Since I was a little girl, I have loved the beginning of a new school year. As a student, or later as a teacher, I loved the anticipation of meeting new people, participating in new activities, and beginning with a clean slate. The summer serves as a rejuvenation and a time of reflection. All of the travails of the past year are erased; all is new. On the first day of school we all can agree that all things are possible if we work together. On the occasion of this “first day of school” I feel somewhat like a kid at a new school. I look out at you and recognize only a few people. Although I am excited about being your new provost, I am somewhat anxious thinking about the newness of the position and the challenges that lie ahead. My head is full of questions about how I should go about being your provost, who will work with me to help us reach our potential even in difficult economic times, and who will become frustrated because some changes come quickly and others come slowly? I can only begin to guess what questions are racing through your heads. Perhaps you are thinking “Who is this person?” “What kind of changes is she going to bring about?” “How will these changes impact me and my work?”
I do know that it is vitally important that you and I work together well if we want to move Salisbury University to the next level. Today I would like to take that first step to creating a smooth transition. So, in an attempt to accomplish this, I decided to bring in consultants, experts, if you will......that is, people who have worked with me before. I sent a survey – one question – and asked these colleagues to send suggestions to you on how best to work with me. I have selected some of their best tips (from my point of view, of course). So, here are the Top Ten Tips for Working Effectively with the Provost (if you watch David Letterman, you will know that I am stealing his format).

#10 Before you meet with Dr. Allen, ask her administrative assistant if her complexion is approaching red. If it is, RUN in the other direction.

#9 If you bring a problem or question to Dr. Allen, she will turn it around and give it back to you such as “What would you like to accomplish?” “What do you think is the best way to handle this?” or “What would you like to see happen?”

#8 She doesn’t understand the meaning of “no”....even when a dictionary is provided.

#7 When you go in for a meeting, make sure your ducks are all in a row. She can’t shoot them all down at one time.

#6 If you think you can’t, she’ll show you you can.

#5 Don’t talk about change in her presence, unless you are prepared to work to see it happen.

#4 The only “whine” she enjoys comes with a corkscrew.
#3 If there are resources you want for your program, department or school, phrase it as a data driven request. Dr. Allen loves to make decisions based on data.

#2 It’s ok to come with problems. It’s better to come with suggested solutions.

#1 If at first you don’t succeed, rest assured you WILL try again!

For the last month I have been getting to know Salisbury University a little better. I have confirmed my initial impressions…..this is a place of excellence where faculty take pride in teaching and working with students. Additionally, you stretch yourselves professionally to extraordinary heights. Let me share a few of my discoveries.

- *Salisbury University garnered national distinction through the following national rankings: The Princeton Review’s The Best 371 Colleges and The Best Northeastern Colleges; The Chronicle of Higher Education 2009 Great Colleges to Work For; The Princeton Review 50 Best Value Public Colleges; and for the 13th consecutive year US News and World Report has ranked SU Number 7 for Top Public Universities – Masters level for the North.*

- The Perdue School was internationally accredited by the Network of International Business Schools, one of only eight institutions worldwide.
• The Fulton School completely reformed their curricula to provide for courses with more depth.

• Faculty at SU spent 1,948 hours per week advising students.

• Faculty spent 4,896 days working in partnerships with K-12 schools, government agencies, non-profit agencies, and businesses.

• Twenty (20) books were published by faculty.

• 191 refereed and 204 non-refereed papers were published by faculty.

• Faculty participated in 431 creative activities and presented 331 papers at professional meetings.

• Fifty-six (56) faculty held officer positions in professional associations.

• 145 grant proposals were submitted, and 77 were awarded for a total of $4.3 million. An additional $3.3 million in funding is still pending. Twenty-seven of these proposals targeted federal agencies such as the US Dept of Education, National Institutes of Health, Environmental Protection Agency, United States Institute of Peace, National Endowment of the Arts, US Department of Justice, National Science Foundation, and National Endowment for the Humanities.
Those are the collective numbers, but individual accomplishments were also outstanding. I’ll share just a few of the most recent.

- President Janet Dudley-Eshbach was honored with the Newton Marasco Foundation’s first annual award for Leading Environmental Stewardship for her commitment to sustainability. A non-profit environmental group based in VA, NMF hosts the annual Green Earth Book Awards at SU.

- Vice President Rosemary M. Thomas was appointed the new ACT state representative for Maryland/Delaware/District of Columbia. Focused on education and workforce development, ACT offers programs and services to thousands of colleges and universities, schools, professional associations, businesses and governments worldwide.

- The work of Jinchul Kim (Art) was represented among a showcase of 218 of the world’s leading galleries at the seventh annual Korea International Art Fair—the largest international art-related undertaking in Korea.

- Dr. Mike Lewis (History) was one of 30 people worldwide invited by the World Health Organization to deliver oral and written responses at a London conference to its 2008 report on the social determinants of health.
• Dr. Timothy J. Dunn (Sociology) published "Blockading the Border and Human Rights: The El Paso Operation That Remade Immigration Enforcement."

• Dr. James King (English) will travel to Ghana and Dr. Brian Polkinghorn (CADR) will travel to Israel as Fulbright Scholars this coming academic year.

• Dr. Mark Holland (Biology) received a patent with research student Nicole Lenihan for the discovery of a bacteriophage, a virus that infects bacteria, and another for a method to produce reversible male sterility in plants. Dr. Miguel Mitchell (Biology) received a patent for an environmentally "green" way to make curcumin, an antioxidant that may help treat cancer, rheumatoid arthritis and Alzheimer's.

• Led by Dr. Lisa Seldomridge, the Nursing Department received a total of $715,000 in grants from MHEC and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in support of nursing education and programs.

• Dr. Michael Scott (Geography & Geosciences) won an $80,000 USM Elkins Professorship for the coming year which he will use to continue his work with the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative.
• Drs. Tylor Claggett and Shekar Shetty (Economics & Finance) were named Fulbright Scholars this past year. Claggett spent the year at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics in China, while Shetty traveled to Tallinn University of Technology in Estonia. Dr. Dean Kotlowski in History traveled to De La Salle University in Manila, Philippines.

• During his sabbatical, Dr. Steve Adams (Management) worked on a book *Before the Garage: Institutional Builders of Silicon Valley.*

• Dr. Danny Ervin (Economics & Finance) won an $80,000 USM Elkins Professorship for the coming year which he will use to continue his work with ShoreENERGY.

• Dr. Marvin Tossey (Social Work) earned a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Social Workers–Maryland Chapter for 30+ years of leadership as a social work educator and professional.

• Drs. Teena Ruark Gorrow (Teacher Education) and Susan Marie Muller (Health & Human Performance) wrote *The ABC’s of Wellness for Teachers: An A-Z Guide to Improving Your Well-Being in the Classroom and Out.* It was a finalist for the Association of Educational Publishers Distinguished Achievement Award.
• SU education faculty created a new handbook for recent graduates preparing to enter the classroom. Called *Your First Years of Teaching: Beginning a Journey of Excellence*, the book is edited by Drs. Dorsey Hammond and Joan Buffone.

• Drs. Patrick McDermott (Perdue-Accounting & Legal Studies) and Brian Polkinghorn (Fulton-Conflict Resolution) were awarded a $460,000 federal grant to examine conflict management practices within the U.S. Transportation Security Administration.

• Drs. Ed Robeck (Seidel-Teacher Education), Andrew Sharma (Fulton-Communication Arts), Dan Harris and Mara Chen (Henson-Geography) and Jim Quan (Perdue-Information & Decision Sciences) received two consecutive Improving Teacher Quality Grants from MHEC, totaling just under $200,000. The grants fund the ESPRIT Science project designed to train Delmarva science teachers to use innovative and real world information technology to enhance their STEM curriculum.

• Drs. James King and Kelli Randall (Fulton-English) and Peggy Proudfoot-McGuire (Seidel-Social Work), earned Henry C. Welcome fellowships from the MHEC valued at $20,000 over three years.
• Dr. Jill Caviglia-Harris (Perdue-Economics & Finance) teamed up with faculty from NC State and UC-Santa Barbara after earning a $530,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to continue their study of the Amazon. In addition, Drs. Joan Maloof and Judith Stribling (Henson-Biology), Alexis Aguilar (Henson-Geography & Geosciences) and Michael Lewis (Fulton-History) received $25,000 from The Nature Conservancy to study original forest landscapes in the Nassawango Creek Watershed.

I know that I have just scratched the surface of achievement that makes SU a Maryland University of National Distinction. None of these things could have been achieved without great leadership from the Provost, so join me in thanking Dr. Tom Jones for his leadership for the past three years.

In my month of talking to faculty and staff I have learned about new initiatives for the coming year. For example, we will implement a new masters program in conflict and dispute resolution (19 enrolled students), take the first steps in implementing our new masters in applied biology, and refine our Fulton reform in its second year. Tom Jones is leading our STEM initiatives that will involve students in the Henson School and the Seidel School and will help to prepare more of our students today to become the scientists, mathematicians,
and teachers of the future. In September we will unveil an incredible statue of Harriet Tubman cast by Jim Hill and his students with the hope that this statue will inspire discussions about art, culture, education, and history. Our international programs will broaden our students’ horizons by offering programs in Ecuador, Estonia, China, France, and Germany. As some students connect internationally, others will connect locally through BEACON, the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative, PACE, and internships too numerous to mention. It is these student-centered activities that have brought Salisbury University its reputation as a university of distinction.

My challenge to you is to embrace our uniqueness, to learn from our accomplishments, and to commit to reach a new height of excellence. But how do we do these things? When I was a young girl my Dad put me in charge of navigation on our family trips. He outfitted me with a large atlas, and my responsibility was to help guide him to our next destination. I took this responsibility very seriously. Today I still require a map, a guide to reach my destination. From an administrative perspective, I need a map, a strategic plan, to help me make decisions about programs, staffing, and resources. Last year you participated in focus groups to determine where Salisbury should be in 2013 and to map the journey. Too often we create these strategic maps for our institutions
as an exercise and they end up in a file cabinet collecting dust. That will not be the fate of our 2013 strategic plan. We will use it to make decisions, to make the maximum use of our resources, and to move us to greater distinction.

Our Strategic Plan for 2013 has four major goals:

1. Provide exceptional, contemporary liberal arts and academic and professional programs that are aligned with an increasingly competitive, global, and knowledge-base economy.

2. Continue to attract and retain quality students.

3. Promote and develop a student culture that places the highest priority on academic engagement and personal growth by leveraging the SU “small school feel” and strong student/faculty/staff interactions.

4. Continue to build the resources – human, financial, physical, and external – that support student academic and engagement needs.

Over the next few years we will be addressing all of these goals. However, for AY 2009-2010 I would like us to focus our energies on the following aspects of the strategic plan:

• SU is recognized for our focus on rigorous, high quality undergraduate curricula. The Fulton Reform, the New Reader project, and the move to learning communities in the residence halls are all testament to the value
we place on the undergraduate academic experience. A natural outgrowth of a strong undergraduate program is an equally strong graduate program that provides extended opportunities for students to develop a deeper knowledge base. While we have developed the appropriate administrative structures to support our undergraduates in their pursuit of knowledge, we have not developed a strong infrastructure to support our graduate programs. In addition we should rethink how we support faculty and create opportunities for you to conduct the research and other scholarly and creative endeavors that support both undergraduate and graduate instruction. During the next year I will be working with faculty and staff to create the infrastructure that will allow us to achieve the same excellence in our research and graduate studies that we have created in our undergraduate programs.

- The next natural step in our academic growth is the development of applied doctorates. Currently, there is demonstrated need for doctorates in nursing and literacy. We will be moving forward immediately with plans for the development of an applied doctorate in nursing. Licensure issues, the dearth of qualified nursing faculty, and the near crisis need for medical personnel are the driving forces behind the choice to pursue the nursing
doctorate at this time. In addition there is a high demand for a doctorate in literacy from area teachers and administrators that we should not ignore. The literacy faculty has developed a preliminary proposal, and I will continue to work with them so that our second applied doctorate can follow quickly on the heels of our first.

- Diversity is an important value for Salisbury University. It is a conceptual blanket that encompasses cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, geographic, and socioeconomic differences that requires our students...and us... to view our worlds through multiple lenses. To be successful in today’s global society our students will need these lenses and the skills to work with all the diversities they will encounter in the workplace. Given the importance of diversity, you will hear me talk about and will witness my commitment to international studies, exchange programs with other countries and across this great country, and recruitment of a diverse student body and faculty.

- The Final Report of the Governor’s STEM Task Force (science, technology, engineering, math),*Investing in STEM to Secure Maryland’s Future*, noted that annually the state has 6,000 STEM jobs available, but our universities only graduate about 4,000 students in these fields. Even if most of these
graduates accept jobs in-state, there still will be a large deficit of appropriately prepared individuals to fill the available positions. This situation is so critical that the Governor and the Chancellor of USM have challenged the state’s universities and colleges to develop plans addressing the shortage of STEM graduates. Dr. Tom Jones has been appointed as Director of SU’s initiatives which include tripling the number of teachers in STEM fields and increasing the overall number of STEM graduates by 40%. Dean Olmstead and faculty in the Henson School along with Dean Pataniczek and his faculty in the Seidel School will partner in achieving these outcomes.

- The success of recruiting, progressing, and graduating our students is a direct function of the efforts not only of the staff in Student Affairs but also of the commitment of faculty to create learning environments that are rigorous and relevant. This year some of you will be asked to create living/learning communities in our residence halls. I am convinced these living/learning communities will add a dimension to our students’ learning that few other experiences could provide. Students will develop critical thinking skills, respect for the ideas of others, and an appreciation that learning occurs through many channels and over a lifetime. I have
witnessed this first hand when my son lived in a multicultural
living/learning community as an undergraduate. As he adjusted to living
with students from diverse backgrounds, he learned about culture and
other viewpoints about life and education. I believe his experiences in the
living/learning community helped him to develop the empathy and social
awareness that has served him well in his career as an attorney. Watching
his growth and success has convinced me of the value of living/learning
communities.

I am looking forward to an awesome year. I hope for your support,
encouragement, and above all patience. We face some economic challenges to
be sure; however, I am confident we will emerge from these challenges a
stronger university focused on excellence.

The first day of school...excitement, curiosity, commitment – what could be
better? Thank you and best wishes for a successful year.