

History of the University

Committed to advancing the quality of its teachers, in 1922 the state of Maryland sought a suitable location for a two-year state normal school, the first to be built east of the Chesapeake Bay. The city of Salisbury, located at the intersection of the area's chief north-south and east-west travel routes, was a natural choice, not only for its role as "Crossroads of the Delmarva Peninsula," but as the area's economic and residential center and its largest municipality. By September 1925, Salisbury University began its many-named life, first as the *Maryland State Normal School at Salisbury*. For six years, a two-year training program for elementary teachers remained its sole academic offering. In 1931, a third-year course was added, and in 1934 the institution—now renamed the *State Teachers College at Salisbury*—became a four-year college offering a Bachelor of Science degree. In 1947, certification for junior-high teachers and in 1960 senior-high training complemented the elementary program.

The liberal arts and sciences, beginning in 1960 with the creation of a Bachelor of Arts course of study and additional Bachelor of Science degree programs, assumed a central place in the school's curriculum. In 1962, a Master of Education degree heralded the University's first entrance into graduate education. Less frequently cited, a more significant change also began in the early 1960s—enrollment of Salisbury's first African-American students.

The Maryland legislature in 1963 voted to rename the State's five teachers' colleges, dropping the word "teachers" from their names and bringing them under a central governance board. The institution's name was subsequently changed (for the third time) to *Salisbury State College*. The creation of a single Board of Trustees for these state colleges brought new statewide resources but an end to some of Salisbury's campus self-determination and governance. On balance, these changes reflected a new statewide commitment to the liberal arts and sciences and greater statewide direction to Maryland public higher education.

Over the next forty years professional

programs in business, social work, medical technology, respiratory therapy, and nursing brought Salisbury's total undergraduate programs to its current level of forty-two. Several graduate programs in the liberal arts joined education's advanced degrees—Master of Arts in History (1971), Master of Arts in English (1974), and Master of Arts in Psychology (1975; discontinued 2000). Additional professional graduate degrees—a Master of Business Administration (1982) and a Master of Nursing (1986)—soon rounded out an institutional graduate curriculum. Recent graduate degree additions bring the total to thirteen (plus five advanced certificates): Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Education in Public School Administration, Master of Science in Applied Health Physiology (2000), Master of Social Work (2001), a Master of Education Reading Specialist and Master of Science in Math Education (2003), and in 2006 a Master of Science in Geographic Information Systems and Public Administration and a Master of Arts in Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution.

Throughout the University's history, graduate programs have remained small in size—fewer than 10% of collective overall enrollment. Since 1960, quality undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences and a range of professional programs has been the overwhelmingly dominant aspect of the University's programmatic life.

By state legislative action in 1988, Maryland's five state teachers' colleges joined the University of Maryland System (later renamed the University System of Maryland), with a single state Board of Regents as the governing body for eleven degree-granting institutions and two research institutes ranging widely in size and historic purpose. A fourth and then a fifth name change followed, with respective Board of Regents' approval, to recognize Salisbury's increased status as a university, first as *Salisbury State University* (1988) and then its fifth and current identity, *Salisbury University* (2001).

University Environment

Salisbury University is the largest higher education institution on the Eastern Shore of Maryland with a fall 2006 headcount enrollment of 7,383 students and 6,631 FTES (Full-time Equivalent Students). The University is located in Salisbury, which is centrally located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland—that part of the Delmarva Peninsula in Maryland between the Chesapeake Bay on the west, the Atlantic Ocean on the east, the State of Delaware to the north and to the east, and the State of Virginia's Eastern Shore to the south.

First explored by Captain John Smith, the Shore retains much of its historic charm and natural beauty. Because of its miles of shoreline, many rivers, and proximity to major urban centers, the Eastern Shore has become known for its recreational appeal and, increasingly, its economic diversity. Tourism and both recreational and commercial fishing are major regional industries. Agriculture has continued as a vital source of livelihood and commerce since European settlers first arrived in the early 1600's, while an increasing number of high-technology industries, including the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport, promise new and ever more opportunities.

The Atlantic beaches, relatively mild winters, and leisurely lifestyle attract summer vacationers and, in recent times, an influx of retirees, many of whom are natives of northern states relocating their permanent residence. 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 (September 2006), the 2005 nine county population of the Eastern Shore was 425,600. This figure represents a 43% increase from the 1980 census (296,620) and 24% from the 1990 census (343,769). The population is projected to increase by approximately 7.5% every five years for the next two decades.

Salisbury, which is the industrial, commercial, educational, and transportation hub of the Eastern Shore, is its largest city and 8th largest in the state with a municipal population of 26,295. 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 remains largely rural. The 2005 population of Wicomico County was 89,950, an increase of 21% from 1990 and 39% from 1980.

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.

Salisbury University is the cultural center for the region, providing numerous programmatic offerings in lectures, theatre, music, dance, and art exhibitions that are enjoyed annually by thousands of campus and community members. Numerous University-sponsored cultural events are open to the community, most at no cost. A recent economic impact study announced that the University brings some \$350 million annually to the Lower Eastern Shore economy and generates the equivalent of 3,000 local jobs.

The University presents a nationally distinctive case in which all four schools have been endowed: the Richard A. Henson School of Science and Technology, the Charles R. and Martha N. Fulton School of Liberal Arts, the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business, and the Samuel W. and Marilyn C. Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies. Other University endowments have established the Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture, the Bobbi Biron Theatre Program, and the Thomas E. Bellavance Honors Program. Other large donations generated and support The Center for Conflict Resolution, the Salisbury Symphony, and the Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement, among others. Each plays a critical role in responding to the educational, economic, cultural, and social needs of the region.