Case for the Equalization of Tuition for Salisbury University

The combination of low Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES) funding and low tuition and State-supported fees places Salisbury University (SU) at the lowest funding level of all University System of Maryland (USM) institutions. The gap between SU’s funding and that of other institutions widens when tuition increases are made at a fixed percentage across the board. This funding gap should not exist and does not reflect our steadily increasing student demand or the high quality of programs that SU provides its students. Additionally, such funding fails to recognize SU’s market, position in national rankings, and performance-based outcomes. We ask that a structural correction to SU’s tuition be made immediately to address funding shortfalls and market conditions.

Equitable Tuition for Exceptional Quality

The tuition we charge should reflect the quality of our programs and our high student demand.

- For FY 2010 and 2011, SU’s tuition lags behind Frostburg by almost $200.
- SU’s tuition trails that of Towson by $366 in FY 2010 and $377 in FY 2011, demonstrating the widening funding gap as a result of fixed percentage increases.

IF SU’s FY 2011 tuition were at the level of Towson, the University would have an additional $2.7 million in annual tuition revenue.

Inequitable Tuition with Competitors

Noel-Levitz/SU research indicates that freshmen not attending SU most often chose the following institutions whose tuition rates were higher and financial aid packages were significantly larger:

- Privates: McDaniel College, Stevenson University, Mount St. Mary’s, Washington College (avg. tuition $27,275, 466% higher than SU)
- Public In-State: UMCP, Towson, UMBC, Frostburg, St. Mary’s (avg. tuition $6,740, 40% higher than SU)
- Public Out-of-State: Penn State University, Virginia Tech, University of Delaware (avg. tuition $19,387, 907% higher than SU [SU in-state tuition rate: $4,814])

Implications of Continued Underfunding

- SU’s low funding combined with high student demand for admission forces the University to turn away a considerable number of students. Over 3,200 students were denied admission in fall 2009, almost 700 of whom would have been deemed qualified for admission. This spring many qualified applicants were denied admission.
- SU’s low funding results in an extremely high ratio of students to staff—significantly higher than the USM average. This results in staff carrying extremely high workloads, and it is especially detrimental in areas such as student counseling, retention, and in our efforts to close the achievement gap.
- SU’s low funding significantly impacts our ability to offer competitive financial aid packages. Because we are so limited in the funding we can offer in the form of grants and scholarships, our ability to increase the numbers of high-ability students is severely restricted. Similarly, we are not able to provide adequate need-based aid for the socio-economically disadvantaged.

Dashboard Indicators on Red

Every one of the Board of Regents’ financial dashboard indicators on which SU falls below standards is due wholly to our lack of funds:

- low State appropriation per FTES
- low expenditure for instruction per FTES
- low operating expenditures per student
- high average undergraduate debt burden upon graduation

Acknowledgement of Rising Reputation

Leading academic guidebooks and publications bolster SU’s reputation as a Maryland University of National Distinction.

- SU is the only institution in the USM recognized by The Princeton Review as both one of the 2010 “Best 371 Colleges” and “Top 50 Best Value Public Colleges.”
- SU is one of the top two USM campuses listed in Kiplinger’s Personal Finance’s 2010 Top 100 “Best Values in Public Colleges.”
- SU is the only comprehensive university in Maryland to be named one of The Chronicle of Higher Education’s “Great Colleges to Work For.”

Comparison of Full-Time, In-State Undergraduate Tuition Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>FY 2010 Tuition</th>
<th>Projected 3% Increase</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UMCP</td>
<td>$6,763</td>
<td>$7,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMBC</td>
<td>$6,679</td>
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<tr>
<td>Towson</td>
<td>$5,335</td>
<td>$5,505</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frostburg</td>
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<td>$5,315</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>$4,958</td>
<td>$5,197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total State Support includes General Funds, Higher Education Investment Funds, tuition, and State-supported fees.

Salisbury University

A Maryland University of National Distinction

www.salisbury.edu