
History of the University

In 1922, the Maryland State Legislature established a commission to determine a location for a two-year normal school on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. A site at Salisbury was selected by the commission and the Maryland State Normal School at Salisbury was opened in September 1925.

The school offered a two-year course for the preparation of elementary school teachers in Maryland until 1931 and 1934 when respective increases of three and four years were implemented. By action of the Maryland Legislature, the school was authorized to grant the Bachelor of Science degree and to change its name to the State Teachers College at Salisbury.

In 1947, the teacher preparation program expanded to include the junior high school level. In 1960, the program was expanded further to include teacher preparation for the senior high school level. Simultaneously, a four-year program in the arts and sciences, with majors in several academic fields leading to the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science degrees was established. In 1962, the State Board of Trustees approved a graduate program leading to the Master of Education degree.

By legislative action, the five state teachers colleges in Maryland became state colleges in 1963 with the word “teachers” deleted from the name, and a new board of trustees was established known as the Board of Trustees of the State Colleges. Under the jurisdiction of this governing board, the major emphasis was placed on the development of the college’s undergraduate program, with majors in the arts and sciences as well as professional preparation leading to teaching certification. Concurrently, the institution was renamed Salisbury State College.

Since 1963, the institution has expanded rapidly and presently offers 41 undergraduate majors including professional programs in business, social work, medical technology, respiratory therapy, and nursing, in addition to curricula in education and the arts and sciences. The baccalaureate degrees offered include: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts in Social Work, and the Bachelor of Fine Arts. In 1971, a program leading to the Master of Arts degree in history was approved; in 1974, a Master

of Arts in english was created; and, in 1975, a Master of Arts degree in psychology was established, although the program has been eliminated. More recently, graduate programs leading to a Master of Business Administration were added in 1981 and a Master of Science in nursing in 1982; a Master of Education with a major in public school administration in 1994; a Master of Arts in Teaching in 1996; a Master of Science in applied health physiology in 2000; and a Master of Arts in Social Work in 2001.

Through legislation effective July 1, 1988, Salisbury State College along with five other institutions formerly governed by the Board of Trustees of the State Universities and Colleges, became a part of the University of Maryland System. On the same date and through separate legislative action, the name of the institution was officially changed from Salisbury State College to Salisbury University. Similarly, the University of Maryland System has since become the University System of Maryland (USM) and consists of 11 degree granting institutions and 2 institutes that are governed by a Board of Regents. The Board is established by statute as a public corporation and charter system charged with the responsibility for governance and management of the USM and constituent institutions, centers, and institutes. Although operating with autonomy, the USM collaborates with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), which by statute is given the responsibility for planning and coordinating higher education in the State of Maryland.

In 1999, Salisbury University began internal dialogue in consideration of another change that would remove “State” from its name. After considerable discussion among alumni, faculty, students, staff, and other interested constituents and leaders, the University announced in April 2000 that it would pursue a change in name to Salisbury University. Approval was granted by the Board of Regents, the Maryland Legislature, and the Governor, and on July 1, 2001, the legal name of the institution became Salisbury University.

University Environment

Salisbury University is the largest higher education institution on the Eastern Shore of Maryland with a Fall 2003 headcount enrollment of 6,816 students and 5950 FTES (Full-time Equivalent Students).

The University is located in Salisbury, which is centrally located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The Eastern Shore of Maryland is that part of the Delmarva Peninsula in Maryland between the Chesapeake Bay on the west and the Atlantic Ocean on the east; the State of Delaware borders portions of the region to the north and the east, while the State of Virginia's Eastern Shore lies to the south.

First explored by Captain John Smith, the Shore retains much of its historical charm and natural beauty. Because of its miles of shoreline and many rivers, the Eastern Shore has become known for its recreational appeal. Tourism and both recreational and commercial fishing remain important sources of income. Agriculture has continued as an important industry since European settlers first arrived in the early 1600's. The Atlantic beaches, relatively mild winter temperatures, and leisurely lifestyle attract both summer vacationers and permanent residents. As the population has increased and the economy diversified, more people have become employed in manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and professional services. According to the Maryland Department of Planning, the 2000 nine county population of the Eastern Shore was 395,890. This figure represents a 33.5% increase from the 1980 census (296,620) and 15.2% from the 1990 census (343,769). The population is projected to increase by approximately 5% between 2000 and 2005.

Salisbury, which is the industrial, commercial, educational, and transportation hub of the Eastern Shore, is its largest city with a municipal population of 23,743. Located at the crossroads of Routes 50 and 13 and along the Wicomico River, Salisbury is the county seat for Wicomico County and a major distribution point for supplies and materials to the region. Unknown to many, Salisbury is the second largest port in Maryland after Baltimore. Its Salisbury/Ocean City Wicomico Regional Airport is also the state's second largest after Baltimore-Washington International. Manufacturing and processing industries employ the largest number of

residents, but both wholesale and retail firms and service industries are important components of the community's economy.

Salisbury is located 115 miles east of Washington, D.C., 125 miles south of Philadelphia, 120 miles north of Virginia Beach; and 30 miles west of Ocean City, Maryland, which swells to a population of 300,000 during the summer months. Despite its proximity to national and international urban centers, all of which are readily accessible through a well-maintained highway system, the Eastern Shore is largely rural. The 2000 population of Wicomico County was 84,644, an increase of 13.9% from 1990 and 31.1% from 1980. The population is projected to increase by approximately 5% between 2000 and 2005.

Along with its importance as an economic center, Salisbury offers many social and cultural opportunities. Its newspapers, television and radio stations, movie theaters, stores, businesses and industries, museums, libraries, civic center, cultural programs, houses of worship, public and private schools, community college, and university all contribute to an on-going vitality and significance in the life of the Eastern Shore and Maryland.

Five institutions of higher education serve the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Washington College is a private college located in Chestertown, Maryland, and is the northern-most institution on the Eastern Shore. Chesapeake College is a community college located in Wye Mills and primarily serves the five counties of the Upper Shore. In a collaborative adventure among the five Eastern Shore institutions, a regional state-supported higher education center opened in Fall 2002 on the Chesapeake College campus. Both Wor-Wic Community College and Salisbury University (SU) are located in Wicomico County. The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) is located 12 miles to the south in Princess Anne and is a sister institution to SU within the University System of Maryland. In 1998, these five institutions signed an historic Memorandum of Agreement to form the Eastern Shore Association of Colleges (ESAC). The alliance was created to develop inter-institutional strategies to expand educational opportunities for students and to promote the higher education services and economic development of the region.