

Executive Summary

This report fulfills a [Faculty Senate charge](#) to the Long-Range Academic Planning Committee. The report reviews key information related to upcoming changes to the landscape of K-12 and higher education within Maryland. Of primary importance, the potential for substantial changes in the nature and number of dual enrollment high school students provides both opportunities to refine delivery of early career and/or general education courses while also challenging University teaching loads.

Introduction

As an institution primarily focused on traditional undergraduate teaching and learning, Salisbury University must remain responsive to shifts in the landscape of higher education generally and within Maryland specifically. Recent changes in USM goals for growth¹ will intersect with landmark K-12 legislation to create new opportunities and challenges for recruiting, educating, and graduating undergraduate students. What constitutes a “traditional” undergraduate is expected to change, as will options for how early-career courses are delivered, and potentially by whom.

This report tends to focus primarily on the impacts of the Blueprint. This is because unlike the SU and USM Strategic Plans, the Blueprint has the force of Maryland law.

Methods

The Long Range Academic Planning Committee (LRAP) was charged with examining the following items and reporting back to the Faculty Senate:

1. Identify other institutions who offer a clinical faculty career ladder
2. Understand current conversations with area high schools about student preparation, necessary supports, and the potential for programs like "Taste of College" or other dual-enrollment offerings
3. Understand SU enrollment projections and targets concerning two key questions:
 - a. What is the "right size" for SU?
 - b. How might changes in delivery of curricula (e.g., online vs face-to-face) affect enrollment projections?
4. Explore options and identify and evaluate current efforts to identify students who need remediation during early coursework, and devise supports
5. Explore the possibility of establishing an officially recognized and binding minimum percentage of tenure-track faculty instruction at an institutional level at SU

In 2022 the Long-Range Academic Planning committee began examining three guiding documents believed relevant to examine these charges: [SU's Strategic Plan](#), [USM's Strategic Plan](#), and the [Blueprint for Maryland's Future](#). In addition, conversations with key personnel occurred during Fall 2023 and informed the committee's responses to the Faculty Senate charge. Key personnel included: Laurie Henry (Dean of Siedel School), Chrys Egan (Associate Dean of Fulton School), Michael Scott (Dean of Henson

¹ Though vague, the plan sets a goal to “Attract, retain and graduate more aspiring Maryland students at the undergraduate and graduate levels” USM Strategic Plan, page 10.

School), Laurie Couch (Provost), Allen Koehler (Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management), and Aurora Edenhart-Pepe (Vice President of Administration and Finance).

Analysis

LRAP believes that dual enrollment represents the most substantial potential change, and has thus received the most attention in conversations and in this report. The potential growth of dual enrollment students raises immediate questions about SU facilities (is there sufficient classroom space, etc.), instructional modality (will courses be taught on-site, on-campus or online), and staffing (should SU consider alterations to faculty lines). LRAP findings for these and other questions are below.

Dual Enrollment (charge items 1, 2, & 5)

Dual enrollment refers to high school students taking college or university courses. Increased dual enrollment is one of the landmark changes introduced in the Blueprint, which will be fully implemented in AY 2026-27. Under the Blueprint qualified 11th-grade students (those who meet certain metrics) will move towards 100% dual enrollment. Some dual enrollment students will effectively complete an Associate's degree by the time they have completed 12th grade. For students interested in a traditional four-year degree, they can leave 12th grade having completed two years of collegiate coursework.

For reference, Wicomico County expects that 1,200 students will participate in the new full-time dual enrollment program; in AY 2023-24 there were approximately 75 dual enrollment students at SU.

Implications for Budgeting / Financial Decisions (charge 2)

Dual enrollment students currently represent a decrease in revenue for the University relative to traditional undergraduate students. Consider 500 students taking 12 credits of existing SU courses per semester:

- Dual enrollment is set at \$150/credit hour, netting approximately \$1,800,000.²
- Traditional enrollment would net up to \$3,700,000, though many/most of those students would also receive some form of financial aid.
- Room and board for traditional students would yield up to an additional \$9,500,000.³

The net difference between the two groups is as much as \$11,400,000. It is worth considering, however, whether even the more modest revenue of dual enrollment is better than missing out on that population entirely.

² Cost per credit hour is set through formal MOUs, with a current state cap of \$236/credit hour. "Competitor" institutions like Wor-Wic have set their cost even lower than SU. Approximately 60% of Wor-Wic FTEs are through dual enrollment. This can also be contributed to high school counselors being more familiar with Wor-Wic offerings, more Wor-Wic courses being offered on-site at local high schools, and the option for students to ride Wor-Wic shuttles. In short, the Wor-Wic program is more robust and well-developed.

³ This assumes that dual enrollment students would not be staying or (primarily) eating on campus.

The Blueprint will change other aspects of dual enrollment logistics. Most relevant, it will shift the entirety of dual enrollment costs to K-12 districts. Under the current system parents must pay 10% of dual enrollment tuition. This could alter how students and parents decide on a dual enrollment university.

As described below, the potential increase of students who may need remediation or other academic supports could impact relevant areas of campus including the Writing Center, Disability Resource Center, and Counseling Center. In brief, those offices are consistently at or near capacity, and -- in cases such as the Writing Center's individual appointments⁴ -- well beyond capacity.

Implications for Faculty Work / Instructional Staffing (charge items 1, 2, 4)

Given the expected increase in eligible DE students, instructional staffing will likely need to be addressed. Seidel is advocating for the creation of fast-track MA programs for teachers to address the expected demand for dual enrollment. This consideration may help ease the burden of staffing at high school⁵ but does not address the likely need for additional instructional staffing at SU. One possible solution is to expand and formalize the use of clinical/instructional/practice positions to meet the increase in demand. [SU currently employs these instructor types](#) which have unique hiring, minimum qualification, contractual terms, and promotion levels. Currently, four other USM institutions employ these types of instructional faculty. These faculty appointment types exist at half of SU's performance peer institutions.

Alternatively, SU may choose to take an active role in training/mentoring existing or new high school teachers to teach DE students. A mentor/mentee network of SU faculty and high school teachers is being developed under Michael Scott's direction with qualified high school teachers receiving affiliated faculty status at SU. The clear benefit to this ladder solution is lower expenditure for SU as additional faculty may not need to be hired to meet demand. Conversations and agreements will need to be made with each high school which may present logistical barriers.

Demand for the use of SU facilities will likely increase as a result of additional DE students. LRAP has identified four considerations on how to approach this demand:

- SU faculty and/or qualified high school teachers teach at SU
 - Issues of space, transportation, parking, etc. will arise
- SU faculty teach at high schools
- Qualified high school teachers teach at their high school
- SU faculty and/or qualified high school teachers teach online

The Blueprint establishes a minimum starting salary of \$60,000 for K-12 educators, increasing to \$72,000 for qualified teachers in their third year. These increases could make hiring and retaining qualified University faculty under traditional practices more challenging.

Beyond the impact of DE, additional teaching tracks could benefit students needing remedial support. As an example, the Center for Student Achievement offers a 1cr 7-week course GENL 103 Advanced

⁴ Per Melissa Bugdal, under current staffing individual appointments are booking 2-3 weeks out with a 12+ person wait list per day. The Writing Center is turning away 83% of waitlisted students.

⁵ Wicomico County, for instance, anticipates 120 high school teachers being involved in dual enrollment instruction.

Learning Strategies for students to learn basic study skills and resources. They currently run 4 sections in the fall and 2 in the spring, and would expand those sections with a clinical track.

Implications for Instruction by Tenure-track Faculty (charge item 5)

LRAP was tasked with proposing language to bind the University to a minimum percentage of instruction being delivered by full time tenure-track faculty. The prior SU Strategic Plan included the goal “Aim to staff academic programs so that at least 75% of instruction [at SU] is delivered by tenure-track faculty.” This would make SU a positive outlier in the System.

Per the most recent data from USM on the percentage of student credit hours by faculty type,⁶ 62% of instruction at SU was delivered by full time tenured or tenure-track faculty. That ranks third in the System (U Baltimore, 63%; Frostburg State, 65%) and an increase of one percentage point over AY 2016-2017. 20% of instruction at SU was delivered by full time non-tenure track instructors.

Provosts Olmstead and Couch deemed any such binding resolution as untenable owing to fluctuations in enrollment, modalities, and overall hiring trends. They expressed doubt that any such target could be meaningfully binding.

LRAP encourages Senate to engage in conversations about additional instructional models at the University that might promote or at least safeguard the expansion of tenure-track or similar protected, long-term options.

LRAP also encourages keeping targets for full time tenure-track teaching in Strategic Plan conversations moving forward.

Implications for Enrollment and Retention (charge item 3, 4)

University leadership has set a specific target of 8,500 total students by 2027. Meeting that target involves an increase of 400 students for the AY 2024-25 with complementary increase of student retention by 5%. Enrollment increase is likely to continue coming from incoming first-year students, however, higher education trends suggest lower enrollment among traditional incoming first-year students is likely in the coming years. Increased attention will need to shift to recruiting transfers, DE, and graduate students. For example, SU aims to increase graduate enrollment by 12% in coming years.⁷

Salisbury University has set a target to improve undergraduate retention from 80% to 85%. Retention plans are currently underway and include three enrollment management campaigns:

1. Alert campaign to increase the use of Navigate alerts to link students vulnerable of withdrawing with appropriate campus-based resources. Of note, the Provost has indicated that departmental use of this feature will be tracked.
2. Maroon/Gold campaign in which relevant chairs (e.g., program, department, school) will meet with at-risk first-year students.

⁶ USM Report on Faculty Teaching Workload, AY 2021-2022.

⁷ AY 23-24 graduate enrollment was 756. The final target is just over 1,000.

3. Midterm grade campaign to increase midterm grade reporting among faculty, centralized in Gullnet.

It is also likely that curriculum delivery options will need to expand to meet increased enrollment demands. The increased use of online and hybrid course options may be feasible options to meet demand.

Implications for Services to Support Student Academic Success (charge item 4)

As mentioned, one primary goal of the University is to increase student retention to 85%. One way to approach that goal is through LRAP spoke with heads of four main academic support areas: Center for Student Achievement, Counseling Center, Disability Resources Center, and Writing Center. There are common statements across the four support centers. These include the provision of a range of services in many different modalities, the effectiveness of services on student academic success, the challenge of getting students to take advantage of the services, and the realities of staffing limitations.

There is no consistent format for student academic services. For instance, while faculty can arrange to embed supports directly in our courses, there are also group sessions and individual consultations. The same variety is the case for how students find themselves in one of these centers. Faculty referrals to CSA are effective; students tend to “find” the Writing Center on their own or through course integration; student-student referrals are most effective for the DRC; students who use the Counseling Center tend to have prior experiences with mental health services.

Center staff are confident that services address a range of SLOs in the new General Education model. DRC reports confidence in offerings that can support information literacy; oral and written communication; human experience; and personal, social, and cultural responsibility. The Writing Center primarily addresses written communication. CSA feels strongest in critical thinking, though they also offer a basic study skills and success course (GENL 103) that could become mandatory for certain students such as incoming students, those with a specific DWF, or others. Their office currently lacks the capacity for such a requirement.

Most of these centers are operating at or beyond capacity. DRC reports needing another PIN position for a testing coordinator, and predicts needing another two additional specialists to support growing dual enrollment. The Writing Center operated beyond capacity, turning away up to 83% of waitlisted students from individual appointments. CSA is operating near capacity, in large part because of staffing that includes undergraduate SIs and tutors. The Counseling Center is perhaps best positioned at the moment as the online Timely Care service means students can reach a mental health professional independent of staffing; there are reasonable questions about the efficacy of primarily-online support.

Ultimately all of these services depend on students taking advantage of the support. Faculty can encourage use and refer students in a variety of ways. Mandated insitutionalized use seems less feasible given basic staffing limitations.

Implications for Communication About Dual Enrollment (charge item 2, 5)

A consistent point in conversations about managing dual enrollment is the often siloed nature of the work at SU. Several people mentioned the potential value of a “dual enrollment coordinator” or similar position to help with outreach, course scheduling, and basic tracking.

Regardless of a specific position or title, the process should involve more regular communication amongst chairs, deans, provost, president, admissions, and administration & finance. Dual enrollment also requires participation of “local education agencies” (e.g., school boards) to complete required MOUs, and could be strengthened with some parental outreach or participation. At present, the best model for this might be the Regional Professional Development Schools Network of the Seidel School, though the Fulton School has also helped to host successful dual enrollment interest events.

LRAP was told of a “strategic enrollment plan” coming in 2025. Faculty should be involved in that process.

Conclusion

LRAP has adopted a three-part framework for thinking about the implications of the changes noted above.

1. Practical. It seems clear that these changes -- especially to K-12 education -- are coming. Institutions like Wor-Wic, who are already deeply involved in models like dual enrollment, stand to benefit. We worry that institutions who do not plan for these changes will be overlooked.
2. Financial. Dual enrollment seems to represent a net loss of revenue relative to the traditional undergraduate student population SU is accustomed to educating. But, even relatively lower dual enrollment tuition is better than no tuition.
3. Ethical. As a regional comprehensive university, SU has a long-standing commitment to our local communities. That includes offering an empowering education to eligible students and their families. At the same time, we have a responsibility to seek equity amongst our faculty and across ranks.

Open / unanswered questions

LRAP also encountered questions that have not been answered. We include these as possible areas for additional investigation. They include:

- Will the Blueprint remain in its current form?
Though passed into Maryland law, the Blueprint is receiving pushback from several counties. It is possible that elements of the legislation may change.
- What about out-of-state students?
The Blueprint is Maryland law, but SU also recruits and educates students from other states. LRAP was not able to gather information about how the University might balance the different populations and their relative ages, maturity levels, or general preparation.
- Will adding different instructional career ladders “fracture” faculty voice?
Though lacking the concept of “tenure” we have options for career ladders and contracts

available, such as adjuncts and clinical faculty. There are concerns about fracturing faculty voice by having too much “variety” in faculty types.