

STRATEGIC PLAN | 2026-2031

Anchoring Our Region, Advancing Our Future

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

As Salisbury University reflects on its centennial, we do so at a pivotal moment, not only for our institution, but for public higher education and for the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

MISSION

Salisbury University is a premier comprehensive Maryland public university offering excellent, affordable education in undergraduate liberal arts, sciences, business, nursing, health sciences, social work, and education and applied master's and doctoral programs. Our highest purpose is to empower our students with the knowledge, skills, and core values that contribute to active citizenship, gainful employment, and life-long learning in a democratic society and interdependent world.

Salisbury University cultivates and sustains a superior learning community where students, faculty, and staff are viewed as learners, teachers/scholars, and facilitators, and where a commitment to excellence and openness to a broad array of ideas and perspectives are central to all aspects of University life. Our learning community is student-centered. Students learn from professional educators in small classroom settings, faculty and professional staff serve as academic advisors, and virtually every student has an opportunity to undertake research or experiential learning with a faculty mentor. Through our privately endowed Schools and Honors College, and the College of Health and Human Services, we foster an environment where individuals prepare for career and life, including their social, physical, occupational, emotional, and intellectual well-being.

The University recruits exceptional and diverse faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students from across Maryland and the United States and from around the world, supporting all members of the University community as they work together to achieve institutional goals and vision. Believing that learning and service are vital components of civic life, Salisbury University actively contributes to the local Eastern Shore community and the educational, economic, cultural, and social needs of our State and nation.

VALUES

The core values of Salisbury University are excellence, student centeredness, learning, community, civic engagement, and diversity and inclusion. 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. In addition to these principal values, the University embraces, through its shared governance bodies, the long-honored tradition of honesty and mutual regard that is and should be a defining characteristic of higher education.

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A Message from
President Carolyn R. Lepre

Across the nation, regional comprehensive public universities are being asked fundamental questions: *Why do you exist? Who do you serve? What difference do you make?*

Salisbury University is the intellectual, cultural, and economic anchor of the Eastern Shore. We are problem solvers and knowledge generators. Our graduates are the nurses staffing regional hospitals, the teachers leading local classrooms, the entrepreneurs launching businesses, the scientists protecting coastal ecosystems, and the public servants strengthening civic life. When the region faces challenges, in areas such as healthcare access, workforce shortages, environmental vulnerability, and economic mobility, the Eastern Shore turns to Salisbury University.

This plan builds upon Salisbury University's mission as a regional comprehensive public university, grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, where professional preparation, intellectual inquiry, and civic learning work together to prepare students for meaningful careers, active citizenship, and lifelong learning. Salisbury University prepares students to apply their knowledge to real-world challenges through experiential learning, research, and community engagement.

This strategic plan makes an intentional choice:

Salisbury University strives to be Maryland's model for connecting broad-based foundational learning and intellectual discovery with regional problem-solving and impact, preparing our students for a lifetime of success.

Listening sessions, working groups, and campus dialogue revealed something powerful: Much of what this plan aspires to is already happening at Salisbury University. We are a Carnegie Community Engaged institution. We offer extraordinary experiential learning. We generate meaningful and significant new knowledge. We care for our people. We partner deeply with healthcare systems, school districts, governments, nonprofits, and employers.

Our strategic plan is not a list of everything we might do. It is a statement of who we are choosing to be. Striving for excellence, creating life-long learners, making meaningful impact.

This plan provides the framework that positions Salisbury University to move ahead with purpose, and to continue to advance learning, impact, and student success, leaning into a distinctive element of our mission: to serve this place we call home while preparing students to lead anywhere. Salisbury University is a living-learning laboratory, where learning, discovery, and community problem-solving come together. Much like a “sandbox” environment used by developers to test ideas, refine solutions, and learn through trial and error, our University creates structured spaces for students to engage with real challenges supported by faculty expertise and institutional guidance. Within this environment, our robust general education curriculum provides the intellectual foundation that enables students to analyze complex problems, consider multiple perspectives, and develop solutions that are grounded in evidence, ethical reasoning, and civic responsibility.

Students are encouraged to try, learn, adapt, and improve, gaining practical experience while contributing meaningfully to the Eastern Shore, the Delmarva region, and the State of Maryland. The work is authentic, the stakes are real, and the learning is transformational, yet it occurs within a setting designed to support growth, learning through setbacks, experimentation, reflection, and improvement.

Students develop skills and perspectives grounded in regional impact but designed for global application, preparing them to solve complex problems wherever their lives, careers, and passions take them. In this way, Salisbury University becomes a place where learning and problem-solving are inseparable, and where progress is measured by our ability to adapt to the changing needs of students and communities alike and by outcomes that make a difference.

Sincerely,



Dr. Carolyn R. Lepre
President, Salisbury University

Developing the Plan & Building Salisbury University's Next Century

Learn more about the people and process behind the development of the Salisbury University Strategic Plan:



salisbury.edu/strategic-planning

This strategic plan was developed through an inclusive, year-long process that engaged students, faculty, staff, alumni, community partners, and University leadership. As Salisbury University approached its centennial, the University undertook a thoughtful examination of its mission, strengths, opportunities, and aspirations for the future.

The planning process included listening sessions, stakeholder meetings, governance discussions, working groups, surveys, and campus-wide feedback opportunities. Participants were asked to consider the University's role as a public regional comprehensive university and how Salisbury University can best serve students, the Eastern Shore, and the State of Maryland over the next five years.

The resulting plan reflects both broad community input and the work of a dedicated Strategic Plan Steering Committee that helped guide discussions, synthesize feedback, and shape the framework presented in these pages.

Shared Definitions & Commitments

Throughout this plan, terms such as *high-impact practices*, *experiential learning*, and *impact* are used intentionally.

High-impact practices require sustained engagement, reflection, and application of knowledge – they demonstrate learning outcomes connected to applications. At Salisbury University, high-impact practices refer to structured learning experiences, such as internships, clinical placements, research, service-learning, student leadership, athletics, and study abroad.

Similar to high-impact practices, experiential learning is the approach in which students actively apply knowledge beyond traditional instruction. Experiential learning focuses on learning by doing and putting theory into practice.

Impact refers not simply to activity but to measurable contributions to student learning, regional problem-solving, and institutional value.

Specific benchmarks and metrics will be developed during the implementation phase to ensure clarity, accountability, and alignment.

PILLAR 1 Transformational Learning and Academic Excellence that Connects to Everyday Needs

1 GOAL
Deliver an exceptional and transformative educational experience characterized by academic excellence, innovation, and student success, supported by a sustained commitment to faculty and staff development.

Strategies

- Encourage innovation in curriculum design, program development, and instructional delivery models.
- Elevate academic excellence by pairing high expectations with high levels of support, including investment in robust student support services that remove barriers to achievement.
- Recruit and retain talented faculty and staff by supporting excellence in teaching, scholarship, and student success, including investment in professional development, health and wellness programs, mentoring, and sustainable workload practices.
- Incentivize interdisciplinary teaching, research, and community-engaged work.



2

GOAL

Make experiential learning grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, the defining feature of a Salisbury University education.

Strategies

- Ensure all students, regardless of background or major, have access to high-impact and experiential learning opportunities.
- Expand and develop pipelines for employer- and community-partnered learning embedded across academic programs.
- Invest in clinical simulation, laboratory, and applied learning spaces, equipment, and partnerships to increase student access to active learning experiences.
- Invest and expand in high-impact practices that support student success and/or directly address regional and state-wide needs.



3

GOAL

Align academic programs with workforce needs and regional priorities while sustaining academic integrity and the broad intellectual foundations of a comprehensive education.

Strategies

- In partnerships with faculty governance, identify and invest in signature, high-demand undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs that solve pressing regional needs.
- Develop and expand licensure-aligned, industry-recognized, and stackable credential pathways to create clear, flexible routes for professional advancement and regional workforce development.
- Expand access to accelerated pathways and transfer partnerships.
- Conduct regular program review and reinvestment.



4

GOAL

Advance knowledge and strengthen the region through faculty, staff, and student research; scholarship; and creative activity.

Strategies

- Invest in internal funding, grant development, facilities, and administrative support for high-quality research, scholarship, and creative activity involving faculty, staff, and students that advances disciplinary knowledge.
- Highlight and promote research and creative work to demonstrate and strengthen student learning outcomes, regional engagement, institutional effectiveness, and the University's reputation.



5

GOAL

Ensure all students engage in learning experiences that develop critical thinking, civic responsibility, and global perspectives.

Strategies

- Strengthen and continuously improve the General Education curriculum to ensure it provides a cohesive foundation that prepares students for informed citizenship, lifelong learning, and meaningful participation in a complex society.
- Embed meaningful community-engaged learning opportunities across the campus experience, recognizing community-based education as a powerful contributor to student learning and success.
- Expand international learning opportunities, including study abroad and study away, and global perspectives throughout the student learning experience.
- Incentivize and support the development of interdisciplinary courses that explore complex regional and societal challenges.

PILLAR 2 Support Students and Their Success at Every Stage

1 GOAL
Foster belonging and engagement while supporting students' academic, personal, and career growth, so every student feels seen, valued, and empowered to succeed.

Strategies

- Expand mentoring networks that connect students with faculty, staff, alumni, and community professionals.
- Develop student leadership, campus employment, and co-curricular involvement into learning-outcome-focused experiences.
- Strengthen signature traditions, events, and shared experiences that build community pride and connection.
- Ensure accessible and inclusive design of programs, spaces, and communications.



2 GOAL
Remove institutional, financial, and structural barriers to student success and full student participation in Salisbury University's learning community.

Strategies

- Integrate advising, coaching, and early alert systems across the student lifecycle.
- Simplify registration, transfer credit, and degree pathways to improve time to completion.
- Expand access to need-based aid, emergency support, and low-cost learning resources.
- Leverage technology and innovation to personalize learning, including expanding flexible learning modalities/times to meet diverse student needs (i.e. online and evening)
- Use disaggregated data to identify and close equity gaps.
- Increase consistency and quality of student advising, instruction, and support through targeted professional development focused on key student transition points.

3 GOAL

Improve student success by investing in programs and practices proven to help students stay on track, complete their degrees, and achieve meaningful learning and career outcomes.

Strategies

- Strengthen use of institutional data, assessment results, and student feedback to evaluate effectiveness and guide decisions about expanding, refining, or sun-setting student success initiatives.
- Prioritize the expansion and scaling of student-forward programs and practices that show measurable improvements in retention, progression, completion, and equity across student populations.
- Enhance faculty and staff access to timely data, tools, and professional development to support shared responsibility for improving student success outcomes.
- Enable earlier and more effective student support interventions by providing faculty and staff with integrated systems and timely actionable data.
- Reduce fragmentation in the student experience by clarifying roles, decision-making authority, and accountability across academic and student support functions.



4 GOAL

Promote student resilience, health, and well-being as essential foundations for academic achievement and lifelong learning.

Strategies

- Expand counseling, health, and case-management capacity using a stepped-care model.
- Enhance physical and virtual spaces that support connection, reflection, and healthy behaviors.
- Embed well-being education into orientation, first-year experiences, and academic programs.

PILLAR 3 A Community-Engaged Campus that Strengthens and Uplifts the Region

1 GOAL
Build strong partnerships with regional employers, organizations, and communities to address shared challenges and expand learning opportunities for students.



Strategies

- Establish a coordinated university-wide approach to mutually beneficial community and employer partnerships.
- Expand internships, applied research, and community-engaged learning with regional priority areas.
- Measure and communicate SU's economic, social, and cultural impact on the region and State.

2 GOAL
Demonstrate Salisbury University's value as a hub for lifelong learning, civic engagement, and community problem-solving to our community, region, state, and beyond.

Strategies

- Expand access to continuing education, professional development, and credential pathways for learners of all ages.
- Increase access to educational and civic programming through hybrid and community-based delivery.
- Strengthen alumni engagement as a lifelong partnership with the university.

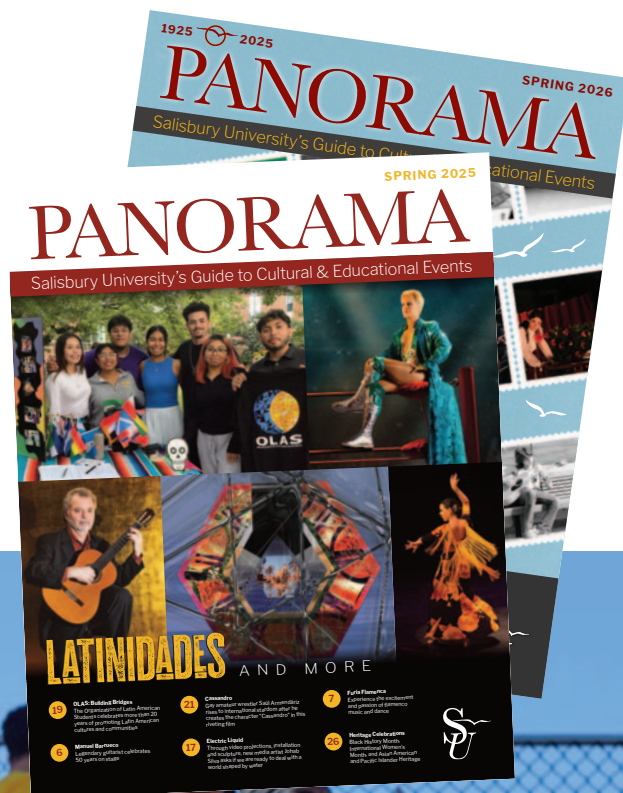


3 GOAL

Strengthen Salisbury University's role as a regional gathering place by expanding cultural and athletic programs that engage and unite the Eastern Shore community.

Strategies

- Increase community-facing cultural events and programs that engage local communities and residents.
- Advance an athletics program that prioritizes student success in the classroom, meaningful community engagement, and competitive excellence, strengthening both the student experience and regional connection.



PILLAR 4 Responsible Stewardship for a Strong Future

1 GOAL
Build a campus culture of trust rooted in shared governance, professional development, a strong sense of belonging, and openness to a broad range of ideas and perspectives.

Strategies

- Invest in new onboarding, mentoring, clear career pathways along with leadership/professional development for faculty and staff (aligned with strategic priorities) to position Salisbury University as a best place to work.
- Improve the clarity, transparency, and effectiveness of shared governance processes to support timely and impactful decision-making.
- Recognize and elevate achievements that advance SU's mission and institutional impact.
- Regularly review faculty, staff, and student employee (undergraduate and graduate) engagement, climate, and workload sustainability to guide improvements in policies and practices.

2 GOAL
Coordinate faculty and staff roles to advance student learning, academic excellence, and the University's mission.

Strategies

- Regularly assess and adjust faculty and staff workloads, role expectations, and unit structures to ensure capacity is focused on student success, academic quality, and regionally engaged work in a sustainable and transparent manner.
- Implement intentional workforce planning, succession strategies, and targeted professional development so that faculty and staff skills and capacity respond to current and emerging institutional priorities



3

GOAL

Strengthen financial resilience and strategic investment capacity.

Strategies

- Launch a comprehensive capital campaign aligned with institutional priorities.
- Diversify revenue through grants, partnerships, entrepreneurial programs, and innovative delivery models.
- Align budgeting and resource allocation with strategic priorities and outcomes while supporting the breadth of programs expected of a comprehensive public university.
- Deepen a culture of philanthropy to increase donor engagement, expand philanthropy and giving, and strengthen long-term financial support.



4 GOAL

Modernize systems, operations, and infrastructure to improve efficiency, adaptability, and long-term sustainability.



Strategies

- Streamline administrative and academic processes that affect students, faculty, and staff.
- Invest in integrated data, analytics, and AI-enabled tools to support decision-making.
- Improve internal service delivery (e.g. HR functions, IT systems, Workday processes), accountability, and transparency.
- Optimize space utilization and pursue facilities that enhance learning, access, and community engagement.
- Commit to and invest in responsible stewardship of land, energy, and water as a teachable model for the region.
- Support environmental sustainability projects, initiatives, systems, and staffing efforts, particularly those aligned with high-impact practices, research, and community partnerships.

5 GOAL

Sustain enrollment management while maintaining the educational excellence and the distinctive student-centered learning environment that defines Salisbury University.

Strategies

- Develop strategies to increase or improve recruitment, retention, and program growth across the university with particular focus on areas with demonstrated academic quality, student demand, and strong outcomes, and that intentionally support current regional and state needs.
- Via strategic partnerships, transfer pathways, and outreach efforts, broaden recruitment reach that yields measurable enrollment growth in priority areas.
- Develop targeted graduate recruitment strategies, including cohort-based pipelines, and strengthened graduate student support infrastructure to ensure sustained enrollment growth, retention, and program quality.



Pillars & Goals Overview

PILLAR 1

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE THAT CONNECTS TO EVERYDAY NEEDS

- GOAL 1** Deliver an exceptional and transformative educational experience characterized by academic excellence, innovation, and student success, supported by a sustained commitment to faculty and staff development.
- GOAL 2** Make experiential learning grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, the defining feature of a Salisbury University education.
- GOAL 3** Align academic programs with workforce needs and regional priorities while sustaining academic integrity and the broad intellectual foundations of a comprehensive education.
- GOAL 4** Advance knowledge and strengthen the region through faculty, staff, and student research; scholarship; and creative activity.
- GOAL 5** Ensure all students engage in learning experiences that develop critical thinking, civic responsibility, and global perspectives.

PILLAR 2

SUPPORT STUDENTS AND THEIR SUCCESS AT EVERY STAGE

- GOAL 1** Foster belonging and engagement while supporting students' academic, personal, and career growth, so every student feels seen, valued, and empowered to succeed.
- GOAL 2** Remove institutional, financial, and structural barriers to student success and full student participation in Salisbury University's learning community.
- GOAL 3** Improve student success by investing in programs and practices proven to help students stay on track, complete their degrees, and achieve meaningful learning and career outcomes.
- GOAL 4** Promote student resilience, health, and well-being as essential foundations for academic achievement and lifelong learning.

PILLAR 3

A COMMUNITY-ENGAGED CAMPUS THAT STRENGTHENS AND UPLIFTS THE REGION

- GOAL 1** Build strong partnerships with regional employers, organizations, and communities to address shared challenges and expand learning opportunities for students.
- GOAL 2** Demonstrate Salisbury University's value as a hub for lifelong learning, civic engagement, and community problem-solving to our community, region, state, and beyond.
- GOAL 3** Strengthen Salisbury University's role as a regional gathering place by expanding cultural and athletic programs that engage and unite the Eastern Shore community.

PILLAR 4

RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP FOR A STRONG FUTURE

- GOAL 1** Build a campus culture of trust rooted in shared governance, professional development, a strong sense of belonging, and openness to a broad range of ideas and perspectives.
- GOAL 2** Coordinate faculty and staff roles to advance student learning, academic excellence, and the University's mission.
- GOAL 3** Strengthen financial resilience and strategic investment capacity.
- GOAL 4** Modernize systems, operations, and infrastructure to improve efficiency, adaptability, and long-term sustainability.
- GOAL 5** Sustain enrollment management while maintaining the educational excellence and the distinctive student-centered learning environment that defines Salisbury University.