

*A Maryland university
of national distinction*

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

Testimony Presented To

The Senate Subcommittee
on Education, Business and
Administration

The House Subcommittee
on Education and Economic
Development

By Janet Dudley-Eshbach
President

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TESTIMONY OF DR. JANET DUDLEY-ESHBACH

President of Salisbury University

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Janet Dudley-Eshbach, and I am proud to be completing my sixth year as President of Salisbury University. I am grateful for this opportunity to share what is now being recognized as one of the more compelling success stories in American higher education. It is also my privilege to thank each of you for your steadfast support of Maryland's colleges and universities and to respectfully ask for your support of Governor Ehrlich's proposed Fiscal Year 2007 budget.

A Maryland University of National Distinction

In recent years, Salisbury University has earned national acclaim despite receiving a lower level of state funding, per student, than all but one of our peer institutions. For the ninth consecutive year, SU has been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the top 10 public universities of its kind in the northern U.S. SU was also named one of the "Best 361 Colleges" in the nation by *The Princeton Review* and as one of America's "367 Most Interesting Schools" in *Newsweek-Kaplan's America's Hottest Colleges*.



Last month, *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* magazine listed Salisbury as one of its "100 Best Values in Public Colleges" for 2006.

These recognitions validate Salisbury University's ability to balance our rigorous standards of competitiveness and quality with a commitment to remain affordable and accessible to deserving students, and to establish an unprecedented level of institutional diversity. The following testimony expands upon our success in each of these vital priority areas.

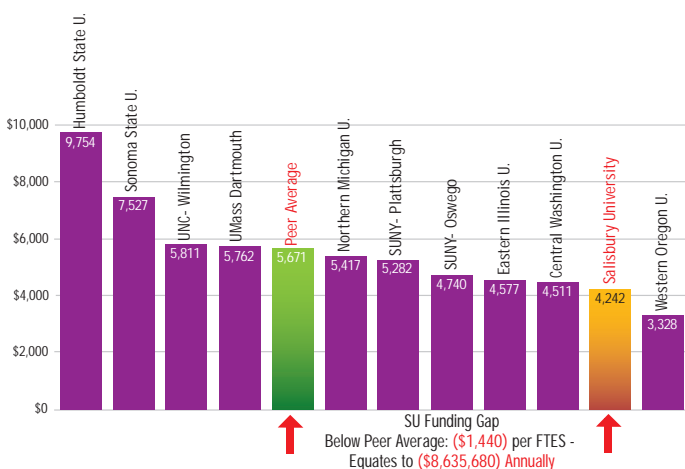


■ Competitiveness and Quality

The student body currently enrolled at Salisbury University is among the most accomplished of any in our institution's history. The average SAT score of our 2005 freshman class was 1136—15 points higher than last year and 112 points higher than our State average. The average high school grade point average for incoming freshmen was 3.46, and 56 percent of all current SU students graduated in the top 25 percent of their class. In addition, SU has posted the highest four-year graduation rates in the University System of Maryland for 18 consecutive years.

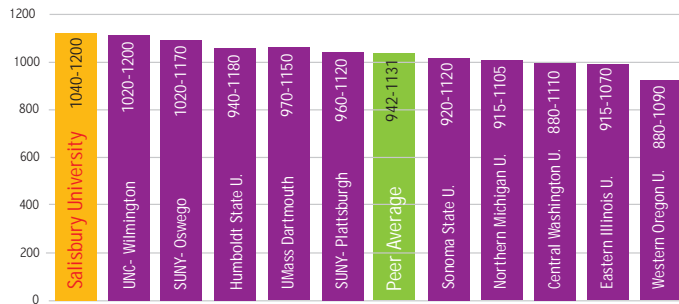


State Appropriations per FTES: 2005

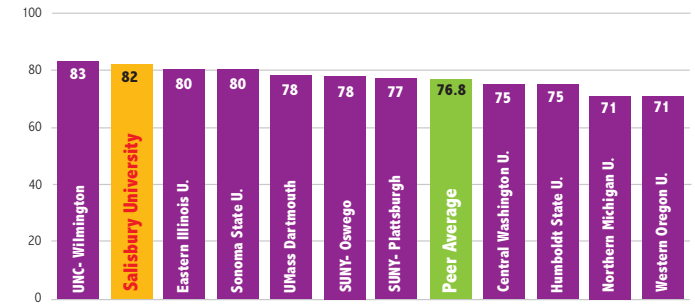


Salisbury University vs. Our Performance Peers

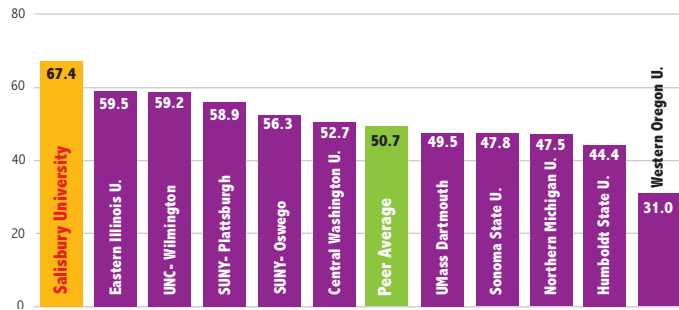
SAT Ranges



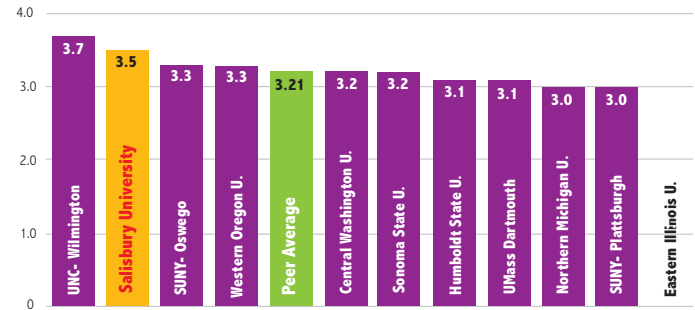
Average 2nd-Yr Retention Rate (%)



Six-Year Graduation Rate (%)



Average High School GPA Scores



Salisbury University continues to outperform, by substantial margins, our performance peers in a broad range of performance benchmarks.



Access and Affordability

The 2004 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Higher Education recognized the challenges presented by rising tuitions and fees at Maryland's colleges and universities, and the concomitant decline in need-based financial aid. The report called upon Maryland's institutions to "review their aid programs and to target more funds to support students, including transfer students, with financial aid."

Salisbury University has addressed this challenge with extraordinary results, in spite of the challenges posed by relatively low tuition rates and state funding constraints. In Fiscal Year 2001, my first as President, Salisbury devoted just \$133,250 to institutional, need-based financial aid.

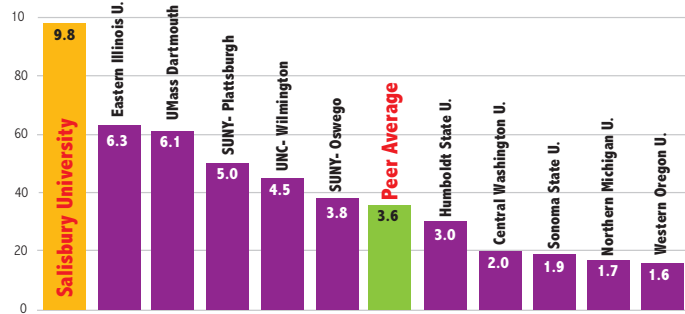
In FY 2006, that amount has risen to \$930,000—**an increase of 600 percent**. This effort has coincided with the work of the Salisbury University Foundation to raise scholarship funds through the private sector.

While I am extremely proud of our efforts to make a Salisbury education a more attainable option for more students than ever, I remain mindful that we still lag far behind our performance peers in our delivery of need-based financial aid. With that in mind, we are very pleased that the Governor's budget proposal reflects a commitment to increasing the amount of need-based aid available at Salisbury University and the entire University System of Maryland (USM).





% African-American Of All Undergraduates (Fall 2004)



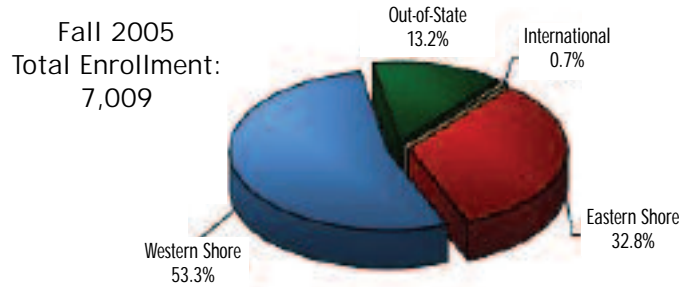
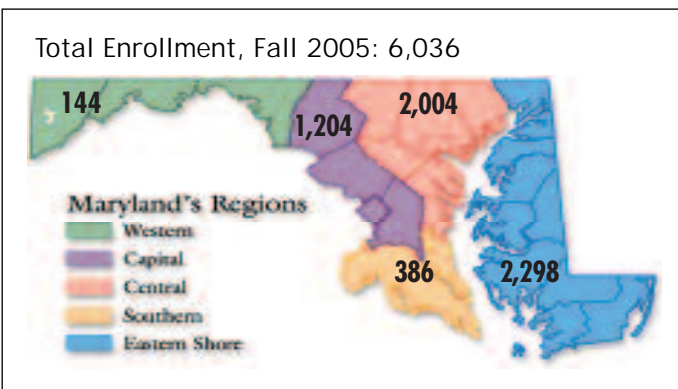
Diversity

It is my pleasure to report that the student body enrolled at Salisbury University today is more racially, ethnically and geographically diverse than any in this institution's history. Total minority enrollment in Fall 2005 increased by 4.7 percent over 2004 and, at nearly 16 percent of the total student population, has nearly doubled the total of just 10 years ago. A breakdown of these figures confirms that SU's efforts to diversify its student population are succeeding across the board:

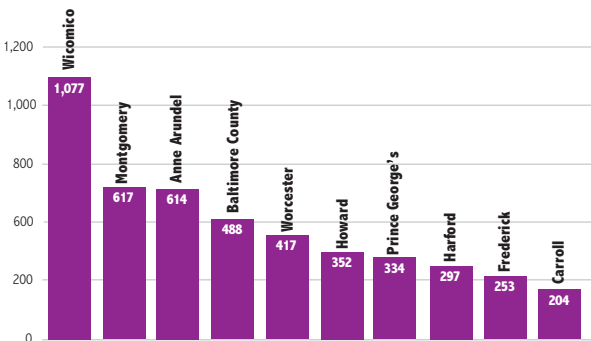
- African-American undergraduate enrollment increased by nearly four percent above last year and, at 645 students, has increased by 55 percent in just five years.
- Latino undergraduate enrollment increased by 10 percent over last year and, at 160 students, has increased by 167 percent in five years.

- Asian-American undergraduate enrollment remained at an all-time high in 2005 and, at 167 students, has increased by 78 percent in five years.
- Salisbury University's student body now includes representatives from 30 nations, including the United States.

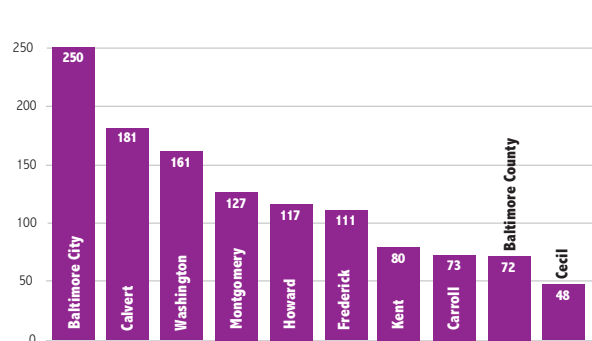
Over the past decade, as Salisbury University's reputation has expanded beyond the Eastern Shore and throughout the entire State, we have experienced a dramatic increase in the percentage of students who hail from "the Western Shore." In 1996, 39 percent of our total student body came from the Eastern Shore, compared to 38 percent from the rest of the State. In the 2005-06 academic year, "Western Shore" students comprise 53 percent of our total student population, and 68 percent of our in-state enrollment. Our growing reputation as a competitive yet affordable institution, the quality of our campus experience and convenient access to Maryland's metropolitan regions have combined to make Salisbury University a statewide institution of first choice.



Top 10 MD Counties, By Enrollment



Top 10, By Enrollment Growth Percentage, 1994-2005



An Economic Engine for Maryland

“Salisbury University was one of the primary reasons for locating our microwave filter business in Salisbury. The quality and reputation of its programs is instrumental in providing, attracting and maintaining a world-class workforce. We are very fortunate to have an institution of this caliber in our community.”

Kevin Bernstein; President, Lorch Microwave;
Salisbury University, Class of 1992

Salisbury University’s rise to national acclaim has coincided with its emergence as one of the most dependable engines of Maryland’s knowledge-based economy. Our four professional schools—the Fulton School of Liberal Arts, the Henson School of Science and Technology, the Perdue School of Business, and the Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies—are producing many of our state’s most sought-after health care professionals, high-tech workers, business executives and teachers.

Our institution’s emphasis on workforce development, with an eye to the global marketplace, is evidenced by our most popular fields of study. Currently, our five largest undergraduate majors are Business Administration, Elementary Education, Communication Arts, Nursing and Biology. We are proud of our institution’s ability to respond to the needs of the knowledge-based economy, albeit mindful of the budgetary and physical challenges that have accompanied this success.

For example, enrollment in Salisbury’s Nursing Department expanded to 428 in Fall 2005—an 87 percent increase since 2000. This is a reflection of an acute demand within the health care industry for Bachelor of Science (B.S.)-level nurses.

The magnitude of our nursing enrollment growth, combined with the labor and capital-intensive nature of the program and the rising costs of clinical placement, has placed extraordinary pressure upon our operating budget. I commend the attention that you have given this important health care issue in recent years and am grateful that Governor Ehrlich’s proposed operating budget addresses this critical need.

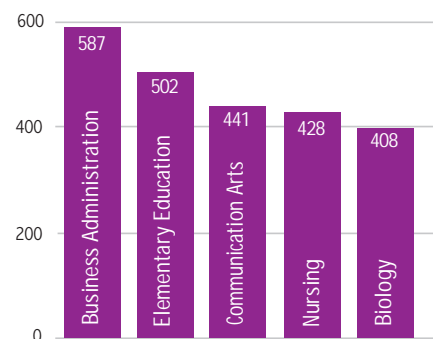
However, we are not relying solely upon State support to address key priorities. As I have pointed out to this Committee in past years, all four of Salisbury’s schools are privately endowed—a relative rarity for institutions like ours. Consistent with the guidance of the Governor, the General Assembly and the Board of Regents, we have become more aggressive—and more innovative—in identifying opportunities for public-private partnerships. For example, Salisbury has joined forces with Peninsula Regional Medical Center (PRMC), our region’s largest hospital, to expand the pool of future medical professionals. PRMC has agreed to contribute \$20,000 a year

for three years toward the salary of a respiratory therapy instructor.

Salisbury University’s Business, Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) provides our region’s private sector leaders with information—such as consumer trends, demographic data and sector forecasts—that helps guide long-term business decisions. Two BEACON programs of note have proven extremely valuable in meeting the needs of our region’s diversifying economy. The GrayShore initiative was established to educate service providers and local governments about the Shore’s growing aging population and to help them prepare for the effect of this demographic trend on our economy, workforce and service needs. Bienvenidos a Delmarva, a coalition of over 70 service providers, helps provide our region’s growing immigrant population with the support services, community relationships and legal resources needed to secure stable, good-paying jobs.



Top 5 Undergraduate Majors, By Enrollment, Fall 2005



Along with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, the University of Maryland College Park and Old Dominion University, SU has entered a collaborative relationship with the Mid-Atlantic Institute for Space Technology (MIST), a public-private partnership working to harness and promote the economic potential of space-related industries. Finally, a recent BEACON study concluded that Salisbury contributes over \$350 million annually to the Eastern Shore's economy and generates the equivalent of 3,000 local jobs.

A Center of Cultural and Civic Vibrancy

It is now widely accepted that a region's cultural vitality is also an important determinant of its economic health. In this respect, Salisbury University performs an indispensable service by providing the Eastern Shore with a vibrant center of fine arts, civic discourse and intercollegiate sports.



The Salisbury Symphony Orchestra, comprised of both students and community members, is currently celebrating its 20th year of memorable performances. The Bobbi Biron Theatre Program at Salisbury University serves a dual role as an academic theatre to SU students and a regional theatre for Eastern Shore audiences, and currently stages three mainstage productions, two studio productions and one studio production each season.

The Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture memorializes the Eastern Shore's extraordinary past by collecting and preserving archival materials. Our Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art boasts the world's most comprehensive collection of wildfowl carving, and offers an innovative range of education programs for K-12 students that promote wildlife protection and ecological awareness.

Since its 1999 inception, the Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE) has provided students with a vehicle for meaningful involvement in politics, government and community life. For example, the Institute's Presidential Citizen Scholar Program provides students with both the

classroom and practical experience that helps them become effective public servants.

PACE also serves our region as a non-partisan "public square" for ideas and debate. The Institute's Paul S. Sarbanes Lecture Series has attracted leaders of national renown to Salisbury University, including Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and U.S. Representative and civil rights leader John Lewis. The survey research performed at PACE provides the public with an important window into public sentiment, and does much to inform the thinking of our region's decision makers.

Meanwhile, our NCAA athletic programs continue to be a great source of university and civic pride. In an era where "three-peats" at any level are an increasingly difficult accomplishment, our women's field hockey and men's lacrosse teams have each captured three consecutive NCAA Division III titles. Our baseball team is also in the midst of an extraordinary run of success, logging five consecutive NCAA tournament appearances, four 30-win seasons and two trips to the Division III World Series in the first half of this decade. Finally, our football team completed a successful 7-3 season in 2005 by defeating our friends from Frostburg State for the Regents Cup and hosting the ECAC Southeast Bowl.



Salisbury's Future: Innovation, Accountability, Results

While the faculty, staff and administration of Salisbury University can look with justifiable pride upon our record of accomplishment, I want to assure this committee that we do not intend to rest on our laurels. We are continuing to explore ways in which we can improve the quality of the learning experience for our students, prepare our graduates even more effectively for the knowledge-based workforce, and manage our public and private resources even more responsibly.

One innovative learning approach that we are strongly considering, as part of the second phase of the USM's Effectiveness and Efficiency (E&E) Project, is a "course-based curriculum." This model, now used at many prestigious private colleges and universities, uses courses instead of credit hours as the basic measure of academic content. While our current credit-based curriculum requires at least 40 courses of

three credits apiece for a degree, students in a course-based curriculum would take 32-35 courses to satisfy major and graduation requirements.

While we have not yet made a final decision, we do believe that there are compelling arguments in favor of this curriculum model. The reduction in the number of courses, coupled with an increased emphasis on coursework performed outside of the classroom, would ease the demand for classroom use and make it easier for Salisbury to accommodate enrollment growth. The additional time for each course would allow faculty to present course material in greater depth and foster greater interaction between instructors and students, particularly majors. These outcomes would help increase retention and graduation rates and are consistent with Salisbury University's intimate, engaged learning culture.



While continuing to pursue even higher benchmarks for competitiveness and diversity, Salisbury has increased its transfer enrollment by 25 percent since 2001. We recently announced a program to provide a limited number of institutional scholarships to Maryland community college graduates with a high level of achievement. We have recently entered into several articulation agreements with community colleges across the State, which ensure that credits earned in a particular department at the community college will be fully accepted at Salisbury University. This reciprocity eliminates one of the biggest hurdles facing transfer students attempting to earn their bachelor's degrees in four years. Our success in remaining affordable through increased financial aid opportunities and reasonable limits on tuition growth also will ensure that Salisbury remains an attractive option for transfer students.

Finally, we hope to have the resources in the coming years to establish a greater presence in Maryland's distance learning centers. Salisbury University, along with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Washington College, currently offers upper-division courses at the Eastern Shore Higher Education Center, located at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills. Programs such as these are indispensable to students in regions that are not served by four-year institutions, and save many students money by eliminating a long commute or the need for housing.

The Fiscal Year 2007 Budget: A New Day for Salisbury University

The Fiscal Year 2007 higher education budget proposed by Governor Ehrlich is essential to our ability to manage the growth of the years ahead, remain accessible to deserving students and maintain our nationally-recognized standards of quality. If approved by the General Assembly, the Governor's budget will elevate Salisbury's annual State funding from \$27.5 million in 2006 to \$31.7 million in 2007. While we will continue to trail most of our performance peers and USM counterparts in funding per full-time equivalent student, this funding support will enable us to meet the expectations established by the Board of Regents, the Governor and the legislature.

Much of this new funding will be dedicated to mandatory expenses such as energy and employee health care, both of which have increased dramatically in recent years. This budget would allow Salisbury to accept 323 new students in the 2006-07 academic year, in accordance with our designation by the Board of Regents as an enrollment growth institution. The reasonable limits on tuition increases and the new investment in need-based financial aid will help Salisbury University remain an affordable option for deserving students. This operating budget will also allow us to hire additional faculty and provide more competitive salaries for our current faculty—both of which are needed if we are to accommodate enrollment growth while maintaining current class sizes and intimate, interactive learning environments.

Through responsible fiscal stewardship, extraordinary support from private donors and an institutional dedication to the principles of affordability, quality and diversity, Salisbury University has earned national acclaim despite receiving lower levels of state support than our national peers.

We believe this budget proposal represents an acknowledgment of our record of success, and a vote of confidence in our ability to sustain this momentum. The funds contained in this budget will enable us to accommodate growth, keep our institution affordable and accessible, and give us the resources to make an even greater contribution to Maryland's knowledge-based economy. It is essential to our future success, and I respectfully ask for your support.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and for your consideration.





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RESPONSES TO LEGISLATIVE ANALYST OVERVIEW QUESTIONS

The President should comment on what practices will be used to increase retention for all students.

Salisbury University's overall second-year retention rate currently ranks a close second among our 11 performance peer institutions, and, as noted in the analysis, our minority retention rates are also on the rise. We recognize that continued progress in this area is vital to Salisbury's success.

We have numerous initiatives underway that will further improve retention rates. We are committed to preserving a high standard of academic quality by filling core faculty positions as they are vacated and by planning to further reduce our dependence on part-time and adjunct faculty. In addition, we are committed to reinvesting in key student services, many of which sustained staff reductions when our general fund appropriation was drastically reduced in 2002. While Salisbury University does not offer remedial services, last November we opened a new University Writing Center that provides students with the professional and peer tutelage that enables them to refine their writing skills.

Salisbury University is also one of only 24 institutions in the nation currently participating in the *Foundations of Excellence* task force. This initiative is designed to use improvements to the student orientation process and in freshman classes to facilitate a more seamless transition from high school to college. The *Foundations of Excellence* model has improved retention rates on other campuses, and we expect to see similar results on Salisbury's campus over time.

The President should comment on the low percentage of African-American and minority students enrolled. The President should also comment on what plans SU has in the future to increase African-American and minority student enrollment at SU.

Salisbury University's minority enrollment is at an all-time high and continuing to grow. As mentioned in my testimony, we have increased African-American undergraduate enrollment by 55 percent in the past five years. During that time, we have increased Asian-American undergraduate enrollment by 78 percent and Latino undergraduate enrollment by 167 percent. Total minority enrollment in Fall 2005 increased to nearly 16 percent of our overall student population—nearly doubling the total of just 10 years ago.

To continue our progress, Salisbury University has established a series of strategic relationships with high schools across the state and region, focusing specifically on college preparation programs for minority students. Through programs such as *College Bound* in Baltimore City and Prince George's County, *Upward Bound* in several Eastern Shore counties and *DC Cap* in the District of Columbia, potential applicants travel to Salisbury by bus to experience campus life, attend "mock classes" taught by real faculty and meet with current minority students. These successful programs increase the visibility of our campus and reinforce the idea that a Salisbury University education is an attainable goal.

Minority students who have the potential to succeed at the post-secondary level frequently face two obstacles. First, many students from low-income households and school districts are unaware of higher education opportunities that are available, and of the preparation needed in order to take advantage of them. The second obstacle is inadequate preparation in science and mathematics—which, of course, is a well-documented subject of national concern.

One of our most innovative programs addresses both of these challenges. Supported by MHEC grants, Salisbury University has partnered with the Somerset County Public Schools' Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (*GEAR UP*) to help Somerset's minority students prepare for college-level work and to help parents and students become more aware of the broad range of higher education opportunities that are attainable.

This program began in 2000 with about 200 seventh-grade students. Over the years, SU has provided this cohort of students with campus visits, tutoring and mentoring services, and exercises in mathematics, writing, reading and laboratory sciences. This original group of students will graduate from Somerset County high schools in 2006, and we are confident that they will be far better prepared to succeed at the next level. While Salisbury University will certainly be the first choice for some of these students, they will emerge with the tools to succeed at the college or university of their choice.

We look forward to building upon the success of these programs while identifying new, innovative strategies to grow minority student enrollment.

The President should comment on how SU will accommodate an additional 323 students given current space limitations. The President should also discuss how the additional general funds will be spent.

While space limitations remain a constant challenge on Salisbury's campus, we have the capability to accommodate enrollment growth next year through both innovative space management and an ongoing increase in off-campus coursework. Last year the University began using a software program, *Ad-Astra*, a program that facilitates maximum use of classroom and laboratory space.

A greater percentage of Salisbury University coursework is now being conducted away from our main campus, and we expect that trend to continue next year and beyond. This is due to the enhanced course offerings that are available at Professional Development Sites (PDS) and at distance learning facilities like the Eastern Shore Higher Education Center at Chesapeake College. In addition, more of our students are now taking advantage of online course offerings, internship experiences and opportunities to study abroad. This allows the University to maximize its enrollment potential and achieve operational efficiencies. The University intends to accommodate short-term parking demand by leasing space

near campus, while moving forward with plans for construction of our first parking garage in 2008.

Salisbury University's long-term physical capacity will be significantly enhanced by the construction of two new buildings. Our new Teacher Education and Technology Center (TETC), a three-story, 165,000 square foot facility, will house our Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies and some departments of the Fulton School of Liberal Arts. Construction is scheduled to begin this fall, with completion slated for 2009. Planning is also underway for a new building that will replace and expand the facilities currently supporting the Franklin Perdue School of Business and its instructional, research and public service programs.

The majority of the additional general funds that Salisbury University expects to receive—\$2.2 million—will be used for mandatory costs such as energy, employee health care, facilities renewal and financial aid.

Our \$1.8 million enrollment growth allocation will enable us to hire additional faculty and staff to accommodate the increase in our student population. Another \$200,000 will be used to leverage private support through our capital campaign.



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