According to news reports, one of the surprises of the 2008 presidential election year has been the hundreds if not thousands of young people attending campaign rallies and cheering enthusiastically for Senator Barack Obama and his call for “change you can believe in.” In many primary and caucus states, voter turnout of the 18-29 age group more than doubled. In the New Hampshire primary, for example, turnout increased from 18 percent in 2004 to 43 percent this year.

Though Obama’s age and style undoubtedly resonate with many young people, it is equally clear that such a sea change in attitudes did not come out of the blue but has been quietly developing for a number of years. One Salisbury University student in 2004 said, “My parents aren’t interested in politics, but I want to be.”

We think that attitude is representational of today’s students and the research seems to bear us out. In the 2004 presidential election, 18-24-aged voter turnout was 47 percent, an increase of 11 percentage points over 2000.

Candidates for the 2008 presidential election are paying more attention to these young voters. One new tool is the use of technology, with networking Web sites such as Facebook, as well as the activist site Moveon.org, said Dr. Scott Britten, SU communication arts faculty.

“The Internet is a way to get your face out to voters and potential supporters,” he said. “There is an element of democratic participation that we’ve never seen before.”

In 2000, Democratic candidate Howard Dean became the first to harness the power of such sites, not only for public relations, but for fundraising, Britten said. The face of future presidential campaigns forever changed.

“Now, every viable candidate has a technology team,” Britten said, comparing the new method of Internet campaigning to John F. Kennedy’s use of television during the 1960 campaign.

Of course, television still plays a part in shaping public opinion, but today it’s not only journalists but entertainers such as Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert who attract attention. Last spring, SU senior Dana Alsup joined three other SU students to attend a taping of Comedy Central’s The Colbert Report, in Philadelphia.

“Those shows have given me a new perspective on voting,” she said. “Politics always seemed like a boring thing because all I saw was CNN and other major news networks like that doing the reporting. Shows like The Colbert Report and The Daily Show make politics interesting and funny so they appeal to me.”

Surveys completed by The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press and Harvard University’s Institute of Politics conclude that attitudes favorable to civic engagement are becoming more widespread among young adults. They do not, however, always participate in politics the way older generations have. They are more likely to sign an online petition or contribute to a political advocacy blog than actively campaign for a candidate.

But they are voting, and that may make all the difference.
By Candice Evans, Staff Writer
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At a recent Salisbury Christian School charity event, “An afternoon with Mr. Lamkin” became the most active auction item ever donated by a teacher.

Two sets of parents enthusiastically bid on behalf of their children until the final tally reached $1,900.

“It’s a little overwhelming,” admitted Steven Lamkin, who is in his second fullyear of teaching kindergarten.

“With this age group, you have to constantly keep moving,” he said. “So I try to set the classroom up so it’s easy for me to get around — so there’s not so much moving back and forth.”

Lamkin also applies more traditional techniques to his job, which includes communicating with parents on a daily basis and working one-on-one with students to break down teacher/student barriers.

“I learn new things every day,” Lamkin said. “I’m constantly improving.”

Even though Lamkin is tired by the end of the school day, he describes the feeling as “good exhausted.”

“I know that all the energy I put forth every day is worth it,” he said.

When searching for mentors, Lamkin looks no further than his parents. For more than 30 years, his mother has continued to teach kindergarten, and his father works as a music teacher.

Lamkin said his mother always encouraged him to be a positive role model in his field for students and peers.

“My mom said, ‘So few men teach this grade level,’” said Lamkin, who originally thought he would be better suited to teach second- or third-graders. “What an opportunity this will be for you.”

Especially when Lamkin can teach his young students that being different is OK. He continues to stress that “his body just works differently.”

“They were curious about it and asked questions the first week of school — watching me walk,” he said. “I told them that it’s like the colors in a crayon box. It would be a boring world if they were all the same.”

Study Social Work Closer to Home

Reaching out to students statewide, SU’s growing social work program has expanded even further across Maryland. New agreements are making it easier for Central Maryland students to go on to earn bachelor’s degrees.

As of this fall, students at Frederick and Hagerstown community colleges are able to transfer to SU’s satellite social work program at the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown. Similarly, Harford Community College attendees may enroll in SU’s satellite program at Cecil College.

“In a lot of these areas there are no universities nearby that offer a social work program,” said Cindy Wingate, program coordinator. “By having streamlined access to our satellite sites, where evening classes are offered, it’s a great opportunity especially for working professionals.”

The agreements provide a smooth transition by outlining course requirements to avoid duplicating curriculum. Similar agreements already exist with Cecil College, Chesapeake College and Delaware Technical and Community College.

Shannon Baublitz of Abingdon, MD, enrolled at the Cecil site last fall. A single mom who decided to pursue social work after adopting her five-year old son, she was excited that the bachelor program fit with her busy schedule.

“It was very easy to enroll; the director made everything really simple,” she said. “Part of the program is on the Internet, so I only go up there twice a week, which means I don’t have to spend a lot of time away from my son.” Another perk was being able to join Phi Alpha, the social work honor society. “I feel like I’m part of Salisbury even though I’m at Cecil,” she said.

SU’s Social Work Department began offering its Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and Master of Social Work programs at satellite sites in spring 2007. SU has one of only three social work master’s programs in the state, and it is the only one that focuses on serving non-urban areas. Since the satellite sites were established, enrollment has nearly doubled.

All satellite courses are “blended,” using the latest technology including face-to-face, interactive live video and online instruction from SU’s full-time faculty. Students may complete all degree components, from registration to field placements, in their local communities.

Sue Patchel of Stevensville enrolled at the Chesapeake site. “It made things a whole lot easier because it’s close,” she said. “It’s convenient and we’re very happy with the hybrid classes. Each and every professor has been top notch.”
In 2007, when Salisbury University President Janet Dudley-Eshbach joined leaders from more than 400 colleges and universities in the fight against global warming by signing the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, it was the latest in a series of sustainability efforts by the University in the past two decades.

SU was thinking “sustainable” before sustainability was cool. In 1990 SU began its on-campus recycling program, which has evolved to recycle everything from carpet to electronics.

Now the ante has been upped once again. SU is committed to creating a climate-neutral campus, the crux of the Climate Commitment, by reducing carbon emissions and maintaining green spaces. Going far beyond the “reduce, reuse, recycle” mantra of the ’90s, SU’s current sustainability efforts range from classroom instruction to classroom construction.

**Green in the Classroom**

Through its environmental science and environmental issues majors, SU is at the forefront of creating leaders in sustainability. Students in Salisbury’s 40 other majors also have opportunities to add green to their studies. The University’s Earth literacy course, taught by Dr. Joan Maloof of the Biological Sciences Department, recently expanded from one section to several due to student demand.

Students in Dr. George Whitehead’s environmental psychology class received hands-on instruction last spring, creating and installing bluebird boxes at Pemberton Historical Park in Salisbury. Dr. James Hatley of the Philosophy Department teaches students about “responsible human uses of the real world” by planting gardens in his environmental philosophy class. Dr. Shawn McEntee of the Sociology Department hopes to take this initiative even further in the future, drafting a plan for SU to grow its own vegetables to be served in the Commons.

**Sustainability Abroad**

SU students don’t just learn about protecting the environment at home. Currently, they have the option of signing up to conduct environmental research abroad in Honduras with Dr. Laura Marasco of the Education Specialties Department. Future environmental study abroad trips scheduled include India in 2009 with Dr. Michael Lewis of the History Department and the Amazon in 2010 with Dr. Jill Caviglia-Harris of the Economics and Finance Department.

**Environmental History**

Every two years since 2002, SU students have engaged in undergraduate research as part of SU’s Local Environmental History Seminar. Focusing on Wicomico County, the research has culminated in three e-books on the Wicomico River (2002), local agriculture (2004) and local forestry (2006), each made available to the general public as well as regional environmental researchers.
Environmental Friendliness Makes Sense

Pepco Partnership

Replacement light bulbs and plumbing fixtures don’t normally make headlines, but when SU partnered with Pepco Energy Services, Inc. for a plan to reduce power and water consumption—all at a savings of more than $5 million—state officials took notice. The Maryland Board of Public Works lauded the strategy, which included replacing plumbing fixtures and lighting in buildings campuswide with more energy-efficient models.

In all, the project saved water equal to the amount consumed annually by 473 family homes (11,000 gallons) and electricity sufficient to power 1,600 homes. It also reduced emissions equal to removing 1,571 cars from the road or planting 2,145 acres of trees.

Giving Green

SU is lowering its carbon footprint in other ways, as well. A recent gift from Charles and Barbara Emery (above) provided the Salisbury University Foundation, Inc. with a 135-acre family farm, only slightly smaller than the main campus.

Valued at more than $540,000, “the gift included an easement that prohibits development on the property,” said Kim Nechay, director of development for SU and assistant director of the foundation, adding that she hoped to see more green donations in the future.

Preservation of green properties helps offset the development that is necessary to maintain SU’s status as A Maryland University of National Distinction.

Rewarding Environmentalism

SU not only celebrates sustainability on campus; it salutes those who are making a difference around the world. Since 2005, SU has partnered with the Newton Marasco Foundation to present the Green Earth Book Awards, the first prize in the United States lauding authors of environmentally friendly children’s literature. In 2008, the foundation presented its first international award to Irish-Canadian author O.R. Melling for her book The Light-Bearer’s Daughter. Winners receive $2,500 plus a $500 donation to the environmental charity of their choice.

Practical Ideas

Each year the Student Government Association hosts Earth Day festivities on campus. This year, fun and games were paired with more practical matters as students in Maloof’s Earth literacy course presented their ideas for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s “P3: People, Prosperity and the Planet” grant competition. Through this program, the EPA challenges college students to come up with better designs for sustainability. The top designs compete for $75,000 in grant funding.

Not every idea, however, needs to be grant-worthy to be effective. “Our students come up with ideas all the time,” said Lewis. For example, one student noted the number of napkins being wasted in the Commons. Napkins were located next to the trays and silverware at the dining hall’s entrance, and students routinely took more than they needed. The student suggested the napkins instead be placed in baskets on individual tables, allowing students to take napkins as they became necessary. The result: reduced waste and a cost savings for the University.

RecycleMania

Last spring SU students got serious about a project with a silly name: RecycleMania. Students in SU’s residence halls participated in the national contest for the first time, joining more than 400 colleges and universities throughout the United States in competing to see who could produce the most recycling.

“Half of what people throw away in college residence hall Dumpsters can be recycled,” said Rebecca Rosing-Johnson, horticulture and grounds manager at SU. “We really need to keep these things out of the landfills.”

During the 10-week competition, SU students recycled 4.3 tons of material including glass, aluminum, plastic, paper and cardboard. A student-produced public service announcement, expected to air on campus radio station WXSU as well as the University’s closed-circuit TV station, will encourage the SU community to do even more in 2009.
Student Organizations

SU students participate in many campus organizations dedicated to protecting and preserving the environment, including Bio Environ, the Environmental Health Club and the Environmental Students Association. Clubs like these provide like-minded students the opportunity to join together and become active in environmental concerns.

Carbon Study

Under the direction of Dr. Stephen Adams, management and marketing faculty, and John Hickman, executive director of SU’s Small Business Development Center, students conducted a semester-long carbon study of the campus. Using the data, students projected future carbon emissions, giving SU officials an idea of the amount of carbon they will need to neutralize in future initiatives.

Better Buildings

From bamboo to bike racks, SU’s new Teacher Education and Technology Center proves careful planning is the key to environmental friendliness.

Bicycle racks were incorporated to encourage alternatives to driving. Some floors are covered with renewable and recyclable bamboo instead of petroleum-based products. Up to 40 percent of the structural steel frame is made from recycled materials, and an ultra-efficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning system uses no CFCs.

Second Time Around

“As we’ve kept quite a few tons out of the landfills,” said Rebecca Rosing-Johnson, director of SU’s Horticulture Department, which oversees recycling on campus. Each year SU recycles more than one million pounds of items ranging from paper and glass to electric motors and oil.

For more information about SU’s continuing sustainability efforts, visit www.salisbury.edu/president/sustainabilityinitiatives or www.salisbury.edu/environment.