics' Opportunities for Learning Assistance" or "HOLA." (Both of these efforts are early in the planning stages.)
6. An expansion of international education with the creation of a full-time director of international education.
7. Under the leadership of Nelson E. Townsend, renewed efforts for academic and social exchange between the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and SU in their nationally recognized award-winning collaboration, established in the 1980s.

Dudley-Eshbach sees the process of making SU more diverse as on-going and these initiatives as only a first step. "What needs to happen on this campus is no less than a transformation in inclusiveness, climate and dialogue within our community," she said.

*SU has 426 faculty; 90 percent of the tenure track faculty have terminal degrees*