

# Re:Search

Graduate Studies & Research at Salisbury University

2026 Edition

**SALISBURY AT 100:  
THE DEANS'  
PERSPECTIVE**



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Sea Gulls,

As Salisbury University celebrates its centennial year, this special edition of *Re:Search* offers an opportunity to reflect on a century of discovery and creativity.

This issue is particularly meaningful because it tells that story through the voices of our academic leaders. Each of our deans contributes a thoughtful reflection on the evolution of their disciplines and the role they play in shaping Salisbury University today. Their essays are more than institutional histories; they are creative narratives that capture the spirit and promise of SU.

Together, these perspectives trace the remarkable arc of our first century. They remind us of our origins as a normal school dedicated to preparing teachers for Maryland's Eastern Shore, and they illustrate how that mission has expanded to encompass a wide range of disciplines, research initiatives, and creative activities that serve our students and communities alike.

Across these pages, you will discover how education programs continue to prepare the next generation of teachers, how libraries serve as a hub for research and intellectual exploration, and how the arts, humanities, and social sciences deepen our understanding of the human experience. You will see how undergraduate research empowers students in science and technology to move beyond the classroom and contribute to real discovery, how experiential learning prepares future business leaders, and how health and human services programs address complex challenges facing our communities.

What emerges is a portrait of a university deeply committed to innovation and the success of its students. Across our campus, faculty and students work side by side asking important questions, exploring new ideas, and applying knowledge in ways that make a meaningful difference.

As we close out our centennial celebrations, we do so with both pride and purpose. The reflections captured in this issue remind us how far we have come and inspire confidence in the discoveries and impact that will define Salisbury University's next century.

**Dr. Carolyn Ringer Lepre**

President, Salisbury University

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On the Cover: Dean of Graduate Studies and Research Dr. Clifton Griffin proudly displays copies of *Re:Search*, which documents the highlights and milestones of scholarly pursuits at Salisbury University.



# 100 Years of Educating at Salisbury: *Our Deans Reflect*



As Salisbury University celebrates its centennial year, it is natural for those who help lead it to reflect on how far we have come as an institution of learning. In honor of this landmark, SU's deans were asked to share their thoughts on the state of their areas. Some provided thoughts on their origins and evolution, others took a philosophic look at their disciplines, and some celebrated their past, current, and ongoing accomplishments. Throughout all these varied perspectives is a shared belief that through a commitment to excellence, collaboration, and innovation, anything is possible for our students – yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Salisbury. Forever.

# A Century of Preparing Educators: Origins, Innovations, and Enduring Impact

*By Dr. Laurie Henry, Dean*



When the doors of the State Normal School at Salisbury first swung open in September 1925, the campus consisted of a single building situated on 29 acres of cleared cornfields. Inside, 105 female students and eight faculty members embarked on a mission that was as urgent then as it is now: train high-quality teachers to address severe teacher vacancies in this rural region of the state. That small teacher training academy has evolved into a nationally recognized, endowed powerhouse of pedagogical innovation that is at the heart of Salisbury University today.



## Laying the Foundation

In the early 20th century, the Eastern Shore of Maryland faced a critical shortage of qualified teachers. In response, the Maryland General Assembly authorized the creation of a “Normal School” in Salisbury, a two-year college for elementary school teachers. Under the visionary leadership of its first principal/president, Dr. William J. Holloway, the institution was designed not just as a college, but as an embedded teaching and learning community. In the early years, the students lived, ate, studied, and socialized within the walls of what is now known as Holloway Hall.

The curriculum was a rigorous two-year program focused on the “norms” of teaching – hence the name “Normal School” (a model established in Paris in 1794). These pioneering educators weren’t just learning to master core subjects for teaching (reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and geography); they were mastering the art of teaching (pedagogy), child development (psychology), and classroom management through clinical practice in model classrooms. Holloway Hall served all these functions, including a Campus School (under the direction of Principal Thomas Caruthers) with two classrooms that enrolled 61 students in grades one through four, to ensure graduates had hundreds of hours of hands-on experience before earning their credentials.

By 1931, as the demands on educators grew, the teacher training program expanded to three years and enrolled male students for the first time. By 1934, it became a full four-year Bachelor of Science program. This transition marked the school’s first major evolution into the State Teachers College at Salisbury (1934-63). In 1962, the first graduate program was offered with the Master of Education (M.Ed.) in elementary and secondary education designed for practicing teachers who needed a fifth year of study for permanent teaching licensure. With a continued emphasis on applied educational research to address common problems of practice, the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) program was launched in 2014 with an emphasis in literacy studies. Finally, in 2019, the Bachelor of Arts in outdoor education leadership was developed, establishing a strong foundation for leadership-focused pedagogy as a cornerstone of the Seidel School.

## A Laboratory for Learning: Caruthers Hall

By the 1950s, the college recognized that growing enrollments were straining Holloway Hall’s capacity. Additionally, pedagogical shifts called for the modernization of the original Campus School. Initially, a remodeling of the elementary school classrooms in the east wing was considered but soon abandoned. The State instead invested nearly \$700,000 to build a modern, stand alone “demonstration school” equipped with specialized features (acoustic ceilings and dedicated observation areas) to operate as a true laboratory environment. In 1955, the Campus School opened as a fully functioning school with classrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium, and playground. After 11 years of operation, the school was renamed the Caruthers Campus School to honor the legacy of the campus school’s first principal and founding faculty member in mathematics and psychology, Dr. Thomas J. Caruthers (1925-1955).



*Pauline Riall (in black) looks on as Maryland Governor Theodore McKeldin places the cornerstone at the dedication for the Campus School, August 1953.*

Under the leadership of E. Pauline Riall as principal (1955-1969), this “laboratory approach” to teaching cemented the school’s reputation for practical, hands-on experience. Even as the college rebranded to Salisbury State College in 1963 and broadened its liberal arts offerings, the commitment to teacher preparation remained the institution’s primary identity. However, due to state budget shortfalls in 1967, Governor Spiro Agnew (1967-1969) called for the closure of demonstration schools on college campuses in the state. The Campus School began scaling back operations in 1968 with the elimination of the upper grades 4-6, and the Campus School was permanently closed in 1969.

## Philanthropic Transformations

The Seidel School of Education is known for its deep commitment to enhancing the educational experiences of youth in the community. This may be best demonstrated through the tutoring program offered by the May Literacy Center. Established in 1991, the center was created by an endowment from Dr. John May, a former faculty member who was diagnosed with dyslexia, and his wife Dr. Florence Simmonds May. For 35 years, the May Literacy Center has helped thousands of local K-8 children – particularly those with learning exceptionalities and multilingual learners – leaving a lasting impact on their educational success.

The most pivotal moment in the school’s modern history came in 1997, when Samuel W. Seidel, a local businessman and former teacher, along with his wife Marilyn, recognized that to lead on a national stage, its education programs needed permanent, dedicated support. The Seidels provided a landmark \$1 million endowment, making the Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies the first named, endowed school of education in the state and only the second in the nation. This endowment provided the school with the prestige and resources needed to recruit world-class faculty, launch innovative research initiatives, and directly support non-traditional students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds through scholarships. The initial \$1 million gift was the capstone for a larger campaign that raised \$3 million for the school.

## *Modernizing the Mission*

With the onset of the 21st century, the nature of teaching was undergoing a digital revolution. The chalkboard gave way to the smart board, and the “demonstration school” model needed a major upgrade. In 2008, the university opened the \$65 million Teacher Education and Technology Center, later renamed Conway Hall after Delegate Norman Conway (an SU alumnus and educator) who was instrumental in securing funds for the building. Spanning 165,000 square feet, Conway Hall is the largest academic building on campus and serves as a monument to the success of the Seidel School. The building houses integrated technologies, specialized “Learning Labs” and dedicated instructional spaces where faculty and students test new instructional methods. It isn’t just a building; it’s a hub of innovation where the rural mission of 1925 meets the global connectivity of today’s classrooms.

These specialized learning labs are continually revitalized to keep up with the ebb and flow of innovative instructional evolutions. The EMMA (Eye Movement Miscue Analysis) lab (one of only 12 worldwide) provides a high-tech research site where graduate students and faculty mentors collaborate to better understand how diverse readers construct meaning from text. In 2018, a traditional computer lab was repurposed to create a dedicated Makerspace to support the infusion of design thinking, 3D modeling, and physical computing experiences into program coursework that provides hands-on creative exploration for aspiring teachers. Our programs exemplify innovation and revolutionary thinking in teacher preparation as recognized by the American Association for Teacher Education with the 2020 Best Practice Award for Innovative Use of Technology.

## *A Legacy of Impact*

The Seidel School of Education has a storied tradition of producing high-quality, classroom-ready teachers. From local county recognitions to the prestigious Maryland Teacher of the Year award, the school’s alumni consistently rise to the top

of their profession. This track record is a direct result of the school’s “clinical first” philosophy, which has been part of its DNA from the beginning and acknowledged by the National Association for School-University Partnerships (formerly the National Association for Professional Development Schools) with 10 national awards: Spirit of Partnership Award (2009), Exemplary PDS Achievement (2011, 2015, 2017, 2021), Emerging Leader (2018, 2021, two in 2025), and Exemplary Mentor Teacher (2023).

As one of the state’s largest suppliers of teachers, our impact on the profession is immeasurable. Through our educational leadership programs and the Academy for Leadership in Education, we train the next generation of school administrators to ensure a steady supply of high-level, skilled professionals who hold leadership positions or seek to transition into leadership roles. We support practicing teachers pursuing National Board Certification who seek to advance their content knowledge and pedagogical skills. The school also provides direct clinical services to thousands of families in the region through the Eastern Shore Childcare Resource Center, which provides high quality training, resources, technical assistance, and coaching for childcare providers across the region.

## *The Next Century of Excellence*

Our faculty are known for their excellence in teaching and scholarship, frequently honored for their innovative pedagogy and student-centeredness. They are early adopters of new classroom technologies and help expand global perspectives through coursework and study abroad opportunities. Today, faculty are reimagining teaching and learning with the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and are leading the way in the ethical and effective use of AI to enhance learning.

As we look back on the past 100 years, the Seidel School has remained true to Dr. Holloway’s original 1925 vision. While technology has evolved from slate to digital tablets, the core belief remains the same: a community is only as strong as its teachers. ●



# Fundamental Academic Infrastructure and a Partner in Research

*By Joan Ruelle, Dean*



For over a century, Salisbury University Libraries have been more than collections of books; we've been a strong foundation for learning, research, and collaboration. From our beginnings as curators of a small collection of books in Holloway Hall to the College Library that later became Blackwell Library to today's stunning Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons (GAC), we've grown and evolved alongside the University.





The diary of Mae Jones, one of the first students admitted to Salisbury Normal School in 1925, includes that the “Library Tech Class” (Library Techniques – the precursor to what we know as information literacy) was included in the curriculum from the very beginning (Bradley, p. 16). SU Libraries are constantly adapting to new technologies and new ways of learning. From print card catalogs to computers, CD-ROMs to the Internet, Google to AI – SU Libraries have always worked to be the best first stop for research and a trusted partner in academic success. Throughout SU’s history, SU Libraries have been an integral part of the university’s research enterprise as an intellectual crossroads of the campus, offering resources and expertise that fuel inquiry and curiosity across the disciplines.

### *Resources and Expertise*

Research is rarely one-size-fits-all, and that’s why SU Libraries provide a variety of resources to support research at every level. We provide collections and access, meeting the needs of every discipline through professional curation and discovery tools to search hundreds of thousands of books, journals, databases, and digital resources both locally and available through our partnerships with other libraries. Expert guidance is given by faculty librarians who teach hundreds of information literacy classes each year, are embedded in academic courses, and collaborate with teaching faculty to design assignments that build strong research skills including

AI-literacy and lateral reading to counter mis/disinformation. Through consultations and partnerships liaison librarians offer tailored research consultations, collaborate on grant proposals and data management approaches, and connect scholars to specialized tools. The libraries also are a space for work and collaboration – from quiet study rooms to inviting spaces for group work, we provide environments that support every stage of the research process. Whether you need a quick strategy to streamline your search or you want to explore new lines of inquiry, the team in the SU Libraries is here to help.

### *Centers of Learning*

In addition to the main library in the GAC, SU Libraries are also home to a variety of specialized centers and collections that deepen research opportunities and connect scholars to the region and beyond.

The Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture is a cornerstone of SU’s regional research identity, preserving and providing access to the University Archives, manuscripts, and artifacts documenting the history and culture of the Eastern Shore. Its distinctive research contributions foster collaboration, experiential learning, and public scholarship. Examples include hands-on learning workshops for K-12 students and teachers, supporting AP U.S. History, African American Studies, and Maryland History Day; campus and community storytelling, providing archives

and expertise for SU's centennial celebrations and local media projects; regional and national partnerships by hosting programs like the Maryland Humanities Summer Teacher Institute and the Robert F. Smith Summer Internship Program with the National Museum of African American History and Culture; and access to digital history, such as *Enduring Connections: Exploring Delmarva's Black History*, which offers online access to hundreds of thousands of records, expanding research opportunities for scholars everywhere.

The SU Libraries MakerLab, located in the GAC, offers maker services like 3D printing and laser cutting/engraving, allowing SU students, faculty, and staff to incorporate the use of these technologies into their research. The Ernie Bond Curriculum Resource Center, embedded in the Seidel School of Education, supports education research and teacher preparation with collections of children's and young adult literature, teaching materials (including puppets!), and curriculum resources that are essential for future educators and literacy scholars. The Museum of Eastern Shore Culture, located in downtown Salisbury, cultivates the preservation and expression of the cultural heritage and traditional arts of Delmarva's various communities, preserving artifacts and curating exhibits that serve as primary sources for research and creative exploration.

## *SU Librarians Are Researchers*

Our faculty librarians don't only support the research of others, we also conduct our own research to contribute to scholarship and best practices in librarianship. We publish in peer-reviewed journals, present at national conferences,

and collaborate on projects that shape the future of libraries. Examples include articles in journals such as *Journal of Academic Librarianship* and *New Directions on Teaching and Learning* and chapters in books by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) – the premier academic library association – on faculty partnerships, diversity in collections, scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), and mentoring; presentations at major conferences on topics like information literacy and emerging technologies; and serving in leadership roles in professional organizations and editorial work for national publications. I edited and co-authored one such book, *The Engaged Library: High-Impact Educational Practices in Academic Libraries*, exploring how libraries enhance student success.

## *A Beacon to the SU Campus*

The Guerrieri Academic Commons is a stunning and welcoming building, by thoughtful design. Based on responses from SU students, SU Libraries have been recognized as a best library in the U.S. by Princeton Review for multiple years. But more than being part of a great place to study, SU Libraries are a place to belong, to explore, and to connect. We build collections to support local needs, collaborate with other libraries to expand access, and cultivate environments where all members of our community can find their spot. Most of all, we're here to help you succeed, whatever that might look like. Whether you're asking your first research question or working on a years-long project, make SU Libraries your first stop – we're ready to help you discover what's possible. ●



*Chaires stands next to the construction site of the campus library.*

## *Grace Strickland Chaires: A Pioneer for SU Libraries*

When Salisbury was still a small teachers' college, one librarian helped lay the foundation for the research culture we know today. In 1937, Grace Strickland Chaires became SU's first professionally trained librarian – a milestone that transformed the library from a modest book collection into a true academic resource. Grace didn't just manage books; she built a vision. Under her leadership, the library grew its holdings, met national accreditation standards, and became a trusted partner for faculty and students. Her commitment to access and quality meant that SU could support deeper inquiry and broaden its academic horizons.

Her tenure at Salisbury was briefly interrupted by a twist of adventure. In February 1943, she joined the WAVES, the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, which was the official name for the women's branch of the U.S. Naval Reserve during World War II. As she explained it, "My brothers are all too old or have families to support; they fought in the first World War. Now it is my turn" (Bradley, p. 93). Returning after the war, she continued shaping SU's library until her retirement in 1969. For more than three decades, she championed the idea that libraries are not just storage spaces – they are engines of discovery.

# The Transformational Power of Higher Education

*By Dr. Maarten Pereboom, Dean*



From time to time, the question crops up, as it should, as to whether we are on the right track as an academic institution. Salisbury University's centennial celebration prompts reflection on our progress as an institution, and we are also in the midst of a strategic planning exercise. Our roots are as a normal school, but we've branched out in the arts and sciences, and today we support a wide variety of graduate and professional programs as well.





Fall 2025 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

## *A Forceful Response*

Broadly speaking, higher education revolves largely around research, and we as a country are rightly proud of the critical role that academic research has played in expanding knowledge and improving the human experience. Of course, athletics also feature prominently in American higher education, leading some to comment waggishly about our universities functioning simultaneously as world-class research hubs, big-money sports enterprises, and, as an afterthought, a resort for teenagers. That's a joke, of course, but that perception lies at the heart of the current debate about the value proposition surrounding the undergraduate experience in particular. As an exemplary public regional comprehensive university, we have a forceful response to that challenge: our mission is to support the critical adult formation of our students as individuals, professionals, and citizens. Research and creative activity, in the Fulton School of Liberal Arts and across the university, plays an essential role in supporting that mission.

In the past, higher education catered to privilege, and the “best” institutions served the wealthy and perpetuated inequality. The GI Bill and Civil Rights movement opened up the promise of higher education to more people, but, despite the effects of democratization, the vestiges remain. Today the importance of keeping our mission focused on the transformational power of higher education to prepare young adults for life, work, and citizenship is greater than ever, given significant shifts in the economy and even challenges to our democracy.

## *The Importance of Engagement*

As the presence of artificial intelligence expands across our society, it's ever more important to engage our students with the processes whereby we actually expand knowledge and creativity, rather than just draw on existing word patterns and potentially flawed data to reinforce and perpetuate what we already have. The space we have carved to cultivate and reward faculty mentorship is especially critical in our increasingly automated and depersonalized way of life. The need to rehumanize our experience, while continuing to benefit from what technology has to offer, is the impetus for research and creative activity in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

The driving force in our visual and performing arts programs is a faculty with a strong commitment to creative activity. They model this through their exceptional individual talents, expressed in exhibitions and performances, but we have also coalesced as an arts community: semester after semester, the *Panorama* magazine documents the extent to which the arts enhance the life of our campus and wider community. COVID took that away from us temporarily, but we persevered, and even deployed technology in innovative ways to ensure that the shows would go on. Now, as we anticipate the development of a performing arts center in downtown Salisbury, we feel the strong support of our wider community for something we all feel is a beautiful opportunity to build community around shared belief in the arts and their power to celebrate excellence, to foster connection through participation, and also to heal.



*We have so much to celebrate in this centennial year as we reflect on who we are and where we came from. As a historian, it comes naturally to me to recognize the significance of all the efforts that have made us who we are.”*

### *Understanding Human Behavior*

As I think about my colleagues in the social sciences, I think of the work they are doing to understand human behavior as it pertains to key facets of our society, including politics and economics, and the challenges of our time, including inequalities and the environment. Doing that work in an academic environment that strongly favors applied approaches and engagement with the wider community means that their research has more immediate impact, and students have the opportunity both to witness and participate in those impactful activities.

We recently got the news that our Carnegie recognition as a Community Engaged Campus has been renewed; the highly innovative work of our Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE), led by colleagues including Dr. Sandy Pope, Dr. Sarah Surak, and Ryan Weaver, and building on the groundbreaking work of Dr. Fran Kane and Dr. Harry Basehart, has developed a civic learning spiral that has become a national model because its innovations were shared through research and dissemination. The fact that now seven institutions within the University System of Maryland will bear that designation, instead of just two, testifies to the power of our model and to our leadership in this critical area.



*PACE was influential in bringing some of the nation’s most prominent legislators to SU, including civil rights icon Rep. John Lewis.*

### *Scholar-Teachers and Mentors*

In the realm of the humanities, I could cite many examples of scholarship among my Fulton School colleagues that has gained national and international recognition, including through publication in the most reputable journals and prestigious scholarly presses. I’ve been on a quest to get more of our faculty recognized with Board of Regents awards for scholarship and creative activity, and I suspect part of the challenge may be that, by definition, research accounts for a smaller proportion of workload. We have multiple colleagues who are competitive for that recognition, and several have received the award. However, even our most accomplished scholars strongly embrace their primary calling as scholar-teachers and mentors.

As the humanities in particular have felt a sense of crisis in recent years, fueled by a sense of marginalization, the way back from that is to reconnect the humanities with the essential human activities they explore: storytelling, the search for meaning, and the need to understand experience. As a community-engaged, public regional comprehensive university, we are in an ideal position to champion research in public humanities that will help us to find the equilibrium we desperately need: AI is just the most recent development in technology shaping our experience. Traditional scholarship of discovery, which in other settings is compromised by pressures to specialize and publish in volume, in our community is freer to innovate, including in ways that engage students and the wider community. Among so many examples I could cite, I note the work Dr. Elsie Walker has done to engage student perspectives in video essays for the now fully online and universally accessible scholarly journal *Literature/Film Quarterly*, another example of a current generation of scholars building on the legacy of pioneers like Dr. James Welsh and Dr. Tom Erskine and taking the research to a new level.

We have so much to celebrate in this centennial year as we reflect on who we are and where we came from. As a historian, it comes naturally to me to recognize the significance of all the efforts that have made us who we are. The work we are doing now clearly connects scholarly and creative innovation with the wider community that benefits from it and gives us confidence that future generations will recognize those efforts with appreciation and respect. ●

# The Crucible of Discovery: The Vital Role of Undergraduate Research in STEM at SU

*By Dr. Michael S. Scott, Dean*



**I**n the traditional landscape of higher education, the classroom is often viewed as the primary site of knowledge acquisition. Students sit in lecture halls, absorbing theories and solving problems with known solutions. But at Salisbury University, particularly within the Richard A. Henson School of Science and Technology, this historical paradigm is only part of the story. We promote undergraduate research as a cornerstone of our STEM educational experience, transforming students from passive learners into active contributors to the scientific community.



The value of these experiences extends far beyond the laboratory bench or the computer terminal. They form the intellectual center of our enterprise. To be a success in a STEM career, one must both learn the foundational knowledge of an academic discipline as well as develop the dedication and curiosity it takes to succeed in a challenging academic field. We believe that this mindset is best forged through the trial and error of authentic research. By engaging in a high-impact practice like knowledge discovery, our students are not just preparing for the future; they are actively shaping it.

## *Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice*

In STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application can be vast. Undergraduate research serves as the bridge between them. At Salisbury University, this is evident in the sheer variety of projects available to students. In our most recent student research conference, topics ranged from owl nesting choices to environmental chemistry of local lakes to cellular automaton simulation to metrics from skeletal dental measurements to forensic entomology to using fluorescence spectroscopy to measure enzymatic reactions to mapping the risk of gentrification. Our students and faculty are engaged in a dizzying array of topics of exploration!

For a student majoring in biology, for instance, learning about neuroendocrinology in a lecture is one thing; tracking the hormonal changes and social lives of flying squirrels in the field is another entirely. Such projects, mentored by faculty like Dr. Angela Freeman, allow students (like Katie Ekholm, Abigaelle Pierre, and Gabriela Maroto) to apply complex biological concepts to living systems. Similarly, in the realm of computer science, Dr. Enyue Lu's EXERCISE (Explore Emerging Computing in Science and Engineering) Research Experience for Undergraduates (funded by the National Science Foundation) has brought more than 100 students

from universities across the country to work with faculty from SU and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore to solve data-intensive problems like medical image reconstruction using parallel computing.

These experiences align with our vision of a student-centered environment where expert faculty empower students with knowledge and skills from science, engineering, and mathematical disciplines. By tackling problems where no solution manual exists, students develop a level of intellectual independence that is impossible to replicate in a controlled classroom setting.

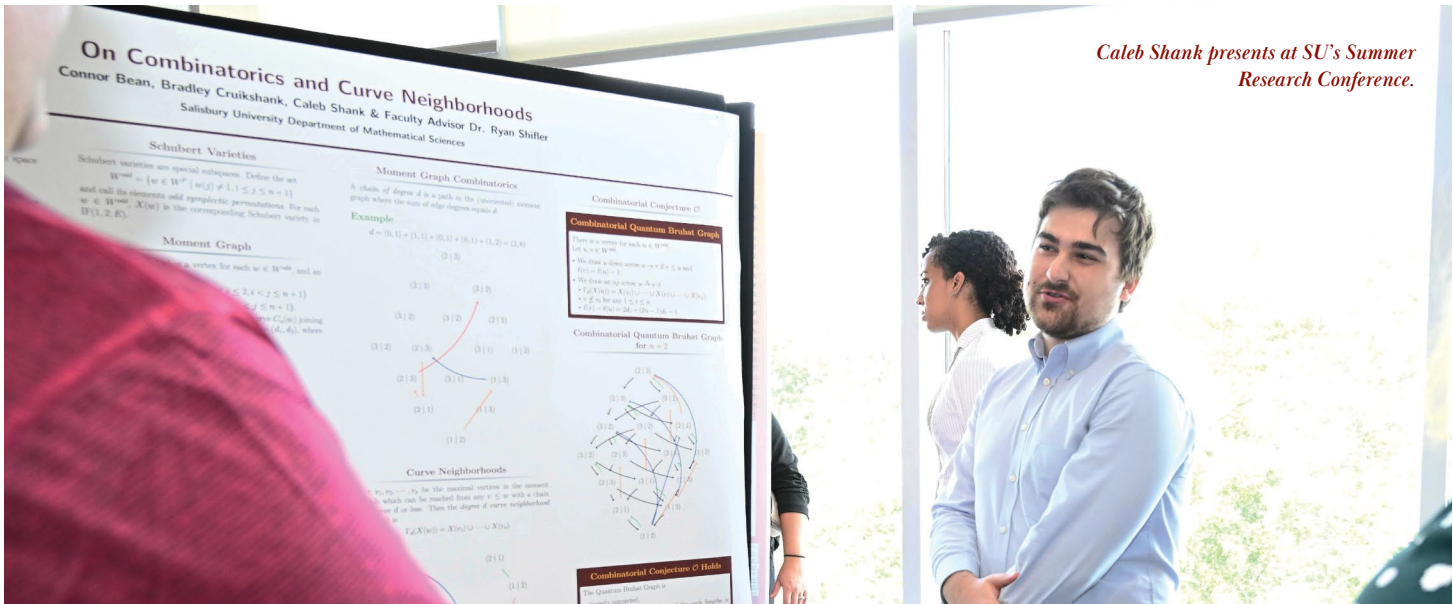
## *The Henson School Advantage: Mentorship and Resources*

One of the defining characteristics of research at SU is the accessibility of faculty. Unlike large research institutions where undergraduates might be buried under layers of graduate students, SU offers direct collaboration with seasoned experts. This mentorship is the heart of our school. We support this culture through robust funding and constantly improving infrastructure:

- **Henson Student Research Grants:** Providing up to \$800 for semester-long student projects to cover equipment, supplies, and travel for field work.
- **Guerrieri Summer Research Experience:** Immersive 10-week experiences that provide generous stipends for both students and faculty, allowing dozens of researchers to focus exclusively on their inquiries.
- **Student Travel Grants:** The research is not complete until you present it to your peers in the scientific community. Students can apply for funding to offset the cost of their travel to professional conferences
- **Equipment Investments and Upgrades:** The Henson School, through both state appropriation and the generous support of donors, usually spends more than \$200,000 a year on the physical scientific equipment that makes certain research projects possible.



*Dr. Angela Freeman and students (from left) Katie Ekholm and Joanna Diaz-Ocana in the field performing flying squirrel research.*



*Caleb Shank presents at SU's Summer Research Conference.*

This institutional support ensures that research is not a luxury for the few, but an opportunity for the many. It fosters a culture where new research foci, new energy, and new ways of connecting with students are constantly being introduced by a faculty dedicated to student success.

### *Developing Professional Competencies*

Beyond the specific scientific data collected, undergraduate research cultivates a suite of “power skills” that are highly prized in the modern workforce. STEM graduates are critically needed to keep the United States labor force competitive, and employers are increasingly looking for more than just a high grade point average. They want force multipliers, or individuals who can manage projects, communicate complex ideas, and persist through failure.

Research inherently teaches resilience. When an experiment fails or a code script breaks, the student must troubleshoot, iterate, and try again. This process builds the dedication necessary for a challenging field. Furthermore, the opportunity to present at the SU Student Research Conference or national forums like the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) or to publish in SU's own peer-reviewed student research journal, *Laridae*, sharpens communication skills. The students who can explain their published work on mathematics that is driven by quantum physics, general relativity, and mirror symmetry (like Caleb Shank and Connor Bean, mentored by Dr. Ryan Shifler in the Mathematical Sciences Department) to a non-expert audience are students who are ready for leadership roles in industry.

*“We seek to empower students with knowledge and skills that allow them to thrive.”*

### *Impact on Career Trajectories and Graduate Success*

The statistics surrounding undergraduate research at Salisbury University are telling. Research suggests that students who engage in these high-impact practices have higher retention rates and are more likely to pursue advanced degrees. At SU, many students co-author peer-reviewed papers with their mentors before they even receive their diplomas. For example, Dr. Yaping Jing and her undergraduate student Omar Aboul-Enein co-authored a paper on robotics that won a national award; today, Omar works at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

This trajectory is exactly what we in the Henson School aim for. By providing exceptional learning experiences in the classroom, field, and laboratory settings, we ensure our graduates are recruited by the best employers and graduate schools. Whether it is a chemistry major finding their passion at the intersection of art and science, or a geography major using GIS to help a local government plan for disasters, the research experience provides the deliverables that turn heads in an interview.

### *Conclusion: A Mission of Service and Discovery*

Ultimately, undergraduate research at Salisbury University is about more than just academic advancement. It reflects a commitment to research that serves the community. This ethos is passed down to the students, who learn that science is a tool for making a difference.

As the Henson School continues to grow, our focus remains clear. By prioritizing undergraduate research, SU is not just teaching students about science; it is teaching them how to be scientists. We seek to empower students with knowledge and skills that allow them to thrive. For a Henson School student at Salisbury University, the journey of discovery starts long before graduation, fueled by a university that believes their contributions are valuable today. ●

## Four Decades of Excellence Through Experience

*By Dr. Christy Weer, Dean of the Perdue School of Business*



**T**he Franklin P. Perdue School of Business demonstrates how a regionally rooted institution can deliver national-quality business education while remaining deeply connected to its community. Founded through the Perdue family's generous philanthropy and shaped by decades of curricular innovation and community engagement, the Perdue School combines rigorous academic standards with transformative opportunities that prepare students to lead organizations from small enterprises to global firms.



## *A Foundation Built on Vision*

The Perdue School was formally established in 1986 through a multimillion-dollar endowment intended to create a leading business school on Maryland's Eastern Shore. From its inception, the school has carried a dual mandate: elevating academic standards while serving as an economic engine for the Delmarva region. That founding gift anchored the Perdue School in both tradition and tangible regional impact.



*President Thom Bellavance confers with Business School namesake Frank Perdue.*

## *Commitment Built on Academic Excellence*

Academic quality has been central to the Perdue School's identity. In 1994, we earned accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), joining an elite group of institutions worldwide meeting rigorous standards for faculty qualifications, curriculum, and continuous improvement. We sustained that standard through recurring reaccreditation, most recently in 2023. In 2015, we earned separate AACSB Accounting accreditation, a distinction held by fewer than two percent of business schools worldwide.

Today, the Perdue School serves over 1,500 students through seven Bachelor of Science majors. These include accounting, business economics, finance, information systems, international business, management, and marketing. We also offer a Bachelor of Arts in economics and two M.B.A. pathways. Our 58 full-time faculty and supporting staff deliver programs enhanced by business development initiatives including the Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network (BEACON); the Small Business Development Center (SBDC); and the David and Patsy Rommel Center for Entrepreneurship in downtown Salisbury.

A defining feature of the Perdue School has been our commitment to experiential learning across all programs, ensuring students do not simply study business, they practice it.

## *Accounting: Quarter Century of Hands-on Excellence*

For over 25 years, the accounting program has required all majors to complete two distinctive experiential learning activities. First, the Business Activity Model simulation in Intermediate Accounting II engages student teams in multi-year financial statement corrections and analytical work for a client company. Second, the Capstone Internship in Auditing pairs classroom instruction with team-based financial assessments and consulting engagements for regional nonprofits. The program's track record speaks to its rigor. Three alumni within 12 years earned the prestigious Elijah Watt Sells Award, reserved for fewer than 60 candidates nationally scoring at least 95.5% on all four CPA Exam sections.

In an era of heightened scrutiny around higher education's return on investment, the accounting program's industry partnerships and placement success reinforce our institutional credibility. Our students and faculty maintain deep, recurring relationships with a remarkable roster of employers, Big Four, national, and regional CPA firms, private companies, and government agencies. Since 2017, SU has offered Maryland's only undergraduate fraud and forensic accounting certificate, expanding to M.B.A.-level coursework in fall 2026.

## *Economics: Competing on the National Stage*

Real-world application permeates our economics program through participation in the National College Fed Challenge, a prestigious Federal Reserve System competition. Each year, students compete against more than 100 universities nationwide, analyzing real-time economic conditions and developing monetary policy recommendations that simulate Federal Open Market Committee deliberations. Our teams have consistently earned regional recognition, including first-place finishes and finalist distinctions, validating students' analytical capabilities.

## *Entrepreneurship: From Concept to Creation*

The Perdue School hosts one of the nation's longest-running student entrepreneurship competitions, annually awarding up to \$260,000 to students and Mid-Atlantic entrepreneurs through four business competitions, including a high school pitch event. This investment is enabled by a multimillion-dollar Phillip E. and Carole R. Ratcliffe Foundation grant alongside alumni and community partner support.

Beyond competitions, we incubate companies at the 6,000-square-foot David and Patsy Rommel Center for Entrepreneurship in downtown Salisbury, made possible through a \$5.5 million gift from local entrepreneurs Dave and Patsy Rommel. This facility includes 12 garage and office spaces, makerspace with prototyping tools, and professional conference rooms. The Rommel Center bridges academic learning and entrepreneurial practice, transforming innovative ideas into viable businesses.



Students present their business ideas at the Idea Factory Poster Competition, part of SU's long-running Entrepreneurship Competitions.

## *Finance: Student-Managed Investment Excellence*

Launched in 2000, the Sea Gull Fund was Maryland's first student-managed investment portfolio and among the nation's earliest. Funded privately and designed to provide authentic investment management experience, the fund now manages over \$2.6 million, ranking among the 50 largest student-invested portfolios nationally. Students conduct security analysis, evaluate alternatives, and make portfolio decisions mirroring professional asset management. This experience dramatically enhances career opportunities in competitive finance fields.

## *Information Systems: Professional Certification and Enterprise Software*

The information systems major integrates SAP software throughout the curriculum, utilizing cases that allow students to manage complex business processes in real time. The SAP IEE2E Certification program enables students to earn professional certification before graduation, providing documented technical competencies that distinguish them in competitive job markets and validate their readiness for careers in information systems, consulting, or operations management.

## *International Business: Global Competency Through Immersion*

The international business major blends comprehensive business foundations with international and cultural competency. All students complete study abroad experiences, with faculty-led programs in Spain and Italy providing immersive European business exposure. A distinctive opportunity is the semester-long dual-degree option with Grenoble École de Management in France, allowing students to earn credentials from both institutions while developing global networks. These experiences prepare graduates to lead with confidence in an interconnected world.

## *Marketing and Sales: Industry Partnership at Scale*

The Mid-Atlantic Sales and Marketing Institute (MASMI) evolved from a pilot project with two faculty and a handful of students into one of the nation's top collegiate sales programs and Maryland's only Full Member of the University Sales Center Alliance. Industry-funded, MASMI has developed deep partnerships with organizations that actively recruit our graduates. Students in the program engage in multiple hands-on experiences culminating in the MASMI Sales Championship where the top four students go head-to-head in a live competition with a top-level executive from the sponsoring company playing the buyer. The program engages over 200 students annually and offers a minor and track in Professional Sales and Business Development. MASMI alumni success demonstrates our ability to anticipate workforce needs and respond with creativity and rigor.

## *A Legacy of Partnership and Purpose*

Nearly four decades after its founding, the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business continues fulfilling the vision established by the Perdue family's transformative investment. Their confidence in what a business school could become on Maryland's Eastern Shore, combining academic excellence with regional economic impact, has been validated by generations of students who have learned not merely to analyze business problems but to solve them, not simply to understand markets but to shape them.

None of our achievements would be possible without the vision, generosity, and trust that the Perdue family provided nearly 40 years ago, nor without continuing support from alumni, business partners, and philanthropists who invest in our programs and our students. As we look ahead, the Perdue School remains committed to the founding principles that have guided us: that exceptional business education serves both individual ambition and collective prosperity, that learning reaches its highest purpose when theory meets practice, and that a regionally rooted institution can achieve national distinction while serving its community. This is the Perdue School difference, excellence through experience, powered by partnership, dedicated to preparing business leaders in our region and beyond. ●

# The Intersection of Care, Knowledge, and Community Impact

*By Dr. Matt Laurent, Dean*



The programs housed in the College of Health and Human Services all stem from not just a commitment to care and helping, but from a clear understanding that meaningful change requires systematic understanding. Our fields have evolved into sophisticated, engaged research disciplines that have accepted the charge to produce evidence, shape professional practices, and guide policy creation and revision. When our communities face complex challenges, we avow our commitment to research, practice, and to defining strategies aimed to improve human well-being.



## *Leveraging Disruption to Lead Innovation*

As we reflect during this centennial, we find ourselves at an increasingly evident inflection point indicated by workforce shortages, persistent inequities, and growing behavioral health needs. This is coupled with an emerging awareness of the intertwined nature of the social and environmental contexts that influence health outcomes across all populations. It is precisely in times such as these when our fields have a respected reputation of leveraging disruption to lead and bring forward innovation and creativity. For the health and human service fields in the college, this moment presents a unique opportunity in which our academic programs, research, and community partnerships are well positioned to respond to these challenges with purpose and impact.

Historically, many of the areas represented in the college have been largely characterized as service-oriented professional programs within higher education. While service remains foundational, it no longer duly captures the full scope of our intellectual contributions. Indeed, even a cursory glance across the current higher-ed landscape would reveal that the health sciences, nursing, and social work are deeply engaged in research and scholarship that are applied, interdisciplinary, and increasingly methodologically diverse.

This is true here at Salisbury University. Our faculty inquiry has employed laboratory-based research, simulation training-based studies, and community-engaged investigations. These efforts examined issues ranging from the optimization of human performance; to clinical and rehabilitative decision-making; to the translation and implementation of evidence to improve clinical practice, health care systems, and population outcomes; to behavioral health access; to determining the social determinants of well-being. This work reflects a commitment to, not only understanding complex problems, but generating evidence that informs practice, guides policy, and improves health outcomes.

## *A College at the Intersection*

Today in the College of Health and Human Services, we find ourselves at an auspicious intersection of care, community, and knowledge creation. Indeed, the very questions we seek to find answers to in our scholarly endeavors are inseparable from the lives of individuals and families, and from the systems shaping access, quality, and outcomes. This intersection is neither distant nor abstract – it is evident in the health barriers our community members realize and the growing need for an integrated approach bridging clinical care, prevention, behavioral health, and social support for optimal health and wellness.



*Students learn and work collaboratively in the Henson Medical Simulation Center.*

Accordingly, you'll find that across the college our faculty lead both discovery- and practice-focused studies in research laboratories, simulation and skills-based settings, clinical environments, and community agencies. In addition, we generate novel work coordinated through our collaborative substructures such as the Henson Medical Simulation Center and our Center for Healthy Communities.

Additionally, many of our initiatives are sustained through externally funded initiatives that address behavioral health access, early intervention, family support, and workforce development. Programs, such as our Buzy Family Interprofessional Education Conference, demonstrate how integrative research, service, and evaluation are in the health and human services. In this way, community engagement is not ancillary to scholarship; it is frequently the substance that helps us shape our research questions, methods, and how we measure impact.

Moreover, our student-faculty research is central to our scholarly ecosystem. Throughout the college, our undergraduate and graduate students collaborate with faculty on projects situated within laboratory, clinical, and community contexts. Through these experiences, students learn how to ask and define meaningful questions, execute appropriate research methods, collect and analyze data responsibly and ethically, and translate findings into action through targeted dissemination. They participate in studies ranging from the examination of health behaviors, program effectiveness, clinical outcomes, human performance, and the social conditions that influence well-being. In doing so, students come to understand scholarship is not an abstract academic exercise, but a meaningful and useful tool for improving health, strengthening communities, and informing policy and an empowering academic exercise.



This approach prepares graduates who are not only skilled practitioners, but reflective professionals capable of applying evidence-based practice dedicated to improving the lives of all the individuals and communities they will serve. To that end, in the college, we champion that educational innovation is a powerful avenue for scholarly inquiry, and that outcomes from those efforts, in turn, inform how future professionals are prepared for increasingly integrated and demanding professional environments.



*We approach the next 100 years committed to producing rigorous, collaborative research and scholarship that is anchored to real-world context and to advance health.”*

### *Collaboration at the Cornerstone*

Importantly, a cornerstone of the college is that interprofessional education and scholarly collaboration have been at the heart of who we are from our inception. Unquestionably, the complexity and entwined nature of health and social challenges reinforce the need and importance of interdisciplinary collaboration as we continue to understand that health outcomes are shaped by biological, psychological, social, **and** environmental factors. Simply, no single profession can adequately address this alone.

Our schools of Health Sciences, Nursing, and Social Work will continue to lean into the opportunities of this truth through intentional scholarly work, crossing disciplinary silos and emphasizing interprofessional approaches. Our research will seek to integrate clinical science, population health, behavioral health, movement and rehabilitation sciences, and social systems as an intellectual necessity, mirroring the realities graduates will encounter in practice. This enduring commitment to interdisciplinary research and scholarship will continue to define who we are, how we serve, and why our work matters.

A centennial ultimately offers us a moment of clarity for the future among the celebration of all we have accomplished. For the College of Health and Human Services, that clarity lies at the intersection of care, knowledge, and community impact. We approach the next 100 years committed to producing rigorous, collaborative research and scholarship that is anchored to real-world context and to advance health, health care, and education. The college carries forward both a legacy and a responsibility – one that honors our history while preparing and excited for the opportunities of the century ahead. ●

# Strong Roots: 100 Years of Research and Creative Activities

*By Dr. Clifton Griffin, Dean*



*“Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.” – Carl Sagan*

Much like Salisbury University, there is beautiful American elm tree at the north end of Holloway Hall that also began its life 100 years ago. Over the past century, both the elm and SU have created deep and strong roots that have sustained growth. Imagine all the images of life at SU the elm has witnessed?





*SU has twice hosted the National Conference on Undergraduate Research.*

## *Strong Roots Lead to Growth*

Starting as a normal school, we have become a fantastic regional comprehensive university. Early in our history, teaching the teachers was our mission. Much like the elm tree sheds its leaves for winter rest and re-emerges each spring with renewed growth, SU has seen generations of students attend, learn, grow, and emerge from their time here to move on with their lives. They are left with the imprint of treasured times at Salisbury, molded by dedicated faculty and staff.

Built on that initial mission of teaching excellence, SU has evolved into a broadened educational powerhouse built with faculty distinction in teaching, research, service, and mentorship for both undergraduate and graduate students. As we cross the threshold of the next 100 years, it's natural to reflect on our proud history, ponder our current place in the education landscape, and wonder where we go from here. In short, how do we define Salisbury University today and what's vision for the future?

## *Becoming a National Leader*

Salisbury University maintains its long-term core values of student-centeredness and community engagement. These should always be the pillars of an SU education – but, we have grown. For example, 50 years ago, the idea of SU being a national leader in undergraduate research did not exist, and yet, it is a cornerstone of who we are today. When I interviewed for my job at the university in February 2010, many people on campus said, “SU has a dedicated culture of undergraduate research.” Now, here we are, in 2026, and I proudly confirm that SU still has a strong culture of developing, empowering, and growing undergraduate research. Indeed, the entire research culture of our campus has grown over the years. How did we do this?

Undergraduate research and creative activities thrive at SU because of our dedicated faculty. Faculty provide the opportunities for students to participate and excel in

life-changing engagements outside of the classroom. Our undergraduates provide the energy and interest that help make the connections endure.

In the last few decades, SU undergraduates have been joined by dedicated graduate students in 15 different master's programs and two doctoral programs. These programs offer students an opportunity to take a deeper dive into specific disciplines and further hone their skills. Indeed, as the number of programs has grown, the entire research culture at SU has grown in breadth and depth. Our faculty and students participate in research at ever-growing rates each year, with SU's overall output for research activities reaching over \$14 million last fiscal year.

Since 2011, examples of the expansion of research at the university have been highlighted throughout 15 editions of *Re:Search* magazine! This magazine you are currently reading is a reflection of who we are and our dedication to teaching and learning, inquiry and creativity. The first edition included features on climate change, deforestation, and the evolution of undergraduate research at SU. Last year, we read about a decade-plus research project on endangered frogs in Panama conducted by SU faculty and undergraduate and graduate students in biology. We also celebrated 10 years of graduates from our Doctoral in Nursing Practice Program. We've featured research and community outreach projects on addressing opioid addiction, prevention of financial abuse of elderly, and the creative arts. These 15 editions include over 100 feature articles and hundreds of excerpts on faculty mini-grants and graduate student grants. They include dozens of pictures from our highly successful annual SU Student Research Conferences, faculty and undergraduates performing field and health care research, and graduate students engaged in high-level training and research in laboratories. All these stories and pictures paint a powerful mosaic of Salisbury University that demonstrates our uniqueness and the contributions we have made to discovery.



*Students share their research with Maryland legislators – including Governor Wes Moore – every winter.*

## *Transformative Research Evolves*

Research is often the lifeblood of progress, and nowhere is this more evident than in colleges and universities like SU. We serve our region as an engine of discovery and community connection that not only expands knowledge but also transforms everyday life. At SU, we demonstrate our effectiveness through events such as Posters on the Bay, our annual poster session where some of our brightest Sea Gulls present their research and creative efforts to the Maryland legislative delegation and other leaders. We consistently send students to the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, and our undergraduate and graduate students participate in summer research projects. Just a few years ago, SU welcomed its own undergraduate student research journal, *Laridae*. In other words, we get things done – this is impact in action!

Now, more than ever, research and inquiry matter. They must. While challenges remain, from inequality to climate change, the trajectory of human development demonstrates that research has improved quality of life, expanded opportunities, and reduced suffering. At SU, our first 100 years have been a rich example of faculty and students learning and growing together to better themselves and the world in which they live.

It is clear that SU research plays a critical role in shaping the future. SU is home to a National Science Foundation

project exploring the use of artificial intelligence to help solve problems for our regional businesses. These and other new technologies reshape how we teach, how we do business, how we govern, and how we live our daily lives. At Salisbury University, we are great at empowering our students to not only ask “What can we do?” but also “What should we do?,” “Who will be impacted?,” and “What is our duty to our community?” Our students learn by doing and enter their future lives with real skills for making a lifetime of contributions.

Salisbury University was founded on students realizing their duty for teaching and service. We carry that message forward today. Just as the 100-year-old elm stands tall and strong entering its next century of growth, so too does SU. By elevating and communicating the impact of our regional public university research and outreach, and by fostering collaboration across disciplines and communities, we ensure that connection, service, and innovation remain shared pillars of our mission. Our Sea Gull students are taught to learn, explore, and make connections. This forward looking and holistic molding of students makes SU a leader in undergraduate and graduate student development. We empower the whole student – mind, body, and spirit – to do great things.

That’s who we are: Salisbury University – where student learning, research, and dedication to society are essential to who we are. ●

# HONORS: AN ORIGINS STORY



When Salisbury's Honors Program first took shape in the early 1980s, its beginnings were humble in the most literal sense. The inaugural cohort gathered in a windowless exercise room in the old Tawes Gym – near where Fulton Hall stands today. It was an unassuming space for a bold academic vision. Many of those early students were philosophy majors, and the curriculum leaned heavily into the liberal arts, inviting deep inquiry and spirited debate. From those modest roots, the program would steadily evolve, expanding across every discipline at the University. In 2016, that growth culminated in its elevation to an Honors College, and in 2020, with the support of an endowment, it became the Glenda Chatham and Robert G. Clarke Honors College. As the University celebrates its Centennial, it is fitting to look back at how this enduring commitment to excellence first began.

The seeds were planted during the 1977-78 academic year, when a small group of faculty members began discussing the possibility of creating an Honors Program at then Salisbury State College. At an April 1978 meeting of the Academic Council, Dr. Fran Kane of the Philosophy Department appeared as a guest to update members on the progress of the Honors Proposal. President Norm Crawford welcomed the idea enthusiastically and suggested that a faculty member serve as director. The Council unanimously endorsed the proposal. Yet despite the excitement in the room, the program did not immediately move forward.

It would take a few more years – and new leadership – to transform vision into reality. Under President Thom Bellavance, the proposal found renewed momentum. When Dr. Nayland Page was serving as dean, Dr. Tony Whall of the English Department approached him to revisit the idea. Page embraced it, asking Whall to lead the effort. Though Whall guided the development, he was quick to credit others – Dr. Kane and students Beth Bosserman and Toby Weaver – for laying the groundwork.

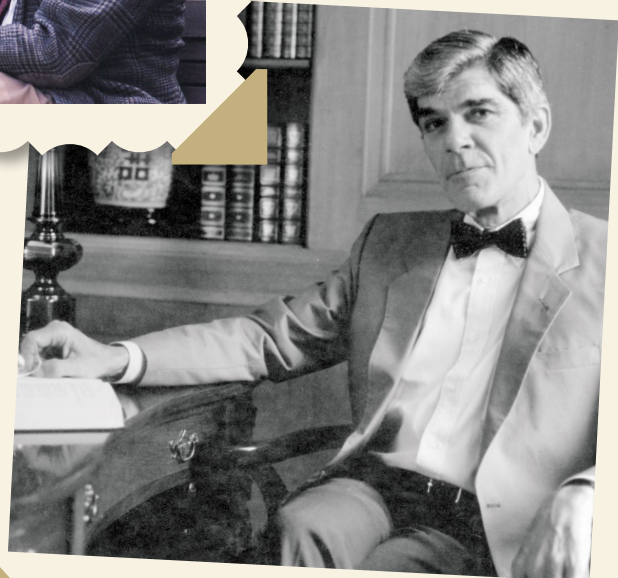
President Bellavance appointed a committee to design a series of honors courses, and by fall 1980, the first was offered. The next challenge was recruiting students. The program targeted incoming freshmen with a minimum 3.25 GPA and combined SAT scores of 1100, as well as current undergraduates with a University GPA of 3.25. The response exceeded expectations. By the end of the 1990s, interest had grown so strong that the University capped admissions to the program at 60 students.

Faculty selected to teach honors courses were chosen not only for their expertise, but for their passion and commitment to nurturing exceptional students. As an Honors Program brochure from that era explained, these professors believed “that teaching is mainly about enabling students to become independent thinkers and learners and that their task is to challenge students to take an active role in their learning experience.” It was a philosophy that shaped both classroom culture and lasting mentorships.



Left: Dr. Tony Whall with an honors student.

Below: President Thom Bellavance.



The academic structure was built around a core of honors courses: Critical Thinking and Writing; Western Intellectual Tradition I and II; and Scientific Knowledge. Around this foundation, additional honors-level offerings flourished in disciplines ranging from non-Western cultures to mathematical reasoning to art and music histories. Together, they created an experience that was both rigorous and expansive.

Yet from the beginning, leaders understood that enrichment extended beyond the classroom. The Honors Program sought to cultivate a vibrant intellectual community through robust extracurricular opportunities. That commitment found a physical home in 1989 with the purchase of a house on the corner of Loblolly Lane and Camden Avenue. Renovated in 1994, it became the Honors House – a gathering place for ideas, conversation, and collaboration.

Even its garden tells a story. When considering how to screen the backyard from the parking lot and loading dock of the Alumni House, Horticulture Director Les Lutz suggested creating a walled garden. An elegant plan featuring a brick wall with Japanese tile and a pagoda-style structure proved too costly. Undeterred, Dr. Whall approached Lutz with a creative alternative: Lutz would teach a class on Japanese garden design, and students would help build a simpler version as part of the course. The result was more than a garden – it was a living example of the collaborative spirit that would continue to define the program for years to come.

President Bellavance remained a steadfast advocate, believing the Honors Program “manifested palpable evidence of the University’s commitment to excellence in education.” When Bellavance passed away suddenly in 1996, Interim President

“ THE CLARKE HONORS COLLEGE IS A VEHICLE FOR EXPERIMENTATION AND RISK, BUT ABOVE ALL, IT’S A SPACE FOR THINKING. ... OUR STUDENTS COME TO US FROM ACROSS THE DISCIPLINARY DIVIDES AND SEEK A GREATER SENSE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO THINK IN A WORLD THAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO PRIVILEGE THINKING IN MEANINGFUL AND REFLECTIVE WAYS.”

– DR. ANDREW MARTINO, CLARKE HONORS COLLEGE DEAN 2018-2026





The Honors Program  
**MANIFESTED PALPABLE  
 EVIDENCE OF THE  
 UNIVERSITY'S  
 COMMITMENT TO  
 EXCELLENCE IN  
 EDUCATION.”**

– PRESIDENT THOM BELLAVANCE

Left: The Honors House has become the place for honors students to study, gather, and just have fun!

Below: Forty-five years after the first honors class was offered, the Clarke Honors College Class of 2025 celebrates on the steps of Holloway Hall.

Nelson Butler proposed renaming the University Honors Program in his honor. The Honors Program Committee unanimously agreed, and it became the Thomas E. Bellavance Honors Program.

Over the next four decades, the Bellavance Honors Program has remained an integral part of what is now the Clarke Honors

College, joined by additional programs in business, science and mathematics, and health and human services. While its size and scope have expanded, its original mission endures: to offer a challenging curriculum paired with individualized faculty mentorship, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to excel – academically and personally.



# 100 Years of Supporting Student Success

By Dr. Melissa Granger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs & Student Success

One of Salisbury University's primary goals is ensuring that our students are successful. For those tasked with leading student success, the scope of responsibility has expanded dramatically over the years as new practices have been added to tried-and-true approaches. Over the last 20 years, the pace of change has accelerated due to student demographic shifts, technological innovations, and economic uncertainty. SU has responded to the needs of our students and remains committed to adapting to an evolving landscape as the next 100 years unfold.



From its first graduating class forward, Salisbury has been committed to student success.

- **1925:** "Library Tech" instruction provided to students on the first day of classes
- **1926:** Inaugural edition of the *Evergreen* yearbook published (last issue 2005)

- **1957:** Blackwell Library opened



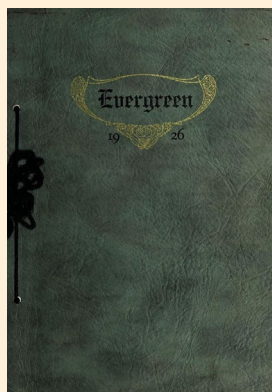
Our first library building.



SU hosts NCUR for the second time.

- **1987:** Inaugural Distinguished Faculty Award presented
- **1990:** Career Services opened
- **1991:** Mosaics peer-mentoring program established
- **1995:** Faculty advisement required
- **1998:** Hosted the National Conference for Undergraduate Research for the 1st time (hosted again in 2008)

## 1925



First Evergreen Yearbook.

- **1946:** Approval to train veterans received (via the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944)



Students studying in the 1970s.

- **1970:** First issue of *Scarab* student literary journal published
- **1975:** Writing Center opened
- **1975:** Reading Lab opened
- **1976:** Authorized by U.S. government to sponsor F-1 visas for degree-seeking international undergraduate and graduate students
- **1977:** Math Center opened
- **1978:** Study Skills Center opened

- **2000:** SU adopts "Information Literacy" as a university-wide student learning goal
- **2000:** First learning management system launched
- **2001:** First Alumni Association Faculty Appreciation Awards presented
- **2001:** Relay For Life held on campus for the 1st time
- **2003:** First Living Learning Communities (LLCs) established



SU's student-run Relay For Life has raised over \$1.5 million for cancer awareness, research, services, and education.

# THE EVOLUTION OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Information courtesy of Education Advisory Board (EAB).

## 1925 to 1960s: Pre-History of Student Success

In the late 1930s, the federal government surveys 60 schools in the first-ever study of “student mortality.” Post-war enrollments swell as a result of the GI Bill and baby boom until the late 1960s, when the impact of expanding college access to new populations combines with the effects of student movements to generate the first widespread concerns over student attrition.

## 1970s: The Dawn of Retention Theory

William Spady and Vincent Tinto develop the first widely recognized theories of college student retention. These sociological models describe how a student’s commitment to earning a college degree hinges on their integration to the college community and environment. This work will form the intellectual basis for subsequent student engagement programming and practice.

## 1980s: Bridging the Achievement Gap

Declining enrollments in the 1970s lead to the advent of enrollment management in the 1980s. As admissions offices collect more information on student backgrounds, researchers see that certain demographics graduate at lower rates than others. Schools respond by developing programming and services targeted to support specific student populations.

## 1990s: Investment in the First Year

Attention shifts to supporting students through academic transitions, particularly from high school to college. In response, institutions invest heavily in first-year experiences and university colleges, and in professional advisors to support these programs. The emphasis on first-year retention rates begins to overshadow graduation rates.

## 2000s: A Technological Revolution

New early alert technologies allow advisors to understand risk in terms of behaviors, not just demographics. Emphasis returns to graduation rates, and long-term degree planning becomes more commonplace as schools strive to translate first-year retention gains into degree completions.

## 2010-2025: An Era of Rapid Change

The diversifying needs of a new generation of students intersect with the financial pressures of the Great Recession to dramatically accelerate change. Advising offices transform into student success offices. Concerns over the rising costs of college put an increased emphasis on shortening time to degree. Elevated rates of underemployment among new graduates make career development an increasingly important part of the student success conversation. Some schools begin to experiment with strategically deploying small grants to support persistence.



Students prepare to head out to volunteer in the community for the Big Event.



Navigate App.

- **2004:** First outgoing international exchange students
- **2004:** First Big Event community volunteering event held



SU supports hundreds of students studying abroad every year.

- **2010:** SU's 1st TRIO Grant awarded
- **2012:** First U.S. Student Fulbright Fellowship awarded
- **2013:** Nationally Competitive Fellowships Office opened
- **2013:** Graduate Research and Presentation (RAP) grants created
- **2013:** Education Advisory Board (EAB) partnership established
- **2014:** Veteran Services opened

- **2017:** *The Saunterer* wins Best Honors Newsletter (Print Edition) in the nation (wins again in 2019, 2022, and 2025)
- **2018:** Center for Equity, Justice, and Inclusion opened (later named for President Charles Wight)
- **2018:** Office of Student Transitions formed (became Orientation and Family Programs in 2025)
- **2018:** Food for the Flock food pantry opened
- **2018:** Career Closet opened
- **2018:** First case manager to support student experiencing non-academic barriers to success hired
- **2018:** First Posters on the Bay undergraduate research presentation to Maryland General Assembly held
- **2019:** First edition of *Laridae* undergraduate research journal published
- **2019:** Navigate – a student-facing academic success app – launched

2025



Powerful Connections plays an important role in helping students transition to university life.



Over 1,000 students participate in Center for Student Achievement workshops annually.

- **2006:** Mosaics transitioned to Powerful Connections
- **2006:** Center for International Education Opened (later named for President Janet Dudley-Eshbach)
- **2007:** New Student Reader program established (ran until 2017)
- **2007:** Office of Disability Support Services opened (now known as the Office of Access and Accommodations)
- **2008:** Inaugural Outstanding Graduate Student Award presented
- **2008:** Center for Student Achievement opened
- **2008:** First “I Love Salisbury” community volunteering event held

- **2015:** Standardized 4-year curriculum guides for each major established
- **2016:** Guerrieri Academic Commons opened
- **2016:** Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (OURCA) created
- **2016:** Academic Advising Center opened



The Guerrieri Academic Commons is the heartbeat of student study on campus.



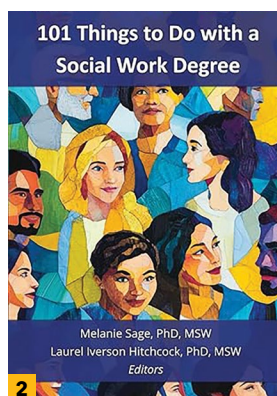
The new General Education ensures students in every major have real-life experiences.

- **2021:** Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence established
- **2024:** Revamped General Education program launched, including a First Year Seminar requirement
- **2024:** TimelyCare tele-mental health service integrated into MyClasses for quick access
- **2024:** Student Success Council was formed

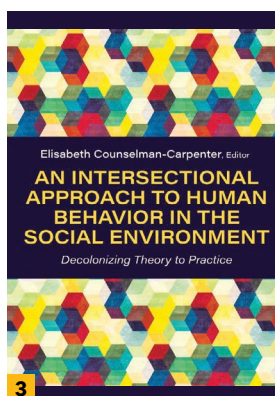
## RECENT FACULTY BOOKS



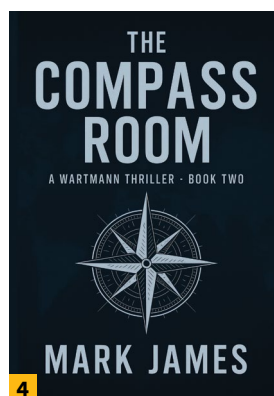
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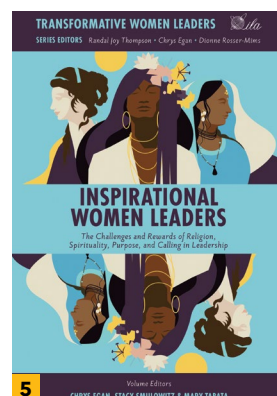
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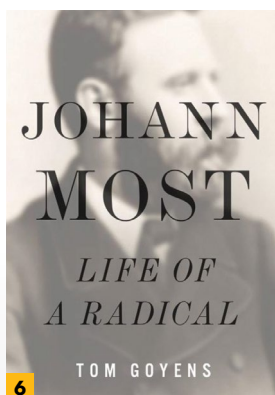
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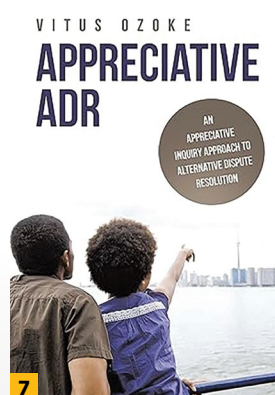
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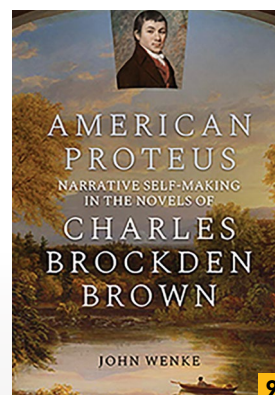
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### Health Communication for Social Justice: A Whole Person Activist Approach By Dr. Vinita Agarwal, Communication

**1** This book explores health inequities experienced by disadvantaged and marginalized populations and outlines the actions students can take to address these challenges. The book demonstrates how physical, mental, and emotional health is connected to equitable understandings of individual, community, and environmental health. It considers how social, interpersonal, and systemic factors such as personal relationships, language, literacy, religion, technology, and the environment affect health equity. To present strategies and invite action to support the goals of the whole person, social justice activist approach, the book provides contemporary examples, interviews with communication scholars, and case studies that examine local communities and the everyday contexts of health meaning making.  
Routledge, 2024

### 101 Things To Do with a Social Work Degree – Chapter: Introduction for Clinical, Mental Health, and Private Practice Chapter Co-Author by Dr. Becky Anthony, Social Work

**2** Discover the extraordinary breadth of possibilities with a Master of Social Work through 101 authentic, inspiring stories from the field. Have you ever wondered where an M.S.W. could take you? Beyond the traditional roles you might expect, social workers are making profound impacts in hospitals, schools, courtrooms, corporations, and communities around the world. This groundbreaking collection brings together diverse voices from every corner of the profession to share their journeys, challenges, and triumphs. Dr. Anthony's introduction summarizes the inspiring stories from the clinical, mental health, and private practice chapter and provides reflection questions for the reader.  
We Social Work, LLC, 2025

### An Intersectional Approach to Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Decolonizing Theory to Practice – Chapter 4 – Sexual and Gender Identity Development Across the Lifespan Chapter Co-Author by Dr. Becky Anthony, Social Work

**3** The book explores contextual factors affecting human development, including various identities and societal systems. Chapter 4 examines sexual and gender identity. The early part of the chapter explores the history and context of foundational sexual and gender identity development models followed by a critical examination of these models and how they have been influenced by shifts in sociocultural changes, political discourses, and systems of oppression. This chapter discusses the limitations of defining and applying identity models to a holistic approach to understanding sexuality and encourages students to apply an intersectional, social justice framework for applying sexual and gender identity models.  
Cognella, 2025

### **The Compass Room**

By **Mark James de Socio, Geography & Geosciences**

**4** After a catastrophic war leaves Americans stranded overseas, Vice President George “Daddy Longlegs” Wartmann must hold a fractured nation together as the president retreats, allies falter, and enemies circle. In his private study – the Compass Room – at One Naval Observatory, Wartmann maps a perilous path. As diplomacy unravels and unrest grows, every decision pushes America – and the world – closer to the edge. *The Compass Room* is a geopolitical thriller about leadership under fire – and the vision of one man who stares into the abyss and sees the future.

North Arrow Press, 2025

### **Inspirational Women Leaders: The Challenges and Rewards of Religion, Spirituality, Purpose, and Calling in Leadership**

Co-Edited by **Dr. Chrys Egan, Communication**

**5** The two book set explores diverse women leaders and issues they have faced as shaped by religion and spirituality in daily life and work, finding and exploring a sense of leadership purpose, and recognizing and following a calling or vocation. Book One, *Contemporary Research and Reflections*, delves into the profound and often underexplored connection between a woman’s leadership and her spiritual, religious, or philosophical foundation. Book Two, *Spiritual Women Leaders Across Time and Cultures*, features historical figures and contemporary leaders from various faith traditions, revealing how their spiritual journeys have shaped their transformative leadership. Both books illuminate how personal beliefs and a sense of calling can be a source of immense strength and a catalyst for unique challenges in a leader’s professional and personal life. Emerald, 2026

### **Johann Most: Life of a Radical**

By **Dr. Tom Goyens, History**

**6** Best known for championing the “propaganda of the deed,” Johann Most has long been caricatured as a reckless fanatic. In this comprehensive and long-overdue biography, explore the complexity behind the German agitator who helped shape both German socialism and American anarchism. Through fiery speeches and incisive writings, Most inspired workers, defended science against religious dogma, and endured relentless persecution without abandoning his cause. Tracing his turbulent ideological journey, Goyens offers a compelling and nuanced portrait of a visionary radical whose influence on revolutionary thought remains enduring. University of Illinois Press, 2025

### **Appreciative ADR: An Appreciative Inquiry Approach to Alternative Dispute Resolution**

Dr. **Vitus Ozoke, Conflict Analysis & Dispute Resolution**

**7** Ozoke brings 15 years of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) teaching experience into a transformative new framework by integrating the philosophy and process of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). He argues that, rather than treating conflict solely as a problem to be solved, ADR practitioners should adopt an appreciative lens – focusing on strengths, possibilities, and shared positive potential. The book guides mediators, arbitrators, facilitators, and negotiators through both the theoretical foundations of AI (including the 4-D cycle: Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny) and practical applications across ADR modalities. It invites a shift from deficit-based dispute handling to a more generative, human-centered practice. Balboa Press, 2025

### **El poeta vs. La Máquina; The Poet vs. The Machine**

Translated by **Sally Perret, Modern Languages & Intercultural Studies**

**8** This experimental book incorporates original poems from Galician poet Marcos de la Fuente and translations by Sally Perret with computer-generated images coordinated and made by Mariel Martínez and Ismael Faro. The combination of man-made and computer-made art subverts the notion of humanity in relation to the machine, exploring the intricate codes and new personalities that the digital world is capable of developing. In all, the book is an “artefact of adventures” that represents early explorations and interpretations of combining AI images with poetry, in all its troubling and stimulating complexity. Editorial Elvira, 2025

### **Teaching Civic Engagement in Challenging Times: Global Perspectives on Democratic Education for All**

Chapter Authored by **Ryan Von Weaver, Interdisciplinary Studies**

In an era marked by democratic uncertainty, higher education must recommit to its role in preparing students for active citizenship and interdisciplinary leadership. This chapter examines civic curiosity as a transformative approach to civic leadership development, using the Presidential Citizen Scholars (PCS) Program within Salisbury University’s Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement as a case study. Aligned with the university’s highest purpose and presidential strategic initiatives, PCS demonstrates how interdisciplinary, community-engaged learning cultivates civic knowledge, leadership competencies, and collaborative teamwork. The chapter illustrates how intentional co-curricular design can strengthen campus-wide civic culture and prepare students for lifelong democratic participation. De Gruyter, 2026

### **American Proteus: Narrative Self-Making in the Novels of Charles Brockden Brown**

By **Dr. John Wenke, English**

**9** Explore how Charles Brockden Brown created a novel kind of fiction for a new kind of country. A work of biographical criticism, this study charts the emergence of Brown’s authorial voice as it developed throughout a conflicted apprenticeship. His brief yet momentous career as a publishing novelist lasted from 1798 through 1801. Within such novels as *Wieland* (1798) and *Edgar Huntly* (1799), Brown dramatizes how authorship and self-making constitute reciprocal processes, wherein authorship appears variously as a compositional act, a histrionic activity, and an expression of political provocation and domination. Mercer University Press, 2025

## **FACULTY INSTALLATION**



**Patrick**  
By **Bill Wolff, Art**

“Patrick” is a permanently installed cast bronze memorial at Camden Elementary School, in Camden, NY. Inscribed on the base is: “Patrick was a familiar face around town in the 1970s and kept a friendly eye on the children playing in the schoolyard or enjoying ice cream next door.” The sculpture was donated in memory of Eileen “Granny” Wolcott by her grandchildren.

Camden Elementary, Camden, NY,  
Installed 2025

# FACULTY MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

The SU Faculty Mini-Grant Program provides awards up to \$3,000 to encourage faculty to develop research, scholarly or creative programs that provide the potential for sustained professional development and “seed funds” to secure additional extramural support. The following is an overview of this year’s awardees.

## When Words Are (Not) Enough: Narratives of Loss as a Communicative Strategy in Mental Health Communication

### Dr. Vinita Agarwal, Communication

This research project explores how telling stories about health-related loss can help people cope and improve their mental health. In the world of health care, “loss” isn’t just about death. It can mean losing physical abilities (such as during hospice care), losing your sense of identity (from a bereavement), or losing a connection with a loved one due to memory loss. Loss can be sudden and unanticipated (such as that of suicide) or something inevitable we grieve in advance (such as anticipatory loss). These experiences are devastating and can disrupt a person’s entire sense of well-being, including their mental and spiritual health.

Dr. Agarwal believes that narratives (personal stories) are a powerful tool for healing. While previous studies show that storytelling helps people manage stigmatized illnesses or improves health outcomes in specific communities, there isn’t enough research on how we communicate specifically about “loss” in socially networked spaces within the field of mental health.

This project aims to understand how sharing these stories in communities of support helps people “reframe” their pain into something navigable or even empowering. To do this, Dr. Agarwal examined stories of loss from social network communities focusing on those who are experiencing or have experienced grief and loss and then analyze these stories to understand how we engage in shared sense-making to find meaning and balance.

By creating a collection of these themes and their narrative structures, the study hopes to provide an online platform where others can find comfort and reflection. Ultimately, the goal is to fill a gap in academic research and provide new, empowering ways for people to navigate their journey toward (re)integration and mental wellness.

## Understanding Factors influencing Virtual Reality Acceptance: Perspectives on Device, Sensory, and User Attributes

### Dr. Hoon S. Cha, Information Systems & Operations Management

Virtual reality (VR) has captured widespread attention across diverse fields. With advanced head-mounted VR headsets, users can dive into rich, interactive experiences – both visually and audibly – such as attending live events, engaging in sports simulations, or exploring virtual destinations across time and space. Given its vast potential and its still-emerging presence for many users, understanding what drives VR acceptance is increasingly vital. This study aimed to tackle the following research questions:

- How do VR device attributes, such as discomfort and motion sickness, shape users’ intentions to adopt VR?
- How do VR sensory attributes – like vividness, presence, and interactivity – affect users’ adoption of VR?
- Do VR device attributes interact with sensory attributes, suggesting that content design should align with specific devices?
- Which user characteristics influence VR adoption?

To address these questions, Dr. Cha conducted an online survey and a VR experiment. Participants engaged with a custom-designed app using the Meta Quest headset, with each session lasting approximately 30 minutes. Over three years, data collection yielded 537 valid responses: 147 in 2022, 184 in 2023, and 206 in 2024, continuing into 2025. Preliminary findings were to be presented at AMCIS 2025 in Montréal.

## Green Futures Research Lab: Audio-Visual Equipment for Environmental Career Documentation

### Dr. Shane Hall, Environmental Studies

Led by Dr. Hall, the Green Futures Program at Salisbury University is a forward-thinking initiative designed to bridge the gap between college classrooms and the rapidly growing green economy.” As the world shifts toward sustainability, Dr. Hall recognizes that students need more than just traditional degrees; they need a direct path to careers in conservation, climate resilience, and environmental policy.

To build this path, Dr. Hall has established a mentorship network that links students with faculty, alumni, and regional employers. Last summer, the project expanded through the Green Futures Research Lab. Dr. Hall led a team of undergraduate researchers in conducting field interviews and documenting the regional economic landscape. This hands-on research can identify exactly where the “green-collar” jobs are and what skills are required to land them.

To ensure this work is recorded with professional quality, Dr. Hall received funding to outfit the lab with specialized equipment, including:

- Digital voice recorders and lavalier microphones for crystal-clear interviews.
- Compact video cameras and tripods to document the work of regional environmental organizations.
- Production accessories to create high-quality educational resources for future students.

By June 2025, students were trained on this technology, preparing them to build a comprehensive media archive of environmental career pathways. The impact of this project extends far beyond a single summer; these tools will be used to record the program’s seven annual workshops, creating a lasting digital library for the university. Ultimately, Dr. Hall’s work ensures that Salisbury University students are not just studying the environment, but are actively equipped to lead the workforce that protects it.

## Salisbury Dance Festival

### Jennifer Johnson, Music, Theatre, & Dance

The Salisbury Dance Festival was a vibrant and successful celebration of creativity, cultural exchange, and community. It brought together SU students, faculty, guest artists, local dancers, and audiences from across the Delmarva Peninsula. Inaugural events were held April 11-13, 2025, and included live performances, participatory demonstrations, dance film screenings, and masterclasses, offering a rich and engaging experience for participants.

Two showcases featuring creative work by local and regional dance students – including the SU Dance Company – highlighted the talent of our immediate community. These showcases offered an opportunity for dancers to perform in a professional setting, develop connections, and gain confidence in stage presence. Invited guest artists Blakeley White-McGuire, Daniel Fetecua-Soto, and his company Pajarillo Pinta’o shared their inspiring choreographic works rooted in culture, interdisciplinary exploration, and storytelling encouraging meaningful connections with audiences.

The festival’s dance film presentation showcased screendance artists residing in or connected to the Delmarva Peninsula including CAVES Project, Morgan Hawkins, Rebecca Lloyd Jones, Jennifer Leung Johnson, zap mcconnell, Cat Rider, and Jennifer D. Yackel. SU dance minor Lillian Clark premiered their first dance film, and participated in a post-screening artist Q&A alongside featured artists.

Masterclasses led by Daniel Fetecua-Soto (José Limon Company) and Blakeley White-McGuire (Martha Graham Company) were offered to SU students and local dancers with over 40 participants attending. One participant, local dancer Nora Arey, was awarded a partial scholarship with the José Limon Institute and invited to attend their summer intensive in Harlem, NY.

Overall, the Salisbury Dance Festival was a resounding success, highlighting the strength of our local dance community, artistic excellence, and community engagement. The festival was hosted by SU’s Fulton School of Liberal Arts and sponsored in part by Salisbury-Wicomico Arts Council and Maryland State Arts Council, with its success made possible through the dedication of administrators, faculty, students, volunteers and participants.

## Toward Self-Determination: Federal Indian Policy from Truman to Clinton

### Dr. Dean Kotlowski, History

*Toward Self-Determination: Federal Indian Policy from Truman to Clinton* is under contract with University of North Carolina Press, which will receive the final manuscript in December 2026. Resting on research in secondary sources and over 250 manuscript collections in 53 archives across the U.S., this book examines how federal policy became favorable toward self-determination for American Indians.

Beginning in 1970, the U.S. government ceased its earlier efforts, beginning in 1945, to “terminate” (or end the federally recognized status of) Indian tribes and to assimilate Indians into non-Indian society. Instead, the government turned to respecting, even enhancing, tribal authority and American Indian cultural distinctiveness. To implement self-determination, Richard Nixon’s White House released a lengthy message that renounced termination as “morally and legally unacceptable.” The president asked Congress to pass a resolution repealing termination and eight bills to advance tribal autonomy and settle land claims. In 1970 and 1971, Nixon signed legislation to return the area surrounding Blue Lake, in New Mexico, to the Taos Pueblo, and to settle the land claims of Alaskan natives.

To be sure, the Nixon record included blemishes, such as the standoff between federal forces and American Indian Movement (AIM) activists at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (1972) and Wounded Knee (1973) as well as the administration’s intensive surveillance of AIM. Nevertheless, Nixon’s initiatives proved far-reaching. Writing in 1988, the historian Lawrence C. Kelly observed that U.S. Indian policy had evolved over a century from “virtual denial of tribal sovereignty to almost full recognition.”

No article (or book) considers Indian policy in the later decades of the 20th century – or Nixon’s initiatives in particular – in such depth. The work thus will contribute both to the existing historical scholarship as well as teaching at Salisbury University.

## Exploring the Impact of Collision Sports on Cognitive Function, Sleep Health, and Brain Activity: An EEG and Data Science Collaboration

### Dr. Echo Leaver, Psychology

Dr. Leaver is spearheading a comprehensive research project designed to uncover the long-term effects of collision sports on brain health. While high-profile concussions often dominate public conversation, Dr. Leaver’s work focuses on a more subtle concern: sub-concussive impacts. These are repeated hits to the head that do not result in a clinical concussion but may still cause cumulative damage over time.

Building on preliminary findings that showed slight variations in memory, speech, and mental processing speed among athletes, Dr. Leaver is expanding the study to achieve more definitive results. The project compares three distinct groups:

- Collision sport athletes (such as football or rugby players)
- Non-collision athletes (such as runners or swimmers)
- Non-athletes

To gain a deeper look into how the brain functions, the research team is integrating EEG technology to monitor electrical activity in the brain alongside behavioral assessments and sleep health tracking. This multi-layered approach allows the researchers to see not just how a person performs on a test, but how their brain activity might have shifted due to years of physical play.

A unique feature of this project is the collaboration with data science students. These students are tasked with building a predictive model that can categorize individuals and forecast their cognitive and physiological health based on their specific sports history. By blending traditional neuroscience with modern data analytics, Dr. Leaver aims to identify early warning signs of cognitive decline. Ultimately, this work seeks to provide the evidence-based insights necessary to develop better safety protocols and interventions, ensuring that athletes can protect their long-term neurological well-being while staying active in the sports they love.

### Financial Education Program and Financial Health

#### Dr. Shan Lei, Finance

Dr. Lei is conducting a comprehensive study to evaluate how financial education and access to resources impact the overall financial well-being of young adults. While many people associate financial success solely with income, Dr. Lei's research focuses on financial health, a broader concept that includes how effectively individuals manage daily expenses, their ability to bounce back from unexpected financial setbacks, and their capacity to build long-term security.

The study utilizes a "pre-post" design, meaning students are surveyed at the beginning and end of their courses to measure growth. Dr. Lei is specifically observing students in Financial Management classes to track several key factors:

- Objective Literacy: What students actually know about money based on testing.
- Self-Perceived Literacy: How confident students feel about their own financial knowledge.
- Resource Accessibility: How easily students can access the financial tools they need.

A major component of this research involves comparing different groups of students. Dr. Lei will analyze those enrolled in specialized financial literacy courses, such as the General Education class Wealthy, Healthy, and Happy, against those who have not had formal financial training. By comparing these groups, the study aims to determine if these specific university programs actually lead to better financial habits and stability.

Ultimately, Dr. Lei's work seeks to provide hard evidence supporting the importance of financial education for all college students, regardless of their major. The findings could influence university curriculum decisions, potentially leading to more robust General Education requirements that prepare young people to navigate the "ups and downs" of their financial lives with confidence and resilience.

### Owl Species Experiencing Habitat Loss and Changing Climates: Advancing Student Research and Training in Wildlife Biology

#### Dr. Eric Leibgold, Biological Sciences

Dr. Leibgold is launching a professional development and research initiative designed to advance the capabilities of his avian research laboratory. The project centers on mastering advanced techniques for studying "charismatic" bird species, with a particular focus on large owls and raptors. By renewing specialized bird banding certifications and learning new methodologies for capturing and handling these birds, Dr. Leibgold ensures his lab remains at the forefront of wildlife biology and conservation.

A significant portion of this work takes place during the spring breeding season, a vital window when bird populations are most abundant. During this time, Dr. Leibgold will attend workshops and shadow expert researchers to learn how to identify specific feather patterns used to determine the age and sex of various species. These highly technical skills are essential for maintaining accurate data and will allow him to mentor and train the many students who rotate through his lab, preparing the next generation of researchers for field success.

Beyond fieldwork, Dr. Leibgold is utilizing this project to synthesize years of existing data. He plans to finalize several time-sensitive manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals, including:

- A unique study on cannibalism within Eastern screech owl populations.
- An analysis of the dietary habits of Eastern screech owls.
- Research regarding the protection of endangered species.

Ultimately, this project serves as a bridge between current findings and future discovery. By gaining these new skills and clearing the backlog of data analysis, Dr. Leibgold is establishing a strategic six-year plan for his lab. This roadmap will guide future research directions and ensure that his team has the expertise required to study and protect complex avian species effectively.

### Conceptions of Mental Health Among Emerging Adults (13-29 years)

#### Dr. Deeya Mitra, Psychology

This ongoing research project seeks to investigate the persistent mental health challenges faced by emerging adult's post-pandemic. While the first stage of this study – surveying a nationally representative sample of 500 participants – has been completed, Dr. Mitra is currently conducting in-depth interviews to explore the underlying reasons for prolonged distress. This faculty mini-grant will support the completion of interviews by compensating participants, allowing the team to gather richer qualitative data to supplement survey findings beyond the funding through the Fulton Faculty Grant.

A mixed methods approach provides a comprehensive analysis of emerging adults' mental health struggles, with an emphasis on anxiety, depression, and general life stressors. Utilizing thematic analysis, Dr. Mitra aims to identify patterns that explain why these challenges persist. Her research aligns with national concerns regarding the mental health crisis among young adults and builds on recent publication in the *Journal of Adult Development* (Arnett & Mitra, 2024).

Dr. Mitra presented her findings at the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood conference in Charleston, SC, in June 2025, on a panel featuring experts from Clark University, Harvard Graduate School of Education, and Weill Cornell Medicine.

### Research on North Korea's Strategic Shifts of Nationalism

#### Dr. Taehyun Nam, Political Science

Dr. Nam will conduct an in-depth study on North Korean nationalism at a pivotal moment in the country's trajectory. In December 2023, Kim Jong Un declared that South Korea was no longer a reunification partner and dismantled state agencies dedicated to inter-Korean relations. This shift is not mere rhetoric – it marks a fundamental redefinition of North Korean nationalism, warranting close scrutiny.

Dr. Nam's faculty mini-grant funds his visit to South Korea in spring 2026 to support this research. He previously presented "Unveiling Change: Analyzing North Korea's Strategic Shifts and Ideological Evolution" at the 2024 American Political Science Association Annual Conference in Philadelphia. Since then, he has been working with two South Korea-based experts to develop this study for publication. The research will examine the forces driving North Korea's ideological shift, including its nuclear deterrence strategy, rising tensions with Seoul, and regional power dynamics. It will also assess broader implications: If Pyongyang continues rejecting a shared Korean identity, this could reshape diplomatic strategies, military postures, and the geopolitical landscape of Northeast Asia.

Understanding nationalism is crucial in an era of rising far-right movements and global ideological polarization. Nationalism shapes state identities, fuels geopolitical tensions, and undermines multilateralism. North Korea's evolving nationalism reflects broader trends, including skepticism toward liberal internationalism and the assertive nationalism of both democratic and authoritarian states.

Dr. Nam will access North Korean materials available only in South Korea, collaborate with colleagues, and engage with scholars in the field. These steps are necessary to contribute to a deeper understanding of North Korea's shifting national identity.

### Understanding Help-Seeking Behavior for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in College Students

#### Dr. Stephen Oby, Social Work

Dr. Stephen Oby is launching a research initiative to better understand how college students navigate mental health challenges in the digital age. As technology becomes more integrated into daily life, Dr. Oby is investigating the specific ways students use social media, mobile apps, and even artificial intelligence (AI) to find mental health support or help prevent suicide. The goal is to determine if these digital tools are seen as reliable lifelines or if significant barriers still prevent students from seeking the help they need.

The core of this project involves a brief, anonymous survey distributed during the University's Out of the Darkness campus walk. By engaging students in a setting already focused on mental health awareness, Dr. Oby aims to capture honest insights into:

- Help-seeking preferences: Where do students turn first when they or their friends are struggling?
- Digital Trust: Do students actually trust mental health apps and AI tools to provide accurate support?
- Social Media Impact: Does social media help raise vital awareness and foster connection or does it complicate the path to recovery?

Once the data is collected, Dr. Oby will analyze trends across different age groups and academic majors. This analysis will highlight whether certain students are more likely to embrace technology-based support than others. Ultimately, the findings from this study will serve as a roadmap for mental health practitioners. By understanding the digital habits and preferences of the modern student, counselors and universities can modernize their outreach strategies, ensuring that mental health resources are not only accessible but also delivered through the platforms students trust most. This research is a critical step toward enhancing the safety, resilience, and overall well-being of the campus community.

### BucketCams and Biodiversity: Investigating Hidden Wildlife Across the Urban-Rural Gradient

#### Dr. Tami Ransom, Environmental Studies

Dr. Ransom is launching an innovative wildlife research project to shine a spotlight on the "hidden" residents of the Delmarva Peninsula. While the public often focuses on famous, large animals like the ponies of Assateague, smaller creatures – such as native mice, turtles, frogs, and snakes – frequently go unnoticed. Dr. Ransom's work aims to document this overlooked biodiversity and understand how people perceive these smaller neighbors in urban, suburban, and rural environments.

To overcome the challenges of traditional wildlife monitoring, which can be time-consuming and often miss elusive species, Dr. Ransom is developing BucketCams. These are specialized, low-cost camera traps designed to capture high-quality images of small vertebrates. While standard trail cameras are excellent for spotting deer or bears, they often fail to trigger for a tiny frog or a fast-moving lizard. The BucketCams provide a non-invasive way to monitor these animals more effectively across diverse landscapes.

The project is structured into five comprehensive phases, with the current stage focusing on the construction and pilot testing of 30 BucketCam units. As the research progresses, Dr. Ransom will also:

- Conduct a deep dive into how humans perceive “urban wildlife.”
- Secure permissions to study protected local areas.
- Launch public surveys to gauge community attitudes toward different species.
- Deploy the cameras for long-term biodiversity data collection.

This initiative is not just about technology; it is a collaborative effort that will involve students in data collection and analysis, fostering the next generation of conservationists. By combining cutting-edge field biology with social science, Dr. Ransom’s research will provide a clearer picture of local ecosystems and help bridge the gap between public awareness and the conservation of small, vital species.

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**Violence During Peace Negotiations:  
The Case of Sri Lanka**

**Dr. Ignaciyas K. Soosaipillai, Conflict Analysis & Dispute Resolution**

Dr. Soosaipillai is conducting a vital study into a persistent paradox in international relations: Why does violence often continue, or even escalate, while opposing sides are sitting at the peace table? While the ultimate goal of any peace negotiation is to halt conflict, history shows that talks frequently fail to stop the bloodshed in the short term. Dr. Soosaipillai’s research aims to uncover the specific reasons behind this continued violence, filling a significant gap in the field of conflict resolution.

To explore this issue, Dr. Soosaipillai is using Sri Lanka as a primary case study. Having experienced decades of civil war and multiple failed peace attempts, Sri Lanka provides a complex and rich history for analysis. The project will examine three distinct phases of negotiations, utilizing both existing historical records and new, firsthand accounts gathered through interviews with key informants. As a researcher originally from Sri Lanka with extensive expertise in its political history, Dr. Soosaipillai is uniquely positioned to interpret these events.

The study investigates several critical theories, such as:

- The Role of “Spoilers”: Individuals or groups who use violence to deliberately sabotage a peace process they perceive as a threat to their interests.
- Mistrust and Hardline Positions: How deep-seated suspicion between parties can lead to defensive or offensive violence even during dialogue.
- Strategic Pressure: Whether groups use violence as a bargaining chip to gain leverage during the actual negotiations.

Ultimately, this research is not just academic; it has significant policy implications. By identifying why violence persists, Dr. Soosaipillai aims to help international mediators and third-party peacekeepers develop better strategies to protect negotiations. Understanding these patterns is essential for creating more resilient peace processes that can withstand internal “spoilers” and lead to lasting stability.

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**Senior Research Fellowship  
at the Hong Kierkegaard Library**

**Dr. Timothy Stock, Philosophy**

Dr. Stock is currently developing a book manuscript that re-examines the works of Søren Kierkegaard, the famous 19th-century philosopher often called the “Father of Existentialism.” While Kierkegaard is frequently studied through a strictly religious or philosophical lens, Dr. Stock proposes a dramaturgical reading. This means looking at Kierkegaard’s writing as a form of theater or drama, where the “characters” and the author himself undergo a dramatic sacrifice of their own identities – a concept Dr. Stock calls a “negative theology of personhood.”

To refine this theory, Dr. Stock is spending time at the prestigious Hong Kierkegaard Library. His research focuses on several specific, often overlooked areas of Kierkegaard’s thought:

- The Power of Comedy: He is exploring how Kierkegaard used contemporary comedies and humor to critique and shape personal identity.
- Literary Scripture: He is analyzing Kierkegaard’s interpretations of biblical books like Tobit, Jonah, Esther, and Job, looking for “comic” or dramatic elements that influenced his philosophical outlook.
- Intellectual Influences: He is investigating Kierkegaard’s complex relationship with the German philosopher Lessing, who served as a model for blending dramatic and religious thinking.

By accessing rare, non-English sources and specialized dissertations, Dr. Stock aims to bridge the gap between Kierkegaard’s literary style and his religious messages. The project explores the idea that “becoming a person” involves a constant process of creating, critiquing, and ultimately letting go of who we think we are. This research promises to offer a more holistic understanding of Kierkegaard’s authorship, showing how drama and laughter are not just entertainment, but essential tools for exploring the deepest parts of human existence.

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**Clashing Views on Jurisdiction, Service, and Counsel in Medieval Aragon: Research at the Library of Congress for Two Monograph Chapters**

**Dr. Belen Vicens Saiz, History**

Dr. Belen Vicens Saiz is challenging the popular image of medieval history in her upcoming monograph, moving beyond the myths of all-powerful kings and heroic crusades. Her research focuses on the Crown of Aragon in northeastern Iberia during the 13th century – a region that defies many modern expectations of what a “state” looked like. Rather than being a unified kingdom, Aragon was a diverse collection of territories where Christians, Muslims, and Jews lived side-by-side for centuries.

Central to Dr. Vicens Saiz’s work is the reign of James I of Aragon, a king who was often short on funds and viewed by his nobles as an equal rather than an absolute ruler. To govern effectively, he could not simply issue commands; he had to rely on constant negotiation and compromise. The project investigates a pivotal moment in history when the Crown attempted to centralize power through new legal and judicial reforms inspired by Roman law.

While traditional history often portrays medieval nobles as selfishly resisting these reforms to protect their privileges, Dr. Vicens Saiz offers a more nuanced perspective. She argues that these legal changes were not forced upon the people by a monarch. Instead, they were the result of intense debates between the Crown and the aristocracy. Aragonese noblemen recognized that the world was changing and demanded a seat at the table, actively shaping their government was built.

By examining how reformed law was applied in everyday governance – rather than just in abstract intellectual debates – Dr. Vicens Saiz’s book reveals that the foundations of the modern state were built on a complex tug-of-war for authority. Her work provides a fresh look at how diverse populations and defiant aristocrats forced a “weak” king to develop sophisticated political strategies that still resonate in the history of European democracy.

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**Training and Participation in the Workshop in Videographic Criticism (Middlebury College, Vermont)**

**Dr. Elsie Walker, English**

Dr. Walker is embarking on a prestigious, intensive two-week residency at Middlebury College to master the art of videographic criticism. While traditional film criticism relies on the written word, videographic criticism uses the medium itself – video – to analyze movies. By creating “video essays,” scholars can use sounds and images to explain how cinema works in a way that text simply cannot.

Dr. Walker was selected for one of only 15 spots worldwide for this competitive workshop, where she will train under

global leaders in the field. Although she already incorporates video essays into her teaching, this formal training will provide her with the advanced technical skills and theoretical grounding needed to reach international acclaim as a video essayist. These digital works are designed to be shared globally, bringing increased visibility and prestige to the film and English programs at her home institution.

The impact of this project extends far beyond Dr. Walker’s own portfolio. As the long-time editor-in-chief of *Literature/Film Quarterly* (lfq.salisbury.edu), the SU peer-reviewed journal, she plans to use her new expertise to launch a regular feature dedicated to video essay submissions. This move will modernize the peer-reviewed journal, allowing it to host cutting-edge multimedia scholarship. By gaining a deeper technical understanding of the craft, she will be better equipped to mentor contributors and evaluate digital submissions.

Ultimately, this initiative is about “paying it forward.” Dr. Walker intends to integrate these new technologies and creative approaches directly into her classrooms, providing students with modern tools to analyze media. By bridging the gap between traditional academic writing and digital storytelling, she is helping to lead her department and the broader field of film studies into a more visual, accessible, and influential future.

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**Supporting STEM Careers**

**Dr. Xiaoxia Zhu, Management**

Dr. Zhu is leading a research project aimed at understanding how “career calling” – a deep sense of passion and meaning in one’s work – can be nurtured and sustained. While roughly half of adults feel a strong calling toward their profession, very little is known about the specific factors that help a person actually achieve and “live out” that dream. This research is especially vital for women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields, who often encounter unique social barriers and gender-role expectations that can discourage them from following their professional passions.

This specific study investigates the power of close relationships in the career journey. Dr. Zhu is examining how support from family, friends, and close mentors helps STEM students bridge the gap between having a dream and successfully building a career. Using a series of online surveys, the project will gather data from students to see which types of encouragement and practical help are most effective in keeping them on their chosen path.

The impact of this research is twofold:

- Practical Guidance: The findings will offer concrete advice for students on how to seek support and for universities on how to better mentor students. It also helps families and friends understand their crucial role in helping their loved ones succeed in challenging fields.
- Academic Excellence: This study is a major component of a larger project intended for publication in world-class management journals. By reaching this high level of academic visibility, Dr. Zhu aims to highlight the importance of supportive networks in professional development.

By identifying how to protect and promote career callings, Dr. Zhu’s work seeks to ensure that talented individuals – particularly those in underrepresented groups – have the social and emotional backing they need to thrive in the STEM workforce.

# GRADUATE RESEARCH AND PRESENTATION (RAP) GRANT PROGRAM

The Office of Graduate Studies and Research provides research grants, up to \$750, to help graduate students develop research and scholarly projects with faculty supervisors and present their projects at various conferences and meetings. The program enables students to receive recognition for their work and provides networking opportunities and professional development in their field of study.

## A Tale of Two Metros: A Spatial Analysis of Gentrification in the Washington-Baltimore Corridor

**Maxwell Gundling, M.S. Geographic Information Systems Management**

The Washington-Baltimore urban corridor is one of the nation's most vibrant economic centers. Since the 2000s, targeted redevelopment has transformed specific neighborhoods to attract wealthier residents – a process called gentrification. While the revitalization has brought some benefits, it has also caused cultural loss and the displacement of longtime residents. Effective policies are necessary for the crucial matter. Still, it is not simple; the types and levels of gentrification vary within the region because Washington, D.C., and Baltimore have different historical and socio-economic backgrounds. To understand the complex phenomenon with its spatial heterogeneity and dependence, this project performed GIS-based spatial analysis. By analyzing U.S. census data in multiple years with spatial autocorrelation and classification methods, we revealed local patterns of gentrification with clusters and outliers, such as gentrifying clusters related to Black neighborhoods alongside D.C. Metro lines and outliers in the Baltimore Waterfront. Our analysis quantitatively corroborated the argument that neighborhood change tied to gentrification is a process shaped by distinct historical legacies of segregation, unique paths of suburbanization, and the disparate economic fortunes of both cities and their suburbs. The results were visualized through maps, which would be helpful for policymakers to identify priority areas.

## Frances Harper's Archive of Resistance

**Darien Legates, M.A. English**

Research was focused on using African American newspapers and connecting their subject matters and political landscape to Frances Harper's poetry, specifically her collection *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects* written in 1854. Legates research focused on the news publication the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* as not only was it published in Lisbon, OH (where Harper lived when she wrote that collection), but Legates found that she also ended up submitting poetry and letters to this publication and working as a sales collector for the paper. Legates believes they are the first to find that she worked for the paper as they have yet to see any biographies for Harper or the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* mention it. Legates also was inspired by Kate Adams' "Frances E. W. Harper and the 'Quest for a Usable Past'" and how that text claims that Harper's poem "Free Labor" created a historical record that African Americans contributed to the free produce political movement. Together, Legates created a lens for literary analysis where they interpreted Harper's poetry and used the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* as a bridge to see connections to what issues were prevalent in her community of African Americans in Lisbon, OH, that altogether creates an archive of her community.

## A Focus on Learning Content: Teacher and Student Roles in Text-Based Discussion in Secondary Social Studies Classrooms

**Jessica McInerney, Ed.D. in Literacy Studies**

The social studies field has increasingly promoted classroom discussion strategies over lecture because of the practical alignment of discourse to content understanding, classroom community relationships, and state and national speaking and listening skills (Maryland State Department of Education, 2022; National Council of the Social Studies, 2013). McInerney's dissertation proposal focused on the following research questions: 1. How can text-based discussions facilitate student content learning in a secondary social studies classroom?; 2. What is the role of the teacher in planning for and enacting discussions as an instructional method?; and 3. How do students reflect on the role of discussion for content learning? The purpose of this dissertation is to understand how social studies content text-based discussions facilitate content learning. In spring 2025, McInerney collected qualitative data from four eighth or tenth grade U.S. History teacher participants and one section of each of the teacher participants' classes.

Data was collected from teacher pre-interviews, observations, field notes, classroom artifacts, informal student pre- and post-discussion assessments, teacher post interviews, and student reflections. The RAP Grant supported the data collection and analysis stages through qualitative coding software and transcription services.

## Teacher Identities and Lineages: Tracing Our Narratives of Becoming

**Morgan Rush, M.A. English**

In this research, the three authors explore their stories of teaching as a lineage of teacher identity development. A narrative lineage is a document that traces at least three generations through personal stories, photos, and family tree data; we use this concept metaphorically to consider our relationships and identities as educators as we tell ourselves collectively into existence. Our "stories to live by" follow three generations: a teacher educator, a mentor teacher, and a student teaching intern; they are connected through their work at a university teacher preparation program and a local high school (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Writing, reflecting on, and critically analyzing their lineage using narrative inquiry methodologies (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004) provides a new perspective on teacher identity as a collective endeavor passed down (and up) across time and space. Consequently, their stories express moments of convergence and divergence as they mentor one another, self-reflect, and explore moments of tension and ease in their ongoing process of identity-making.

## The Impact of a Putative Lipase, TleVf1, on Interbacterial Competition in *Vibrio fischeri*

**Ashlyn Shoemaker, M.S. Applied Biology**

Bacteria are ubiquitous, and oftentimes multiple bacteria compete to colonize the same location. *Vibrio fischeri* is a marine bacterium that competes with sister strains to colonize the light organ of the Hawaiian bobtail squid. *V. fischeri* uses a contact-dependent molecular weapon that injects toxic effectors into adjacent cells known as a type VI secretion system (T6SS). Bacteria that express a T6SS and toxic effectors usually also express immunity factors to prevent the toxins from killing themselves; however, the exact mechanisms underlying T6SS contact-dependent killing are unclear. Investigations into these mechanisms may provide insight into how to manipulate other beneficial symbiotic microbes to prevent host dysbiosis. This study will investigate one putative type VI lipase effector in *Vibrio fischeri* (TleVf1) and its hypothetical immunity factors (TliVf1-4) to determine their role in contact-dependent killing via co-incubating strains with differential expression of these tleVf1 and tliVf1-4 genes, forcing them to compete to the death.

## Polychrome Predators: The Influence of Color Polymorphism on Eastern Screech Owl Habitat Use and Survivability

**Rachel Stone, M.S. Applied Biology**

Color polymorphism is a phenomenon where individuals within the same species exhibit two or more different, genetically inherited color variations or patterns independent of sex or age. The Eastern screech owl (*Megascops asio*) is a color polymorphic owl that exhibits both rufous and gray color morphs. The purpose of color polymorphism in Eastern screech owls is not well understood. In this research, Stone used mark-recapture data to test whether the two morphs differ in survival. They also tested whether the owls utilize different habitat types where their respective colors are better camouflaged using OPS data from owls fitted with satellite tags. Stone predicts that the rufous morph will have a higher survival rate than the gray, as they are more common in the study region. Furthermore, Stone predicts that the rufous owls will utilize different habitat (such as pine forests) than the gray owls due to increased crypsis. Understanding the evolutionary function of color polymorphism will provide further insight into how species evolve to occupy their niche in the environment and how changes to those environments may alter species' ability to persist.

## Research of Literacy Assessment and Intervention in Costa Rica

**Emma Tomczyk, M.A. English**

This research explores literacy instruction methods in Costa Rica from the perspective of a TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) graduate student. As English continues to grow in global importance, understanding how literacy is taught in multilingual contexts like Costa Rica is crucial for effective language education. Tomczyk's study focuses on early literacy development, bilingual education, and the integration of English as a foreign language (EFL). Through classroom observations, and interviews with teacher candidates, this research identifies both strengths and challenges in English literacy instruction. In this experience, Tomczyk will be conducting research in two different school environments – one environment will be an urban setting in the capital city, another will be a rural context. During the experience, Tomczyk will be investigating how teacher candidates can implement English literacy strategies and impact monolingual students' language development. Additionally, the role of cultural context in shaping literacy practices is emphasized, offering important insights for TESOL professionals working in similar environments. This study contributes to the growing body of international TESOL research by highlighting how local practices and policies intersect with global trends in language education. The implications support the development of culturally responsive teaching strategies and inform future TESOL educators.

## Site Fidelity and Habitat Preference of Male and Female Spotted Turtles (*Clemmys guttata*) With and Without Predator-Induced Amputations

**Trey Wehlan, M.S. Applied Biology**

Land reconfiguration is a major driving force causing the decline of many species with turtles being disproportionately affected as they often require multiple discrete microhabitats to fulfill their annual life activities. The spotted turtle, *Clemmys guttata*, is a semi-terrestrial freshwater turtle species currently endangered in response to the reconfiguration of many of its historical wetland habitats. As part of Wehlan's thesis, they will be investigating their spatial ecology to identify which microhabitats they utilize to fulfill their biological needs, how this utilization persists across distinct activity cycles throughout and across the years, and how these are influenced by sex and injury status. Wehlan will be capturing an equal proportion of male and female individuals as well as injured and uninjured individuals for study. Utilizing VHF radio transmitters affixed to their shells, individuals are radio-located twice a week during the fall. Locations are logged with a GPS unit and the surrounding primary vegetation cover identified. Geospatial and geostatistical analyses such as minimum convex polygons and kernel density polygons are conducted in ArcGIS Pro. Wehlan's findings may highlight key microhabitats required life activities of the species that can be applied to both currently existing and future habitats for preservation and conservation.

## The "Workshop" Workshop: Designing Accessible Spaces for Learning Outside of Tutoring

**Josey Zeunges, M.A. English**

The workshop will work with participants through developing their own writing center programming and materials that are active, engaging, accessible, and assessable. Presenters will discuss their development of a highly successful workshop program over several years at their university and provide advice on creating effective, engaging workshops. Participants will leave the session with tools and planning guides for creating in-class workshops using universal design principles that allow all students to engage where they are at while still meeting pedagogical goals for individual courses and assignments.

# SUMMER STUDENT RESEARCH

Every year, Salisbury University students spend their summer engaged in extensive research projects. In 2025, they explored topics ranging from squirrel foraging behavior to the influence of music on identity formation. Over 60 students presented their results during a poster session at SU's annual Summer Student Research Showcase. They are among the summer researchers listed here.



## GRADUATE STUDIES & RESEARCH SUMMER 2025 RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

### Developing Observational Astronomy Labs for Small and Medium Aperture Telescopes

Ian Abrego  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Nicholas Troup

### Shellfish Pollution Prediction website

Danish Ahsan  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Soeun You

### Artificial Intelligence Assisted Language Learning: The Generation, Utilization, and Impact of ChatGPT-Generated, Personalized, Target Language Stories in a High School Spanish 2 Honors Class

Ryan Allen  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Maida Finch

### Exploring Multimodal Composing in the Secondary ELA Classroom: Enhancing Literacy Through Diverse Modes of Expression

Benjamin Bradner  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Heather Porter

### Addressing Social Determinants of Health in Rural Community Pharmacies Through Social Work Integration

Catilin Ciel  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kim Van Vulpen

### Sensitivity Analysis and Ranking of Factors Affecting Chicken Hatching

Sude Celik  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Deepak Bastola

### Evaluating the Relationship Between Human Activity and Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) Nesting Patterns on Assateague Island, Maryland

Ian Clancy-Mallue  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Chelsea Berns

### Is Hostile Personality Associated with Health Behaviors and Outcomes in University Attending Emerging Adults?

Josie D'Aquila  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Mark Walter

### Investigation of Environmental Factors Influencing Secondary Structure of (CAG)<sub>n</sub> RNA Associated with Huntington's Disease

Luke Dean  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Josh Sokoloski

### The Effect of Anogenital Distance on Mate Preference in Southern Flying Squirrels

Katie Ekholm  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Angela Freeman

### RGB Video-Based Object Counting and Decision Fusion

Anye-Nkwenti Forti  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Peter Wang

### Effect of Urbanization on Ant Community Dynamics on the Urban Campus of Salisbury University

Isabella Garrison  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Dana Price

### The Associate Recognition in Aging (ARIA)

Tagnon Yanne Gbokede  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

### Social Behavior Between Male and Introduced Female Black-Handed Spider Monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi*)

James Goebel  
Faculty Mentor: Mary Gunther



### Determining the Efficacy of Targeted Removal of Invasive Blue Catfish *Ictalurus furcatus* on the Choptank River

Liam Hanley  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Noah Bressman

### Cognitive Difference in Collision vs. Contact Sport Athletes: A Behavioral and EEG Investigation

Neushinth Hettiarachchi  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

### Sports and Cognition

Alanaïs Lorraine Hicks  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

### Furry Foodies: A Deeper Look into Squirrel Foraging Behavior in Salisbury, Maryland

Savannah Howe  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Angela Freeman

### Green Economy Pathways: Mapping Career Opportunities in the Delmarva Region

Lauren Imhof  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Shane Hall

### Behavior Analysis of Financial Markets Using Markov Models, Genetic Algorithms, and Neural Networks

Logan Kelsch  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Yaping Jing

### Listening to the Galaxy: Enabling Salisbury Students to Engage in Radio Astronomy Through the Detection of 21cm Hydrogen

Andrew King  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jeffrey Emmert

### How Japan's Christmas Stories Reveal its Western Cultural Influencers

Darien Legates  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. David Johnson

### Examining the Connection Between Pornography Use and Academic Outcomes

Matthew Lin  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Lance Garmon

### Associative Recognition in Aging

Nia Lockwood  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

### Thermal Imaging-Based Chick Detection and Counting for Hatcheries

Brennen McCorison  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Peter Wang

### A Focus on Learning Content: Teacher and Student Roles in Text-Based Discussion in Secondary Social Studies Classrooms

Jessica McInerney  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Maida Finch

### *E. Coli* Regulation of Magnesium and Calcium Ions Under Various Stress Conditions

Aida Nabila  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Josh Sokoloski

### Literature Review: Digital Literacies in the Middle School Setting

Erin Nathan  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Heather Porter

### Chronotopes of Pretension: Hybrid Language Practices and Audience Policing in Iranian Digital Spaces

Kia Nemati  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Farzad Karimzad

### The Influence of Substrate Type on Burial Behavior, Prey Detection, and Feeding Success in Little Skates (*Leucoraja erinacea*)

Colin O'Donnell  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Noah Bressman

### Critical Language Pedagogies: A Literature Review

Lauren Pokhrel  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Maida Finch

### The Identification and Classification of Events that Cause Gravitational Waves from Archival Data

Darren Price  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Nicholas Troup

### Deep Learning for Option Pricing

Eli Prushansky  
Faculty Mentor: Deepak Bastola

### Literary Canon and Pedagogy in Higher Education: The Influence of Canonical Hegemony on Pedagogy

Susannah Randall  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Isabel Quintana-Wulf

### Enhancing a Web-Based AI-Powered Shellfish Pollution Monitoring Platform

Ali Ranjha  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Junyi Tu

**Axon Degeneration in Gyperglycemia-Induced Zebrafish**

Wennia Ferreira Reis  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jessica Clark

**Production of A Girl in School Uniform (walks into a bar)**

Abigail Reynolds  
Faculty Mentor: Jamie McKittrick

**Characterizing the Expression of an Ancient Retroviral Gag Gene in a Mammalian Order**

Mahrukh Rizwan  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Guney Boso

**The Impact of a Putative Lipase, TleVf1, on Interbacterial Competition in *Vibrio fischeri***

Ashlyn Shoemaker  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kirsten Guckes

**Polychrome Predators: Habitat Use and Survivability of Color Polymorphic Eastern Screech Owls (*Megascops asio*)**

Rachel Stone  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Eric Liebgold

**Environmental Justice in Baltimore City**

Keegan Taylor  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Shane Hall

**Linguistic Equity at Writing Centers**

Faith Thompson  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Heather Porter

**Fostering Student Engagement and Collaboration in the First-Year Composition Classroom through Playful, Arts-Based Pedagogies**

Holly Thompson  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Melissa Bugdal

**The Influence Music Has on Identity Formation**

Julliana Timbane  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Lance Garmon

**Front-End UI Design for Sensitivity-Driven Monitoring in Poultry Hatcheries**

Aaron Triplett  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Deepak Bastola

**The Implications of Maryland's Hospital Revenue Growth Cap: Financial Stress, Cost Reductions, and Impacts on Healthcare Quality**

Darby Trout  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Ning Li

**The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity. Understanding Autism: Some Philosophical Considerations**

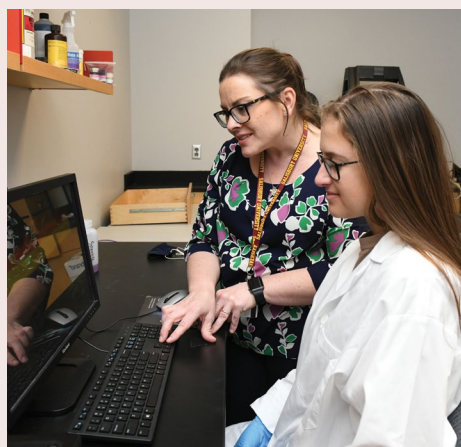
Margaret Vaughn  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Cristina Cammarano

**EEG Data Collection and Analysis**

Veronica Velarde  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

**A Comprehensive History: The Evolution of Literary Magazines and Creative Writing at Salisbury University**

Josey Zeunges  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Melissa Bugdal



**HENSON SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
SUMMER UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PROGRAM**

**Fear the Bird: Exploring the Multifaceted Function of the Avian Amygdala**

Sara Alessandrini  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jeremy Corfield

**The Influence of Artificial Reef Size on *Centropristis* Sex Change and Population Structure**

Owen Ashdown  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Noah Bressman

**Lattices in Type B**

Stephen Barr  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Ryan Shifler

**Impact of VasX on Type-VI System-Dependent Interactions in *Vibrio fischeri***

Riley Bozman  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kristen Guckes

**Predicting Shellfish Pollution in the East Coast Using Convolutional Neural Networks and Large Language Models**

Ramez Eloheid  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Xiaohong Wang

**Palladium Catalyzed Formation of Arynes from Arenes for the Total Synthesis of Aporphine Alkaloids**

Marcus Gjini  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Stephen Habay

**Aryl Iodonium Salts to Form Arynes for the Total Synthesis of Aporphine Alkaloids**

Bryce Greenlee  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Stephen Habay

**Functional Redundancy of Type VI Secretion System Gene Clusters in *Vibrio fischeri***

Madison Harrah  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kristen Guckes

**Augmented Skies: Displaying the Stars and Their Motion Using Augmented Reality**

Abigail Guy  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Steven Binz

**Investigating Regeneration and Cell Proliferation in Hyperglycemia-Impaired Zebrafish Larvae**

Phyo Min Khant  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jessica Clark

**Effect of the pH on the Volume of Acrylate Hydrogels Containing Different Amounts of Hemin**

Rhona Lynch  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Zulma Jimenez

**Examining Water Quality Impacts of Stormwater Runoff and Land Use in a Small Mixed Use Watershed, Delmarva Peninsula**

Marshall Raff  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Keota Silaphone

**Observational Analysis of Piping Plover, *Charadrius Melodus*, populations between Chincoteague and Assateague Beaches**

Adam Rutter  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Chelsea Berns

**Boundary Conditions and the Invertibility of Linear Finite Dynamical System**

Sean Shockley  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Mike Bardzell

**Measuring, Mapping, and Analyzing Seasonal and Surface Temperature Variations of Salisbury University Land Use/Land Cover**

Cailin Snider  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Mara Chen

**Measuring, Mapping, and Analyzing Seasonal and Surface Temperature Variations of Salisbury University Land Use/Land Cover**

Heather Sweeney  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Dan Harris

**Tracking Diamondback Terrapins (*Malaclemys Terrapin*): Nesting Patterns, Offshore Movements, and the Effects of Climate Change**

Rebecca White  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Eric Liebgold

# UNIVERSITY STUDENT ACADEMIC RESEARCH AWARD

University Student Academic Research Awards (USARA) are research grants, up to \$400, that are available to help support undergraduate research projects and creative endeavors related to developing and conducting projects with a faculty supervisor. These competitive funds support undergraduate research projects, directed by a faculty mentor, that may include research development, supplies, and the presentation of research/scholarly pursuits at national or regional meetings.

## SPRING 2025 WINNERS

**COVID-19 as a Life-Limiting Stressor: Socioemotional Selectivity and Future Time Perspective Shifts in Younger and Older Adults**  
Delaney Bartosz  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

**Does Sex Affect Basking in Spotted Turtles?**  
Kristina Bennett  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Eric Liebgold

**The Impact of Unexpected Learning Events on Children's Metacognition**  
Kaley Hardman & Anna McCallister  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Rhyannon Bemis

**Expanding Cultural Competency in Nursing: The Lasting Impact of Global Health Experiences**  
Skylar Kohler  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Tina Reid

**The Effects of Playing Sports on Cognition and Neural Activity.**  
Nia Lockwood  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

**Gaming, Streaming, and Mortality Salience During the COVID-19 Lockdown**  
Jackie Tippett  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Meredith Patterson

**Marijuana: Time for Replication**  
Veronica Velarde  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Cecilia Acoella

**Burnout Among Special Education Teachers: Impact of Social Support and Stressor Domains**  
Allison Yeager  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Heidi Fritz

**The Archived and Un-Archived: Listening to Abundance, Amplifying Silence, and the Rhetorical Analysis of Archival Materials**  
Josey Zeunges  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Melissa Bugdal

## FALL 2025 WINNERS

**The Relationship Between Nucleus Taenia Volume and Vocal Complexity in Songbirds**  
Sara Alessandrini  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jeremy Corfield

**The Effects of Playing Sports on Cognitive and Neural Activity**  
Emily Boniface  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

**Comparative Analysis of Soil Microbiota Associated with Poplar Trees from the Pop Up Poplar Gardens**  
Jasmine Bowie  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Elizabeth Emmert

**Characterizing the Features of Co-Opted Retroviral Genes in *G. volans***  
Bethany Butler  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Guney Boso

**ADHD In-Person Learning vs. Virtual Learning EEG**  
Alanis Caez-Lugo  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

**What Can We Learn from Race Dialogues? Reflection and Fantasies for Possibilities**  
Alexis Davis & Kaliyah Little  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Yuki Okubo

**Antimicrobial Potential of Bacterial Isolates from Medicinal vs Non-Medicinal Perennial Plants Against ESKAPE Relatives**  
Katherine Hendricks  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Elizabeth Emmert

**The Influence of Urbanization on the Roosting Behavior of Eastern Screech Owls**  
Alaina Linton  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Eric Liebgold

**How Do Environmental Stressors Affect Lynx Canadensis' Fecal Cortisol Metabolites?**  
Yzabella Mattern  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Angela Freeman

**Exploring Postural and Cueing Strategies for Standing Limb Occlusion Pressure Measurement**  
Dillon Otero  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Tim Werner

**Axon Degeneration in Hyperglycemia-Induced Zebra Fish**  
Wennia Reis  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jessica Clark

**Using Law to Achieve Health Equity in Maryland: Addressing Healthcare Disparities Through Legal Frameworks**  
Salim Ruffin  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sherry Maykrantz

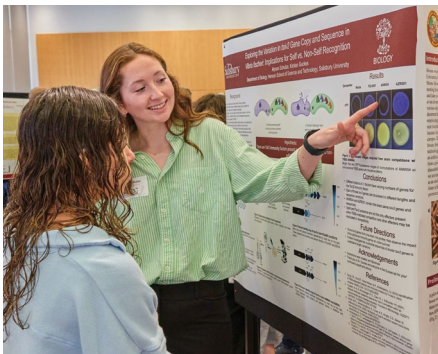
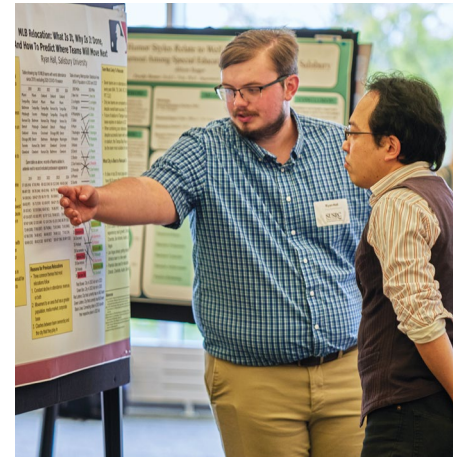
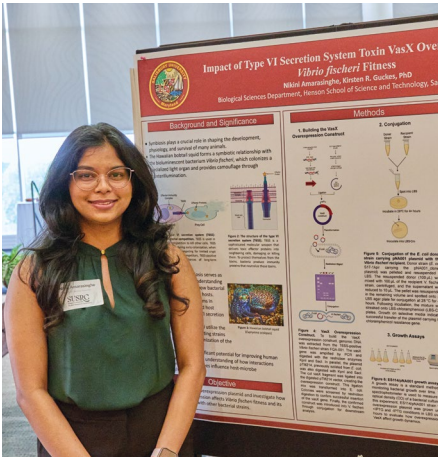
**Analyzing The Urban Heat Island Effect by Land Use/Land Cover on Salisbury University's Main Campus**  
Cailin Snider & Heather Sweeney  
Faculty Mentors: Dr. Mara Chen & Dr. Dan Harris

**Sports and Cognition**  
Destiny Thomas  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

**Impact of Blood Flow Restriction Cuff Design on Upper Body Exercise**  
Sean Zupnik  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Tim Werner

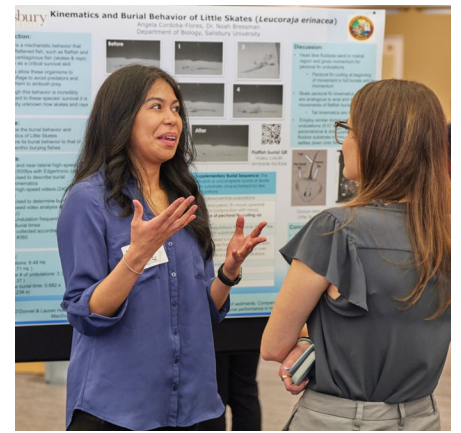


# 2025 Salisbury University Student Research Conference

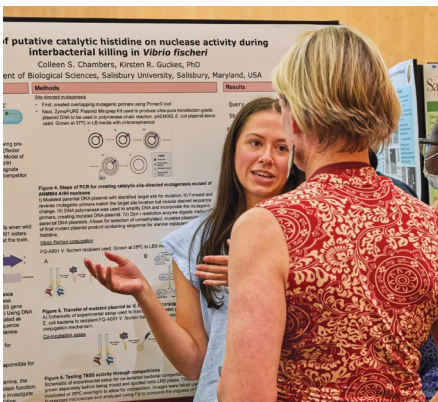
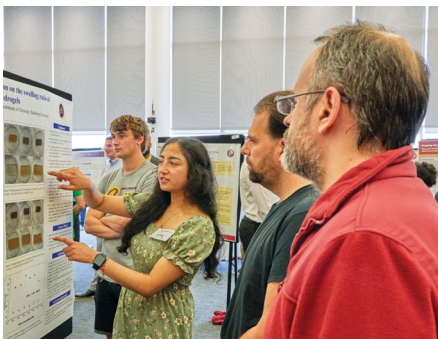


## Ransom Earns Outstanding Research Mentor Award

Dr. Tami Ransom, associate professor of environmental studies, has earned SU's 2025 Outstanding Research Mentor Award. Presented at the 23rd SU Student Research Conference (SUSRC), the honor celebrates faculty who are excellent supervisors of student research or creative work. During the past six years, Ransom has mentored 31 undergraduate students in direct field research. Those students have produced 17 co-authored posters for presentation. She also works directly with students on research papers, co-authoring five over the past six years. Ransom also served as co-chair to four Master of Science students for their theses during this period. Her work in the classroom also has focused on research, with classes including environmental studies research methods and senior seminar, which concentrate on writing and presenting a qualitative research paper, and community research projects.



**Save the Date!**  
**SUSRC 2026: Friday, April 17**



Dr. Ransom took the time to understand my academic interests and career aspirations, offering guidance that extended far beyond the classroom. It is rare to encounter a professor who is so dedicated to the success of their students ...”

— **Karsin Bachran**, SU Alum & Wor-Wic Community College Biology Instructor



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- Educational Leadership (M.Ed.)\*
- English (M.A.)
- Geographic Information Systems Management (M.S.)\*
- Health and Human Performance (M.S.)
- History (M.A.)
- Mathematics Education (M.S.M.E.)
- Nursing (M.S.N.)\*
- Public Communication (M.A.)
- Reading Specialist (M.Ed.)
- Social Work (M.S.W.)\*
- Teaching (M.A.T.)

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- Educational Leadership Certificate of Advanced Study \*
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
- Health Care Management\*
- Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate of Advanced Study

\* Online option available

