

**PROGRESS REPORT
ON
INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Cultural Diversity Planning at Salisbury University

Presented to the USM February 26, 2010 (per Senate Bill 438 & House Bill 905)

Introduction

Salisbury University's 2009-2013 Strategic Plan embodies the University's commitment to and plan for programs of cultural diversity on the campus, and recognizes several areas where Salisbury University SU is committed to moving forward over the next five years.

The core values of Salisbury University are:

- *excellence*
- *student-centeredness*
- *learning*
- *community*
- *civic engagement*
- *diversity*

We believe these values must be lived and experienced as integral to everyday campus life so that students make the connection between what they learn and how they live. The goals and objectives of our strategic, academic, facilities, and enrollment plans, as well as our fiscal commitments, reflect our fundamental values.

SU's 2008-09 Cultural Diversity Plan is grounded in the institutional core values and aligned with our Strategic Plan which has four goals and each has several focus areas. While *Diversity* is mentioned explicitly as a Focus Area for Goal 2, cultural diversity is interwoven into all four goals.

Cultural Diversity at SU

Since its founding in 1925, Salisbury University has traditionally attracted primarily white students, faculty, and staff. Recognizing a need to increase students' opportunities to gain competency in learning about and working with diverse cultures and expanding access to college, President Dudley-Eshbach launched a cultural diversity initiative when she arrived on campus in 2000. In her initial letter to the campus Dr. Dudley-Eshbach stated, "What needs to happen on this campus is no less than a transformation in terms of inclusiveness, campus climate, and dialog within our SU community," and announced the creation of an Office of Diversity.

Tasked with promoting cultural diversity on the campus, the Office of Diversity was organizationally housed in the Division of Academic Affairs reporting directly to the Provost. At that time the Office of Diversity initiatives included educating the campus community on the importance of cultural diversity, sponsoring events that promote cultural diversity, and addressing the special needs of minority communities. In 2009, Dr. Dudley-Eshbach in consultation with a diverse group of students, faculty and staff, reorganized the Office of Diversity placing it as a function of the President's Office. Working directly with the Chief of Staff, the Chief Diversity Officer was hired in December 2009 and is charged with providing leadership in the implementation and accountability of SU's Cultural Diversity Plan.

At Salisbury University we welcome and embrace ***cultural diversity*** in the broadest context so as to recognize, value and learn from all people of varying cultural backgrounds such as but not limited to: ***ability, age, class, color, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation.***

Valuing Diversity

SU is proud of the quality and diversity of students we attract as we continue to witness freshman classes becoming more diverse each year. SU has a deliberate and sustained effort to show tangible results. We were pleased to welcome in the fall 2009 the most racially and ethnically diverse freshman class in SU history.

Salisbury University continues to work on a number of interventions to ensure that we progress on the recruitment and retention of diverse student populations. SU has instituted the Powerful Connections Program, a semester-long mentor and orientation program, orchestrated through Multicultural Student Services. The program offers a variety of activities from pre-matriculation throughout the end of the first year to assist under-represented students with a successful transition to college-level work and facilitate their sense of connectedness to the University community. An additional success and retention measure fully implemented in fall 2008 was the University's mid-semester reporting program, which is designed to encourage early and frequent feedback to students from faculty regarding their course progression. Finally, math placement was piloted in fall 2008 and fully implemented in fall 2009.

We will continue to seek alternate funding sources to keep recruitment and retention programs viable and have recently applied for a TRIO grant, which is currently under review. Funds would enable expansion of critical programs including broadening support for freshmen in challenging courses by offering structured study sessions led by talented peer students; creating a targeted summer bridge program designed to facilitate the academic transition of new students; expanding our Living-Learning Communities to provide a safety net for students in a supportive learning environment; and increasing tutorial services to better address student academic needs.

Progress on meeting goals as stated in SU Plan to Enhance Cultural Diversity

Administrative Coordination and Accountability

Chief Diversity Officer

- The Office of Diversity was reorganized is now part of the President's Office, and is now led by a newly hired Chief Diversity Officer (CDO).
- The CDO is charged with reviewing and assessing the institutional affirmative action and equal opportunity policies and practices, developing strategies, programs, and services to support institutional diversity initiatives such as increasing diverse faculty and professional staff on campus, and assisting with diversity-related challenges and opportunities.
- The CDO will work in partnership with key campus stakeholders to assess and strengthen efforts to recruit and retain a diverse student body, faculty and workforce.
- This will include the development of diversity awareness, educational and professional development training opportunities both faculty and staff.
- A Diversity Leadership Council comprised of faculty, staff and students will be established in April 2010 to serve as an advisory group to the CDO.

University Governance Consortium Cultural Diversity Committee/Campus Climate Survey

- The establishment of the University Governance Consortium and its Cultural Diversity Committee replaced the now defunct SU Assembly *Committee on Multi-Ethnic Concerns*.
- The Cultural Diversity Committee began meeting in mid-2009 and has been developing a Campus Climate Survey instrument which was piloted in January 2010.
- The survey instrument is currently being refined and will go before the IRB in March 2010. We anticipate delivering the climate survey to students, faculty and staff by fall 2010.

Complete an Assessment of General Education

Development of Student Learning Outcomes and Alignment with General Education Curriculum

- A General Education Assessment Retreat was held June 2009 to engage faculty in the alignment of the University Student Learning Goals to the General Education curriculum in the various General Education areas. Additionally, faculty was asked to develop specific student learning outcomes/objectives that were aligned with the much broader Student Learning Goals.
- During the fall 2009 semester, University Assessment Research and Analysis followed up with each of the five General Education areas to review and revise the outcomes written during the June retreat.
- During the spring 2010 semester, the University Academic Assessment Committee (UAAC), department chairs and committees and an open faculty meeting will all have an opportunity to review and comment on the student learning outcomes. A final version will be developed based on this feedback and submitted to the Faculty Senate for review and voting.
- Alignment of the GE curriculum with the Student Learning Goals, recommended by Middle States to be completed by June 2011, will be finalized by the end of spring 2010 semester.

Developing a Culture of Assessment through Training

- On January 21, 2010, the UAAC and Faculty Development Committee (FDC) co-sponsored a Faculty Develop Day on General Education Assessment. The purpose of the day was to: provide assessment resources and best practices, describe the assessment process, discuss the role SU faculty will play in developing the assessment process at the institution, and collect feedback from faculty on assessment strategies that they recommend for collecting data on student achievement of General Education outcomes.

International Education

Incorporate a Reference to International Education in SU's Mission Statement

- The University's mission is updated on a cycle identified by the Maryland Higher Education Commission. The mission will be updated once the cycle update begins anew.

Implement the five-year Strategic Plan for the Center for International Education

We have made discreet achievements in the International Education Strategic Plan

- Launch of Salisbury Abroad: Ecuador study abroad program. Provides semester-length study abroad and course work in new minor in Latin American studies at same cost as main campus (August 2009).
- Designation by US Department of State as J-1 Exchange Visitor institution in the categories of student, short-term scholar, professor (January 2010).
- Launch of Salisbury Abroad: Estonia study abroad program. Provides semester-length study abroad and course work in new minor in European studies at same cost as main campus (August 2010).
- Formation of first SU Alumni chapter abroad (Europe). Summer 2009. First official SU Alumni Europe chapter event (January 2010).
- Ongoing efforts to enhance international recruitment efforts in division of enrollment management.
- New partnership with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to receive King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) students (July 2009). Received first enrolled KASP scholar (January 2010)

Establish English Language Institute

- The English Language Institute (ELI) committee has been established and met in January 2010 to discuss and develop a proposal to implement an ELI.
- Proposal submitted to Executive Staff for an ELI to be launched fall 2010. (February 2010).

Hiring Procedures

Enhance procedures to expand the diversity of applicant pools

- The Diversity Office is researching and developing database of national (and international) professional associations specific to various affinity groups with the goal of developing an institutional relationship in an effort to expand our applicant pool.

Establish procedures to document assess efforts to expand the pool of diverse applicants

- Human Resources (HR) held focus groups in February 2010 to gather feedback on the current search process.
- Partnering with HR the Diversity office will continue to review and monitor the search process.

Identify Resources

- In the coming year, HR and the Diversity Office will continue to work together to identify resources to:
 - Help search committees recruit
 - Attract diverse applicants
 - Retain diverse applicants

Implement a system to track and assess the results of enhanced hiring practices

- Human Resources has converted the entire application process to an online process using our existing PeopleSoft platform. This will greatly improve the efficiency of gathering and tracking of applicant data for assessment and review.

Minority Student Recruitment Initiatives

(This is an additional component to our 2010 Plan for Cultural Diversity.)

The following strategies have been implemented as part of Salisbury University's Strategic Enrollment Plan

- Determine effectiveness of financial aid packaging methods for minority student populations.
- Utilize current student hosts to visit home high schools to speak with Guidance staff
- Create focus groups to more clearly identify and articulate students' social and co-curricular needs and desires.
- Continue current assessments (EBI, SSI, CIRP, NSSE) to collect students' perceptions of Salisbury University
- Invite prospective students to attend select cultural events sponsored by existing Salisbury University cultural organizations.
- Provide financial aid information sessions to connect families with financial aid resources, meet filing deadlines and to optimize federal, state and institutional financial aid.
- Design special visitation events for first-year students to meet faculty and staff as part of a collaborative effort between Admissions, Multicultural Student Services, and cultural student organizations.
- Identify and develop relationships with local as well as regional community-based organizations to create a broader support system for Asian and Hispanic students.
- Establish advisory boards to address and respond to the needs of special student populations.
- Modify messaging in publications, presentations, and the website to be more inclusive of and more attractive to diverse students.
- Design a system for individual guidance counselor visits and send invitations to advisory members and target high schools with diverse target markets.
- Offer bus visits for prospective and admitted students from Baltimore and Prince George's county. Sponsor three to five visitation bus trips for under-represented populations.
- Develop a partner list of community-based organizations and top feeder schools for diverse students. Include these schools in special mailings and campus programming invitations. Send current students from those schools back to speak to prospective students.
- Purchase prospect names of high school sophomores and juniors from the College Board's PSAT in January, rising seniors from the SAT in mid-summer for test optional candidates and seniors from under-represented populations who first took the SAT in the fall.
- Utilize social networking to reach admitted minority student communities to enhance application rates and yield.
- Enhance telecounseling program to include: pairing SU students with prospective students with shared backgrounds and interests, increased phone contacts from SU students and admissions staff and increase 30-day follow up contacts.
- Offer bus trips for prospective minority students to visit the campus (1,000+ students annually).
- Optional SAT (seems to be positively affecting recruitment of minority students).
- Annual multiethnic visitation weekend for freshmen.

- Activities such as GEARUP (MHEC CPIP), AmeriCorps, the Business Economic and Community Outreach Network.
- Activities for TRIO high school students visiting from other campuses to explore SU, (SU does not yet have a TRIO program).

Closing the Achievement Gap (Retention)

Strengthen the Center for Student Achievement

- SU Center for Student Achievement (CSA) first opened in fall 2008 and marked the first time SU has had such services for students. Significant progress was made toward the development of the Center’s resources for students. However, the CSA has been severely limited in its development because SU has only been able to reallocate about 40% of its full implementation budget of \$417,000.
- Although the CSA is operating on a shoe string budget, it began offering tutorial services in fall 2009 and will continue to offer this service as a retention initiative.

FALL 2009 Tutoring by Race	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	% of Race that attended tutoring
African-American	11	12.8	14.1	1.236%
American Indian	1	1.2	1.3	1.961%
Asian/Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic	5	5.8	6.4	2.427%
White	61	70.9	78.2	0.998%
Nonresident Alien				N/A
Subtotal	78	90.7	100.0	
Unknown	8	9.3		13.793%
Total	86	100.0		

Identify Resources for Center for Student Achievement and Success

- A Federal TRIO grant was written and submitted in February 2010 to support academic initiatives listed through this progress report.

Strengthen the Writing Center

- The CSA is intended to bring cohesion to a wide-range of services offered by the University, as well as formalize several institutional initiatives designed to maximize student success. With its opening in 2008, the CSA has provided students with opportunities to engage in learning outside of the classroom. The University will continue to seek alternate funding sources to keep recruitment and retention programs viable and have recently applied for a TRIO grant, which is currently under review.

Implement Programs to Address Gaps in Students’ Mathematical Backgrounds

- The ALEKS (Assessment & Learning in Knowledge Spaces) math assessment was piloted in fall 2008. ALEKS assists students and academic advisors in placing students in math courses that best match their ability level. Currently, the University does not offer pre-college math support for students whose math skills are below the college algebra level. This weakness of math skills among prospective college students is a national problem that requires close cooperation between K-12 and higher education to resolve. The Governor’s STEM Task Force report, “Investing in STEM to Secure Maryland’s Future,” clearly identifies this challenge. This pilot phase was fully funded in 2009-10.

Pilot a Summer Bridge Program

- This is a long-term initiative that is in very early discussion phase.
- We have begun researching summer program models and sources of funding.
- These programs are well known for preparing students for success, yet are expensive because the target audience is often in financial need and families can’t afford the cost of a month on the campus during the summer. SU simply does not have adequate resources to fund such an initiative.

Pilot Academic Learning Communities

- Living-Learning Communities (LLC) provide a safety net for students in a supportive learning environment and increase tutorial services to better address student academic needs. These communities have generated much interest among faculty and they hold great promise for improving retention and student success.
- Our Green LLC has been very successful.
- This year, a STEM-based Living-Learning Community was implemented.
- Plans are underway to add a pre-health and pre-nursing LLC.

Pilot Freshman Seminar Integration with General Education Courses

- Seven sections of the Freshman Seminar were piloted in fall 2009.
- 122 first semester students randomly enrolled in the seminars.
- Data regarding the impact of the seminar on both short and long term retention and success rates of the seminar students will be collected and analyzed during the spring 2010 term.
- We plan to enroll approximately 300 first semester freshmen in 15 freshman seminars with representation from all four schools in the fall 2010.

Emphasize Cultural Diversity in the First-year Orientation Program

- Incoming first-year students participate in an Orientation program entitled "Shared Paths".
- Shared Paths is an interactive program that takes students on a journey of self-discovery as well as increase their awareness of self and others.
- This is done through a few different exercises beginning with concentric circles in which students partner, respond and discuss questions about their own cultural understanding, as well as what they learned about other cultures growing up.
- The program then moves to a "Target - Non Target" group exercise where students are asked to identify themselves based on a number of categories presented to them. The idea of the "Target" exercise is to get student to see how they are more alike than different, and that our individual experiences in life serve to connect us in deep and meaningful ways.
- The Chief Diversity Officer will work closely with the Dean of Students office to assess the outcomes of its current diversity-related orientation initiatives.

Market Research

Initiate Market Research Project

- Marketing and Public Relations is currently working with Enrollment Management and Admissions staff, along with a professional firm, to conduct a market research project.
- Marketing research was initiated in January 2010 with Stamats, Inc., a company nationally renowned for marketing, to generate the best projections possible of the demographic profiles of college-bound students five to ten years in the future and the best-informed strategies for marketing, recruitment, retention services, pricing, programs, and facilities.
- The Diversity Office will work with this team to specifically research the growing Hispanic/Latino population identifying needs, trends and measures to implement.
- This project will assess environmental and demographic trends in the State of Maryland that will impact SU's enrollment, retention and overall competitiveness in the marketplace over the next few years.
- Phases II and III will be considered for future research if funding is available, to identify specific program recommendations for Salisbury University's ability to continue to attract and retain a diverse student body.
- The Public Relations and Publications offices work to ensure SU awareness among diverse populations by advertising in publications such as *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*, *Maryland African-American Pride* magazine, and the 2010 National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE) program guide. Explore advertising in other national and international professional association publications or websites.

Financial Aid

Increase Need-based Financial Aid

- While the Strategic Enrollment Plan spells out an aggressive ten-year plan to increase institutional financial aid to \$17 million, the current economic times prevented additional funding from State support that was designated for enrollment growth.
- SU's relatively low funding limits grants and scholarships which are vital to provide access for economically disadvantaged students. Even with the added challenges to increase the total dollars for financial aid during this economic downturn, SU has increased the proportion of aid that is awarded to students who demonstrate financial need.
- In the past five years, institutional aid has increased by nearly 50 percent and the ratio of need support has increased over merit aid by 7 percentage points with 54 percent now awarded to students with need.
- From FY 08 to FY09, need-based aid increased by \$419,396.

Social Life and Organizations

Increase Student awareness, understanding of the Cultural Diversity Plan

- The Diversity Office will ensure that student representation is present on the University Governance Consortium Cultural Diversity Committee, and the Diversity Leadership Council.
- SU's cultural student organizations are supported by the Office of Multicultural Student Services and add to the rich diversity programming at Salisbury University campus. Cultural student groups within the alliance of organizations continue to assist in attracting diverse students to the campus with their annual programs offered during key prospective student visitation days.
- Organizations within this alliance are: Union of African American Students, Gospel Choir, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Untouchables Dance Company, Passion for Fashion Club, Organization of Latino Students (OLAS), Asian Pacific Islander Club (APIC), Muslim Student Association (MSA), Bi-Transgendered Lesbian Association of Students, Salisbury University Step Squad, and the Caribbean Students Association (CSA). All of these groups have continued to excel within the campus student government system. The increase in students of color and their culturally specific groups has aided the retention of a diverse student body.
- The Public Relations Office supports the efforts of the offices of Multicultural Student Services, Cultural Affairs and others by promoting their events using the methods noted above. In addition, the office helps promote student groups including the Union of African-American Students and the SU Gospel Choir by sending press releases regarding student involvement (election of officers, upcoming events, etc.) to students' hometown newspapers in the mid-Atlantic and throughout the nation. SU PR recently assisted a recognized documentary filmmaker in videotaping a program on African-American genealogy sponsored by SU's Nabb Center. The filmmaker used a Nabb Center exhibit on African-American Family and Faith as its setting.

Faculty and Administrative and Support Staff Development

New Employee Orientation

- Plans are underway to develop a new faculty and staff orientation program that speaks to the importance of cultural diversity to the mission of the University and related challenges and opportunities in the classroom

Faculty and Staff Development

- The Diversity office has begun discussion with the Faculty Senate's Faculty Development Committee and the Office of Instructional Design and Delivery to the support faculty and staff development opportunities and explore issues of pedagogy, classroom dynamics, and student/faculty relations in an increasingly diverse institutional setting.

Support for Curricular Development

- The Diversity Office has begun searching for grant opportunities that would increase support for curricular development in all disciplines to prepare students to work in a diverse society and world.

Community Relations

Catalyst for Positive Change

- Serve as a catalyst for positive change in the surrounding community. The University will continue working with local and regional governmental and private entities to make the Salisbury area more accepting of diverse populations.

Alumni Programs

Determine ways to engage alumni in the cultural diversity initiative

- The Alumni Board has increased its minority membership from one minority member in 2007 to three in 2009.
- The Alumni office partners with the Multiethnic Student Services office to produce affinity group specific events during Homecoming Weekend (i.e. - Multiethnic Jazz Social).

Design Alumni Survey Instrument

- The Alumni office is reviewing various survey instruments and will implement their survey by May 2011.

Designated gifts & grants that support cultural diversity

Faculty & Staff Campaign

The Faculty & Staff Campaign helps to support two University Foundation accounts that support diversity initiatives:

- The Horizons Program which is designed to promote awareness of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues on campus.
- Women’s History Committee which recognizes women in all facets of life through a series of performances, films and talks held during the month of March.

Other Initiatives

- The Public Relations Office has publicized faculty grants that help support cultural diversity. Examples include a recent U.S. Department of Education grant to support SU’s Teaching English as a Second Language Program and funding from the SU Foundation, Inc., to support a unique study to determine how sports may be used therapeutically for former child soldiers in Africa.
- The PR Office also reserves space in SU News for the promotion of faculty grant opportunities, some of which are diversity-based.
- The Office of Publications recently worked with several offices on campus in the application for a TRIO grant. Documents were reviewed for accuracy and inclusive language to support SU’s efforts to earn this important funding opportunity.

Demographic Data

Student, Faculty and Staff Statistical Information

Student Institutional Enrollment								
	2008-09				2009-10			
	Numbers	Percent of TOTAL	Male	Female	Numbers	Percent of TOTAL	Male	Female
African American	890	11.3%	409	481	942	11.5%	425	517
American Indian	39	0.5%	19	20	54	0.7%	26	28
Asian Pacific Islander	204	2.6%	104	100	206	2.5%	96	110
Hispanic	198	2.5%	93	105	216	2.6%	106	110
White	6373	81.0%	2743	3630	6657	81.1%	2850	3807
Nonresident Alien	64	0.8%	21	43	61	0.7%	28	33
Unknown	100	1.3%	47	53	68	0.8%	32	36
TOTAL	7868	100.0%	3436	4432	8204	100.0%	3563	4641

Faculty (Includes Teaching Assistants and ALL full-time and part-time)								
	2008-09				2009-10			
	Numbers	Percent of TOTAL	Male	Female	Numbers	Percent of TOTAL	Male	Female
African American	28	4.2%	17	11	25	4.3%	16	9
American Indian	2	0.3%	0	2	2	0.3%	0	2
Asian Pacific Islander	18	2.7%	10	8	20	3.4%	11	9
Hispanic	9	1.3%	3	6	9	1.5%	4	5
White	544	81.6%	247	297	515	87.6%	246	269
Nonresident Alien	14	2.1%	5	9	10	1.7%	3	7
Unknown	52	7.8%	25	27	7	1.2%	3	4
TOTAL	667	100.0%	307	360	588	100.0%	283	305

A hiring freeze has been implemented since the fall 2008.

Staff								
	2008-09				2009-10			
	Numbers	Percent of TOTAL	Male	Female	Numbers	Percent of TOTAL	Male	Female
African American	341	33.3%	106	235	329	32.7%	105	224
American Indian	1	0.1%	0	1	1	0.1%	0	1
Asian Pacific Islander	11	1.1%	5	6	9	0.9%	4	5
Hispanic	10	1.0%	4	6	18	1.8%	10	8
White	640	62.5%	263	377	630	62.6%	259	371
Nonresident Alien	8	0.8%	2	6	7	0.7%	1	6
Unknown	13	1.3%	6	7	13	1.3%	5	8
TOTAL	1024	100.0%	386	638	1007	100.0%	384	623

Campus-based Hate crimes and Bias-motivated incidents

Incidents of Campus-based Hate crimes and Bias-motivated

- There no reported hate crimes or bias-motivated incidents in 2009.
- The University Police Department has increased the completion of all bias-motivated investigations.
- Perpetrators have been held accountable and we believe this has deterred others.

Hate Crimes (Crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability or ethnicity)			
Date	Location	Incident	Summary
2009	There were no reports of hate crimes or bias-motivated incidents.		
11/2/08	Chester Hall	MDOP/Vandalism	Resident assistant reported that someone drew swastikas upon material affixed to residents' doors. Reported incident of bias-motivated "Anti-Semitism."
10/11/08	Chester Hall	MDOP/Vandalism	Resident director reported that someone drew swastikas upon the walls on the second floor stairway. Reported incident of bias-motivated "Anti-Semitism."

Conclusion

Salisbury University's commitment to student excellence and success is nationally recognized and well established. Concurrent with our sterling reputation is our commitment to recruit and retain a culturally diverse student body. Recognizing the responsibility and opportunity to meet the changing ethnic and racial demographics of Maryland's population, the University has made great strides toward the goal of increasing its minority student population. We are excited to begin planning and implementing strategies that will help us welcome and accommodate the increasing number of Hispanic/Latino Maryland high school students. Diversifying our faculty and staff is of equal value in our institutional diversity goals, and essential to aiding our success in student diversity recruit and retention efforts.

Although our minority student population is modest in number, over the last five years we have piloted and implemented initiatives detailed in this report that support the success of minority students and most of all enhances the learning and success of all of our students. The preliminary results of our efforts are quite positive. With the addition of the Chief Diversity Officer to the President's Office, we will intensify our efforts in recruiting and retaining minority faculty and professional staff. The greatest challenge and threat to our continued success at recruiting and retaining a diverse student body, faculty and professional staff is funding. We are very proud of the momentum of success we have made on closing the achievement gap despite the sparse funding support we receive. Not be deterred we will continue to look for external sources of funding, as well make our case in the appropriate venues. We are also mindful of the competition we have among our state, regional and national peers that the current economic situation presented us with. Doing more with less is a noble deed that requires immediate support if we are to continue to serve as a champion for academic access and excellence for Maryland multicultural citizenry.