



---

**STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS**  
**The Accelerating Pace of Change:**  
**How Well Are We Responding?**

---

Salisbury University President Janet Dudley-Eshbach  
Tuesday, April 18, 2017 • 3:30 p.m.  
Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons  
Assembly Hall (Fourth Floor)

In his latest book, *Thank You for Being Late*, Thomas Friedman points to what he terms an “age of accelerations” that is transforming all aspects of life today. A particularly fascinating example is the advent of Airbnb, which developed from an idea – two young men who wanted to generate some income from their spare bedroom. (The “Air” in Airbnb refers to the air mattress they made available to renters.) Their concept grew practically overnight to an immense *virtual enterprise* – a business with, for all intents and purposes, no employees, no walls and very little overhead. Today, Airbnb rents out more rooms than those available through all the major, established hotel chains combined. Could the future of higher education be similarly transformed through technology and the changing circumstances of today’s learners: No walls, fewer faculty and staff, much lower operating costs?

Friedman categorizes three broad areas of change: globalization, climate change and the market (essentially understood as the way economies work and will work in the future). The book can be unsettling, and I’m left wondering how we humans will keep up with the accelerating pace of change. Is the world spinning out of control? Friedman attempts to adopt an optimistic tone, his advice being that we all must “learn to dance in a hurricane.”

The future of higher education policy, in our state and the nation, is perhaps more uncertain than ever following the 2016 presidential and congressional elections. I am drawn to the image “learning to dance in a hurricane” because it suggests how it is possible to thrive and adapt productively, even joyfully, when events around us swirl and leave us questioning the path forward.

Our institution’s path as we look to its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2025 has been one of many successes. Above all, we have seen growth in the size and reputation of Salisbury University. Since 2000 alone we have added major new facilities<sup>1</sup> and grown in enrollment headcount from 6,421 to 8,748. Our campus has become much more inclusive and diverse; total minority and nonresident alien students have increased 227% since 2000 (from 695 to 2,271), making them 27% of the population today (up from 11% in 2000). Moreover, SU introduced the TRiO-ACHIEVE program in 2010, targeting services to promote the success of first-generation, low-income or disabled students; this population recently graduated its first cohort, with a six-year graduation rate of almost 75% compared to 68% for the non-TRiO group.

We also recently have established an Honors College, which, under the direction of Dean Jim Buss, recruited 11% of the entering class last fall and now enrolls 438 students. Complementing Honors is our Nationally Competitive Fellowships Office, led by Dr. Kristen Walton. This office supports students in winning prestigious awards such as the Fulbright. And, at the graduate level, we have seen significant growth in enrollment and the addition of

two doctoral programs. Provost Diane Allen and Dean Clifton Griffin deserve special recognition for promoting the growth in graduate program enrollments, which further strengthens the University's academic reputation and fiscal health.

Public and private capital investments in SU have exceeded \$350 million since 2000. The footprint of the campus also has grown significantly, from 144 acres in 2000 to 220 acres today; from 59 buildings to 89. Just last month, we acquired a new warehouse-type facility on east campus that will serve as space for our 3-D Art programs such as ceramics, sculpture and glass-blowing, thus freeing up much-needed space in Fulton Hall. The SU Foundation also recently facilitated the acquisition of land just south of main campus, approximately 8.6 acres for future development. Special thanks to Mr. Bob Moore, Chairperson of the Salisbury University Foundation Board, for his role in this most recent key property acquisition.

Our operating<sup>2</sup> budgets have grown dramatically as well since 2000, from \$70 million to \$176.4 million. And the projected State support base budget increase for Fiscal Year 2018 is 6.6% or \$3.4 million, the largest percentage increase of any of the University System of Maryland institutions. This operating budget growth has allowed us to make adjustments to our employees' salaries while meeting ever-increasing benefit costs. Today, our faculty and staff salaries are no longer below the median salaries at our peer institutions. While Governor Hogan's budget for fiscal year 2018 does not provide salary increases for state employees, as re-election plans grow closer, I am hopeful that there will be salary increases to announce next year at this time.

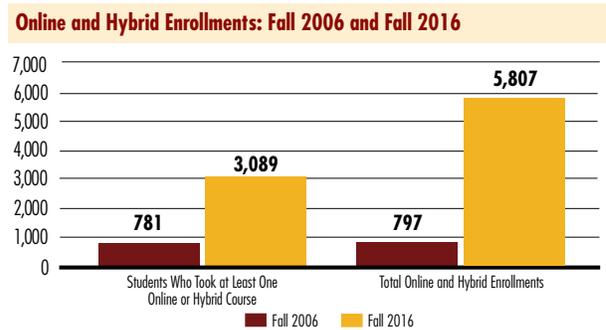
Growth in state funding support since 2000 has helped us manage the costs that are borne by our students and their families. We are grateful for Governor Hogan's and our legislators' commitment to public higher education and for the operating budget increases that will allow us to limit next fall's tuition increases for in-state students to 2%. I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the good work of Eli Modlin, who serves as my Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of Government and Community Relations. Eli, thank you for organizing the University's advocacy and lobbying efforts this legislative season. Special appreciation also goes to Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance Marvin Pyles, who has worked diligently and made great progress in building transparency and decentralizing operating budgets. The Deans and other senior administrators have far greater budget authority as compared to a year ago.

Our work with private donors and corporate fundraising has been essential to ensuring and building upon the "private ivy" feel of our institution. In 2000, the net asset value of the Salisbury University Foundation was \$27.1 million; today, the Foundation's net asset value is \$70.9 million. Thinking in terms of 100s, by the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Salisbury

University, I am confident that the Foundation’s net assets will exceed \$100 million, which is significant for a public comprehensive university only 100 years old. These funds support student scholarships, faculty development and other key University priorities. We are in the very early stages of our next major fundraising campaign. Leadership for the coming campaign will come from members of the Salisbury University Foundation Board and Vice President for Advancement and Executive Director of the Salisbury University Foundation Jason Curtin. In fact, Jason and I will have a major gift announcement later this week.

Modes of instruction and academic program offerings at Salisbury University have evolved in remarkable ways since 2000. We are an institution that has valued more traditional classroom experiences, while at the same time growing online instruction. From the introduction of our first hybrid course in fall 2003, SU has expanded to offer 137 unique courses (with 373 sections) to more than 2,500 students in spring 2017.

In Germany, 111 servicemen and women and their family members currently are enrolled in our Social Work courses, and 22 will graduate in a ceremony on the military base in Kaiserslautern later this month.



Major innovations and technologies have transformed the classroom experience within the walls of our main campus buildings, as well. Salisbury University is the only institution in Maryland that was selected by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) for its project “Re-imagining the First Year of College,” a program that will complement the new Academic Advising Center in boosting student retention and success. While SU boasts the highest four-year graduation rate of all comprehensive institutions in the University System of Maryland, on-going efforts such as the new Advising Center and the AASCU program are hugely important, as it is far more costly to recruit students than it is to retain them once they have enrolled here.

In 2006, I created the long-overdue Center for International Education with the goal of advancing the comprehensive internationalization of the University. The creation of the English Language Institute and acknowledgement of SU as one of the top 40 master’s institutions in the nation for the number of students who graduate with a study abroad experience provide clear evidence of our growing success in becoming a global university.<sup>3</sup> Under the leadership of Assistant Provost for International Education Brian Stiegler, Salisbury University also was selected to participate in the American Council on Education’s Internationalization Laboratory project, which is helping us as we seek to transform aspects

of our curriculum and operations abroad, as well as supporting our goal of recruiting more international students. Many faculty have been involved with the ACE project; special thanks to Drs. Eric Liebgold, Céline Carayon, Art Lembo and Taehyon Nam. Our internationalization efforts will be greatly enhanced in the coming months and years.

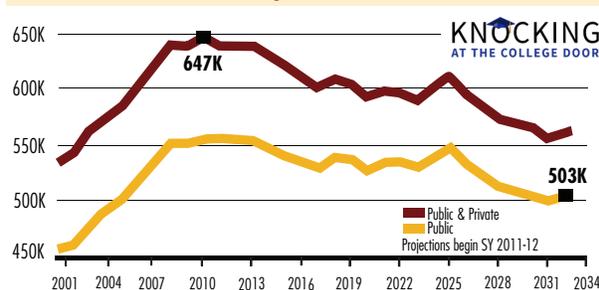
The Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons fosters innovation and the synergy between students, faculty and others, with its technology-rich spaces, Faculty Center, Math Emporium, Writing Center, Nabb Research Center, Graduate Student Commons and Center for Student Achievement, among other key spaces, many of which are not typically found in more traditional library settings. Our new library is truly extraordinary – Special thanks to Deans Pereboom and Hardy for helping us envision what a 21<sup>st</sup>-century library *could be* and then helping to make it a reality.

While we celebrate our many successes, there are, and we will continue to face, extreme challenges to our current ways of doing business. I’ll focus on two key areas in what follows. First, we must change and improve the ways in which we seek to recruit talented students to Salisbury University. Secondly, we must re-think the *ways in which we deliver* high-quality undergraduate and graduate education as well as *what courses and program content* are needed.

Unlike the example of Airbnb I cited earlier, an institution like ours relies heavily on faculty and staff, and our related personnel costs –salaries and benefits – continue to rise. Our economic model depends almost entirely on the students we enroll, and we will be forced to find more cost-effective ways of generating student enrollments.

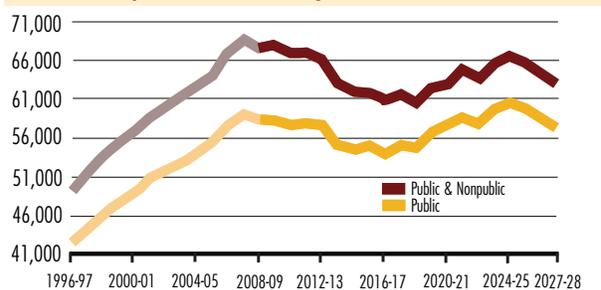
For approximately a decade now, we have been retaining the services of Noel Levitz and the EAB, firms that help us with recruitment strategies and predictive analytics. How can we better utilize the data we are getting to guide our decisions? We aspire to be an even more selective public university, but let us consider the challenges. Here are some indicators of the trends we are experiencing in terms of the prospective applicant pool.<sup>4</sup>

**Profile for Northeast: Overall High School Graduate Trends**



• 599,400 high school graduates, on average, projected per year between school years 2011-12 and 2031-32.  
 • The total number of graduates in the Northeast is not projected to increase after 2011-12, ending at 562,500 in 2031-32.

**Profile for Maryland: Production of High School Graduates**



In addition to the demographics, the University System of Maryland currently leaves enrollment management up to each campus administration; that is, there is no “master plan” that would allocate enrollments System-wide in terms of, for example, how cost effectively a particular campus can educate an undergraduate student. The Maryland publics with which we compete for students are the University of Maryland College Park, the University of Maryland Baltimore County and Towson University. Consider this: In just the past three years alone, College Park has grown the size of its first-time, full-time students, or entering freshman class, by nearly 2,000. The precipitous growth in undergraduate enrollment at College Park has had a ripple effect that has impacted Salisbury University’s selectivity. In order to achieve our desired freshman class size, our acceptance rate has increased. We will continue to work with enrollment management consultants and pursue new strategies, such as cultivating student prospects earlier in their college selection process, considering how best to package financial aid offers, revamping our web presence and developing strategies to increase the numbers of international students, particularly in our graduate programs. But guess what – *Most other institutions are doing the very same things*; the college recruitment process becomes more competitive with each passing year as colleges and universities utilize the services of Noel Levitz and other firms such as Starfish and Royall. Our campus has the look and *feel* of a highly selective public or private – What must we do to better market our institution? Many high school students, transfers and their families simply do not know about Salisbury University, and we must work to change this. Once we do get a student inquiry, our application rate is excellent, 40%, while the national average of inquiry-to-application is only 30%. Kudos to Vice President Dane Foust, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management Aaron Basko and the entire SU enrollment management team. Moving forward, it is imperative that we “open the funnel” in terms of the number of prospective students who learn about our institution and all that Salisbury University has to offer.

Key to stability and possibly future enrollment growth is our diversity efforts. The demographics of our state and the nation are changing, and we must effectively recruit more students – and the faculty and staff students expect to see around campus – from groups that historically have been underrepresented at SU. A diverse and inclusive campus community brings irreplaceable value to our educational experience and work environment, and strengthens us all. We value and strive to create a truly diverse and inclusive environment where the richness of ideas, backgrounds and perspectives of our community helps to broaden our perspectives and moves us forward today and in the future.

The Trump Administration’s proposed billions of dollars in cuts to education will, if approved by Congress, result in major reductions to our work study and Pell Grant programs, underscoring the affordability issue.

It is imperative that we understand these trends and develop strategies to maintain selectivity and overall enrollment. As we all know, many colleges throughout the country are becoming much less selective, smaller and even closing. In this context, it is concerning that we seem unable – or too slow – to accommodate students to high-demand programs, whether these may be in disciplines currently offered such as Nursing and Business, or academic programs that we do not currently offer. We must find ways to increase capacity in high-demand areas. This will require that our academic Deans and Provost make tough decisions regarding internal reallocation of resources.

How well do we respond to changing priorities, student preference, societal realities and workforce needs? We know, for instance, that the demand for experts in fields such as information security, palliative care, long-term care and unmanned aeronautic systems (or drones) are examples of areas in which we could develop certificate programs. We also need to develop academic programs that are attractive in foreign markets to help meet our institutional goal of recruiting greater numbers of international students.

With a greater sense of urgency we must ask ourselves: Do we at Salisbury University offer – and effectively *market* – academic programs that meet emerging needs? What about ways in which interdisciplinary academic offerings might address the growing opioid epidemic in our country? Following the recent presidential elections, I predict there also will be heightened interest and demand in media analysis – Do we, in our Communications Arts, Philosophy, English or Political Science programs, focus specifically on teaching students how to separate fact from fiction in an era of “fake news”? Is there a possibility here for a new, innovative, highly relevant certificate program or new cross-disciplinary course of study? Or, in a world that is increasingly and more immediately global and diverse, how are we preparing our students for the breadth of life experiences they will encounter upon graduation and throughout their lives? Shouldn't *all* students be required to have an alternative cultural experience, whether it's study in another country or completion of community service work in a racial, ethnic or socioeconomic environment that is different from the one in which they grew up? How can we move more quickly to adapt our courses and program offerings so that they are relevant and appealing to prospective students?

One solution to the enrollment puzzle and future cost model will involve offering more programs and growing the numbers of students at the higher education centers throughout the state. I'd like to share a video clip of a Salisbury University student who lives across the Bay Bridge and studies Exercise Science at The Universities at Shady Grove ([www.salisbury.edu/video/Ariel-Blanco](http://www.salisbury.edu/video/Ariel-Blanco)).

Like so many students today, and so many more who in the coming years will be seeking a college education, the student we just saw in the video clip, Ariel Blanco, does not have the resources to relocate to Salisbury and to study on our campus as other students do; it is much more convenient and less costly for him to



take Salisbury University courses at Shady Grove and cost effective for us to offer programs in this way. He may even get his degree without ever having set foot on our campus! These higher education centers are increasingly the focus for growth and funding by the University System's Regents and Chancellor Caret. Moving forward, there will be new incentives for Salisbury University faculty who are willing to offer programs that generate enrollments off site. Our department Chairs and Deans will need to take the leadership role in efforts to ensure program relevancy and timely adaptation to changing needs. As clearly illustrated in the recent presentation by our space consultants, campus space constraints also make it imperative for us to find ways to shift and grow enrollments outside our traditional campus, as Social Work and Exercise Science have done so effectively.

The expansion of Salisbury University's partnerships with the City of Salisbury also may offer new opportunities for enrollments or alternative revenue generation, whether through programs offered to the larger community, services to promote entrepreneurship, or sales at the branch bookstore or "spirit shop," which will be located in the former Plaza building. I know there will be new ideas and initiatives that we have yet to imagine. We have a great partner in Mayor Jake Day; he and City Administrator Julia Glanz, an SU alumna, will help us as we build partnerships to revitalize downtown Salisbury.

Efforts to build support for our larger community also can translate into new sources of revenue. Our recently established Center for Extended and Lifelong Learning, under the leadership of Mary Angela Baker, already has expanded program offerings and will be revenue generating within two years. Other programs which benefit not only the University but the larger area population are the Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture, Delmarva Public Radio, the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, the Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement, and the soon-to-be-established Center for Entrepreneurship, to name just a few.

As demands increase and the pace of change accelerates, we all must develop a greater sense of urgency. Our General Education program has been under review for some time now, and

here I'd like to thank Dr. James King for his steadfast leadership for the ongoing faculty discussions. While it may be understandable and wholly acceptable to take years to debate and revise our General Education requirements, we dare not proceed at a similar pace in considering more urgent issues such as the need to create capacity in high-demand academic program areas or changes to our enrollment management processes. Generally, I would like to see the wheels of higher education move more quickly. However, I do view the implementation of the new College of Health and Human Services a bit differently, in the sense that getting the transition of programs *right* is more important than immediate implementation. As the new College takes shape, we need to be certain to maintain the strength of our Teacher Education programs. Given the announcement of Provost Diane Allen's June 30 retirement, we will take the coming academic semester and, if needed, the entire academic year 2017-18 to consider issues associated with the successful implementation of the new College of Health and Human Services. Leading this process in partnership with Interim Provost Karen Olmstead will be Drs. Bob Joyner and Deb Mathews, working in the coming months as Special Assistants to the Provost for transition to the new College. For the immediate future, I am grateful that Dr. Kelly Fiala has agreed to continue to serve as Interim Dean of the Seidel School, and I also appreciate that Dr. Mike Scott has agreed to serve as Interim Dean of the Henson School.

As we look to the future, leadership also will need to come from department Chairs and Directors, and effective shared governance will be key. Special thanks to the leaders and officers of our governing bodies for faculty, staff and students; these individuals, and so many others, have gone above and beyond their normal responsibilities to help ensure the success of Salisbury University.

I'm asking that *everyone* heed the call to ensure that Salisbury University remains on the path to becoming an even more robust, more diverse and inclusive, moderately-to-highly selective institution. This will require putting aside inertia and the all-too-common resistance to change. Whether we realize it or not, each of us has a higher calling. Education is about so much more than Salisbury University students getting their first job; it is about *values*. Quoting from our draft ACE Internationalization Laboratory report: "In the face of cultural fear and political intolerance, American higher education must redouble its efforts to be inclusive, transnational and global."

Join me. Let us respond to the challenges I've underscored today with a renewed sense of urgency. As President, I may see the challenges and threats on the horizon, but it will take *all of us working together* to build the type of future we want – for our University *and* to ensure that we've effectively addressed the larger challenges of climate change, public health, the need for a more just society and, yes, even the high goal of world peace. Returning to

Thomas Friedman's entreaty, the real question is this: Can we, everyone associated with Salisbury University and vested in the future, learn to dance in a hurricane?

To all the hard-working faculty, staff and students of Salisbury University; to our alumni, donors, board members and community supporters: *Thank you*. Salisbury University has become the outstanding institution it is today because of your sustained support and commitment to excellence.

- 
- 1 Scarborough Student Leadership Center (2001), Henson Science Hall (2002), Support Services (2003), Shoreland Property (2007), Conway Hall (2008), IT Bateman Building (2009), Parking Garage (2009), Maintenance Building (2010), Comprehensive Housing Renovation (2010-2014), Sea Gull Square (2011), Perdue Hall (2011), Henson Medical Simulation Center (2011), Tennis Courts Relocation/Lot H (2015), Tennis Courts Building (2016), Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons (2016), Sea Gull Stadium (2016), Sea Gull Softball Stadium (2017).
  2. Note that capital budget fund allocations and operating budget fund allocations are not fungible.
  3. 2016 Open Doors Report, Institute of International Education (IIE), November 2016.
  4. Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates. Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, December 6, 2016. Regional Dashboard, Northeastern Region, <http://knocking.wiche.edu/nation-region-profile/>.



Thank You.

*Janet Dudley-Eshbach*

Janet Dudley-Eshbach, Ph.D.  
President, Salisbury University



Salisbury  
UNIVERSITY  
*A Maryland University of National Distinction*