Whenever I have encountered any of you this summer on campus, at the grocery store, in restaurants, and such I always asked how your summer was going. The universal response has been, “What summer?” I have to agree. When did summer happen; did it happen? I feel that I have been working non-stop since the spring semester ended. If I stop and force myself to think hard about the summer, I know that I have spent time with my children and grandchild, and I’ve marked a couple of things off my “bucket list.” But I still feel like there has been little, if any, summer. Nevertheless, I am happy to see all of you and hope that you experienced a little down time and are eager to face a new group of students. This promises to be an academic year full of continued success as well as a few challenges.

I always like to begin my remarks by highlighting and celebrating the successes of the past year. Unfortunately, time does not permit me to recognize every single achievement, but I do want to highlight a few.

- Jill Caviglia-Harris – selected as a 2013 Leopold Leadership Fellow, one of 20 people in the world recognized for the impact of their research on the environment

- Louise Detwiler – participated in a BBC-Wiltshire radio interview that aired from Stonehenge, England
• Jim Forte – has two books in production for publication in January

• Sam Geleta and Chris Briand – awarded almost $100,000 from the Maryland Industrial Partnerships grant to study soil amendment on corn yield and soil quality

• Teena Gorrow – named 2013 Top 25 Education Professors in Maryland

• Bea Hardy – elected as a Fellow in the Massachusetts Historical Society, the nation’s oldest historical society

• Dean Kotlowski – will appear as an on-camera expert in a new documentary film about Jewish refugees to the Philippines. Earlier this month, Representative Alan Grayson of Florida commended the documentary on the floor of the US House of Representatives.

• Paula Morris – named the Girl Scouts’ Lower Shore Woman of Distinction

• Molly Parsons – awarded over $600,000 from Health Resources and Services Administration for Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship (benefits our DNP)

• David Ranzan – edited the book, *Surviving Andersonville: One Prisoner’s Recollections of the Civil War’s Most Notorious Camp*

• Ed Robeck – appointed as one of four members of the US Regional Peer Review Committee for Southeast Asia Fulbright Scholar Program
• Lisa Seldomridge – awarded over $1 million for a 3-year grant from the Maryland Higher Education Commission for the DNP

• Frank Shipper – received the Kevin E. Ruble Fellowship from Rutgers University

• Mike Scott – awarded $400,000 from the MD State Highway Administration for research and technical assistance

• Ryan Taylor – recently published an article in Science, the world’s leading and most prestigious general science publication

• Marvin Tossey, Victoria Venable, and Rachel Buchanan – awarded $250,000 from the Maryland Industrial Partnerships grant to establish the predictive ability of the Care-2 Assessment tool

• Joerg Tuske and April Logan participated in NEH summer seminars; Joerg was selected to participate in Understanding Buddhism Through its Classic Texts and April was selected to participate in African American Literature

• Diana Wagner – received a Fellowship to the Holocaust Educators Network Leadership Institute at the Memorial Library in New York City

• Martha Zimmerman – elected as president-elect of the Maryland Library Association’s Technical Services Division

One of my responsibilities as a university leader is to describe to you, make you aware of, the realities surrounding the operations of the academic side of the university. I work with my colleagues in Student Affairs, Administration and Finance, and Advancement to insure that
our efforts are coordinated and focused on the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. Likewise, I monitor System, state, regional and national activities to determine how they might impact what we do here at Salisbury University related to academics. Those realities have been rather bleak in the last few years. There were no salary increases for several years. We went for a couple of years without filling vacancies, although, as you can tell from today’s introductions, that is no longer the case. I have had to say no to some of your requests, and I have asked you to give more when there has been little reward. As bad as it has seemed for you, in truth, Maryland and Salisbury University have been spared the worst effects of the Great Recession. We continue to have record numbers of students apply each year, which has allowed us to be selective in whom we admit. There has been no retrenchment and no cutting of programs. The positives may be of little comfort to you, but they have kept me optimistic throughout. The light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter as the President has suggested. However, I would not be doing my job as a leader if I told you that we will go back to the way it used to be, that you would get every new position your program wanted, or that every new program or initiative would be approved. Higher education will continue to be challenged to do more with less, to perform better, to graduate more students, and to reduce the cost of college attendance at the same time. New competition will continue to emerge from every direction. In the future, our funding may be tied to our performance on measures not necessarily of our choosing. To survive and to grow in reputation in the future, we must be willing and ready to think about our work in new ways. We must be innovative in the ways that we teach, in the
ways that we organize our curriculum, and in the processes and procedures we use. That’s the new reality.

Innovation is not new to Salisbury University. Think back to the Fulton Reform. Although the changes to the Fulton curriculum had been tested at other universities, the changes were new to us. In the five years since the Fulton Reform was implemented, there continue to be new innovations that challenge the SU norm and that allow us to attract better students and create pathways to college graduation and successful lives. We have become in many ways the masters of innovation. How can we continue to use our innovative/creative tendencies to take Salisbury University to a new level of excellence and meet the challenges we face? John Walda, President and CEO of NACUBO, identified five drivers of innovation in the July/August issue of Business Officer. They are changing curricular needs; stretching campus boundaries; global challenges; public perception; and changing demographics. Many of you have felt the pressure of these drivers and have creatively begun to address them.

For example, let’s look at the Social Work Program. The social work faculty are like the energizer bunnies; they are energetic and innovative and everywhere. Currently, they offer bachelors and masters degrees in a hybrid format at four off-campus sites. The newest of these is in southern Maryland. They responded when a call went out from the System to submit a proposal, and they received in excess of $400,000 to do what they and all of you love to do best … teach. Classes begin this fall. The faculty is now working on a very complicated partnership with UMUC that will allow them to take the BSW and the MSW to Germany to an American Air Force base. To do this they will
use a combination of hybrid courses, online courses, and face-to-face in Germany. They also have to redesign their courses to fit into 8-week modules instead of the standard 16-week model we use.

Social Work is not alone. Many other examples of innovation exist on the SU campus. Those innovations include:

- Four programs applied for and received USM funding to support the redesign of courses, including Biology 101, Psychology 101, Physical Education 106, and Nursing 312.

- Twenty-five faculty, including individuals from all four schools, worked with ID&D to redesign courses for this fall.

- The finance lab has obtained its first Bloomberg terminal, which allows students to earn the 4-part Bloomberg certificate.

- The Fulton School implemented a foreign language requirement for all majors.

- The MS in GIS Management Program will be recruiting students from across the nation for a fully online program that aligns with the US Department of Labor’s Geospatial Management Competency Model.

- The MBA is being redesigned to integrate SAP, an enterprise resource planning system across the curriculum; classes are now hybrid and packaged in 7-week modules.

- Katie Hinderer in Nursing and Bob Joyner in Respiratory Therapy have led a campus effort to better develop courses and experiences in the emerging area of multi-professional education.
Their students have collaborated with PharmD, Nursing, Physicians Assistant, and Physical Therapy students at UMES and UM Baltimore.

- Mathematics faculty are collaborating with Coursera to develop online support through the use of MOOCs for Math 155.
- The Fulton School is launching its West African Studies Program this fall, which joins programs in Latin American Studies, European Studies, East Asian Studies, and South Asian Studies. These are all paired with semester-long study abroad opportunities.

All of these changes, and likely others I am unaware of, demonstrate that SU has the brainpower and the creativity to address the drivers of change in higher education. But there are among you those who ask why I am talking about change again. Why is innovation so important? Maybe you are pleased with what you’re doing and how you’re doing it; why would you want to do it differently? Here’s the reality: The question that you should be asking yourself is, “Do my courses provide students the opportunities to develop the critical thinking and higher-level skills they will need to be productive citizens and professionals?” Developing these higher-level skills is very different from learning content. Certainly, we want our students to learn concepts and new knowledge, but knowing content is no longer enough to secure a job, to move up the career ladder, to achieve success, and to be good global and digital citizens. What we, and their employers, really want them to be able to do is to apply those concepts and knowledge in creative ways, to think critically, to reason logically, to problem-solve, to work
collaboratively, to communicate well orally and in written form, and to be able to transfer their skills from one task to another.

Secondly, our students are already more technologically connected than we are. They come to college with an average of five electronic devices. They willingly adapt from one application to another; in fact, they move so quickly that by the time we figure out the new application, the current generation has moved on to another. Take for instance, e-mail. Most of us could not get through the day without our e-mail. Students don’t use e-mail much; as you may have discovered, it is not effective to communicate with them via e-mail. They simply don’t read it. They moved from e-mail to texting; now, it’s Twitter and social media. How many of you incorporate those into your courses or use them to communicate with students? Are you preparing them adequately for digital citizenship?

We know that current students will change jobs and even careers several times during their lifetimes. Although the research is not definitive, it appears that individuals will hold 10 different jobs by the age of 42. So, the careers we prepare them for today may not be the careers of the future. How do we prepare them for the changes in jobs they will make and the changes in their chosen profession? Let me give you an example. This is a true story; I know because it’s about my son.

Tom is a classically trained musician, more specifically a classically trained bass trombonist. As an undergraduate, he attended one of the best music conservatories in this country. He graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in music performance, bass trombone. There is not a more narrow degree than that. It prepared him to do one thing, or so
his dad and I thought. His goal was to play in a large symphony, but orchestras around the country were folding just as he was graduating. He knew it would be years before he had the experience or even the opportunity to play in one of the big orchestras. After all, there is only one – count them, one, bass trombonist in any orchestra. So, he moved back to Texas to start his own studio. Luckily, he was able to contract with a large, wealthy school district in the Dallas area to teach private lessons. Football may be number one in Texas, but music is a close second. Private lessons are required of every music student at every level in this particular school system, so he was able to fill his studio. Tom is an excellent teacher and was very successful; many of his students won regional and state awards. He was in great demand as a teacher and made enough money to support himself at a decent level. However, in January this changed with the arrival of his daughter. What had seemed like an adequate salary now seemed inadequate with a new person in the family.

Tom decided that he needed to change jobs and careers. He applied to a company that manufactures packaging for the food industry to work in their mechanical engineering division. I know that sounds like a huge leap from bass trombone. Tom had some personally developed experience in mechanical systems, but he had no academic preparation nor any professional experience at all. I want to jump to the main part of this story which is the interview process for this company, and I want you to pay particular attention to the types of questions and tasks Tom was asked to do because those will lead to the point of this story.
Tom was invited to an interview, but he was not told what the position actually was. In actuality, he was interviewing to be placed in a pool from which new employees would be selected for any number of jobs within the company. The interview team included a field service engineer coordinator (the job that Tom eventually was hired to do), a mechanical engineer, and the head of the engineering department. These are the parts of the four-hour interview.

1. A written physics test. The last physics class Tom had was in high school. Of the 30 questions, Tom missed five. The interview team graded the test in front of him and as they came to the questions he missed, they asked him to explain his process for deriving his answer. Through this discussion and explanation, they gave Tom credit for two more responses.

2. A timed electrical test. Tom was given a mechanism that had several electric parts/features. He was given written instructions that asked him to make the mechanism do a number of electrical functions. Again, he was asked to explain his thought process for figuring out how to do each part of the task. He literally talked aloud as he worked.

3. Construction of an object. Tom was given a box of parts and an exploded diagram of the object he was to assemble. He was asked to look at the diagram and the parts and to describe orally his process for determining where and how to start as he put the item together. He was given 10 minutes to assemble the object. He took four. Playing with Legos really does pay off.
4. Disassembly and reassembly of a device. Tom was given a multi-part metal device. He was told to remove a small piece within it. When he had taken the piece out, he was told to reassemble the piece. He was given 10 minutes for the entire task.

5. Materials ID test. Several items were placed on the table. Tom was asked to identify the items and to explain how he made his determination.

6. Unidentified object. Tom was given a rectangular object that was plastic on three sides and the two ends and metal on the fourth side. There was no writing on the object. He was asked to tell the interviewers what the object was and how he would use it. After examining it, Tom replied that it was a magnet and that he would use it to hold something on the refrigerator. And he was exactly right. The object WAS a magnet, and one of the interviewers had taken it off the refrigerator as he passed through the break room on his way to this part of the interview.

7. Resume defense/explanation. The reviewers went through every item on Tom’s resume and asked him how he thought each experience would contribute to his work at this company. Remember he didn’t know the position for which he was applying.

Throughout the interview, Tom’s responses were challenged, and he had to defend them. On some they asked him for alternative solutions or responses. Think about what these interviewers were really testing
here. Certainly, they were looking at mechanical knowledge and manual dexterity. But these tasks also required critical thinking, logical reasoning, problem-solving, good oral communication, reading comprehension, ingenuity, ability to work under pressure, confidence, and ability to transfer skills from one task to another. As Tom told me after he had reflected about his performance on the interview, it took everything he had ever learned to be successful. What role did his study of music contribute to this change in career? Actually, it was critical. First, the company required a college degree but did not specify the area or discipline. They assumed a college degree guaranteed a basic level of knowledge. Secondly, his teaching of music prepared him to explain and re-explain his actions in a clear, logical way. Thirdly, the study of music performance requires collaboration, concentration, learning the mechanics of the instrument and of sound, creativity, problem-solving, and discipline. Clearly, Tom learned all of those higher-level skills at the same time he was learning music.

I was intrigued by this interview and the way the company had devised the tasks to get at the higher level thinking skills that are so difficult to teach and assess. Do we prepare our students to think at this level? Will our students be able to move comfortably between professions and jobs? Are we being the role models of innovation they need to see, so that they leave SU as innovative, creative individuals? If we are to prepare our students to be successful in the world they will be entering, we must examine what we teach, how we teach it, how we schedule and organize our classes. We must be innovative, creative, and flexible in all that we do, including administrative processes, procedures, and communication structures.
As your provost, I must tell you this is our new reality. SU must continue to evolve to meet the needs of our students. We must prepare them for their world, not ours. If we do not step up to the plate, some other institution will. State and private resources are limited, and they will flow to those universities and colleges that are preparing students for the future. SU has a reputation for meeting challenges and succeeding, and we must continue to do so.

Earlier, I noted faculty and departments who are already engaged in delivering content through varied models and who are exploring new scheduling frameworks. The rest of us must follow their lead. Opportunities abound, and ideas are already being discussed. Over the course of this academic year, you will have many opportunities to be creative and innovative in ways that make sense for you and for SU. I am not asking you to change the world, just SU. Let me share with you a few of this year’s opportunities of which I am aware. Conversations with your colleagues will initiate other ideas.

(1) First, as you know, we are currently developing our new strategic plan. This is a time of reflection and a time of looking forward. Any innovation should grow from our strategic goals and objectives. Our last strategic plan laid a path to success in many areas. We now have new opportunities to plan the pathway for SU for the next five years. In September, I will be inviting you to planning workshops organized by faculty rank to solicit your input. The strategic plan will be developed and will guide the university forward with or without your input. This is your chance to hear what others think is important and to contribute your own thoughts. I hope to see you there. After September, a draft will
circulate among the university community for comment before the plan is finalized.

(2) Certainly one area we must examine is advising. I hear from both students and faculty about problems with our current system. Is it working? I’m not sure, but the voices of discontent are rising, and we need to take a look at what we are doing and assessing its effectiveness. Melissa Boog, the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, is organizing forums for the fall to gain insight into your thoughts about our current model and to explore other models. Our work in this area will be supported by a new partnership with the Education Advisory Board. Social work, management, art, and math will be piloting the Student Success modules from EAB this fall. You will be learning more about this partnership and the services they will provide to faculty to ensure student success.

(3) Graduate students are becoming more important to us. Dean Griffin has a new goal to grow the graduate student population to 10% of the entire student body by 2018. That works out to a population of about 800 graduate students. To support this initiative, the entire graduate admissions function has moved from Admissions to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. Dean Griffin will work with the Graduate Council to centralize the graduate application and admissions processes, although final admissions decisions will remain with the programs with appropriate deadlines for decisions to be made. As with undergraduate students, we must be flexible and innovative to attract graduate students to SU. Our graduate programs must
meet workforce needs if we hope to attract new students. We must consider innovative scheduling to provide the access this population requires. The new EdD, which will begin in Fall 2014, will provide a unique opportunity to teachers and administrators on the Eastern Shore and beyond. Dr. Wood and faculty in the Perdue School are revising the MBA into seven-week modules that will be available online as well as face-to-face. The GIS program is gearing up to offer courses online to a national audience. There are many, many ways we can grow and enhance our graduate programs.

(4) International education is critical to our students who will be entering and competing in a global marketplace. Dr. Stiegler’s move into the Provost’s Office is a clear signal of the importance that SU places on international experiences for our native students and American experiences for our international students. Our effort to embed international educational experiences into the curriculum is a unique feature. Dr. Stiegler, too, has a goal to reach; currently, a little over 1% of SU’s student body is comprised of international students. In the international summit last year, those attending suggested a goal of 5%. To achieve this goal, Dr. Stiegler has been working with a number of you to create pathways to degrees in education, in business in the MBA, and in TESOL. In the Center for International Education, Dr. Stiegler has created an Office for Asian Initiatives that will focus on partnerships with universities in China, Japan, and Korea. Other changes in the Center will create additional support structures for study abroad, visiting international faculty, the
English Language Institute, and international students on SU’s campus.

(5) The first Research Day and Innovation Showcase will be September 27. Eight faculty have agreed to give talks in a TED-talk format about their scholarly work. Additionally, in an after-hours format others will share with the Salisbury community the innovative ways they and their students are contributing to the growth, development, and well-being of the city, county, and state. This showcase in Perdue Hall will celebrate innovative partnerships developed by the faculty and staff to provide great learning experiences for students. You have received several communications about the event. I hope you will contact Dean Griffin to find out how you can participate.

(6) James Buss is bringing new energy and ideas to the Honors Program. In a recent conversation with the Deans’ Council, Jim stated that he wanted to enhance the Honors Program “to help students navigate the world after graduation.” This should be the mantra for us all. I know you will welcome Jim and work with him to maximize the impact of Honors on student recruitment and success. My goal, which is of course now Jim’s goal, is to make Honors available across the schools and to grow in the numbers of students reached by the Honors Program. Jim has some very innovative ideas, but I am sure he would love to hear from you about your ideas.

(7) Some faculty and programs have started exploring different scheduling options. The Social Work program will be offering 8-
week modules. Likewise, the MBA will be offered in modules of 7 weeks. Others are looking at how summer and winter terms and intensive weekend offerings can extend learning and can shorten the time to degree for our students. You may notice that freshmen this week will be wearing t-shirts saying class of 2017. We are encouraging them to think of the degree plan as a 4-year plan. For them to be successful, we must look at when and how courses are offered and make appropriate changes.

(8) Recent activities have caused us to explore some of the operating processes at SU. I would like to thank Betty Crockett and her staff for working with Academic Affairs to figure out how some operations might be done differently. For instance, Nancy Michelson and Dean Griffin worked with all of the Eastern Shore school district human resource officers and SU’s billing office to create a way for schools to be billed for the tuition and fees of their employees who wanted to attend SU. This may not sound like a big deal to you, but this one change can dramatically increase the number of teachers who will pursue graduate degrees at SU. I appreciate the willingness of Betty’s office to think in creative and innovative ways.

(9) Lastly, I am establishing an Office of Innovation in Teaching and Learning to operate out of the Provost’s Office beginning in the spring. The purpose of this office is to identify, support, and promote successful innovative practices of the faculty. The faculty director of this office will be selected through an internal search. I will work with the Faculty Senate to appoint a search committee that will review applications this fall. If you are interested in
exploring this opportunity, I encourage you to watch for announcements that the search process is beginning. I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Diallo Sessoms, Special Assistant to the Provost for Academic Transformation, and to Dr. Ron Gutberlet, who has been serving as a Fellow with the University System of Maryland assisting with the System’s redesign initiatives. They have been key to fostering conversations around the topic of innovation at SU and have provided their support and expertise to a number of faculty.

Facing the reality that we must be more innovative and acting on its imperatives can create anxiety and consternation. But innovation can also create energy, enthusiasm, and renewed purpose. If you speak to the faculty I have mentioned today, I think you would find them to be as excited about their work today as they were when they first came to SU. SU is a good place to be, but it can be a better place. I challenge you to step up to the plate; to seriously assess your courses, your programs, your scheduling. What knowledge and skills do the students in your major need? How can you best provide those opportunities for deep learning? How do you prepare them for their future? Only your creative and innovative practice can create the SU we want and need to be.

Thank you for your attention. Let’s have a great year.