

SALISBURY UNIVERSITY

2004 Institutional Performance Accountability Report to the Maryland Higher Education Commission

Submitted July 2004

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, & Accountability

Program Description

Salisbury University (SU) serves the State of Maryland by providing undergraduate liberal arts, sciences, pre-professional and professional programs, and select, mostly applied, graduate programs.

MISSION

Salisbury University is a regional comprehensive university emphasizing undergraduate liberal arts, sciences, pre-professional and professional programs, and select, mostly applied, graduate programs. The University creates a superior, active, and engaged relationship between academic programs, the faculty, staff, and students and unites diverse and highly qualified faculty and staff in serving academically capable students from both the Western and Eastern Shores of Maryland and other states and nations. Salisbury University prepares its graduates to pursue careers in a global economy and for meeting the State's workforce needs. The University promotes and supports applied research, diversity initiatives, targeted outreach programs, K-16 partnerships, cultural events, and civic engagement in all aspects of community life. Salisbury University recognizes excellence, student-centeredness, learning, community, civic engagement, and diversity as the fundamental values on which it is founded and upon which it serves the State of Maryland.

VISION

Salisbury University will continue as a premier regional university that is recognized nationally for excellence by its peers and regionally for its commitment to model programs in civic engagement. Undergraduate research, service learning, international experiences, and co-curricular activities will continue to enrich the traditional academic curriculum and enable students to connect research to practice theory to action. The University will provide graduates who will be recruited by the best employers and graduate schools, and who will contribute to the economic vitality of the State and the Nation. The University will continue to enhance the quality of life for its students, the State, and the region, and will explore opportunities to provide doctoral programs in areas of need.

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Quality

In the past fifteen years, Salisbury University has advanced its academic standards and reputation, attaining levels of eminence that readily identifies SU as one of the premier public institutions in the Northeast. Achievements include: nationwide, the 7th highest average 6-year graduation rate among comprehensive public master's universities; average 6-yr graduation rates that are higher than institutional performance and aspirational peers; the highest 4- and 6-year graduation rates in the USM for 17 and 9 consecutive years, respectively; and, for seven years, regional and national recognition by numerous publications including America's Best Colleges (*U.S. News and World Report*) and The Best 351 Colleges (*The Princeton Review*). Additionally, in the 2003 and 2004 editions of America's Best Colleges, SU was ranked as a "top tier" institution for both public and private universities in the North Region.

One year after graduation, approximately 30% of SU alumni enroll in graduate or professional study while 96% are employed. In a given year, 96% to 98% of SU graduates rate their overall quality of education received as satisfactory or very satisfactory. Additionally, a highly valued characteristic of the academic programming for SU alumni, current, and future students is the student-faculty ratio of 16:1—a ratio lower than the average of SU peers. Further, Salisbury University ranks highest against its performance peers in the quality of its student body as measured by standardized test

scores, second when comparing average entering G.P.A., first in retention, first in the graduation of African-American students, lowest in acceptance, third in the graduation of all minorities, and first overall.

Eight academic programs are accredited with specialized agencies. Most recently, the Perdue School of Business earned a reaffirmation of accreditation with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB-International). Out of thousands of business programs and schools worldwide, SU is 1 of only 404 to earn such prestigious distinction. In 2003, the Salisbury University Nursing Program earned accreditation with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) while the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) continued the nursing accreditation through 2012—the maximum allowable period of eight years. Accreditations are earned through the continuous demonstration of excellence according to national standards. Because these programs produce graduates in deficit career areas for Maryland, they are essential to SU's mission. However, with some allied health programs approaching instructional costs of \$20,000 per Full-time Equivalent Student (FTES), they carry heavy expenses. Additionally, Teacher Education accreditation bears significant costs in meeting the Professional Development School (PDS) standards, while both Teacher Education and Business (NCATE and AACSB accreditation, respectively) maintain rigorous standards of educational performance. Contributing academic benefit to the institution at extra financial cost, these programs drive the market salaries of faculty higher while obligating vital reassigned time in order to pursue valuable research, scholarship, and service activities.

Access

Salisbury University continues to focus its enrollment on highly qualified, motivated first-time freshmen. New freshman enrollment for Fall 2003 was 950, with a composite SAT score of 1,040 and 1,220 at the 25th and 75th percentiles, respectively, and an average high-school GPA of over 3.47. At 5,549 applicants, these students were admitted from the largest applicant pool ever to apply to SU. The University maintained its selectivity at 52% in order to accommodate an equal number of transfer students and to operate within the current facility's capacities. The State's delay in funding new and larger facilities on a timely cycle has begun to impact enrollment growth, which remained flat when compared with Fall 2002's record enrollment. Currently, facilities capacities are constrained by insufficient classroom space and although nighttime usage rates could be increased to accommodate additional undergraduate enrollments, financial resources have become a limiting factor in hiring the additional faculty and support personnel necessary to service students during non-traditional hours.

Several significant highlights are indicative of the University's ongoing success and continuing challenges in enhancing student access and diversity:

- for a third consecutive year, SU enrolled the largest freshman minority class in institutional history;
- in Fall 2003, SU enrolled the largest *percentage* of freshman minority students in institutional history;
- in Fall 2003, SU enrolled the second largest number of African-American freshman *and* transfer students in institutional history;
- in Fall 2003 and for the third consecutive year, SU enrolled the largest number of African-American undergraduates in institutional history;
- for the third consecutive year SU achieved or surpassed the retention rate benchmark for African-American undergraduates;
- increased the percentage of African-American undergraduates for a third consecutive year to 8.8%. Although this percentage is below the benchmark level, it reveals a continuous upward trend and represents a 22% increase in the number of African-American undergraduates when compared against Fall 2000; and,
- the number of minority undergraduates continues to increase and now represents 14.0% of the total undergraduate population. This surpasses the benchmark of 13%.

The University's modified entrance criteria have enhanced its diversity, selectivity, and academic profiles. However, in order to improve educational access to a broadly diverse community, and particularly students of underrepresented groups, financial aid dollars must be available in sufficient awards to meet students' financial needs. As the lowest-funded traditional USM institution and a "best performer" when comparing the gap between funding and enrollment/graduation rates, SU must struggle to find independent revenue sources to compete for qualified underrepresented students and to limit financial hardship for our students. Salisbury University is impaired by the States continual failure to meet the principles of the funding guidelines established by the General Assembly to bring equity and reason to the distribution of State funding allocations. This failure leads to comparable institutions funded at rates that differ by hundreds to thousands of dollars per student and leaves SU, despite its educational success and national reputation, without the necessary funds to provide meaningful access to both minority and non-minority Maryland students.

Workforce Diversity

Salisbury University continues to make gains in the diversification of its workforce. The number of women in full-time executive/managerial positions has increased to 46%, a growth of 14 points in 6 years that significantly surpasses the benchmark. Likewise, the number of female full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty increased to 39%, 1 point above the benchmark. Although in FY 2003 the number of African-American men in full-time executive/managerial positions surpassed the benchmark, re-organizational efficiencies instituted as a direct consequence of the rescission of State funding allocations resulted in a decline in this demographic in FY 2004. Additionally, the number of male full-time tenure/tenure-track African-American faculty declined by .4 points. This decline was due to the University's inability to hire many new African-American faculty despite searches that included diverse applicant pools. In a situation applicable to most SU academic programs and not limited to race or other minority statuses, the University is less able to offer salaries, benefits, and workloads that are competitive and appealing to new PhDs in the academic market.

As the data indicate, Salisbury University is dropping backward in a vital academic objective—faculty salary levels. In two years, faculty salaries as a percentile of AAUP peers have fallen from the 83rd to the 66th percentile at the assistant professor level, from 65th to the 59th at the associate professor level, and from 72nd to the 64th at the level of professor. Market and regionally competitive salaries cannot be achieved without an additional \$2,200,000 ANNUALLY—a staggering amount that is nonetheless essential to attract and retain the highest caliber workforce. Despite the struggles other institutions in other states are having in the current fiscal climate, the AAUP data convincingly indicate that many states have continued their commitment to higher education while Maryland has faltered. As a result, Salisbury University will slide farther behind its Carnegie peers and become less attractive to faculty from all backgrounds.

Finally, the percentage of core faculty teaching lower-division courses has climbed slowly from 56% to 59% despite the University's best efforts to achieve its benchmark of 67%. In the three years prior to the rescissions, SU was able to add 39 new tenured/tenure-track faculty positions. However, to achieve this objective fully, the University would need to hire an additional 18 tenured/tenure-track faculty at a salary and benefits cost of \$1,150,000 annually. The level of funding necessary to hire faculty in sufficient numbers to achieve this benchmark cannot be accomplished without significant additional State allocations or alternative resources.

University-Specific Responses

Objective 3.5: Increase the estimated number of Nursing graduates employed as nurses in Maryland from 36 in 1999 to 43 in 2004. Growth in the number of nurses in the nursing program was dependent upon the completion of the new Henson Science Hall and the renovation of Devilbliss Science Building. Both projects are complete and enrollment in the undergraduate nursing program has surged to record levels. Beginning this year and in subsequent years, the number of graduates will swell resulting in a corresponding increase in employment of SU nursing graduates. However, SU nursing graduates are recruited from across the region. Our graduates' life choices are influenced by the income levels and community appeal offered by regional localities. It is incumbent upon Maryland communities and health care facilities to remain personally attractive and financially competitive. If they do not, our successful efforts of teaching and graduating nurses to meet the State's nursing workforce will become the gain of communities nationwide.

Objective 3.6: Increase the percentage of economically disadvantaged students attending SU from 52.5 percent in 2000 to 55 percent in 2004. The goal for this objective was established during a period when the State of Maryland was attempting to fund the University at a level consistent with the MHEC funding guidelines. However, the trend mirrors SU's place in the funding guidelines and its eroding State resources. While other institutions have also seen their resources decline, Salisbury University students appear especially disadvantaged. As an example, St. Mary's College has a nearly identical percentage of economically disadvantaged students but receives more than \$3,500 more per student from the State of Maryland than does SU. Salisbury University is forced to fund institutional operations through a higher percentage of tuition revenues but is, nevertheless, committed to access by targeting a proportion of all new monies to need-based financial aid.

Objective 5.4 Allocate expenditures on facility renewal from .8% in 1999 to 2% in 2005. The amount necessary to accomplish this objective would be approximately \$1,200,000, or approximately the annual instructional cost of the SU Nursing program. The goal for this objective was externally not institutionally driven and is not achievable given the current fiscal realities and priorities.

Funding: Cost Containment and Efficiencies

Significant cost containment and efficiency efforts have continued as a direct result of State fiscal constraints and Salisbury University's own internal goals to achieve continuous quality improvement. The savings and cost containment efforts have resulted in the reallocation of resources to other critical initiatives and functions. The following represent highlights of those efforts for FY 2004:

Collaboration (\$139,000):

- Salisbury University continues its extensive collaboration with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The two universities participate in two dual degree programs, sponsor a joint graduate degree, the Master of Arts in Teaching, and employ several faculty and staff members as joint employees of both institutions. It is estimated that \$139,000 in salary/benefit costs is saved annually.

Use of Information Technology Equipment (\$20,000)

- Use of multi-functioning machines (i.e., copier that faxes and serves as a printer) reduces the need for personal printers and/or facsimile machines. It also creates an economies of scale when ordering paper and other supplies for the machines (\$18,000 in savings)
- Use of one-card for inter-departmental transfers reduces paper usage and office time in preparing the entries (\$2,000 in savings).

Maintenance (\$193,500):

- The continued use of a total energy management system has allowed the institution to monitor and control energy management and has yielded an average annual savings of 15%. (equating to approximately \$186,000).
- Implementation of call-in maintenance service requests provides an estimated annual savings of \$7,500.

Contingent Labor Force (\$365,700)

- The University's state support contingent II labor pool represents 35 positions with a projected annual savings \$365,700. This savings, however, will be drastically reduced when the University is able to reinstate its contingent conversion plan.

Hiring Freeze/delays (\$2,002,894)

- Due to fiscal constraints in the state and unavoidable, unfunded mandatory increases, the University imposed an internal hiring freeze prior to the state mandated one. For most positions not frozen, a three to twelve month hiring delay was implemented. As a result of these actions, the University reallocated funds (\$2,002,894) from both faculty and staff positions to meet its FY 2004 operating needs.

Web-time Sheets (\$3,000)

- Use of "web-time" reporting for all non-swiper full-time faculty and staff, reduces the amount of paper timesheets purchased and manually processed. Estimated annual savings total \$3,000.

Total Highlighted Cost Containment and Efficiencies: \$2,724,094

Trends Influencing Performance Accountability

According to the Fall 2003 MHEC peer analysis, Salisbury University was funded at \$1,652 per full-time equivalent student (FTES) BELOW its funding peers. This amount would equate to an additional \$9,908,000 in state appropriations annually if the University were to be funded at the average peer funding level per FTES. With this significant funding gap, Salisbury University will be unable to maintain competitive performance against those same peers, let alone achieve institutional objectives for access, academic quality, and facility renewal.

Guideline funding based upon ACTUAL not estimated need indicates that SU is behind its Maryland and institutional performance peers on virtually every funding level. However, on many performance indicators, SU equals or surpasses its sister institutions and performance peers. Minimum funding thresholds are necessary to sustain superior performance across a full array of initiatives, and given the high performance standards already achieved by SU, it would be appropriate, albeit unlikely for the State of Maryland to reward excellence.

Although a reordering of priorities may allow additional internal reallocations to focus on specific initiatives, State funding allocations that are significantly below that of funding peers is negatively influencing those indicators in which SU currently surpasses its own expectations and those of the State. Guideline funding has failed to produce the guideline dollars designated, and the University's funding has continually lagged behind all traditional four-year institutions in the USM. With State allocations to Salisbury University falling to less than \$4,200 per student, the University and its students are forced to support the high cost of academic programs that the State only marginally subsidizes. This funding level is less than the level of funding per student in 1990 and, when adjusted for inflation, is equivalent to less than \$3,000 per student.

The perception that Salisbury University as well as the rest of Maryland higher education were richly funded during the late 90's and first years of the new decade are partially misleading and grossly shortsighted. When funded "richly," Salisbury University has never been funded higher than 82% of the MHEC funding guidelines. The data clearly indicate SU's outstanding performance, yet its funding is consistently at the bottom in any comparison group. Academic quality, access, and affordability cannot be maintained with equal success when resources are insufficient to do so. Although budget reductions may propel desirable and beneficial efficiencies, there is a threshold in which an "efficiency" initiates a genuine decline in quality, access, and service. The very same issues identified as concerns by state agencies, that is, graduating more teachers, graduating more nurses, offering more undergraduate courses by core faculty, maintaining an adequate facilities renewal balance, keeping salaries competitive in order to attract and retain quality faculty, providing access and financial aid to needy students could be accomplished at Salisbury University with an additional annual state allocation of 10 million dollars. Peer funding data show SU is funded at 9.9 million less than the average of our peers. This is a deplorable situation that does little to address the educational priorities and values of this institution, of Maryland students and their families, or of the State.