In February 2004, Salisbury University President Janet Dudley-Eshbach announced a new program titled “Partners for Progress.” Building on current programs and creating new ones, Partners for Progress is an eight-point action plan to improve University and community relations that includes the creation of a Town-Gown Council, expansion of programs to make college students feel more welcomed in the community and, in turn, University efforts to make local residents feel more welcomed on campus. The president also pledged money for additional SU scholarships for high school, community college and adult students in Wicomico County.

The Salisbury University Foundation, Inc. hopes to play a major role in the Partners for Progress effort by making fund-raising for scholarships a priority and by creating a focus on the Shore Scholars Fund. Since February, thanks to generous donations from friends of Salisbury University, like area businessmen Bill Martin and Gary Chandler, the Shore Scholars Fund has been gaining momentum.

Mr. Martin and Mr. Chandler know the value of a college education and appreciate the needs of Eastern Shore residents interested in attending Salisbury University. Through a generous gift of real estate, they are helping to make the dreams of a college education a reality for many local students.

One of the students currently benefiting from the Shore Scholars Program is Matthew Lacurts of Mardela Springs, MD. “The Shore Scholars Program is making my being at Salisbury University possible.” Matthew said that he “cannot say thank you enough to those who support the Shore Scholars Fund.” It is the Foundation’s hope that Matthew and many students like him will succeed at SU because of this wonderful program.
he Richard Bernstein Entrepreneurial Award of Excellence has encouraged the spirit of capitalism in Salisbury University students for 17 years. This prestigious award is given to a student of the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business who creates a well researched and potentially successful business proposal. It is designed to encourage young entrepreneurs to move forward with their visions and to provide the resources to assist them. The competition is judged by some of the region’s most successful business leaders and attracts an average of 30 projects each year. Many of these award-winning students and their projects evolve into real world success stories.

Salisbury businesses such as Nacho Pete’s, Tenderheart Day Care Center and Wear It Again, got their start in the Bernstein Entrepreneurial Award competition. As the very first award recipient, Robert Elliot (‘91) is pleased with the continuation and growing reputation and success of the Bernstein Award. Mr. Elliot submitted a paper on the entrepreneurial aspects of managing his band, The Main Event. He credits the Bernstein award process with showing him how to really take what he learned at Salisbury University and apply it to the real world and something that he loved. Mr. Elliot graduated with a degree in accounting and came back to SU for his M.B.A. just two years later. “Accounting helped me learn the language of business; the Bernstein Award brought the core concepts to life,” he stated. Now the Retail Division Comptroller at Perdue Farms, Mr. Elliot said: “It was quite an honor to be the first. I’ve seen the evolution of the Bernstein award process with the continuation and growing success stories.

One of the Bernstein Award’s more recent recipients, Travis Fisher (‘00) and Hunter Johnson (‘00) (pictured), and their award-winning company, Netzotic Digital Consulting, are succeeding in the local business community. With a ribbon cutting for a new storefront scheduled in September 2004 on Salisbury’s Downtown Plaza, Fisher and Johnson are young entrepreneurs who feel they started with a leg-up on the competition. “By competing for the Bernstein Award, our ideas and vision were critiqued and enhanced by outstanding professionals. It really helped us fine-tune the concept of Netzotic,” stated Mr. Fisher. “Without the Bernstein Award experience, the company would probably not exist today,” he continued. Netzotic Digital Consulting specializes in Internet applications, Web hosting, network management and telephony. Fisher is especially proud of the fact that six of the eight employees of Netzotic are Salisbury University alumni. He said: “Our experiences at SU and with the Bernstein Award got us to where we are today and will help us long into the future.”

Many friends of Salisbury University find pleasure and peace of mind in giving back to the University that has educated them, educated their children or bettered their community. Some choose legacy or planned gifts as ways to better the future of Salisbury University. From parents to children, from one generation to the next, legacies of assets, but also values, are the building blocks of the future. A gift of this nature is a legacy that tells others that you support the work and share the values of Salisbury University. Several recent examples of this type of generosity toward Salisbury University are:

- Ron Sisk, Class of 1999, made the Salisbury University Foundation, Inc. the beneficiary of his life insurance policy. The premiums Mr. Sisk pays on this policy, which are tax-deductible, fit into the budget of a young alum.

- An anonymous benefactor established a Charitable Gift Annuity to provide herself with an income stream for her lifetime and Salisbury University with a substantial gift upon her passing. The donor has derived much pleasure from working with University and Foundation administration to structure the guidelines for the future governance of a scholarship endowment, and she knows what a difference this gift will make in the lives of many students and the future of Salisbury University.

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