# SALISBURY UNIVERSITY

MISSION

Salisbury University is a premier comprehensive Maryland public university, offering excellent, affordable education in undergraduate liberal arts, sciences, business, nursing, heath sciences, social work and education and applied master’s and doctoral programs. We empower students with the knowledge, skills, and core values that contribute to active citizenship, gainful employment, and life‑long learning.

## INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

**Overview**

During 2018-19, Salisbury University (SU) achieved many significant accomplishments. Perhaps the most noteworthy change was the welcoming of SU’s ninth President, Dr. Charles A. Wight, in July 2018. Dr. Wight’s arrival comes shortly after the adoption of the Maryland Higher Education Commission’s (MHEC’s) *2017-2021 State Plan for Postsecondary Education: Student Success with Less Debt*. The University looks forward to the opportunity to assist the State meet its access, success and innovation goals. SU’s *2014-2018 Strategic Plan* includes goals that complement the key goals and objectives identified in the *Managing for Results* (MFR) document and the three goals for postsecondary education identified in the 2017-2021 State plan.To determine how effectively SU is progressing towards meeting the 2018 MFR key goals and objectives, data relevant to each objective will be described in subsequent sections of this report. Below, SU’s strategic plan goals are linked to the State plan goals.

One significant endeavor the University embarked on during 2018-19 was a campus-wide strategic planning process. During fall 2018, each of the University governance groups participated in meetings where they discussed the latest higher education trends and identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing SU in the coming years. Information collected during these SWOT analyses provided the topics discussed by 23 focus groups during spring 2019. A draft of the *2020-2025 Strategic Plan* has been completed and will be reviewed by campus during fall 2019. The University anticipates adopting its next strategic plan in 2020.

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| *2017-2021* *State Plan for Postsecondary Education* | *SU Strategic Plan: 2014-2018* |
| **Goal 1:** Access: Ensure equitable access to affordable and quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents. | Goal 1:Educate students for success in academics, career, and life |
| Goal 3: Foster a sense of community on campus and at the local, national, and international level |
| **Goal 2:** Success: Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success. | Goal 1:Educate students for success in academics, career, and life |
| Goal 4: Provide appropriate programs, spaces, and resources for all members of the campus community |
| **Goal 3:** Innovation: Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success. | Goal 2:Embrace innovation to enhance the Salisbury University experience |
| Goal 3: Foster a sense of community on campus and at the local, national, and international level |
| Goal 4: Provide appropriate programs, spaces, and resources for all members of the campus community |

**Access**

*2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education Goal:*

Access: Ensure equitable access to affordable and quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents.

*PAR/MFR Objectives: 1.1-1.4; 3.1-3.3; Additional Indicators 1- 2*

SU’s commitment to provide an exceptional contemporary liberal arts education and academic and professional programs that are aligned with an increasingly competitive, global, and knowledge-based economy is a major goal in the University’s Strategic Plan. For the MFR, access to an affordable and quality education are evaluated using several of the MFR objectives, including:

* diversity of the student body (Objectives 3.1-3.3)
* pass rates on national licensure and certification exams (Objectives 1.1 & 1.2),
* self-reports of student satisfaction with the quality of education and preparation they received (Objectives 1.3 & 1.4),
* salaries of recent graduates (Additional Indicators 1 & 2)

Diversity

*MFR Objectives: 3.1- 3.3*

The changing demographics in the State and Nation are also reflected on SU’s ever-increasing diverse population of students. The University accepted 62% of its first-time degree-seeking applicants and enrolled a first-time student cohort of 1,289 students in fall 2018. Just over 25% of first-time students were from ethnically diverse backgrounds. SU enrolled a total of 7,650 undergraduate students; just under 90% of SU’s student population is at the undergraduate level. As recommended in the *2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education*, graduate student representation on campus grew 44% over the past five years. Approximately, 917 graduate students were enrolled in fall 2018.

While continuing to increase accessibility, SU values both affordability (e.g., tuition, fees, need-based and non-need-based aid and grants, etc.) and quality (e.g., academic credentials of the first-year class, admission, retention, and graduation rates, etc.). During fall 2018, enrollment of economically disadvantaged students decreased slightly from 54.4% to 52.1% (Objective 3.3). The changing demographics of high school graduates across both the State and Nation make it increasingly important to provide affordable access for all students.

The University has increasingly emphasized its desire to maintain a diverse campus—which is readily affirmed in the University’s trends and benchmarks. Fall 2018 marked the most ethnically diverse student population in SU’s history (Objectives 3.1 and 3.2). During fall 2018, SU increased its enrollment of minority undergraduate students for the thirteenth consecutive year. African American students made up 14.4% of SU’s undergraduate students (Objective 3.1). Similarly, 26.3% of SU’s fall 2018 undergraduate enrollment was composed of minority students (Objective 3.2). Despite a slight decrease in undergraduate enrollment since 2014 (4.3%) undergraduate minority student enrollment has increased more than 5% (from 1,861 in fall 2014 to 1,951 in fall 2018).

Licensure

*MFR Objectives: 1.1 & 1.2*

MFR Objectives 1.1 and 1.2 were established as performance goals to help determine the effectiveness of the nursing and teacher education programs at SU. Effectiveness for these goals is measured by examining the pass rates for the nursing licensure exam (NCLEX) and the teaching licensure exam (PRAXIS). At 99%, SU remains well above the average Maryland NCLEX pass rate (88%) for BSN programs (Objective 1.1). In fact, SU has the highest NCLEX pass rate in the State of all BSN programs. The Nursing Department continues its concentrated efforts (e.g., tutoring, NCLEX review course, etc.) to increase its pass rates and maintain an academically rigorous curriculum.

During the 2008-09, the Professional Education Unit of the Seidel School of Education implemented a new graduation requirement for students seeking their degree in a Professional Education area. Beginning with students graduating from the Professional Education program in spring 2010 and after, students were required to pass the PRAXIS II in order to graduate with recommendation for certification. In spring 2019, this program requirement was modified such that all students in the program must take the PRAXIS II in order to graduate. The current pass rate is 99% (Objective 1.2).

Alumni Satisfaction and Salary

*MFR Objectives: 1.3 & 1.4*

##### One measure of success used by SU is alumni satisfaction and earning potential. Data are collected on a triennial basis using an alumni survey to address Objectives 1.3 and 1.4 and Additional Indicators 1 and 2. The most recent survey results are based on students that graduated in August/December 2015 and January/May 2016. It should be noted that the response rate for the alumni survey was 19.5%. Results revealed that 99% and 94% of SU graduates are satisfied with their level of preparation for graduate school (Objective 1.3) and employment (Objective 1.4), respectively.

When examining the median salary of recent graduates, alums saw a 10% increase in salary when compared to 2015-16 graduates. Recent graduates earned a median salary of $41,227 (Additional Indicator 1) which represents the 79th percentile of the median salary for workers 25 years old and over with a bachelor’s degree (Additional Indicator 2).

Accreditations

An additional indicator of the quality and effectiveness of SU is its ability to achieve and maintain national accreditations. Several academic programs and administrative offices are accredited:

* Salisbury University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (**MSCHE**);
* Teacher Education programs- accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (**NCATE**) and MD Education Department;
* Social Work program- accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (**CSWE**);
* Music program- accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (**NASM**);
* Franklin P. Perdue School of Business- accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (**AACSB**);
* Exercise Science- accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (**CAAHEP**);
* Medical Laboratory Science- accredited with the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (**NAACLS**);
* Nursing programs-accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (**CCNE**);
* Programs in the Department of Chemistry- approved by the American Chemical Society Committee on Professional Training (**ACS-CPT**);
* Athletic Training- accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (**CAATE**);
* Respiratory Therapy program- accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (**CoARC**);
* Applied Health Physiology program – accredited by the Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences (**CoAES**) through **CAAHEP**;
* Student Health Services- accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (**AAAHC**);
* Student Counseling Services- accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services (**IACS)**; and
* University Police- accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (**CALEA**).

Rankings

In addition, this has been a year in which SU has garnered much national recognition of its reputation as an exceptional comprehensive University.

* For the 2nd consecutive year, SU was highlighted by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as one of the nation’s top producers of Fulbright students for 2018-19.
* In 2019, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* recognized SU as one of the best four-year public institutions at enrolling and graduating women in computer science. Among public institutions, SU was ranked first.
* *U.S. News & World Report’s* *Best Colleges for 2019-2020* selected SU as a best regional university among public and private institutions in the North*.* This is the 22nd consecutive year SU received this honor. SU was also included on lists for the Top Public Schools, Best Values Schools, Best Colleges for Veterans and A-plus Schools for B Students.
* For the 20th consecutive year, SU was designated by *The Princeton Review* as one of the nation’s best institutions in *The Best 384 Colleges* and *The Best Northeastern Colleges for 2018-19.*
* For the 9th consecutive year, *Kiplinger’s Personal Finance* magazine named SU as one of the Top “100 Best Values in Public Colleges.”
* *Washington Monthly* magazine named SU as one of “America’s Best Bang-for-the-Buck Colleges” in 2018 for the 6th consecutive year.
* *The Princeton Review* in partnership with the *U.S. Green Building Council* named SU as one of the top 399 Green Colleges for the 9th consecutive year.
* *Forbes* magazine named SU one of Americas Top Colleges for 2018, for the 5th consecutive year. *Forbes* also lists Salisbury University as one of America's Best Value Colleges.
* SU was identified by *Money* magazine's as one of The Best Colleges for Your Money for 2018, for the 5th consecutive year.

**Success**

*2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education Goal:*

Success: Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success.

*PAR/MFR Objectives: 4.1-4.6*

Retention and Graduation

At 84.2%, the second-year retention rate for the 2017 entering cohort of first-year students (Objective 4.1) decreased slightly from the previous cohort (84.9%). The 2017 cohort included students that started at SU in fall 2017 and returned to SU or transferred to another Maryland school for the fall 2018 semester. SU’s second-year retention rate is the highest among the USM Master’s colleges and universities.

Objectives 4.2 and 4.3 provide additional information regarding second-year retention rates with a special focus on African American and all minority students. SU increased its second-year retention rate of 84.4% for African American students over last year (83.8%). The second-year retention rate of minority students increased by 0.7 percentage points this year to a rate of 83.7%.

Currently, SU’s overall six-year graduation rate is 72.0% (Objective 4.4). SU’s six-year graduation rate is the highest among the USM Master’s colleges and universities and is 0.5 percentage points above the USM average. The six-year graduation rate for African American students decreased this year to a rate of 66.4% (Objective 4.5). SU has the highest African American student six-year graduation rate among the USM Master’s colleges and universities. In fact, SU’s rate is 11.2 percentage points higher than the USM average. The six-year graduation rate for minority students at SU are the highest among the USM Master’s colleges and universities and 1 percentage point above the USM average. But, SU’s minority student six-year graduation rates decreased this year, to 65.6% (Objective 4.6).

To improve graduation and retention rates, the campus continually evaluates the success of initiatives designed to improve student outcomes. In 2016, SU began utilizing, the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC). The SSC provides an early warning system for students to assist in course selection, selection of a major and early indicators of academic success. Additionally, SU has enhanced its advising system by utilizing not only the SSC but by implementing a new Academic Advising Center. The Academic Advising Center employs professional academic advisors to assist students in achieving their academic goals. Each first-year student is assigned an academic advisor to assist them with understanding degree requirements, planning coursework and developing an understanding of opportunities available across the university. Once students transition to their sophomore year, they are assigned a faculty member within their discipline as their academic advisor.

**Innovation**

*2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education Goal:*

Innovation: Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success.

*PAR/MFR Objectives:2.1-2.5; Additional Indicators 3-7*

SU states in Goal 1 of the *2014-2018 Strategic Plan* that the University’s primary mission is to “educate our students for success in the classrooms, careers, and life.” SU measures its impact on economic growth by successfully producing graduates with the skills necessary to compete in high-demand occupations. To determine our success, the University triennially tracks the percentage of graduates employed one year after graduation.

Nursing

Data for this year indicates that applications and enrollment into the program have remained relatively stable (Additional Indicators 3-6). The number of undergraduate and graduate nursing majors enrolled for fall 2018 were down slightly this year. However, a robust number of SU undergraduate students are still pursue nursing with 542 undergraduate majors in fall 2018. An additional 39 students were pursuing a graduate nursing degree during the same time period. The number of nursing baccalaureate and graduate degree recipients decreased by a mere three degrees to 96 (Objective 2.5).

Teacher Education

The overall number of teacher education enrollments increased by 59 students to a total of 1,190 this year. The number of teacher education graduates from SU (Objective 2.3) decreased this year to 254. This is not surprising give the six consecutive years of enrollment declines. To assist with the continued recruitment of teacher education majors, SU has dedicated resources to establish a Holmes Scholar program designed to recruit underrepresented populations in education careers. Additionally, SU participates in the [Teacher Academies of Maryland](http://www.salisbury.edu/academic-offices/education/early-and-elementary-education/tam.aspx) (TAM) program by providing $500/semester scholarships to TAM graduates when they attend SU. Finally, admissions has partnered with SU’s Seidel School of Education to recruit high promise education majors into a new mentorship program, the Higher Opportunities and Possibilities in Education Program (HOPE). HOPE allows aspiring teachers to be considered for admission based on alternative evidence of their commitment to the field of education, including completion of a TAM program or recommendations of their school administration. These students are mentored by staff and faculty from SU’s Seidel School of Education and upper-class education students. They may also live in one of three education-focused living learning communities.

STEM

In 2017-18, SU graduated 326 STEM majors, a 3% increase from 316 graduates last year (Objective 2.4). STEM enrollments at SU increased in fall 2018. SU anticipates continued growth in STEM majors. In addition to several other scholarships used to attract students, the Henson School Science and Technology offers 16 renewable $5,000 merit scholarships for entering first year STEM students. A new high-performance computer lab opened last spring which supports students in several STEM majors.

##### Employment

##### As mentioned previously, alumni data are collected by the University every three years. Based on responses from graduates in 2015-16, 94.2% of those responding to an alumni survey were employed one year after graduation (Objective 2.2), with 66% employed in Maryland (Objective 2.1). Additionally, SU estimates that, of the 90 Bachelor of Science in nursing graduates in 2015-16, approximately 75 are working in Maryland (Additional Indicator 7). SU provides a quality education, making SU graduates readily employable and prepared to be successful in their future careers and life while addressing the workforce needs of the state.

**RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE COMMISSION**

For the 2018 MFR reporting cycle, SU was required to provide a response to the following Commission comment.

**Commission Assessment:** The Commission continues to focus its attention on equity gaps in college outcomes among minority college students and their white peers. A central topic of the 2019 Completion Summit MHEC held in April was on college completion and equity. One of the speakers, Dr. Nikki Edgecombe of the Community College Research Center (CCRC), discussed ways institutions can create more equitable and inclusive pathways for students to achieve their educational goals.

The principles she posited include: 1) knowing your students, 2) understanding the obstacles to their success, 3) adopting and adapting responsive policies and practices, and 4) scaling and institutionalizing continuous improvement. In reference to this, she stated “*Targeted interventions are probably one of the more powerful vehicles we have for addressing gaps in attainment. They are not always popular, but universal interventions often times may lift all boats but maintain gaps...”*

For your institution, please describe: 1) one or more targeted interventions and the population(s) served, 2) the identified obstacles the students might face, 3) the metrics used to evaluate the intervention(s) and 4) the evidence used to assess and adapt the intervention(s) to ensure its intended effects.

**Salisbury University’s Response:**

We believe that a diverse and inclusive campus community brings irreplaceable value to SU’s educational experience and strengthens the entire University. We strive to create a truly diverse and inclusive environment where we harness the richness of ideas, backgrounds and perspectives of the community to create student learning opportunities and value for the institution, today and into the future.

National trends suggest that over the next decade, high school graduates will be much more diverse in terms of their race, ethnicity and college preparation. The University will prepare for this trend by developing and implementing targeted strategies to meet the needs of college-bound students and those seeking graduate, professional and continuing education. Our aim, therefore, is continued mentoring and advising in response to the needs and talents of our students. As demonstrated through Objectives 4.1-4.3, SU has been and will continue to be committed to closing the achievement gap. Currently, African American students at SU have second-year retention rates above those demonstrated by our overall incoming student cohort, 84.4% vs 84.2%. Similarly, minority students have similar second-year retention rates, 83.7%, to the overall cohort. We believe we have been able to succeed in closing the achievement gap, in part, due to the ongoing financial support we receive through a U.S. Department of Education TRiO grant and the continued mentorship of our minority students through our Powerful Connections program.

The TRiO ACHiEVE Student Support Services grant has allowed SU to develop programs that specifically target first-generation, students with financial need and students with disabilities. Through SU’s TRiO ACHiEVE program, eligible students participate in academic coaching, receive financial literacy training, acquire learning and study strategies and engage in a peer mentoring relationship. For the 2017-18 participants, 93% persisted at SU into their next academic terms. Additionally, 93% of participants completed the academic year in good academic standing.

Another targeted intervention for students from racial and ethnically diverse groups is the Powerful Connections programming. Through the Powerful Connections programs, students are assigned a peer mentor, provided with access to the various services offered through the Office of Multicultural Student Services and provided with a pre-orientation to the academic expectations and social responsibilities associated with being an SU student. For more than 18 years, the Powerful Connections program has assisted racially and ethnically diverse students in feeling engaged with the campus community and achieving academic success at SU. Minority students who receive mentorship through the Powerful Connections program are retained at higher rates than other minority groups, 81.8% vs 79.7% (five-year average). When first-year grades are compared, Powerful Connections students are comparable to the overall minority cohort of first-time students (2.69 vs. 2.71, five-year average). Over the last five years, approximately 325 first-time students have received peer mentorship through the Powerful Connections program.