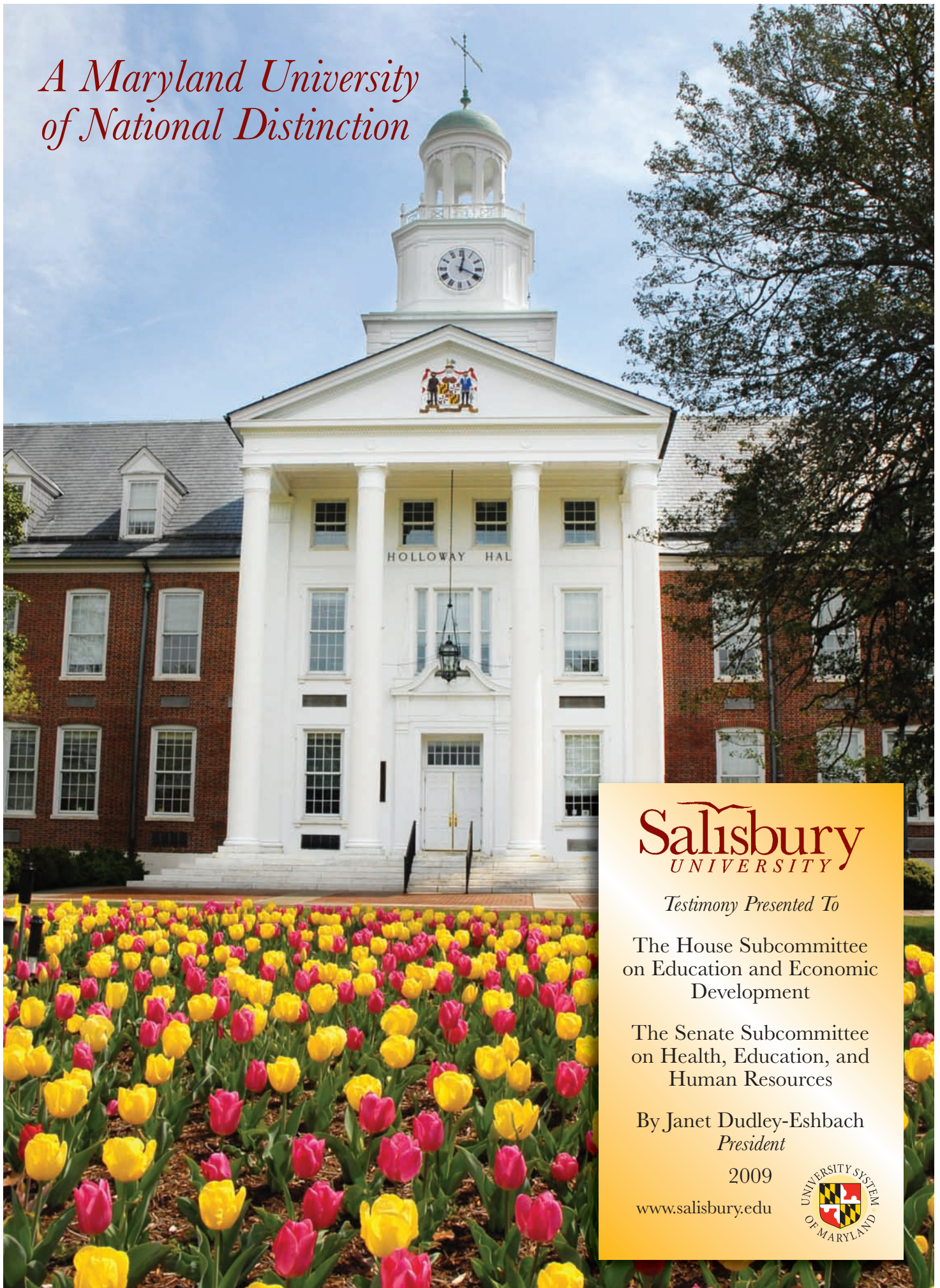


*A Maryland University
of National Distinction*



Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

Testimony Presented To

The House Subcommittee
on Education and Economic
Development

The Senate Subcommittee
on Health, Education, and
Human Resources

By Janet Dudley-Eshbach
President

2009

www.salisbury.edu



Testimony of Dr. Janet Dudley-Eshbach

President of Salisbury University



Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. My name is Janet Dudley-Eshbach, and I am completing my ninth year as the President of Salisbury University. I am very proud of the efforts of all of Salisbury University's faculty, staff, and students. Their hard work has enabled the University to balance

continued growth with the increasing quality and reputation that have earned SU the national eminence captured in our moniker *A Maryland University of National Distinction*.

Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to Governor O'Malley, the General Assembly, the Chancellor, the Regents, and the members of this Subcommittee for their hard work on behalf of public higher education. These responsibilities are difficult under any circumstances. They are especially challenging in light of our current fiscal crisis, when so many important needs across our State are vying for so few dollars. Governor O'Malley's and your continued support for higher education in Maryland is laudatory and visionary. For it is in these most difficult of times when investment in higher education becomes even *more* important. Maryland's institutions of higher education will retrain those who have lost their jobs, educate the diverse high school graduates of the future, complete the research that will provide new avenues for



technology and sustainability, provide the teachers and nurses that our workforce so critically needs, and continue to build the hope of a better future.

Salisbury University continues to be one of the University System of Maryland's most impressive success stories and the State's best return on its investment. SU has transformed its national reputation, the aesthetics of our campus, the quality of our students, and the way teaching and learning occurs in our classrooms. I am so proud to serve this outstanding University and to lead its talented and dedicated faculty and staff. I hope you will agree that your support has been well founded as I share with you some of Salisbury University's highlights of the last year.



SU at a Glance: Fall 2008

Total Enrollment:7,868	Student Profile:
SchoolUndergraduate Enrollment	• from 31 states (including D.C.),
• Fulton School of Liberal Arts2,081	62 foreign countries
• Henson School of Science & Technology1,505	• average entering freshman GPA: 3.53
• Perdue School of Business.....1,678	Faculty Profile:
• Seidel School of Education & Professional Studies.....1,375	• 379 full time
Undergraduate Majors:41	• degrees from 131 institutions, 42 states (including D.C.), 4 foreign countries
Graduate Programs:13	• 93% of tenure track with terminal degree
Student:Faculty Ratio:17:1	

A Maryland University of National Distinction

Salisbury University continues to garner excellent rankings and national attention for the USM and the State of Maryland. Last fall, for the 12th consecutive year, SU was named one of *U.S. News & World Report's* Top Public Universities (Master's category North). Ranked seventh, SU maintains its status as the highest placing public Master's-level university in Maryland. And for the 10th

consecutive year, *The Princeton Review* named Salisbury University one of the nation's best colleges in its publication, *The 368 Best Colleges*. These rankings were followed in December with SU's being recognized by *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* magazine as one of its top 100 "Best Values in Public Colleges." This declaration was echoed by *The Princeton Review* which, in partnership with *USA Today*, named SU among the Top 50 "Best Value" Public Colleges in the nation for 2009. Acknowledging our affordable tuition coupled with our excellent academic programs and student achievements, these accolades provide strong evidence of the high



caliber of SU's faculty and staff, the extraordinary private and corporate gifts that help SU to withstand challenging times, and the excellent fiscal stewardship that impacts every area of this institution and sustains our momentum.

Balancing Quality, Access, and Enrollment Growth

Students and their families are noticing SU. Our student demand last fall was the highest in our history, when more than 7,200 applicants vied for 1,200 freshman seats. Because of this strong demand, last fall's freshman class presented the highest academic quality in the institution's history, with average SAT scores in the range of 1550 to 1800 (1040 to 1210, two part) and incoming grade point averages at 3.53. In its second full year, the SAT-optional pilot program also continues to prove successful in attracting high-quality students.¹

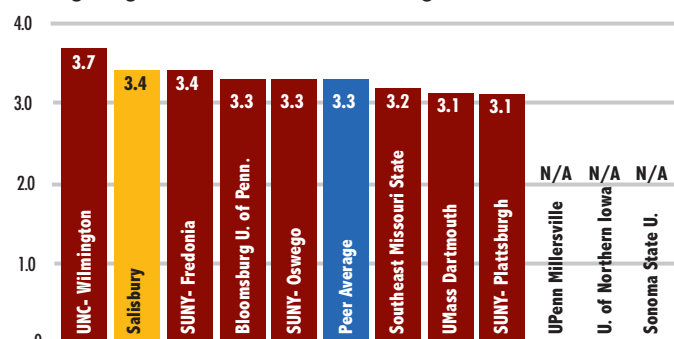
We are competing for Maryland's best and brightest students, and we are keeping them. In fall 2007, our average second-year retention rate of 81 percent ranked second among our national performance peers. In fall 2008, SU's second-year retention rate increased to 82.8 percent. And our six-year graduation rate of 69.9 percent (2000 cohort) ranks us well above the peer average of 57.3 percent.

As a USM-designated growth institution, I am pleased to report that Salisbury University again met and exceeded its

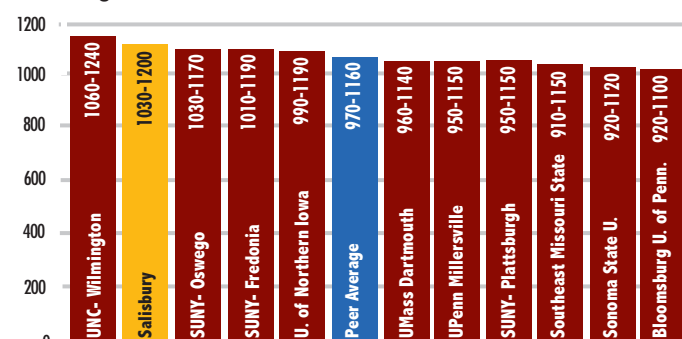
¹ The first cohort of the SAT optional experiment will graduate in 2011.

Salisbury University vs. Our Performance Peers

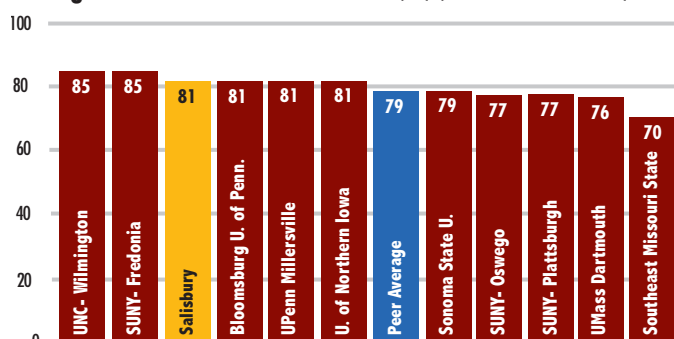
Average High School Grade Point Average (Fall 2006*)



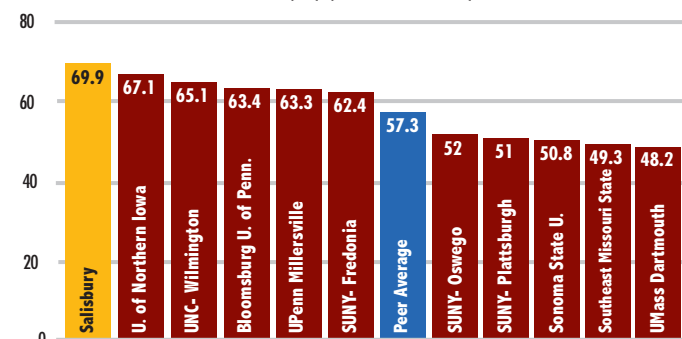
SAT Ranges, Two Part (Fall 2007*)



Average Second-Year Retention Rate (%) (2002-05 Cohorts)



Six-Year Graduation Rate (%) (2000 Cohort)



Data Source for Graphs: Salisbury University Office of University Analysis, Reporting and Assessment

* The last year for which peer data is available.



2008-2009 target for enrollment. The total student enrollment for the fall 2008 semester stood at 7,868, with more than 7,000 of these undergraduate students. We anticipate holding enrollment for freshmen and transfers at 2008 levels in fall 2009 because of budget reductions and the hiring freeze.

Enhancing Campus Diversity

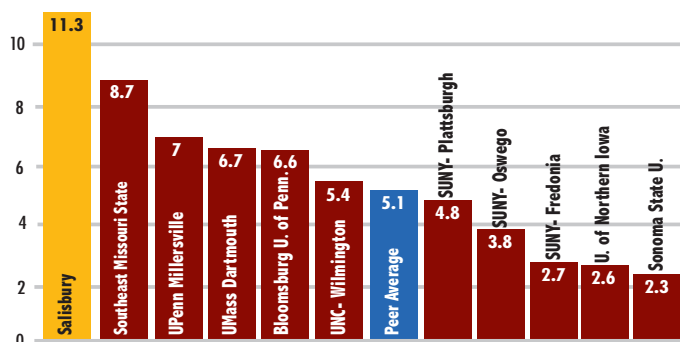
One of the benchmarks of my presidency has been the establishment of a student body that reflects the rich ethnic and racial diversity of our State. I am proud to report that we are meeting and exceeding that goal. The fall 2008 student population is the most racially and ethnically diverse in SU history—minority student enrollment has nearly doubled over the past 10 years and now comprises about 17 percent of SU’s total students. At 890, African-American student enrollment is the highest in SU history. Hispanic and Asian-American student enrollments are also at all-time highs and continue to grow. Significantly, the average African-American six-year graduation rate among our national peers is 41.7 percent (2000 cohort). At 56.3 percent, SU’s six-year graduation rate for African-Americans far exceeds our peer average.

Closing the Achievement Gap

SU is proud to have one of the smallest achievement gaps (difference between retention and graduation rates when compared with white students) for African-American students in the USM. Similarly, a higher percentage of Pell grant recipients at SU graduated within four and six years as compared to overall USM four- and six-year graduation rates. To close this gap further, in 2008 SU developed the Salisbury University Plan for Closing the Achievement Gap and celebrated last fall the opening of the Center for Student Achievement (CSA). Since its opening, the CSA has offered a variety of academic support services to an average of 35 students per day. In addition, to widen communication and strengthen our focus on closing the achievement gap, the Council for Student Achievement and Success was formed in 2008 by faculty and staff across campus to monitor initiatives, suggest interventions, and measure success. As plans to develop living-learning communities and increase student engagement continue to be implemented on campus, coupled with the added academic assistance we hope to provide, I am confident that we will continue to narrow the achievement gap in the years to come. Our progress has been slowed, however, by the inability to hire new staff in the CSA.

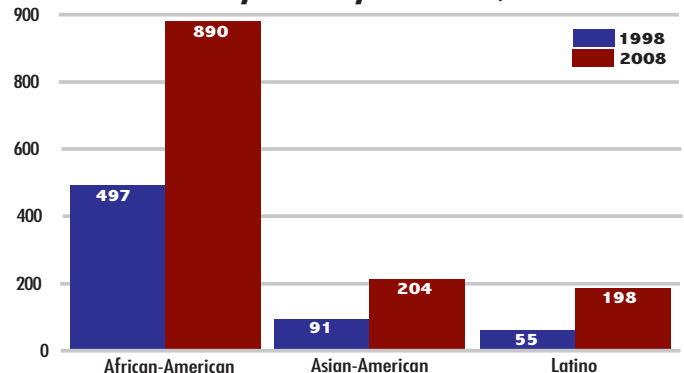


% African-American of All Undergraduates (Fall 2007*)

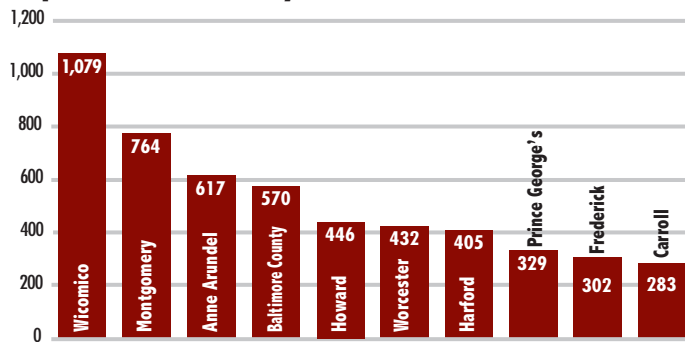


* The last year for which peer data is available.

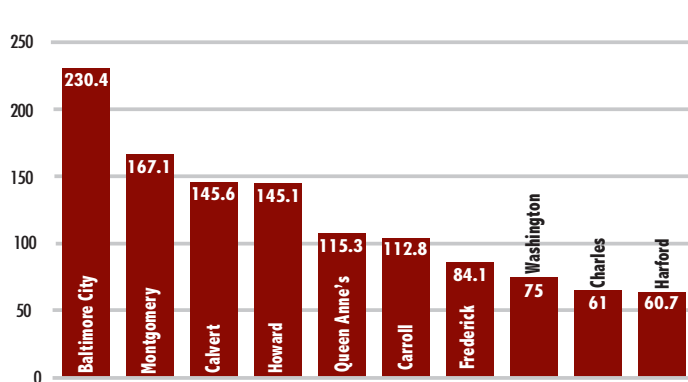
Total Enrollment by Ethnicity and Race (1998 vs. 2008)



Top 10 MD Counties by Enrollment (2008)



Top 10 MD Counties by Enrollment Growth (%) (1998-2008)



Meeting Workforce Demands NURSING

SU made tremendous strides last year in our efforts to work in strategic ways to alleviate the critical nursing shortage. Enrollments are steady in both our traditional and our second-degree programs. In fall 2008, of the 453 undergraduate nursing majors, 187 were enrolled at the junior or senior level.

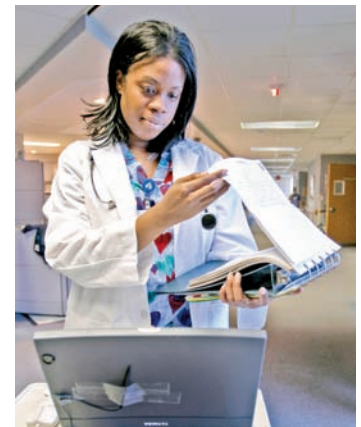
In 2008, SU received a grant for \$261,000 administered by MHEC. That grant allowed us to create in 2008 a new master's track, the Clinical Nurse Educator, to increase the number of nursing faculty. Educating new faculty is a critical



need to be filled if nursing programs are to increase student capacity. This new track already has nine students, doubling SU's graduate-level nursing students to 18. This is our third graduate-level nursing track, along with Family Nurse Practitioner and Health Care Leadership. A second purpose of this grant was to create a seamless transition for practicing RNs into graduate education. The grant enabled SU to launch an RN-to-M.S. program, with all of its undergraduate courses offered in distance format. Five students are enrolled in the program at present, and this number promises to grow in the future.

In addition, Nursing Department faculty developed three grant proposals, two of which are currently under consideration and a third that will be submitted this week. A \$160,000 New Careers in Nursing grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation would fund unrestricted scholarships (\$10,000 per student) for second-degree career change students from under-represented groups including minorities and men, as well as economically disadvantaged students.

A second grant is under consideration by the Maryland Hospital Association's *Who Will Care* grant program. This \$20,000 planning grant would allow us to explore the feasibility of creating a state-of-the-art, high-tech, simulation lab for specialized experiences in



labor and delivery, newborn, and pediatric care. A third and very exciting grant for \$800,000 would be part of the Nurse Support Program administered by MHEC. This grant would allow SU to work with our hospital partners to develop expert practicing nurses into clinical faculty. The three-year grant would provide salary support for two clinical faculty positions in fall 2009 and one additional in fall 2010. With these additions, SU would plan to expand enrollment in its second-degree undergraduate program by 50 percent in three years. Ultimately, 70 percent of the salaries of those new staff would be paid by our hospital partners. All of these potential resources would create important opportunities to increase the number of students in our nursing program.

SU also has implemented a number of initiatives to improve NCLEX pass rates for our students, and those initiatives are showing results. Overall scores improved from a pass rate of 83 percent in 2007 to 90 percent in 2008. And second-degree program graduates scored a 100 percent pass rate for 2006 and 2007; that trend continues for those December 2008 graduates who have taken the test to date.

Finally, SU's nursing program has much to be proud of, as this year, they were reaccruited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education for the maximum 10-year timeframe in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. All of the efforts described here, and many of those which you do not hear about, are important in eliminating the critical shortage of nurses in Maryland.



TEACHER EDUCATION

I was extremely proud to cut the ribbon for SU's new Teacher Education and Technology Center (TETC) last fall. This new facility will allow us to attract more students and the nation's best faculty to our teacher education programs.

SU increased its Praxis test pass rates from 92 percent to 94 percent last year. That pass rate will increase to 100 percent next year when SU will implement a policy requiring that students pass the Praxis prior to graduation.

SU continues to be one of the largest providers of teacher education in the State. In response to strong demand, it is our hope to soon make available a Doctorate of Literacy Education to teachers on the Eastern Shore. Our ability to offer this much-needed program will depend on the availability of resources.

RESPIRATORY THERAPY

The new technology of the TETC also provided the important tools that we needed to begin offering our respiratory therapy program in fall 2008 to the Universities at



Shady Grove. SU's program, the only four-year accredited program in the State, is offered to USG primarily through distance learning. Respiratory therapy was launched with a cohort of 10 students at Shady Grove and intends to expand to four times that number. SU also partnered with UMB and USG to develop a critical care simulation lab to serve respiratory therapy, the UMB programs in Nursing and Pharmacy, and practicing professionals. This important program at Shady Grove is providing another essential site to increase practitioners to fulfill Maryland's health care workforce needs.

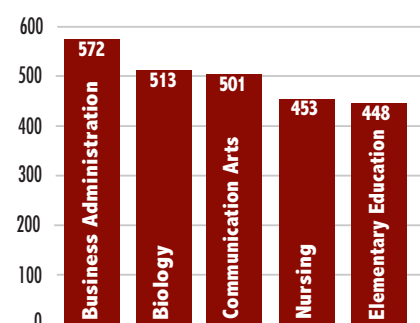


Curriculum Reform and Student Engagement

Beginning last fall, Fulton School of Liberal Arts students with majors in the arts, humanities, and most of the social sciences take four four-credit courses instead of five three-credit courses each semester, allowing them to study subjects in greater depth and develop their analytical skills more intensively and allowing faculty to assign additional readings, civic engagement projects, service learning, and even study abroad. Because many of the General Education requirements also are

under Fulton's responsibilities, students across campus now have the opportunity to be part of this enhanced learning program. This reformed curriculum is expected to transform student learning and foster even stronger student engagement.

Top 5 Undergraduate Majors by Enrollment (2008)



Attracting Donor Support

From its birth as a regional teachers college in 1925, Salisbury University has been enriched and sustained by a culture of private giving that is unique among public institutions of our size. For example, all four of our professional schools—the Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies, the Perdue School of Business, the Henson School of Science and Technology, and the Fulton School of Liberal Arts—are privately endowed.

This philanthropic ethic is a reflection of what SU has meant to the Delmarva Peninsula's economy, culture, and quality of life throughout the past eight decades. It also underscores the confidence that we have earned among our largest and most crucial stakeholders, and validates SU's increasingly entrepreneurial approach to donor outreach. Without this success in supplementing State appropriations with private support, Salisbury University could not have established its reputation for excellence during times of fiscal and budgetary uncertainty. In the current economic crisis, unfortunately, we are finding that our fundraising efforts have met with much less success. Scholarships remain an important focus for the Foundation's fundraising. Efforts also continue on our capital campaign, and we are quickly closing in on our Campaign 2012 goal of \$30 million.



Creating Environmental Sustainability

In 2007, Salisbury University joined more than 400 of the 4,200 colleges and universities across the nation in a pledge to fight global warming. By signing the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, I made the commitment that Salisbury University will work toward climate neutrality. Since that time, students, faculty, and staff have accelerated efforts across campus to identify and implement many environmental initiatives. I have included



with my testimony a document which details some of these initiatives. Most significantly, Salisbury University completed and submitted its carbon inventory, developed by students from the SU-based Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The project involved collecting data on the campus's carbon emissions from 1990 to the present, including information on SU's population, energy use, commuter patterns, and horticulture. This was a first significant requirement of the Presidents Climate Commitment and provides an important baseline for SU's goal of becoming climate neutral. Among many other initiatives, SU continues to pursue the highest possible LEED certification for its new construction projects. And SU has received wide acclaim for installing new high-tech, energy-efficient washing machines in its residence halls last fall. Not only do the washers automatically dispense detergent, use a minimal amount of water, and require no quarters or tokens, the machines' availability is accessible to students via their laptops, and the machines actually send a text message to students when their laundry is complete. The machines are saving countless plastic detergent bottles, gallons of water, and trips up and down the stairs!

These efforts build on SU's ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability, including our partnership with Pepco Energy Services, through which we are achieving campus-wide energy conservation measures that will allow us to realize more than \$5.3 million in savings. In addition, researchers from the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative at SU last year located and mapped some 420,000 septic systems across the State's 23 counties to identify failing septic systems in areas that critically impact the Chesapeake Bay. This year, they are working with the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission to create the methodology for remapping the Critical Area.



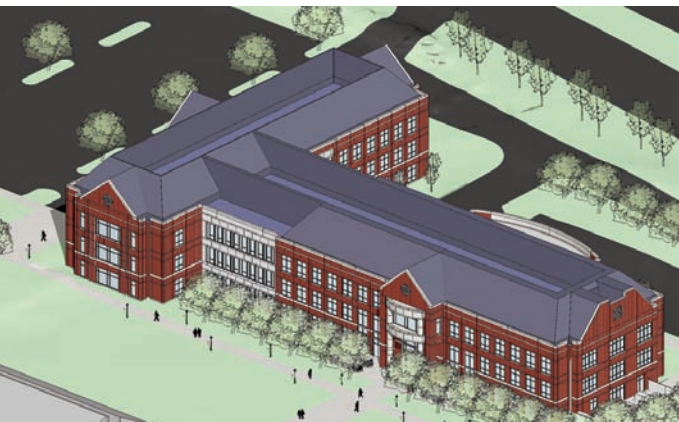
Embracing the Future

These are truly exciting times at Salisbury University. Our numbers are growing and student quality continues to increase steadily, along with applications. As mentioned earlier, we were proud to open the TETC in the fall. This building transformed the face of campus by virtue of its distinctive design elements and prominent location at the intersection of U.S. Route 13 and College Avenue.

Last summer, we began construction of the campus's first parking garage. Located on the East Campus, the garage will add essential parking to support our faculty, staff, and students as well as visitors to our academic venues. The garage is progressing quickly and will open next summer.



Design for the new Perdue School of Business building is also moving quickly. We plan to break ground in fall 2009 on this new facility, which was made possible, in part, through the generous \$8 million donation from the Arthur W. Perdue Foundation, the largest private gift for a capital project in SU's history.



As we look ahead toward an uncertain future, what is certain is that higher education will become even more important as a form of economic stimulus and recovery. The Salisbury University community has been engaged in planning processes across the campus this year. The new strategic plan for 2009-2013, which will be complete this month, confirms that SU is in a very positive position and lays out additional steps to reinforce the "small school feel" that many cited as so important to our success, in addition to initiatives that will be developed to strengthen student engagement and learning. As strategic enrollment plan was also developed this year, which anticipates and identifies initiatives to prepare for the more diverse students of the future. Finally, SU updated its facilities master plan, including creating a comprehensive housing renovation program to redesign existing residences in order to accommodate the modern amenities that students want and identifying the need to develop new housing through a public/private partnership on a prominent corner of the campus. Salisbury University is looking carefully at its future and using resources wisely to benefit our students of today and tomorrow.



Campus security and the safety of our students and employees have become critical issues in recent years, and SU has implemented an emergency notification system for text and voice messaging in the event of an emergency. We also have purchased and installed a new siren alert system to back up the text alert system implemented last year, and testing of that system takes place periodically.

2009: A Year of Budget Challenges

Salisbury University can look back with justifiable pride upon a productive year of solid achievements and steadily rising performance indicators. We were poised in 2009 to begin implementing initiatives identified in our planning efforts last year, including enrollment growth and additional academic and programmatic improvements. Given the budget cuts we have already sustained, however, many of our plans have been put on hold as we struggle to maintain our ongoing operations. SU fully embraces the notion that we must shoulder our share of sacrifice as the State and the USM struggle to absorb this year's budget reductions. Given that SU has historically received the lowest level of State funding per student among all Maryland's public colleges and universities, and has one of the lowest tuition rates in the System, however, at Salisbury University these cuts are especially painful. I would be remiss were I not to describe the significant impacts that these budget reductions have already imposed on our campus.

Total Fiscal Year 2009 General Fund and HEIF support was to have been \$40,368,109. To date, SU has experienced the following budget reductions in FY 09:

• June 2008 funding reduction	\$154,147
• October 2008 funding reduction	\$1,332,983*
• December 2008 funding reduction	\$607,848
Total FY 2009 Budget Reductions:	\$2,094,978

* Includes a \$573,282 General Fund reduction and a \$759,701 fund balance transfer

Faculty, staff, and programmatic reductions which resulted in or are exacerbated by the cuts include the following:

- A hiring freeze was implemented in September, resulting in 17 staff positions and eight faculty positions being frozen.
- The reduction in faculty positions due to failed searches and the hiring freeze is causing our class sizes to grow. If current faculty positions remain unfilled, the student-faculty ratio will jump dramatically. While in the short term this is manageable, if the trend were to continue or increase, this would certainly have negative effects on our academic programs. This is particularly problematic as SU has extremely high faculty workload as compared to other comparable institutions in the USM.
- One of the positions which remains frozen is our Assistant to the President for Government and Community Relations. This has weakened our ability to remain responsive to our legislative partners and the System, and has put many of our efforts to improve Town-Gown relations on hold.
- One of our frozen positions is our Director of Diversity. This impacts our ability to give this important area of need the requisite focus it deserves.

- One of our frozen positions is in nursing faculty. This position would be assigned the important task of developing a partnership to allow SU to offer a Doctorate in Nursing Practice, a requirement for all nurse practitioners beginning in 2015.
- One of the frozen positions is the receptionist for the President's and Provost's offices, an important "first face" to many of our visitors and potential students on campus.
- Our residence life staff is down one position, diluting the critical 24/7 response team which responds to student health and safety needs.
- Our efforts in closing the achievement gap are slowed, as one of the frozen positions is in our newly created Center for Student Achievement.
- Our students were so concerned about our frozen Director of Student Activities position that they met and voted to support a new fee to fund that position themselves. It is important to note that reductions in our operating funds often hurt our students in the form of increased fees and ancillary costs, even in the face of "frozen" tuition.
- Our counseling and student health center staffing levels do not meet accreditation standards. We do not have an on-call psychiatrist. With the growing health, psychiatric, and safety needs on college campuses today, the lower funding per student affects these very basic services that should be available to a residential campus like SU.
- No new dollars are budgeted for facilities renewal, which likely will cause more costly problems in the future.
- SU has identified a critical need for additional funding for financial aid. Despite operating budget cuts, we are holding firm to our commitment in this area and have set aside over \$143,000 for this purpose. We would like to be able to do much more, as Salisbury University is unable to offer competitive scholarships at the level of institutions for which we compete for students (e.g., UMBC, UMCP, TU).
- SU implemented a furlough plan in which the lowest paid employees are taking one furlough day and the highest paid faculty and staff experience five furlough days. In the spirit of solidarity and partnership, members of my Executive Staff and I are taking six furlough days.
- As we continue to hold enrollment at the current year's level, access for Maryland's high school graduates will be diminished, particularly for those who are economically disadvantaged. We are turning away highly qualified students and will need to continue to do so as no funding is available for the hiring of additional faculty and staff.
- The number of faculty with terminal degrees is decreasing as we struggle to attract and retain qualified faculty. This is due to our low salaries and higher than average faculty workload. Since fall 2007, we have had five failed faculty searches.

- Low salaries, noncompetitive benefits, and workload expectations also have hurt our ability to attract and retain the best staff. There have been eight failed staff searches from fall 2007 through the present.
- While we have not frozen our public safety positions, our ability to increase security on campus at all hours is reduced. At a time of more serious and more frequent safety issues across the country and in Salisbury, this is of vital concern to me and my constituents.
- Significant demand exists to develop a Doctorate of Education in Reading Literacy on our campus. It was our hope to develop this applied program at SU this year. Plans have been put on hold, however, because of budget cuts.
- Even though SU has realized increases in direct State support in recent years, these funds continue to represent a smaller percent of our total state support operating budget. As such, SU has become increasingly reliant on supplemental support from the Salisbury University Foundation. Like nonprofits across the country, however, the Foundation has experienced significant reductions to its portfolio coupled with smaller and fewer gifts from donors. Reduced Foundation support diminishes SU's ability to supplement funding in those areas where State support has been decreased or eliminated.

Clearly, SU is shouldering its share of Maryland's and the USM's fiscal burden. If there are further reductions, however, our ability to provide access and quality academic programs will be further diminished. We have built our national eminence over the past decade; once quality is compromised, those past efforts are largely lost and difficult to rebuild.

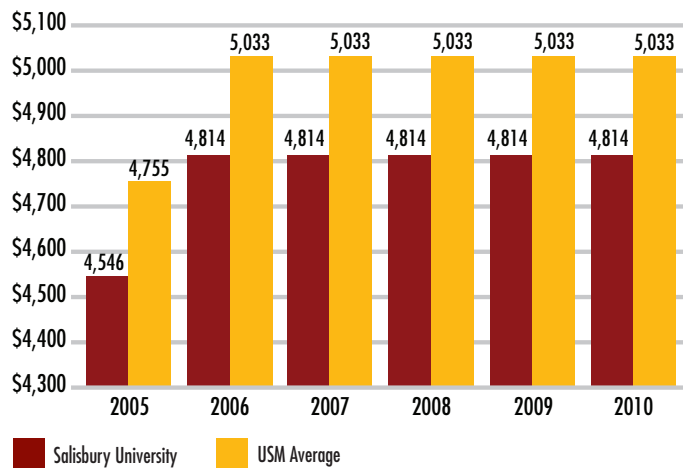


The Fiscal Year 2010 Budget

We urge you to support in full the Governor's proposed Fiscal Year 2010 operating budget. We appreciate and support the Governor's commitment to keeping tuition frozen for a fourth year. I have outlined here many of the most severe impacts of our FY 09 budget reductions. Should there be reductions in the Governor's proposed budget, however, Salisbury University will experience further faculty and staff cuts and academic program reductions. This will result in a general lessening of the quality of our education, diminishing the hard-earned gains that we have made across the State and the University System of Maryland.

Our Fiscal Year 2010 request covers only mandatory costs, modest funds to meet our financial aid commitment which I mentioned previously, and a required increase in retirement funds set aside for non-tenure-track faculty. Even if funded as requested, total State appropriations to Salisbury University will cover only 46 percent of the University's State-supported operations. This underscores SU's heavy reliance on tuition and fees to cover educational costs, including institutional-based financial aid. SU's low State appropriation per student combined with inadequate revenue from our tuition continue to impede our ability to accommodate a growing student population, attract and retain quality faculty and staff, dedicate more funds to need-based financial aid, and offer a distinctive, high-quality student experience. And while we neither ask for nor expect these conditions to change in the current fiscal year, any reduction in the Governor's proposed budget for FY 2010 will have significant negative consequences for the academic program and the students of Salisbury University.

Full-Time Undergraduate In-State Tuition



* NOTE: If Salisbury University's tuition were at the USM average, the University would have an additional \$1.5 million in tuition revenue.

Response To DLS Requests For Comment

The President should comment on why the University expects the number of new student applicants to the nursing program to remain level despite measures that have been planned or implemented to increase that number.

The major obstacle to growing our program is our ability to recruit and retain nursing faculty and, given our rural location, the number of clinical sites. There is a scarcity of advanced-degree, prepared nurses, and SU's salaries simply are not competitive, a factor of our overall low State support. Nursing faculty at SU are working on a number of initiatives to increase the number of faculty educators as well as the student capacity of our nursing programs. Two grants have been submitted to achieve these purposes, and a major additional grant application is being submitted this week. At this time, however, we do not know that we will receive the funding for which we have applied. With additional funding, whether from State or other sources, we would be able to address many of the problems that currently preclude us from growing this program.

The President should comment on the strategies to increase the enrollment of students from diverse backgrounds and the status of their implementation.

As part of our institutional mission, Salisbury University has made significant strides over the past several years to attract a diverse student population and to foster a campus environment open and welcoming to differences in ideas, perspectives, and experiences. Through the University's Optional SAT pilot program, strategic enrollment plan, and achievement gap plan, SU is implementing strategies to continue to grow a more socio-economic and racially diverse enrollment.

The **Optional SAT Program**, implemented in fall 2007, has been successful in providing greater access to economically disadvantaged freshmen, as evidenced by an increase of students with financial need by 1.3 percent in the 2007 freshman class. ("Financial need" is defined as a student whose estimated family contribution or "EFC" is less than \$10,000.) In fall 2007, 39 percent of test-optional students demonstrated financial need compared to 29 percent of test-submitted. Results for fall 2008 revealed similar patterns, with the test-optional students representing even more financial need than in the 2007 class. Of those students in the lowest income range with an EFC of less than \$5,000, 26.1 percent of test-optional students, compared to 19.6 percent of test-submitted students qualified for financial need—a 6.5 percentage point difference.

Through the **strategic enrollment plan**, the University has implemented targeted recruitment strategies to increase

student diversity. Strategies include personalized communication by admissions staff, student-to-student connections, and special campus visitation programs focused on high schools known to have large numbers of minority students. Other efforts include specially designed financial aid workshops, targeted community involvement, selective academic receptions, increased numbers of guidance counselor information sessions, and successful solicitation of more parent involvement throughout the college selection process. The next step in this strategic enrollment plan includes conducting a research study of the growing minority populations in the State to ensure that the proper support structure is in place at SU to both welcome and retain a diverse student community.

Further, the University has implemented elements of its **achievement gap plan**, including placement modules and tutorials for freshman math courses and the opening of a new Center for Student Achievement. The University continues its mentor program for students coming to SU from under-represented racial populations. In this program, students enter the University supported by peer mentors and aided by special tracking efforts by our office of Multicultural Student Services to aid in their transition and retention at the University.

As referenced in the testimony, the fall 2008 student population is the most racially and ethnically diverse in Salisbury University's history. The results of these initiatives have resulted in a doubling of SU's minority student population over the past 10 years.

The President should comment on measures the University is taking to improve enrollment projections for budgetary purposes.

While the 2008 over attainment of enrollment can be attributed to SU's success in meeting its commitment as a growth institution, the over attainment in 2009 was not expected. The primary causes of the growth in Fiscal Year 2009 are attributable to the following:

- 1) Increasingly, Salisbury University is the first choice institution for applicants, resulting in higher yield rates;
- 2) Retention rates are high;
- 3) The Fulton School of Liberal Arts curriculum changed from mostly three-credit courses to (currently) mostly four-credit courses. Our Strategic Enrollment Planning Committee is incorporating this data into the analysis it performs as part of projecting future growth. Given the current economic conditions in the State, the University plans to hold fall 2009 freshman enrollments at the same level as fall 2008, although overall FTEs may increase by about 100 due to transfer enrollments and retention initiatives.

The President should comment on the amount of aid awarded to students without a demonstrated financial need.

You have asked why, in the category of aid which is not designated as need-based, only 10 percent of aid went to those who demonstrated the most financial need. The “other aid” listed in Exhibit 8 includes both institutional awards for merit and mission as well as the cost of tuition waivers for the year. The inclusion of tuition waiver costs, which represents about 45 percent of this “other aid” category, skews the data because filing a FAFSA is not required to qualify for this benefit. (Examples of tuition waivers include those granted by USM and/or SU policy for employees and their dependents from SU and other USM institutions and senior citizen tuition waivers. Among USM institutions, SU has a negative net flow of tuition exchange. In other words, more students come to take courses for credit at SU than SU students choose to go elsewhere in the USM to take credit-bearing courses.) Of the remaining 55 percent in this category, which is designated merit and mission funds, roughly 70 percent was awarded to students having submitted FAFSA information. It should be noted, however, that merit and mission awards are based upon academic scholarship criteria and not on demonstrated financial need.

The President should discuss SU’s plans to study allocation of institutional aid.

Because most of SU’s revenues necessarily go toward operating costs, SU struggles to provide enough financial aid. In an effort to maximize available funds, we engaged Noel-Levitz to assist with the design of a funding model for institutional financial aid and Foundation scholarship awards to provide access to those with financial need and recognition to those with academic merit in the most cost-effective manner possible.

The new allocation plan was implemented in the fall 2008 semester. The packaging of financial aid attempts to allow SU’s limited institutional financial aid dollars to reach more of the ever-increasing number of students in both categories of the academically meritorious and financially needy. We have reduced the dollar amounts per student to provide scholarship and financial aid awards to more recipients.

The University will monitor results as they relate to our ability to provide access to students with financial need while also recruiting and retaining high-achieving students. In addition, the University will measure the impact this strategy has on the overall profiles of the freshman classes.

Given that the fiscal 2010 allowance does not provide enhancements over the \$1.1 million SU will receive for the tuition freeze, the President should comment on how the University will implement the achievement gap strategies.

Without additional funds, the University will be unable to implement many aspects of the planned strategy to close the achievement gap. The Center for Student Achievement will remain in operation, but it is very much understaffed. We will continue to seek alternate sources of funding to keep retention programs viable. Salisbury University’s goals of narrowing the achievement gap cannot be met without the necessary resources, either through additional direct State appropriation, tuition revenue, or grants.

