



SALISBURY UNIVERSITY

SELF-STUDY REPORT

DRAFT - 2025

Executive Summary	5
Self-Study Process	5
Chapter 1 Introduction	10
History and Overview of Salisbury University	10
University System of Maryland	11
Institutional Mission, Priorities, and Strategic Plan	13
Self-Study Approach	17
Updates Since the 2016 Self-Study	19
Chapter 2 Academic Success and Student Development	22
Standards I, II, III, IV, V, VI	22
Range of Educational Offerings	23
Design of Academic Offerings	25
General Education	27
Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	33
Support of the Student Experience	40
Academic Support Services	41
Health and Wellness Support	47
Cooperative Efforts and Continual Improvement	48
Impact of COVID-19 on Student Support and Lessons Learned	48
Student Conduct and Campus Judicial Affairs	49
Periodic Evaluation and Assessment	51
Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation	51
Chapter 3 Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration	55
Standards I, II, III, VI	55
Introduction	55
Diversity on Campus	55
Institutional Planning	56
Unit-Level Planning	62
Structures Related to Planning	64
Financial Resources, Planning, and Budgeting Process	65
Procedures, Training, and Initiatives Supporting Faculty, Staff, and Student Development	71
Institutional Structures Committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	77
Policies and Procedures Related to Hiring and Retaining Diverse Faculty and Staff	79
Periodic Evaluation and Assessment	89

Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation.....	90
Chapter 4 Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence	93
Standards I, II, IV, VI.....	93
Access	94
Affordability.....	109
Academic Excellence	111
Periodic Evaluation and Assessment.....	117
Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation.....	118
Chapter 5 Community Engagement and Sustainability	120
Standards I, VI, VII.....	120
Introduction.....	120
Mission and Goals: A Shared Vision	120
Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement (Standard VI).....	122
Institutional Structures Supporting Community Engagement and Sustainability.....	123
Community Engagement and Sustainability Centers and Opportunities.....	123
Cultural Engagement.....	127
Environmental Sustainability.....	128
Alumni and Family Engagement.....	129
Impact of COVID-19 on Community Engagement and Sustainability Efforts.....	129
Periodic Evaluation and Assessment.....	130
Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation.....	132
Chapter 6	135
Requirements of Affiliation and Standard VII	135
Compliance with Government Laws and Regulations.....	135
Procedures to Ensure Compliance with Federal, State, and Commission Policies, Regulations, and Requirements.....	136
Structures that Ensure Compliances with Federal, State, and Commission Policies, Regulations, and Requirements	138
Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration.....	138
Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation.....	144
Chapter 7 Conclusion.....	145
Chapter 2-Working Group 1: Enrich Academic Success and Student Development	145
Chapter 3-Working Group 2: Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration	145
Chapter 4-Working Group 3: Support Access, Affordability and Academic Excellence	146

Chapter 5-Working Group 4: Deepen Engagement with Our Community.....	147
Chapter 6-Working Group 5: Standard VII and Requirements of Affiliation	147
List of Common Acronyms.....	149

Executive Summary

Founded in 1925, Salisbury University (SU) is a comprehensive regional university with more than 60 academic programs. Located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, SU offers certificate programs, 50 undergraduate degree programs, 15 master's degrees, and two doctoral programs. Academic offerings are aligned with SU's mission – emphasizing the empowerment of students with knowledge, skills, and core values that contribute to active citizenship, gainful employment, and lifelong learning. In fall 2023, SU served a student population of 7,030 (89.3% undergraduate) representing 37 different states and 53 unique countries – a reflection of SU's commitment to global engagement. SU strives to have a student body representative of the demographics of the State of Maryland; currently, more than 30.3% of students enrolled at the University identify as racially and ethnically diverse.

Salisbury University fosters a superior learning community where students, faculty, and staff are seen as learners, teachers, and facilitators. This commitment is reflected in a 13:1 student-to-faculty ratio, with 97% of tenured and tenure-track faculty holding terminal degrees. SU's excellence is recognized nationally by *U.S. News & World Report*, *The Princeton Review*, and *Forbes*. Key achievements since the last accreditation include the opening of the Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons, creating the College of Health and Human Services, endowing the Clarke Honors College, establishing a formal Graduate School, and implementing a new General Education curriculum. Additionally, SU was recognized as a Community Engaged Campus by the Carnegie Foundation and was named the number one producer of Fulbright Students in its Carnegie Classification for 2022-2023.

Self-Study Process

The self-study process, conducted over two and a half years, involved extensive campuswide participation. Five working groups, aligned with SU's five goals of the *2020-25 Strategic Plan* and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Requirements of Affiliation were formed to comprehensively evaluate how the University's operations meet the seven MSCHE Standards and Requirements. The process was guided by a steering committee and co-chaired by the Associate Vice President for Planning and Assessment and the Associate Provost.

Using a priorities-based approach, the University community had an opportunity to conduct a comprehensive review of the last eight years of institutional history, while considering our future directions. Through this multiyear, data-driven, and consensus-based review, SU engaged its community in a transparent self-appraisal process that actively involved members from all areas of campus, facilitated discussions about the University's strengths and opportunities for improvement, and encouraged continuous improvement in the attainment of our institutional mission and priorities.

The Self-Study process identified areas for continued improvement, including enhancing assessment processes, strengthening support for faculty development, and expanding initiatives

for diversity, equity, and inclusion. SU is committed to addressing these areas through strategic planning and resource allocation.

In the following chapters, we offer a summary of each of our institutional priorities, demonstrating how they align with MSCHE standards and our commitment to continuous improvement.

Table 1. Chapter Alignment with MSCHE Standards

		Standard (Criterion)						
Ch.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Introduction	1(1-4)	2(6)	3(7-8)	4(6)	5(5)	6(1,2,9)	7(1,2)
2	Academic Success and Student Development	1(1-4)	2(2, 3, 7)	3(1-8)	4(1, 4, 5, 6)	5(1-5)	6(8)	
3	Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration	1(1, 3, 4)	2(1-5, 9)	3(2, 8)			6(1-9)	
4	Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence	1(1-4)	2(6, 7, 8)		4(1-3, 6)		6(1, 2, 4, 9)	
5	Community Engagement and Sustainability	1(1-4)					6(1, 2, 6)	7(1)
6	Requirements of Affiliation and Standard VII							7(1-5)
7	Conclusion							

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 provides an overview of SU’s mission, strategic plan, and institutional enrollment. Additional information is provided about the University System of Maryland, the governance group which ensures SU’s compliance with State and Federal rules and laws. SU’s approach to the Self-Study and our institutional responses to the Commission’s recommendations during our 2016 Self-Study are also included in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Enrich Academic Success and Student Development

SU’s reputation as a premier public, regional, comprehensive university stems from its unwavering commitment to student success. Exceptional faculty, engaged in ongoing scholarship, external funding, and professional development, continually enhance both undergraduate and graduate programs. All undergraduate students are empowered to accomplish the goals of liberal education aligned with SU’s mission. To ensure SU can best meet the needs of its students in an increasingly complex society, we launched a new General Education program in fall 2024, which emphasizes diversity, civic engagement, and environmental sustainability. This curriculum was developed through shared governance, informed by assessment results and national best practices, demonstrating our commitment to Standard II and VI. Likewise, our graduate programs offer advanced professional study, adapting to evolving

workforce needs. Effective collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs divisions ensures students have the resources to complete academic programs and thrive in an inclusive community. Regular assessment and review processes, as outlined in Standard V, guide our continuous improvement efforts across all academic and support programs.

This chapter demonstrates compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), III (Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience), IV (Support of the Student Experience), V (Educational Effectiveness Assessment), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).

During development of the Self-Study, the working group reflected on two internal recommendations related to enriching academic success and student development.

Recommendations

1. Create more opportunities for sharing assessment results and best practices to inform program development and support student success.
2. Create an assessment strategy for First Year Seminar and Experiential Learning courses.

Chapter 3: Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration

SU's core values include diversity and inclusion in recognition of the considerable educational benefits that can be gained from engaging with people and ideas from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. SU is committed to providing the campus with the tools and resources needed to ensure that SU is a welcoming and inclusive living and learning environment. This chapter provides information on the various policies and procedures implemented by SU to ensure a welcoming and inclusive campus environment. Additionally, this chapter describes the financial and strategic planning processes used for institutional improvement. The linkage between various unit-level plans and the University's *2020-25 Strategic Plan* are provided and supported with SU's goals and metrics for evaluating achievements. The chapter further discusses institutional priorities and how the internal budgeting process is designed to align with those priorities.

This chapter demonstrates compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), III (Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).

During development of the Self-Study, the working group reflected on three internal recommendations related to inspiring a campus culture of inclusive excellence, support, and collaboration.

Recommendations

1. Develop centralized staff onboarding processes to more effectively welcome new employees.
2. Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for inclusion, access, and belonging.

3. Utilize the upcoming strategic planning process to configure a planning committee to prioritize institutional needs, recommend strategies for achieving our goals, and track and communicate our progress.

Chapter 4: Support Access, Affordability and Academic Excellence

An important part of SU's mission is to provide an affordable education to its students. Given the changing landscape of higher education, Chapter 4 provides evidence of how SU uses trend data to forecast enrollment goals and how the careful development and re-evaluation of financial aid strategies is necessary to maintain the University's affordability. Chapter 4 provides evidence of transparent policies and procedures related to admission and financial aid in support of our University mission. Additionally articulated is how SU ensures the accuracy of this information and its communication to potential students in marketing materials. This is supported by data demonstrating graduation rates and graduate outcomes.

This chapter demonstrates compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), IV (Support of the Student Experience), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).

During development of the Self-Study, the working group reflected on two internal recommendations focused on student success and achievement.

Recommendations

1. Create collaborative opportunities for offices that contribute to student achievement and success and provide centralized oversight to assess outcomes.
2. Develop communication strategies to promote student successes, outcomes, and achievements.

Chapter 5: Deepen Engagement with Our Community

Community engagement and sustainability are key components of SU's mission. This chapter explores how SU leverages its academic programs, student volunteerism, innovative research, and community-based projects to address the educational, economic, cultural, and social needs of the Eastern Shore and beyond. Drawing on evidence from institutional centers, collaborations, initiatives, and assessment practices, the chapter illustrates SU's multifaceted approach to fostering partnerships, promoting civic responsibility, and cultivating a sustainable future. Discussed in detail is SU's 2020 designation as a Community Engaged Campus by the Carnegie Foundation and the integration of civic engagement and environmental sustainability courses into the new General Education program.

This chapter demonstrates compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement), and VII (Governance, Leadership, and Administration).

During development of the Self-Study, the working group reflected on four internal recommendations related to deepening engagement with our community.

Recommendations

1. Generate clear, measurable outcomes for institutional priorities and planning documents.
2. Centralize information and resources for more efficient collection and dissemination of community engagement and environmental sustainability opportunities and efforts.
3. Establish campuswide awards for community engagement for faculty, staff, students, and community partners.
4. Improve support systems for faculty, staff, and students to engage with communities via externally funded grants.

Chapter 6: Standard VII and Requirements of Affiliation

Chapter 6 demonstrates SU's compliance with the MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration. SU's organizational structure and the six primary divisions are described as well as the five governance groups that share a role in reviewing and creating policies and setting institutional goals. Additional details are provided about the system- and state-level oversight that ensures SU is fulfilling its institutional mission effectively and efficiently.

During development of the Self-Study, the working group reflected on two internal recommendations related to document management and change implementation:

Recommendations

1. Build and continually update a digital repository of key compliance documents used in the Self-Study that can be used by the broader campus community.
2. Develop effective change management principles to navigate the significant pace of change experienced as a result of the implementation of new ideas and initiatives and ensure that the changes continue to yield desired results.

Chapter 1

Introduction

History and Overview of Salisbury University

In 1922, the Maryland Legislature established a commission to determine a location for a two-year teacher's college on the state's Eastern Shore. A site in Salisbury was selected and the Maryland State Normal School opened in September 1925. A two-year course of study was increased to three years in 1931 and to four years in 1934. Following this increase, and by action of the Maryland Legislature in 1935, the institution was authorized to begin granting the Bachelor of Science, with the school's name changing to the Maryland State Teachers College.

The institution expanded its academic programs in 1947 and again in 1960 to offer more four-year programs in arts and sciences and to provide students with the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science. In 1962, the State Board of Trustees approved a graduate program leading to the Master of Education, and other master's degree programs soon followed. This expansion led to the school's name changing in 1963 to Salisbury State College and again in 1988 to Salisbury State University. In 2001, the institution was once again renamed Salisbury University in recognition of its regional comprehensive university mission.

Classified by Carnegie as a Master's University with larger programs, Salisbury University (SU) has a balanced mix of undergraduate programs as well as applied graduate programs. The University continues to meet the increasing demands of society for quality education and today offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs in liberal arts, sciences, and in the professional fields of business administration, education, medical lab sciences, nursing, respiratory therapy, and social work as well as a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in literacy studies and Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.).

In fall 2023, the University enrolled 6,281 undergraduate and 749 graduate students for a total institutional enrollment of 7,030 (1). In addition, SU employs 604 faculty and more than 1,100 staff (2). With a student-faculty ratio of 13:1, the University fosters close engagement between students and faculty and brings together talented students from across campus in collaborative research, professional development, and experiential learning opportunities. The campus is composed of over 200 acres, with 101 buildings and 12 residence halls.

SU has been ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* (Top Public Schools, Best Value Schools), The Princeton Review (Best Colleges, Green Colleges, Best College Libraries), *Forbes* (Top Colleges, Best Value Colleges), *Money* (America's Best Colleges), *Kiplinger's* (Best Public College Values), and others. Providing an excellent return on investment for students and families, SU remains among the state's most affordable options for college-bound students. Recognized as an efficient and effective institution, SU was named a "Model of Efficiency" by *University Business* for four consecutive years and was highlighted for its productivity and

Table 2. Institutional Enrollment and Demographics: 2013, 2018-2023

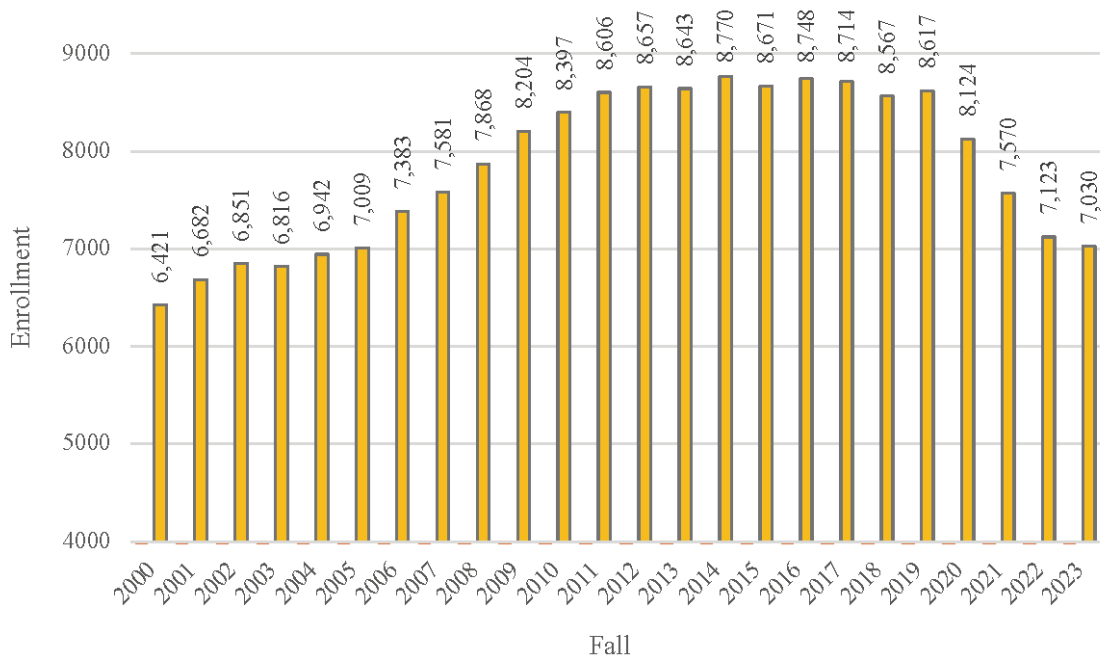
Fall Semesters	2013	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	10-yr Change
Total Headcount	8,643	8,567	8,617	8,124	7,570	7,123	7,030	(1,613)
Total Residing on Campus	2,185	2,221	2,347	1,780	1,911	2,059	2,200	15
Total Commuters	6,458	6,346	6,270	6,344	5,659	5,064	4,830	(1,628)
% Residing On Campus	25%	26%	27%	22%	25%	29%	31%	
MD Residents (geographic)	7,373	7,337	7,410	6,974	6,438	5,984	5,818	(1,555)
% MD Residents	85%	86%	86%	86%	85%	84%	83%	
Out-of-State	1,148	1,050	1,025	992	952	990	1,045	(103)
Armed Forces Europe or Pacific		76	68	81	83	82	81	81
Nonresident Alien	119	98	106	73	77	67	61	(58)
Other¹	3	6	8	4	20	-	25	22
American Indian/Alaska Native	21	54	59	53	38	32	25	4
Asian	202	296	304	302	284	228	205	3
Black or African-American	1,012	1,195	1,232	1,116	978	965	977	(35)
Hispanic/Latino	365	344	376	388	417	461	506	141
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	6	17	10	10	7	8	7	1
White	6,376	6,074	5,997	5,756	5,314	4,922	4,764	(1,612)
Two or more races	306	233	224	173	210	254	294	(12)
US Nonresident (NRA)	119	98	106	73	77	67	61	(58)
Unknown/Unspecified	236	256	309	253	245	186	191	(45)
Total	8,643	8,567	8,617	8,124	7,570	7,123	7,030	(1,613)
Total Known Minority	1,912	2,139	2,205	2,042	1,934	1,948	2,014	102
Total Known Min + NRA	2,031	2,237	2,311	2,115	2,011	2,015	2,075	44
Known Minority	22.7%	25.7%	26.5%	25.9%	26.4%	28.1%	29.4%	
Minority + Nonresident Alien	24.2%	26.9%	27.8%	26.9%	27.5%	29.0%	30.3%	
Unknown	2.7%	3.0%	3.6%	3.1%	3.2%	2.6%	2.7%	
Average Age of all students	22.0	22.1	21.9	22.2	22.1	21.4	22.1	

strong graduation rates by Maryland’s Department of Legislative Services. In 2020, SU received the prestigious Community-Engaged Campus designation by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (3). Additionally, SU has the distinction of being ranked among the nation’s Top Producers of Fulbright Students for six years in a row and for producing the most of any Master’s Large schools in the nation in for 2022-23 (4).

Salisbury University houses several centers of excellence, including the Bosserman Center for Conflict Resolution; the Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Development Hub; the Institute of Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE); Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON); Mid-Atlantic Sales and Marketing Institute (MASMI); Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture; May Literacy Center (MLC); Eastern Shore

Childcare Resource Center (ESCCRC); Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC); and the Dave and Patsy Rommel Center for Entrepreneurship in Downtown Salisbury. The University also runs the Museum of Eastern Shore Culture (MESCC) and is connected to four University Art Galleries and Delmarva Public Media.

Chart 1. Total Institutional Enrollment: Fall 2000-2023



University System of Maryland

The University is a member of the University System of Maryland (USM). The USM was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1988 with the merger of the five University of Maryland institutions and the six members of the state University and College System of Maryland. Today, the USM is comprised of a system office led by the chancellor, three regional higher education centers, and 12 institutions, including Salisbury University (5).

The USM is the most heterogeneous system in the country with four-year institutional members, having R1, R2, and regional comprehensive universities; three Historically Black Colleges and Universities; a professional schools university; an institution devoted to environment sciences; and an online global university.

A 21-member Board of Regents (BOR), including two full-time students, governs the USM, and members serve on the board without compensation. Appointed largely by the Governor, the Regents oversee USM’s academic, administrative, and financial operations; formulate policy; and appoint the USM Chancellor and the Presidents at each institution. Apart from the student members, each Regent is appointed for a term of five years and may not serve more than two

consecutive terms. The Student Regents are appointed for two-year terms, serving as voting members in their second year.

Institutional Mission, Priorities, and Strategic Plan

SU's highest purpose is to empower its 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.

SU 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. 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 five privately endowed units (the Charles R. and Martha N. Fulton School of Liberal Arts, the Richard A. Henson School of Science and Technology, the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business, the Samuel W. and Marilyn C. Seidel School of Education, and the Glenda Chatham and Robert G. Clarke Honors College), and the recently established College of Health and Human Services and Graduate School, we foster an environment where individuals prepare for their careers and lives, with a focus on 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, SU actively contributes to the local Eastern Shore community and the educational, economic, cultural, workforce, and social needs of our State and nation.

Mission

SU is in compliance with Standard I: Mission and Goals, Criteria 1-4. The University has a clearly defined Mission Statement that was adopted in 2014 and revised in 2019 (6,7). In 2013, SU initiated an inclusive and transparent process to revise its Mission Statement and Strategic Plan. Focus groups of students, faculty, and staff met with representatives from Academic Affairs and University Analysis, Reporting, and Assessment to discuss the University's mission and future direction. The revision of SU's Mission Statement in 2018 occurred over the course of several months with feedback and review from various campus constituencies (8,9). Notes from these meetings were placed on a public website for comment as were drafts of a revised Mission Statement.

Additionally, SU engages with various external agencies, including USM and MHEC to ensure the alignment of the SU Mission Statement with System and State-Level Strategic Plans. Pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) Education Article, all Maryland public institutions are required to periodically update their institutional Mission Statement (10). SU's Mission Statements must be consistent with the *2020-2025 Maryland State*

Plan for Postsecondary Education and the *University System of Maryland Strategic Plan* (11,12). SU's updated Mission Statement was submitted to the USM Board of Regents (BOR) and MHEC for external review and approval. The COMAR articles require both governing bodies to verify SU's statements are consistent with the State and System plans and promote effectiveness and efficiency in the use of resources. While the revision of the Mission Statement is overseen by the President's Office and Academic Affairs Division, it includes feedback from various campus constituents, including the entire campus community and its Faculty and Staff Senates.

SU widely publicizes its University Mission and Values Statements using various media. External constituents can see the statements on our website, through the printed or electronic catalog materials, admissions materials, and various websites hosted by periodicals that rank institutions of higher education (e.g., *U.S. News & World Reports*, *The Princeton Review*, *Forbes*, etc.). Additionally, the President publishes the *Salisbury University Annual Report* to review the institution's accomplishments toward achieving the University's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan (13). The President has been a strong advocate of the importance of the alignment of the SU Mission and *Strategic Plan* (6,14). Through the President's Salisbury Seven initiatives, which pledge to "direct our strategic growth over the next five years," there's an intentional alignment and consistent message that our institutional priorities will follow our *Strategic Plan* and Mission. In 2023, the President announced a commitment to fund innovative ideas to help the University achieve its goals related to the *Strategic Plan* and Salisbury Seven (15–17). The resulting Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) designated \$500,000 annually for three years to fund projects proposed by SU students, faculty, and staff that would help the University achieve these goals. These projects include developing new interdisciplinary research clusters, building community and industry partnerships, supporting undergraduate and graduate student recruitment and retention, and other potentially high-impact ideas that require seed funds to test concepts or build momentum. During its first year, more than 40 SIF proposals were submitted by SU students, faculty, and staff. After careful review, six projects related to SU's institutional priorities were funded at the end of fall 2023. Much like the existing process used to track progress on SU's institutional goals, each of the projects provide an annual update and metrics to the Strategic Innovation Council to demonstrate effective use of the funds (18). In addition to supporting State and System-wide goals, SU's updated Mission and Values statements were intentionally aligned with the goals identified in the *Strategic Plan*, see Table 3.

Strategic Plan

SU is in compliance with Standard I: Mission and Goals, Criteria 1-4. The University has clearly defined institutional goals that are consistent with its mission and focused on student learning and outcomes.

The development of the *2020-2025 Strategic Plan* was the product of collaboration between shared governance bodies and the larger campus community (19). In developing the *Strategic Plan*, SU created focus groups to elicit feedback from as many voices as possible. During these workshops, national, State, and regional higher education trends were examined alongside institutional data to inform the development of each goal. Through this effort, SU developed five overarching goals: (1) enrich academic success and student development; (2) inspire a

Table 3. Alignment of SU’s Mission and Strategic Plan Goals

Elements of SU’s Mission Statement	Goal 1: Enrich Academic Success and Student Development	Goal 2: Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration	Goal 3: Support Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence	Goal 4: Deepen Engagement with Our Community	Goal 5: Enhance Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability
Offer excellent, affordable education in undergraduate liberal arts, sciences, business, nursing, health sciences, social work, and education, and applied master’s and doctoral programs	X		X		
Empower 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	X	X		X	X
Cultivate and sustain a superior learning community where students, faculty, and staff are viewed as learners, teachers/ scholars, and facilitators	X		X		
A commitment to excellence and openness to a broad array of ideas and perspectives		X			
Offer a learning community that is student-centered with small classroom settings	X				
Provide every student with an opportunity to undertake research or experiential learning with a faculty mentor	X				
Foster an environment where individuals prepare for career and life, including their social, physical, occupational, emotional, and intellectual well-being	X	X			X
Support a campus community with exceptional and diverse faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students from across Maryland and the United States and from around the world		X		X	
Actively contribute to the local Eastern Shore community and the educational, economic, cultural, and social needs of our State and nation				X	X

campus culture of inclusive excellence, support, and collaboration; (3) support access, affordability, and academic excellence; (4) deepen community engagement; and (5) enhance environmental, social, and economic sustainability. More information about the development and assessment of the *Strategic Plan* can be found in Chapter 3.

Historically, strategic planning has been overseen by the Associate Vice President for Planning and Assessment, and the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC) provided oversight of the entire process, including annually reviewing the plan and progress toward accomplishing the goals and recommendations (20,21). The SPBC is comprised of faculty, staff, and student governance groups, Deans, Vice Presidents, as well as representatives from other campus offices. The *2020-25 Strategic Plan* guided SU as it selected the institutional priorities to include in the Self-Study. More information on the development and assessment of SU’s *Strategic Plan* can be found in Chapter 3. As SU approaches its next strategic planning cycle, the Self-Study working group reports, recommendations, and research question responses will be used to help guide the process. These changes to the SPBC and strategic planning process are included in Chapter 3 as well.

Salisbury Seven

As highlighted in President Carolyn Ringer Lepre’s February 2023 State of the University Address, the Salisbury Seven is a bold new vision in alignment with SU’s Mission and core institutional values (22). These seven pledges direct the University’s strategic growth over the next five years and align with SU’s current *Strategic Plan*.

The overall theme of the Salisbury Seven is moving forward with excellence. These pledges are the defining focus of SU’s vision as we enter our next century.

Table 4. Alignment of Salisbury Seven with Strategic Plan

Salisbury Seven	2019-2025 Strategic Plan Goal
We will invest in the people who deliver on the promises we make to our students.	Goal 2: Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support and Collaboration
We will consistently deliver a rigorous, student-focused academic program taught by world-class educators on a world-class campus.	Goal 1: Enrich Academic Success and Student Development Goal 3: Support Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence
We will have a continual commitment to inclusion, diversity, opportunity, and equity, and the cultivation of a sense of belonging. We will strategically grow to serve the needs of the Eastern Shore, the State of Maryland, and the nation while holding fast to our identity as a student-focused institution that doesn’t just say it cares about its people, it shows it with every decision.	Goal 2: Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support and Collaboration Goal 3: Support Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence Goal 4: Deepen Engagement with Our Community
We will be known for our innovative, high-impact practices and our belief that we are educating the whole person for a lifetime of civic leadership and community service.	Goal 1: Enrich Academic Success and Student Development
We will raise the resources needed to support SU’s programs, its students and its culture.	Goal 5: Enhance Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability
We will strengthen our institutional identity and reputation.	Goal 3: Support Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence

Self-Study Approach

Preparations for SU's 2025 Self-Study began in fall 2022 with the Provost, Vice President for Administration and Finance, Vice President for Student Affairs, Associate Vice President for Planning and Assessment, Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance, Assistant Provost for Faculty Success, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, and Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications, known as the Self-Study Planning Team (SSPT), attending the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Self-Study Institute (SSI) in fall 2022. Through the SSI, the SSPT developed a tentative Self-Study timeline, recommended members for the Self-Study Steering Committee (SSSC), and reviewed and recommended a Self-Study approach and strategy. Dr. Kara Raab, Associate Vice President for Planning and Assessment, and Dr. Jessica Clark, Associate Provost (formerly the Assistant Provost for Faculty Success), were appointed to co-chair the SSSC.

The SSPT elected to use the priorities-based approach, focusing on the five goals of the *2020-2025 Strategic Plan* to demonstrate how the institution is accomplishing each of the seven MSCHE standards. SU's Self-Study focused on how the University strives to:

1. Enrich Academic Success and Student Development
2. Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration
3. Support Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence
4. Deepen Engagement with Our Community

The institutional recommendations included within the fifth Strategic Plan goal – Enhance Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability – were integrated throughout the four selected priorities listed above.

SSSC members were appointed as liaisons for each of the institutional priorities, and four working groups were established. A fifth working group was created to provide evidence of compliance with the MSCHE's Requirements of Affiliation. These five working groups were charged with examining how the University strives to:

- Enrich Academic Success and Student Development
- Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration
- Support Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence
- Deepen Engagement with Our Community
- Meet MSCHE's Requirements of Affiliation

As noted in the Self-Study Design Plan, each priority was aligned with the goals and recommendations of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan (23). The Self-Study Design Plan also provides information on how the four Self-Study priorities are aligned with the University's Mission Statement. Table 5 demonstrates how each of the MSCHE standards will be addressed through our institutional priorities and Self-Study chapters.

Table 5: Alignment of Self-Study Priorities with MSCHE Standards

Standards for Accreditation	Chapter 2 Priority 1: Enrich Academic Success and Student Development	Chapter 3 Priority 2: Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration	Chapter 4 Priority 3: Support Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence	Chapter 5 Priority 4: Deepen Engagement with Our Community	Chapter 6 Requirements of Affiliation
I. Mission and Goals	X	X	X	X	
II. Ethics and Integrity	X	X	X		
III. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	X	X			
IV. Support of the Student Experience	X		X		
V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	X				
VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement	X	X	X	X	
VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration				X	X

Campus Participation

In January 2023, the SSPT established the SSSC, and the SSSC Co-Chairs sent a University-wide email on the importance of the reaccreditation process and requested campus participation in one of the Self-Study working groups (24,25). More than 90 students, faculty, and staff representatives voluntarily participated across the five working groups linked to the Self-Study priorities. To ensure continuity in data/document/evidence collection and reporting, each SSSC member was associated with one of the five working groups and served as a liaison between their working group and the SSSC. In addition, each working group chose a Chair or Co-Chairs to coordinate the individual group logistics.

In April 2023, the SSSC Co-Chairs hosted a half-day retreat for the SSSC and working group members. During the retreat, the Co-Chairs described the Self-Study process and timeline, provided an overview of Microsoft Teams and how it would be used to manage the Self-Study project, and shared the working group charges and research questions. Each working group was tasked with responding to research questions and providing a 10-15 page report on strengths and opportunities related to their institutional priority, along with documents demonstrating compliance with MSCHE standards (26).

Following the submission of the working group reports in May 2024, the SSSC Co-Chairs began reviewing the reports and drafting the Self-Study. The SSSC and the working groups provided

feedback on the draft of the report in September 2024 before it was shared with President's Cabinet and the Deans for their review and suggestions. The President shared information about the Self-Study report and about SU's Preliminary Visit by the team chair during the fall 2024 State of the University Address (27).

Throughout the process, the institution encouraged campuswide involvement through regular campus emails, meetings with shared governance groups and the President's Advisory Team, a dedicated 2025 Self-Study website, and updates to the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee (24,25).

Updates Since the 2016 Self-Study

Following SU's 2016 Self-Study visit, MSCHE reaffirmed our accreditation and required no further follow-up from the University. The visiting team provided two recommendations which the University addressed.

Recommendation 1

Standard 2 (Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal) and Standard 7 (Institutional Assessment): "The team concurs with the Proposed Enhancement suggested in Chapter 8 of the Self Study and recommends that the institution continue the progress made to systematically assess their University Strategic Plan, demonstrate how all plans are used to allocate resources and prioritize decisions, and also expand the System to monitor progress towards achieving institutional goals."

Resolution: SU has since made significant adjustments to its budgeting and strategic planning processes (Chapter 3 further demonstrates compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement). SU's institutional budgeting and planning processes evolved as the University evaluated how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its budgeting process, and in doing so, the University has incorporated defined alignment with strategic priorities. Strategic planning is overseen by the Associate Vice President for Planning and Assessment, with support and oversight from the SPBC. The SPBC, comprised of faculty, staff and student governance, annually reviews the plan and progress of the goals and recommendations.

During fiscal years 2017-21, the institution focused on improving transparency within the departmental and unit-level budgeting processes. SU moved from utilizing the Strategic Planning and Budgeting System (SPBS) to developing detailed budget templates in its enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, Peoplesoft. These templates allowed the budgeting process to be more transparent and inclusive. Departments were provided with historical averages and required to estimate expenses for the upcoming year within unique budget categories. Departments had to provide justification for their expenses and give evidence that additional funds, referred to as "Above the Line," being requested were related to the institutional *Strategic Plan* (28). These budgets were then reviewed by divisional Vice Presidents and the President's Cabinet before finalizing. At the end of each fiscal year, Vice Presidents reviewed the Above the Line allocations with departments during the Performance Management Process (PMP) to determine if the goals of these projects were achieved. The results of these initiatives were also shared

annually with the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC) (29,30).

In 2019, the budget process shifted to an allocation budgeting process, wherein each of the five divisions (Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, Advancement and External Affairs, Office of the President, and Student Affairs) were allocated a certain percentage of the total revenues to meet expenses.

In fiscal year 2022, with the budget template fully implemented across campus, the SPBC re-introduced the use of the SPBS for tracking metrics, costs, and achievement of any Above the Line project funded for that fiscal year (29). The SPBS is an online tracking tool developed at SU to monitor institutional progress toward our *Strategic Plan* goals.

During fiscal year 2024, SU shifted again to better align the budget with strategic priorities. To ensure resources were allocated based on current needs, budget type, and linkage to strategic priorities, the Budget Office continued a shift away from divisional budget allotments and instead designed tools for departments/schools to assist with forecasting costs and identifying budget priorities.

Recommendation 2

Standard 11 (Educational Offerings): “Though it appears all programs (i.e., degrees) have student-learning outcomes, they have not been clearly provided to students in the course catalog. Some departmental websites have articulated student learning outcomes specified for their programs typically in the context of their departmental mission; others are not clear. The University should communicate student learning outcomes at the program level to students and consider doing so using language and a delivery format that makes most sense to the intended audience.”

Resolution:

Following the 2016 Self-Study visit, SU addressed the visiting team’s second recommendation. As noted in their report, all academic programs at SU articulate the student learning outcomes (SLOs). However, these SLOs were not clearly publicized for students to view. As a part of the periodic Academic Program Review (APR) process, programs list their SLOs in our institutional APR system. The University created a webpage that pulls the SLOs from the APR system and displays them publicly on the Academic Program SLO website (31). Current and prospective students can select their program of interest and view the SLOs for the program. The website is updated immediately when programs adjust SLOs in the APR system. Additionally, each program’s webpage received an update to ensure current and prospective students can see learning expectations for graduates (32). Each program has a section on their homepage that summarizes the learning expectations for graduates.

2016 Self-Study Institutional Recommendations

Throughout the 2016 Self-Study process, SU developed proposed enhancements that could be considered to further the institution’s mission. A summary of progress toward each can be found in the Evidence Inventory (33).

Evidence Referenced

1. IPEDS Fall Enrollment 2020-24
2. IPEDS Human Resources 2019-24
3. Carnegie Community Engaged Campus Designation Letter 2020
4. SU Named Top Producer of Fulbright Students and Scholars 2022
5. University System of Maryland Institutions
6. Salisbury University Mission & Values
7. MHEC Approval of SU's 2018 Revised Mission Statement
8. Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes March 27, 2018
9. Governance Consortium Meeting Minutes 2018
10. COMAR 13B.02.02.14 Missions and Goals
11. USM Strategic Plan Vision 2030 Executive Summary
12. MHEC Maryland State Plan for Higher Education
13. SU Annual reports 2021-24
14. SU Strategic Plan 2020-25
15. Salisbury Seven
16. Strategic Innovation Fund
17. Strategic Innovation Funding Rubric
18. Fiscal Year 2024 Strategic Innovation Funded Projects
19. Strategic Plan Feedback
20. Salisbury University Strategic Plan Methodology
21. Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee Minutes 2022-23
22. State of the University Address 2023
23. SU 2025 MSCHE Self-Study Design Plan
24. Communications & Media Middle States 2025 Self-Study
25. Presentations to Campus and SPBC about the Self-Study
26. MSCHE25 SU Working Group Reports
27. State of the University Address 2023-24
28. Budget Tracking by Division
29. Updates on strategic plan, priorities, and budgets
30. SPBC Presentations and Agendas 2019-24
31. Academic Program Student Learning Outcomes
32. Bachelor of Science Biology Major SLOs
33. Summary of 2016 Self-Study Institutional Recommendations

Chapter 2

Academic Success and Student Development (Standards I, II, III, IV, V, VI)

This section demonstrates compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), III (Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience), IV (Support of the Student Experience), and V (Educational Effectiveness Assessment), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).

Introduction

In alignment with MSCHE Standards I and III, Salisbury University demonstrates a deep commitment to student success and development. The *2020-2025 Strategic Plan* places these goals at the forefront of SU's institutional priorities, guiding our resource allocation and decision-making processes (Standard VI). Approached through the design and delivery of rigorous academic programs, coupled with comprehensive student support services that foster academic excellence and personal development, these principles are regularly assessed through institutional effectiveness processes, ensuring continuous improvement in educational offerings (Standard V).

To advance our mission and values, SU demonstrates success in educating thoughtful, resilient, and responsible contributors to society. We are committed to preparing students to address the most pressing issues of our region, State, country and world, while also supporting the advancement and thoughtful education of future generations. This commitment is reflected in our student learning outcomes and assessment processes.

Since the previous self-study, SU has celebrated numerous achievements in academic success and student development including:

- Opening the Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons in 2016 (ranked by the Princeton Review in 2024 among the top 20 "Best College Libraries" in the United States), evidence of outstanding learning resources (Standard III)
- Establishing a College of Health and Human Services in 2018, expanding our academic offerings in response to community needs (Standards I and III).
- Evolving the Honors Program into the endowed Clarke Honors College in 2020, providing enhanced opportunities for high-achieving students (Standard IV).
- Creating a Graduate School, enhancing initiatives to expand graduate enrollment and reinforce institutional identity (Standard VI).

- Earning the designation of a Community Engaged Campus by the Carnegie Foundation, reflecting our commitment to civic engagement (Standards I and IV).
- Being named the No. 1 producer of Fulbright Students in the Master's Carnegie Classification for 2022-2023, demonstrating the success of our global education initiatives (Standards III and IV).
- Maintaining high four-year and six-year graduation rates and low time-to-degree completion rates compared to other comprehensive universities within the University of Maryland System, as evidenced by our institutional data (Standards IV and V).

Range of Educational Offerings

In alignment with MSCHE Standard III, Salisbury University offers an array of rigorous academic programs. The institution maintains a robust process for evaluating and developing new programs, ensuring they meet emerging market trends and regional needs. Existing programs are continuously expanded and supported based on these assessments. The University has also embraced online education, offering multiple modalities to aid students in completing curricular requirements. Our Online Learning Policy ensures online offerings maintain the same high standards as our on-campus courses (1). To support this initiative, we have allocated resources for faculty development in online pedagogy and invested in robust learning management systems (Standard VI) (2).

The pursuit of academic excellence is central to every aspect of SU. With 50 undergraduate degree programs, 94 undergraduate minors, 15 master's degree programs, and 2 doctoral programs, SU fulfills its mission 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.” Enrollment data and student success metrics for these programs are regularly monitored to ensure they continue to meet student needs and academic quality.

Since the last full accreditation review, faculty have worked to develop a number of online and hybrid courses, demonstrating the University's commitment to evolving with student needs and technological advancements, as well as our ethical responsibility to provide accessible education (Standard II). The University supports the student experience through dynamic programs, curricular and co-curricular, which address multiple criteria within Standard IV. These initiatives include:

- Performing and fine arts programs and events: enhance cultural understanding and creativity.
- Entrepreneurship competitions: foster innovation and business acumen.
- Undergraduate research opportunities: promote scholarly inquiry and critical thinking.
- Competitive fellowship support: encourage academic excellence and global engagement.
- Community engagement opportunities facilitated through the Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE): support mission of civic responsibility.

Undergraduate Programs

The 50 undergraduate degree programs reflect SU's status as a comprehensive liberal arts university. Building on this strong foundation, SU's undergraduate programs regularly receive national recognition for excellence. Pass rates on national licensing examinations for professional programs such as Nursing, Respiratory Therapy, Medical Lab Science, and Education are at a level similar to leading programs across the country (3).

Glenda Chatham and Robert G. Clarke Honors College

The Glenda Chatham and Robert G. Clarke Honors College exemplifies SU's commitment to academic excellence and student support (Standard IV). The college's growth from a modest program of 20 students in 1980 to nearly 500 students today demonstrates a responsiveness to student needs and an ability to adapt educational offerings.

The \$1.5 million planned endowment from alumni Bob Clarke and Glenda Chatham in 2020 not only provided financial support but also reflects the ethical stewardship of resources and commitment to transparency in donor relations (Standard II) (4). This endowment has been strategically allocated to enhance the Honors College experience, including funding for scholarships, research opportunities, and program development (Standard VI).

Students admitted into the Clarke Honors College (CHC) can choose between four programs allowing them to meet the requirements of Honors and their Major (5):

1. Thomas E. Bellavance Honors Program (SU's original honors college program, founded in 1980)
2. Richard A. Henson Honors Program in Science and Mathematics
3. Business Honors Program
4. College of Health and Human Services Honors Program

The CHC offers several distinct advantages, including small classes, tailored courses, individualized research opportunities, priority registration, specialized advising, financial support for conference travel, and scholarships. The college also includes over 40 affiliated faculty members covering more than 20 disciplines, ensuring a rich and diverse academic experience – reflecting SU's commitment to interdisciplinary education and faculty engagement in student learning (Standard III).

For incoming freshmen, the CHC offers an Honors Living Learning Community (LLC) that allows students to live and study together throughout their freshman year, mentored by Resident Assistants who are fellow Honors College members. The LLC is assessed annually for its impact on student engagement and academic performance LLC Assessment, with results informing continuous improvement efforts (6).

In alignment with our institutional commitment to civic engagement and community partnerships, the Honors Student Association is active in community service and outreach events such as the City of Salisbury's 3rd Friday activities and the Maryland Folk Festival. The CHC has garnered national recognition for its publication, *The Saunterer*, which has been named the No. 1 honors print newsletter in the U.S. by the National Collegiate Honors Council in 2017, 2019, and 2022 (7).

Graduate Programs

In alignment with MSCHE Standard III, SU's graduate programs are designed to prepare students to embark upon professional careers, pursue professional advancement or seek personal enrichment, and are administered through the Graduate School. SU's graduate programs have received high praise from publications like *U.S. News & World Report*, which consistently has named SU's online M.B.A. and graduate nursing programs among the nation's best. This external recognition serves as one measure of the programs' quality and effectiveness – complementing our internal assessment processes (Standard V). A new master's degree in Public Communication (with track options in Athletics, Corporate, Health, or Public Affairs/Political Communications) was recently approved and is now being offered (8).

The most significant change since the last accreditation is the establishment of SU's Graduate School in March 2024 (9). This transition from the existing Office of Graduate Studies and Research demonstrates SU's commitment to strategic planning and resource allocation to support institutional priorities (Standard VI). The new Graduate School structure aims to grow graduate enrollment, advance graduate research, and provide all graduate students with a strong sense of belonging.

Certificate Programs

Since our last self-study, in response to evolving workforce needs and student demands, SU has expanded its certificate program offerings, which now cover a range of fields including accounting, education, healthcare, and pre-medical studies. They are designed for various levels of students, from students working towards a bachelor's degree, to those who have already earned advanced degrees. Our offerings include:

- Upper-Division Certificate in Fraud and Forensic Accounting
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Health Care Management
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in TESOL
- Post-Master Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Leadership
- Post-Master Certificate of Successful Completion in Educational Leadership
- Post-Doctorate of Nursing Practice Certificate of Completion: Family Nurse Practitioner
- Pre-Medical Upper-Division Certificate

Design of Academic Offerings

All curricular decisions are made by the faculty through a robust approval process reflecting our commitment to shared governance and academic integrity. This collaborative system is structured with steps at the departmental, school/college, and university levels for all courses, with measurable learning objectives at the course and program level, and university-wide student learning outcomes for General Education courses. The new General Education program, launched fall 2024, has exemplified our commitment to intentional curricular design. In preparation, faculty participated in multiple professional development opportunities to ensure course proposals were rigorous and aligned to the new program. Initiatives focused on backward design of curriculum to meet student learning outcomes, assess student mastery, and map these outcomes across the curriculum (10). This approach is now being used to re-design non-General Education curriculum, enhancing the overall quality of education by ensuring outcomes are cohesively integrated and aligned with the program's goals.

Strategic Alignment

In accordance with MSCHE Standard I and VI, all academic programs and curricula are the purview of the faculty, who design, deliver, and assess all aspects of the academic portfolio for alignment with SU's mission and strategic goals. Requests to create a new major, program, or track require a statement describing the extent to which the program is central to the mission, the strategic planning priorities, and its relationship to the instructional program's emphasis (11).

Review of Curriculum

Academic rigor and appropriate course content are ensured in multiple ways. All new courses must be thoroughly reviewed by faculty at the departmental, school, and University level (either the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or the Graduate Curriculum Committee) to determine if the course meets the high standards of SU and demonstrates measurable learning objectives and outcomes at the course and program level, and university-wide student learning outcomes for General Education courses (11). Additionally, any new program, stand-alone certificate, or substantial change to an existing program must go through a separate review by the USM Board of Regents (BOR III-7.01) and MHEC (COMAR 13B.02.03.33) (12,13). All programs, regardless of location or delivery method, are held to the same academic standards for ensuring student learning.

Stand-alone certificate programs go through the same curriculum review process. The proposals for certificates must first be approved at the department and school levels, then by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or the Graduate Curriculum Committee. The curriculum review process requires an explanation of the certificate's connection to the University mission, student learning outcomes and objectives, and evidence that it meets workforce needs in Maryland. The proposal is then reviewed by the USM Board of Regents (BOR III-7.01) and MHEC (COMAR 13B.02.03.25) before the certificate can be offered (13,14).

Academic Program Review

The Academic Program Review (APR) process at SU is governed by the Academic Programs and Review Process of the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the University System of Maryland (15). USM BOR Policy III-7.01 requires that all undergraduate (majors and concentrations) and graduate programs undergo a thorough periodic review. Additionally, the Provost reports annually to the USM (and subsequently to MHEC) on the results of each review (16). To avoid unnecessary duplication, programs that are accredited by agencies recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and/or the U.S. Department of Education substitute their accreditation documents for the APR (17). These programs include Chemistry, Music, Exercise Science, Respiratory Therapy, Nursing, Medical Laboratory Science, Social Work, and all Business and Education programs. Each of these accreditors requires regular review of faculty qualifications, curriculum, and student learning outcomes (SLOs) (18).

The APR process, overseen by University Analysis, Reporting and Assessment (UARA) and Academic Affairs, is regularly reviewed with assistance from the Faculty Senate's University Academic Assessment Committee (UAAC). Established in AY2007-2008, the UAAC advises on academic assessment, recommends assessment options, and develops comprehensive assessment plans (19). In 2024, APR guidelines were revised collaboratively by UARA, the Provost's Office, and UAAC, with the updated draft currently under Faculty Senate review (15).

The APR process is scheduled for all programs on a seven-year cycle, with the first review of any newly approved program occurring five years after inception (20–22). Additionally, three years before the next full APR begins, a progress report, preliminary review, and a meeting to discuss both occur. These processes ensure a continuous review of the program curriculum and assessment results are occurring.

During the APR process, programs highlight significant strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and incorporate feedback from one-two external reviewers. External reviewers are faculty peers teaching in the same programs at other universities who agree to review a program for a small stipend. In addition to an internal and external review of the program's enrollment, degree production, curriculum, and future goals, academic programs also identify program-specific SLOs. Each program's SLOs are available on the SU website for all prospective students and parents to view, reflecting SU's commitment to transparency and accountability (23). Undergraduate programs are required to align their programmatic SLOs to the University's General Education SLOs. Programs must demonstrate the alignment of their programmatic SLOs with the program's curriculum and describe the assessment processes, present data, and articulate how the information has been used to improve teaching and learning. In addition to the systematic and regular review of all academic programs, SU's General Education program also undergoes periodic review (described below).

General Education

SU's General Education program and curriculum are in compliance with Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, Criteria 5. The General Education program requires 45 credits of courses encompassing a diverse range of disciplines (24–26). SU has clearly stated SLOs for the General Education program. These SLOs are periodically reviewed and revised and assessed. SU is in compliance with Standard III, Criteria 4, 5, 7, and 8 and Standard V, Criteria 1, 2, and 3. In addition to meeting the COMAR General Education program requirements in the State of Maryland (COMAR 13B.02.02.16), SU's program includes course requirements that facilitate student learning in the areas of cultural and global awareness and sensitivity, oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, technological competency, and information literacy (IL) (27). Additionally, while technological competency is not a separate General Education SLO, it is embedded within the General Education Learning Principles, which emphasize the use of multiple strategies, resources, and technologies for inquiry and problem-solving. This principle is then integrated into the SLOs. When courses with IL as an SLO are proposed and reviewed, justification is required to ensure technological competency.

During the last Self-Study, SU was in the beginning phases of re-evaluating the entire General Education program. This initiative began with working groups formed in December 2014 and February 2015. The working groups were tasked with evaluating the existing General Education structure, consider peer and aspirant institutions, and propose a new model. Approved by faculty vote in April 2021 and featuring new faculty committees under the guidance of the General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC), the curriculum launched in fall 2024.

The new curriculum intentionally links each course to identified SLOs that define High Impact Practices (HIPs) for student learners, in alignment with SU's *Strategic Plan*. The new General Education curriculum notably includes two signature SU experience courses in the form of First Year Seminar (FYS) and Experiential Learning (EL). These requirements are intentionally positioned to first foster student development and retention, and then upon completion of General Education requirements, to allow application of knowledge and competency in the form of internships, study abroad/away, service-learning, or senior project opportunities. Additionally, three signature outcome requirements have been included that speak to cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity (Civic and Community Engagement; Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability) (24,25,28,26).

The purpose and program principles of the General Education program were also realigned by the GEOC:

Purpose

The General Education program is designed to foster the personal, intellectual, and social development of the Salisbury University student. Salisbury University provides an institutional environment and academic curriculum that supports interconnected learning and experiences, which signify an ability to analyze and make connections between ideas, concepts, and experiences – both on and off campus.

Program Principles

The General Education program advances the University Mission 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 through an integrated curriculum that speaks largely to student learning goals.

General Education Student Learning Outcomes

Essential Competencies are the intellectual habits and skills that students progressively develop to succeed as undergraduates and as members of a rapidly changing and globally interconnected society. Upon completion of their studies at SU, students will demonstrate effective reading and communication, critical thinking and reasoning, quantitative reasoning, scientific reasoning, and information literacy to solve problems.

Foundational Knowledge describes the breadth of information and experiences needed to succeed in a globally interconnected world. This is achieved through the study of the arts, humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. Upon completion of their studies at SU, students will demonstrate knowledge of the human experience, the physical world, and ways of knowing.

Personal, Social, and Cultural Responsibility integrates the knowledge, skills, and core values that allow students to become effective scholars, employees, and active citizens. Upon completion of their studies at SU, students will show evidence of civic and community engagement, knowledge of emerging and global issues, a commitment to and knowledge of environmental sustainability, ethical reasoning, respect for inclusion and diversity, intellectual curiosity, intercultural competence, as well as be aware of issues of personal health and wellness.

General Education Model and Requirements

- **SU Signature Outcomes:** Students must complete at least three credits in each of the following areas:
 - Civic and Community Engagement
 - Diversity and Inclusion
 - Environmental Sustainability
- **First Year Seminar:** Academic preparation, skills, and expectations for educational and professional success through exploration of a topic or issue.
SLOs: Critical Thinking and Reasoning, Effective Reading, Informational Literacy, Oral Communication, Written Communication, Intellectual Curiosity
- **Communicating Through Writing:** Effective reading, writing, and information usage.
SLOs: Effective Reading, Information Literacy, Written Communication
- **Quantitative Analysis:** Numerical, analytical, statistical, and problem-solving skills.
SLOs: Quantitative Reasoning
- **Human Expression:** Exploration of the different ways individuals and societies have and continue to express themselves and communicate the human experience.
SLOs: Knowledge of Human Experience, Intellectual Curiosity, Ethical Reasoning
- **Humanity in Context:** Critical and comparative analysis of humanity, emphasizing the role of history, culture, and/or language in human issues.
SLOs: Critical Thinking and Reasoning, Understanding the Human World, Effective Reading, Knowledge of Human Experience, Intercultural Competence
- **Social Configurations:** Quantitative and/or qualitative analysis of human behavior and/or societies.
SLOs: Understanding the Human World, Knowledge of Human Experience, Emerging and Enduring Global Issues, Intercultural Competence
- **Social Issues:** Applied social science, with an emphasis on understanding and solving problems in the social or behavioral sciences.
SLOs: Quantitative Reasoning, Knowledge of Human Experience, Emerging and Enduring Global Issues, Ethical Reasoning
- **Hands-on Science:** Experiential laboratory-based science.
SLOs: Quantitative Reasoning, Scientific Reasoning, Knowledge of the Physical World
- **Solutions through Science:** Applied science, with an emphasis on understanding and solving problems in the natural and physical sciences (may or may not include a lab).
SLOs: Critical Thinking and Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, Scientific Reasoning, Knowledge of the Physical World
- **Physical Wellness:** Interconnected dimensions of wellness, including physical, emotional, and financial, to live a healthy, successful life.
SLOs: Personal Health and Wellness
- **Experiential Learning:** Apply knowledge and competencies from General Education through internship, study abroad/away, research, senior project, or other relevant experience.
SLOs: Critical Thinking and Reasoning, Information Literacy, Oral Communication, Written Communication, Ethical Reasoning, Intellectual Curiosity

General Education Review

The General Education program is periodically reviewed and revised through a comprehensive process that includes students, faculty, and staff (Standard III, Criteria 4, 5, 7, and 8; Standard V, Criteria 1 and 2). The revision of the General Education curriculum began in 2015 with the appointment of the General Education Steering Committee (GESC) that evolved into a shared-governance-elected General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) from 2019 to the present (25). The list of SLOs was created through the work of the GESC, its associated working groups, Faculty Senate, and open faculty sessions. These groups were provided with University General Education assessment results to examine the current areas of strength and weakness around student learning. These groups were surveyed to determine which SLOs they believed were important for higher education in general, and for SU specifically, to address through its curriculum. Additionally, the survey assessed the extent to which SU's current General Education model was contributing to students' abilities to achieve these outcomes. This comprehensive approach allowed for both the identification of crucial SLOs and an evaluation of the effectiveness of SU's existing General Education program in meeting these learning goals (29). The Faculty Senate approved the proposed SLOs on November 20, 2018 (30), and in accordance with Middle States Standard V, the Faculty Senate and GESC concurred that both periodic assessment of student learning would be evaluated, as would periodic review of the approved SLOs every three years.

Identification and adoption of the approved 2018 Student Learning Goals and Outcomes were the first steps in creating a more impactful (and measurable) General Education program at SU. The next step was mapping these 18 outcomes onto the current General Education model. The mapping was facilitated by an online survey, which asked faculty to review and report the alignment of the SLOs with their General Education courses (29). In addition to self-reporting the SLOs they currently include in their coursework, faculty were asked to rank the outcomes they identified in terms of how relevant and/or important they were to their General Education area. These results allowed faculty to see how the current model aligned with the new SLOs and identified significant gaps. These results aided in the development of the new General Education model, and the faculty-led committee conducted an all-faculty vote, which led to the approval of the new General Education model (30).

The GEOC and its subcommittees maintain a thorough review process through Curriculog, an online curriculum approval platform (25,31). All courses that seek General Education designation are reviewed by the various curriculum committees on campus and must meet SU and State of Maryland requirements, as explained in the University's Curriculum Approval Guide. Proposals must demonstrate how the course will satisfy the University's General Education mission and the specific General Education student learning outcomes. The course proposal review process begins when a course originator submits a proposal in Curriculog, including a cover letter/rationale, course syllabus, and example assignments and assessments. The proposal then progresses through several approval stages, including department, school/college, and curriculum committees. Once these initial approvals are obtained, the relevant GEOC Advisory Subcommittee reviews the proposal to ensure it meets the criteria and student learning outcomes for the specific General Education category. Using evaluation rubrics, the Subcommittee assesses whether the course meets the required standards and may request revisions if necessary (25). If approved by the Subcommittee, the proposal moves to the full

GEOC for review and approval. Upon GEOC approval, the proposal advances to the Provost for final approval. Approved courses are then added to the Academic Catalog. In cases where a proposal is rejected, there is an appeals process allowing faculty to request that GEOC review a Subcommittee's decision. This multi-tiered review process is designed to ensure that proposed courses meet the specific criteria and learning outcomes for each General Education category.

General Education Assessment Methods (e.g. GULL Week)

SU is in compliance with Standard V, Criteria 1, 2, 4, and 5. Gaining Understanding of Lifelong Learning (GULL) Week is a week-long assessment model that has continually evolved since its implementation in 2015 (32–36). Currently, GULL Week occurs during the third week of the fall semester. While participation is not mandatory, all undergraduate students are encouraged to contribute and demonstrate their proficiency in various General Education areas. The UARA office garners faculty and student interest through promotion, communication, and competition. The communication strategy emphasizes participation to demonstrate school spirit and give back to the campus. Along with the Provost, Deans, and staff in UARA, faculty are the best advocates for student participation in GULL Week. Many faculty supporters offer students extra credit for their participation as well as promote the importance of the event in their classrooms. Students receive a GULL Week t-shirt, designed by an SU student each year, after completing their assessment session. To further increase school spirit and create a healthy sense of competition, the School/College that has the highest percentage of its majors participating is recognized as the GULL Week Champion and is awarded a banner and trophy as well as a school photo with SU mascot Sammy the Sea Gull.

Prior to fall 2020, all students wishing to participate in GULL Week followed the same procedures: students voluntarily registered to participate in a one-hour proctored GULL Week assessment session, typically completing two to three computer-based standardized assessments aligned with SU's General Education SLOs. Institutional assessment plans ensure that over a five-year period, each of SU's General Education SLOs are assessed during GULL Week (37).

In fall 2020, following the COVID-19 pandemic, GULL Week was modified. While students were able to return to campus in fall 2020, SU maintained strict social distancing and masking rules. Concerned that a rise in the infection rates could result in another shutdown, the institution canceled the fall 2020 GULL Week and instead spent the semester considering alternative methods to collect this important assessment data. In collaboration with the Faculty Senate UAAC, the UARA office proposed a hybrid assessment approach where data could be collected in both face-to-face proctored testing sessions offered in campus computer labs or in unproctored testing sessions students could complete from their home computers or in campus labs (36). The unproctored testing sessions were piloted in spring 2021 with a small sample of student ($n = 167$) to collect feedback on how easily students could access and complete these assessments from home. While some students faced technology issues when accessing the assessments, by in large, the pilot was successful. A primary challenge of every Gull Week is ensuring SU receives quality data from the student participants. When students do not put forth their best effort, the resulting data is not valid or reliable; and so, SU has developed institutional cutoffs to exclude unreliable data. While we found similar issues for the unproctored sessions piloted in spring 2021, they were no more prevalent than those in the face-to-face proctored sessions. As a result, beginning in fall 2022, sessions in both proctored and unproctored formats were offered. Over

1,700 undergraduate students participated during SU’s most recent GULL Week in fall 2023. Table 6 shows the percentage of SU’s student population who have participated each semester since 2017.

Table 6. GULL Week Participants: 2017-2023

	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
College of Health and Human Services	n/a	n/a	45.90%	38.00%	46.70%	33.90%	40.40%	36.30%
Fulton School of Liberal Arts	23.30%	26.60%	33.30%	28.10%	29.60%	22.30%	18.30%	20.30%
Henson School of Science and Technology	32.10%	31.70%	46.70%	47.80%	46.70%	36.80%	33.80%	36.00%
Perdue School of Business	34.40%	36.70%	38.00%	32.50%	40.00%	22.40%	27.20%	22.20%
Seidel School of Education	25.30%	24.00%	42.40%	41.60%	53.80%	36.10%	34.30%	30.70%
% of UG Students Participating	27.70%	28.60%	39.30%	34.70%	39.80%	27.70%	28.70%	28.10%
Total Participants	2,092	2,160	2,926	2,583	2,969	1,788	1,764	1,710

While GULL Week will continue its current format for fall 2024, changes will be phased in beginning in fall 2025. Faculty have grown increasingly interested in collecting both pre- and post-test data on SU’s SLOs. In spring 2025, SU will pilot two assessments, the CLA and Perrigrine Global as potential tools to evaluate SLOs in a pre- and post-test format with students enrolled in a first-year seminar that semester. One of these assessments will be selected and implemented in the new General Education assessment in two phases.

Phase 1: Beginning in fall 2025, students enrolled in first-year seminars will be targeted for participation. The format will be similar to GULL Week where students can participate during a weeklong assessment period in either a proctored (campus computer lab) or unproctored session. However, there will be two major changes. First, GULL Week will happen in both the fall and spring. Second, we will only request participation from students enrolled in a first-year seminar during that respective semester. This assessment will act as the pre-test for all new, incoming students. As both first-time and transfer students must complete the first-year seminar, this will allow SU to collect data from all new, incoming students. Faculty teaching the first-year seminar will help promote student participation in the assessment.

Phase 2: Beginning in fall 2026, the assessment will expand to include all students enrolled in an experiential learning course during the targeted semester, as well as those enrolled in a first-year seminar. It is anticipated most students will enroll in the experiential learning course after completing the majority of their other General Education course requirements. Students enrolled in experiential learning who completed the assessment as a part of their first-year seminar course, will re-take the same assessment – serving as a post-test.

It will take at least two years of data collection to determine if the assessments are yielding valid and reliable pre- and post-test data. However, the data collection will still provide valuable information on the preparedness of incoming students and achievement of our learning outcomes for students toward the end of their General Education coursework. SU will analyze the data by student learning outcome and examine the relationship between performance and the number of General Education courses completed. Oversight of the assessment of the General Education program occurs at multiple levels, which includes Academic Affairs, UARA, and Faculty Senate (including UAAC and GEOC). Additionally, every five years, MHEC requires all Maryland public institutions to report on the assessment of student learning through their performance accountability process. As such, SU submits the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report (SLOAR) every five years, detailing how the institution measures specific SLOs, including the process used for assessment, how faculty are informed about the assessment process, and how the results have been used to improve teaching and learning on campus (38).

Using General Education Assessment Results for Continuous Improvement

SU is in compliance with Standard III, Criteria 7 and 8, and Standard V, Criteria 3, 4, and 5. General Education assessment data collected during GULL Week has been utilized in a variety of ways to improve teaching and learning at SU (38). The GESC and GEOC used the results, including where students are experiencing weaknesses on the SLOs, to inform the development of a new General Education model to address areas identified for improvement. As a result, the new model provides multiple opportunities for students to be exposed to learning opportunities to bolster skills in these areas. UARA staff created a template for reporting the assessment results by SLO in a one-page format (35). These assessment one-sheets allow faculty to get a quick understanding of the assessment and the results and how they can be used to improve teaching and learning. The publications are available on the UARA website.

Additionally, the results from previous GULL Weeks are regularly summarized and presented to the College/School faculty meetings as part of annual Faculty Development Day activities and more detailed presentations are developed as needed (36).

Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Rigorous, transparent processes ensure the selection and placement of top-tier educators in SU's classrooms and learning environments. The Faculty Handbook and the BOR policies provide clear direction on expectations of all instructional faculty with clearly defined evaluative measures at the department, school, and campus levels. This is matched by a strong commitment to support and mentor faculty throughout their career.

Faculty Qualifications, Recruitment, and Onboarding

The expertise of highly qualified faculty, combined with a favorable 13:1 student-to-faculty ratio, has allowed SU to continually meet and exceed its institutional goals. In fall 2023, the University employed 417 full-time faculty, 332 of whom were tenured or tenure-track; 97% of tenured and tenure-track faculty hold a terminal degree. Of the 85 full-time non-tenure-track faculty, 42% hold a terminal degree. Minority faculty account for 18.7% of SU's full-time

faculty (39). These statistics are regularly monitored and analyzed as part of SU's institutional effectiveness process (Standard V).

Hiring guidelines, located in chapter 2 of SU's Faculty Handbook, are aligned with the BOR II-1.00 policy and ensures ethical, transparent recruitment practices (Standard II) (40,41). The hiring process begins at the departmental level, where chairs work with their colleagues to identify faculty needs, either replacement or new positions. The chairs then work with the academic deans to prepare a justification for the position using data, including student enrollments over time and market demand, to help determine whether a new hire is warranted (42). Once the Provost approves the position request, the hiring process follows the procedure outlined in the Faculty Handbook. To ensure the recruitment of a diverse pool of candidates, all Exempt and Faculty positions are automatically posted on Diverse Issues in Higher Ed (diverseeducation.com) and Higher Ed Jobs (higheredjobs.com). Faculty search committees work closely with Human Resources to ensure the search complies with University and legal standards, and follows the best practices articulated in the Faculty Search and Selection Handbook. In 2022, a new policy was introduced to allow the prepayment of travel expenses for faculty candidates during the search process, reducing financial barriers and ensuring an equitable experience for candidates. To ensure policies and procedures were transparent to all potential applicants, the Faculty Handbook was made publicly available in 2023. Additionally, a Faculty Careers page on SU's website was developed to allow potential applicants to get a holistic view of the campus and culture at SU (43). These enhancements demonstrate our commitment to transparency and equity in the hiring process (Standard II).

Once hired, all new faculty participate in SU's New Faculty Orientation, a comprehensive, daylong event designed to welcome and acclimate all incoming faculty members to the institution (44). This mandatory session provides new hires with essential information about the University's policies, procedures, and academic culture. Throughout the day, participants engage in activities and presentations that introduce them to administrators, staff, and units; outline expectations for teaching and research; and familiarize them with campus resources. The orientation also offers opportunities for networking within their cohort and with the New Faculty Orientation Committee (NFOC), fostering a sense of community from the outset. SU extends this commitment to new faculty through collaborative efforts with our neighboring institution; SU and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) alternate hosting a social event for all new faculty every September. This gathering is attended not only by new faculty and their department chairs but also by deans, provosts, and presidents from both institutions, underscoring the administration's dedication to the success of faculty at both institutions. Given the rural location of these institutions, such initiatives are crucial in helping new faculty relocate and establish a community. To further support this transition, new faculty are encouraged to engage with local organizations, including opportunities offered by the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce through their young professionals' group and in participation at city events like the Maryland Folk Festival, which is hosted by Salisbury (45–47). This approach aligns with SU's identity as a community-engaged campus, as will be detailed in Chapter 4.

New faculty programming continues throughout the year with monthly sessions on topics of interest to new faculty (library resources, sponsored research opportunities, advising 101) (48). An additional full day event occurs before the start of the spring semester for new faculty as well. This also provides more time to establish a network between the new faculty cohort and

support from the members of the NFOC. This event is also used to promote participation in Mosaic Mentoring; developed through collaborative efforts in a Faculty Learning Community in 2019, this culturally responsive, research-based model provides cross-departmental mentoring for new faculty (49). The program combines one-on-one mentoring with group events and offers personalized support outside of departments in an effort to help new faculty navigate institutional processes. Departments also mentor new faculty throughout their pre-tenure years in a manner consistent with disciplinary standards and departmental culture, in a more traditional approach. The effectiveness of these onboarding and support programs is regularly assessed through participant feedback and faculty retention data.

Foundations of Learning: Investing in Faculty Excellence

Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence

Student success is dependent on a commitment to faculty excellence, a recurring theme in SU's *2020-2025 Strategic Plan*. In response to Goal 1, Objective 4, which highlights the need to support faculty in various areas including teaching, research, and professional development, the Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFE) was established in 2022. This decision was informed by feedback from over 175 faculty members, gathered through working sessions at Faculty Development Day in 2021, and in response to a faculty development need assessment survey in fall 2021 (50,51). CAFE has since developed as a centralized unit that supports faculty in the areas of teaching, research, professional development, and personal wellness, and does so either directly or through coordination of efforts across campus. For example, collaborations between Instructional Design & Delivery (ID&D); the Disability Resource Center; Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and the Faculty Development Committee have contributed to a rich array of faculty development opportunities and initiatives around pedagogical best practices (52).

Instructional Design & Delivery

The development and expansion of CAFE has been in close collaboration with ID&D, which has historically served as the primary provider of instructional support. In addition to coordination of our campus supported learning management system (Canvas) and other instructional tools (such as Panopto, Turnitin, Camtasia, etc.), ID&D provides a state-of-the-art faculty development studio with computers, large-scale printer, and two recording rooms to create video and audio artifacts. A lightboard recording room allows faculty to produce videos while writing on a high-quality Sapphire glass, which is illuminated to display highly visible notes, sketches, and equations. The studio and recording rooms allow for faculty and Instructional Designers to consult and collaborate on various projects. In collaboration with the Associate Provost and the Faculty Development Committee (a Faculty Senate subcommittee (19)), ID&D helps coordinate faculty development opportunities throughout the academic year, including the annual Faculty Development Day, Teaching and Learning Conference, Faculty Learning Communities, and Thank a Teacher Week. These programs are regularly assessed and inform future opportunities (53).

ID&D also provides course and program support for distance education and online learning, including maintenance of the Online Learning Policy, which was last updated in summer 2020 to clarify course modalities (with the introduction of remote courses, which combined online with

required synchronous meetings) (1). Quality Matters (QM) standards for quality assurance in the design of online and hybrid courses is supported through ID&D and promoted through SOARING, a professional development opportunity to support faculty in the design and delivery of QM-aligned online courses (54–57). Through SOARING, QM-inspired course templates are created for all online programs. Instructional Designers in ID&D work with assigned units to help develop processes to ensure courses meet QM standards based on the unit’s culture. For programs interested in QM certification of courses, tiered levels of QM course review options exist. As of July 2024, SU has 10 official QM-certified courses with another QM program review in progress in the School of Nursing (56).

As technology becomes increasingly integral to all forms of teaching, ID&D has broadened its scope of services to support diverse faculty needs. This expansion builds upon ID&D’s longstanding commitment to assisting faculty with online learning, course design and development, and the integration of instructional software in various educational settings. The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically showcased ID&D’s capacity for comprehensive faculty support. Following then SU President Charles Wight’s March 11, 2020, announcement of a two-day university closure to facilitate the pivot to virtual teaching, ID&D swiftly organized “just-in-time” training sessions. On March 12 alone, they trained approximately one-third of the university’s faculty on essential tools like Panopto, Zoom, and Canvas. By May 2020, ID&D had developed a flexible professional development program, predating the USM OnTrack initiative, which offered personalized training based on faculty members’ existing online teaching skills. Summer 2020 saw remarkable progress: 206 faculty completed the Soaring Online Learning program, 880 virtual training sessions were conducted, and student employees were organized to support less tech-savvy faculty (58). ID&D’s comprehensive efforts extended beyond course conversion, encompassing assessment adjustments, MyClasses template development, and consultations on enhancing student engagement in virtual environments. These initiatives were instrumental in maintaining educational continuity, ultimately transforming ID&D’s role and highlighting its crucial importance to the university’s educational mission.

Impact of COVID-19 on Faculty Success

In addition to efforts by ID&D to support the faculty in course conversion, numerous other professional development opportunities were implemented to support faculty during the pandemic and then to facilitate realignment with faculty scholarship. Major events such as Faculty Development Day and the Teaching and Learning Conference were adapted for remote delivery, ensuring continued professional growth opportunities despite physical distancing requirements. Additionally, these adaptations allowed SU to invite USM partners to attend our professional development opportunities, and vice versa; SU now has the opportunity to attend workshops that previously were not accessible because of our rural location. An early example of this was the USM Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation’s efforts to organize a virtual showcase in 2021, “Silver Linings: Lessons Learned from Teaching During the Pandemic.” This USM-wide event aimed to honor faculty efforts and explore innovations that could be carried into post-pandemic teaching practices. Several innovative approaches created by SU faculty were showcased, including, “The Connective Power of Video Feedback and Video Messaging,” which explored new ways of providing student feedback; “Global Learning Without Leaving Your Seat: International Classroom Collaborations During COVID and Beyond” discussed virtual international partnerships; “Lab in the Time of COVID: Hybrid and Remote Labs for General

Chemistry” detailed adaptations made to laboratory courses; and “Silver Lining in the Liberal Arts: Fulton Remote Teaching Specialists,” which provided an overview of the faculty development program implemented in the Fulton School of Liberal Arts to support remote teaching during the pandemic (59).

Recognizing the need to help faculty reestablish their scholarship and prioritize personal wellness after the pandemic, SU implemented initiatives like the Summer Writing Program (SWP). This program was designed to help faculty achieve their writing goals through strategies for goal setting, efficient writing practices, and accountability, and was modeled after the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity’s 14-Day Writing Challenge SWP agenda, emails, surveys, and outputs (60). The first cohort of 35 faculty came together after a long period of isolation to recommit to their own scholarship and success. This community met weekly to discuss progress, overcome challenges, and support each other’s progress. While targeting pre-tenure faculty, the program was open to all, supporting the creation of various scholarly outputs such as book prospectuses, journal articles, and grant proposals (60). Additionally, the Faculty Senate led efforts to enact policy changes to protect faculty whose research progression was impacted. These efforts resulted in modifications to the tenure and promotion (T&P) process, ensuring that requests to postpone T&P reviews would be considered with understanding and flexibility (61).

Providing Students a Holistic Academic Experience

SU’s commitment to High-Impact Practices (HIPs) is emphasized in the strategic plan (SP1.3) and demonstrated through the design of the General Education program and commitment to internships, undergraduate research and creative activity, community engagement, Living Learning Communities, athletics, registered student organizations, and nationally competitive fellowships. Through these HIPs, SU enriches academic success and student development while demonstrating compliance with Standard IV, Criteria 4.

Internships

SU offers numerous experiential learning opportunities, aligning with the University’s strategic emphasis of HIPs (SP1.1.4). These hands-on experiences enhance students’ education and career readiness. Virtually all departments offer academic credit for internship experiences, and many programs require an internship as part of the regular curriculum. The credit hour equivalencies for internships are set according to the standards established by MHEC and can be found in COMAR. Internship credits are calculated with one credit hour awarded for every 45 hours of supervised internship activities. In addition to on-site supervision, students must meet with SU faculty according to the requirements set by each academic department. Some departments or programs have alternative centers for applied experiences housed within the University. Among these active learning centers are the Center for Applied Mathematics and Science, the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative, the Business Economic and Community Outreach Network of the SU Franklin P. Perdue School of Business, the Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture, Henson Medical Simulation Center, and the Dave and Patsy Rommel Center for Entrepreneurship.

Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity

As part of its commitment to a rigorous, engaging undergraduate experience, SU emphasizes the importance of undergraduate research and creative activity. In 2016, the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (OURCA) was created to centralize campus efforts to promote and support undergraduate research and creative activities. Since OURCA's launch, efforts have focused on raising overall student participation and expanding opportunities across disciplines. To increase participation, a peer model was introduced in 2017 with Undergraduate Research Fellows (URF) serving as ambassadors. Since its inception, OURCA has had several cohorts of diverse student leaders serving as URFs, representing a wide range of disciplines. URFs are selected to represent the diversity of SU's student body, encompassing a wide range of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Their diverse perspectives and experiences help promote participation in undergraduate research and creative activities across the larger student body.

SU continues to make a strong financial commitment to best support undergraduate research. Numerous student grant opportunities exist to support travel, materials, or summer stipends, including the University Student Academic Research Awards, Fulton Student Research Grants, Graduate Student Research and Presentation Grants, National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) travel awards, summer student scholars grants, Henson undergraduate research grants, and the Guerrieri summer research fellowship (62–65). Likewise, faculty have internal grant opportunities to support their work through the Building Research Excellence grant or through faculty mini-grants (62). SU maintains an institutional membership with the Council on Undergraduate Research and regularly sends large cohorts of student researchers to NCUR, consistently placing SU among the top 5% of universities best represented. At the institutional level, SU hosts an annual Student Research Conference (SUSRC), which has grown significantly since its inception in 1998. In 2024, the SUSRC featured over 140 student scholars presenting their research to the campus and community (66). In 2018, SU hosted its inaugural Posters on the Bay event, where students annually present their research to state legislators in Annapolis (67). In fall 2019, Salisbury University celebrated the launch of the first undergraduate student research journal in its history: *Laridae* (68). Created to complement and highlight the great works produced by SU's undergraduate student body, *Laridae* is a student-led effort with support through OURCA and the Graduate School.

Community engagement

SU is proud to be designated by the Carnegie Foundation with its Community Engagement Classification (69), reflecting our commitment to civic engagement. As will be described in depth in Chapter 5, SU provides supportive infrastructure for community engagement through various offices on campus. The Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE) under Academic Affairs plays a crucial role in situating community engagement as an element of academic programs, while the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (CSIL) under Student Affairs offers regular opportunities for students to engage outside of the classroom.

Living Learning Communities

Since 2007, SU has offered Living Learning Communities (LLCs) to first-year students, allowing them to build networks with peers sharing similar academic interests (70). These LLCs provide a unique experience where students live on the same residence hall floors, take classes

together, and participate in shared activities. Each LLC is guided by a faculty leader who teaches one of the common courses. The success of this HIP is evident in the most recent cohort data (2016-2022), where LLC participants achieved higher first-year grade point averages (GPAs) than non-participants (3.12 vs. 3.02). In terms of retention, LLC students are more likely to continue into their second year at SU (83% vs. 79%) (71).

The program's effectiveness has led to increased participation and an expansion in the number of LLCs available to students. For fall 2024, 10 LLCs were available to students and included: Biomedical Science; Communication; Early and Elementary Education; Environment and Sustainability; Honors; Performing Arts; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Social Justice and Community Engagement; Visual Arts; and Wellness.

For students with shared mindsets or experiences beyond the classroom who have different academic interests, SU is approaching its second year of the Special Interest Housing (SIH) pilot program. Beginning in fall 2023, SU offered students a chance to be a part of their own peer groups, which included University Spirit; Transfer; and Student Advocacy, Inclusion and Leadership (SAIL). For fall 2024, SIH options include a First-Generation Sea Gull Scholars Community, Transfer, and IDEAAA (Inclusion, Discovery, Equity, Allyship, Accessibility, and Advocacy) (70).

Athletics

SU has an outstanding athletics program with a national reputation for excellence on the field and in the classroom. Since 2001, the College Sports Communicators have recognized 50 Sea Gulls as Academic All-Americans, and the Capital Athletic Conference (CAC) has named 11 Salisbury University students as CAC Scholar-Athlete of the Year since 1999 (72). The commitment to academic success is evident in the higher graduation and retention rates of SU student-athletes compared to their non-athlete peers. For example, the cohort of students entering in fall 2017 (the most recent data available) had a 67% graduation rate in six years, while 77% of student-athletes graduated during that same period. Athletic graduation rates and other data are annually reported to the USM and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (73). The *Student-Athlete Handbook* describes University expectations for student-athletes, including maintaining good academic standing and satisfactory progress toward graduation (74). The *Athletics Philosophy*, available through the main athletics website, provides an overview of key points from both handbooks (75). The statement emphasizes academics and establishes athletics as one part of the University rather than a separate interest. Many coaches require group study sessions and other academic activities throughout the year.

Registered Student Organizations

SU offers a range of extracurricular activities, primarily facilitated through the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (CSIL). CSIL oversees more than 120 student organizations, encompassing academic, cultural, service-oriented, and recreational pursuits. These organizations provide students with numerous opportunities to engage in campus life, develop leadership skills, and forge meaningful connections. SU's Greek life, consisting of 19 fraternities and sororities, plays a significant role in campus culture, fostering community and contributing to service initiatives and philanthropic efforts.

All registered student organizations (RSOs) (including special interest clubs, academic clubs, some club sports, fraternity and sorority chapters and councils) are required to register once

every year on the student organization management platform Involved@SU, submit and regularly update a governing constitution, attend monthly SGA Forums, attend mandatory trainings, maintain membership at a minimum of 10 members, and have a campus advisor who is a full-time SU employee responsible for ensuring all SU policies and procedures are followed. Fraternities, sororities, and select RSOs operate as local chapters of national organizations, which may entail additional responsibilities.

While most RSOs have no academic restrictions for membership, there are notable exceptions. Operational organizations with paid executive board members require members to maintain a 2.5 GPA. Club sports participants must be in good academic standing, with a minimum 2.0 GPA. Greek life organizations have more stringent requirements: prospective members must have completed at least 12 college credits and maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA to be eligible for membership in a fraternity or sorority chapter. These academic standards ensure students can balance their extracurricular involvement with their primary academic responsibilities (76).

Nationally Competitive Fellowships

A key component of SU's commitment to student success is its focus on providing access to nationally competitive scholarships and experiences. The Nationally Competitive Fellowships Office (NCFO) plays a crucial role in this effort. This office assists students in locating suitable scholarships and fellowships, hosts information sessions to educate students about available opportunities, and provides comprehensive support to candidates throughout the application process. This includes guidance on personal statements, interviews, and other application components. Since 2018, Salisbury has been recognized as a Top Producer of Student Fulbrights, and in 2022, SU was recognized as the No. 1 producer of Fulbright Students among institutions in the Master's Large Carnegie Classification (77,78). This prestigious acknowledgment underscores the University's commitment to fostering global engagement and academic excellence among its student body.

Support of the Student Experience

SU offers a robust program of student support services continually assessed and modified to meet our students' evolving needs. Many of the programs are the result of collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs divisions, demonstrating the University's commitment to serve students with a holistic approach to maximize their chances at success. Some of these support programs are clearly connected to academic achievement, but others align with the University mission in a more tangential, yet still critically important, manner. Ultimately, student recruitment, engagement, retention, and graduation are the responsibility of all members of the University community. More information about orientation and transition programs for students can be found in Chapter 4. Academic support services, athletics, residence life, cultural programming, and other seemingly disparate initiatives all have a singular goal: to offer SU students the opportunity to succeed both inside and outside the classroom from the moment they commit to SU.

Academic Support Services

SU Libraries

The Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons is SU's main library facility and provides the largest study space on campus, including hundreds of computers and 15 group study rooms (13 of them reservable). Its resources include print and electronic books and journals, nearly 200 databases, DVDs, and streaming media. The MakerLab offers 3D printing, 3D scanning, and laser cutting and engraving equipment. The Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture on the fourth-floor houses unique materials like original manuscripts and artifacts relating to the region, as well as University archives. Reserve holdings, including some textbooks, are available at the Library Service Desk, where students can borrow technology such as iPads and laptops, print color copies, and get help from librarians in finding and using resources for research papers. The library also provides a Lactation Room and a Family Study Room with materials to entertain young children while the student-parent is able to study. A library facility in Conway Hall 226, the Dr. Ernie Bond Curriculum Resource Center, provides a large collection of juvenile literature, puppets, and curriculum materials as well as study space (79).

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center serves 25-27% of all SU students each year. The center is a place where writers can meet to talk about their work with trained peer (undergraduate and graduate) or professional consultants. Services are available in-person and remote synchronously to all SU students. The center's mission is to provide opportunities for writers to seek thoughtful feedback about their work; to increase the confidence, versatility and competence of all writers, in all disciplines; to help writers reconsider and refine their ideas so they can revise their writing in meaningful ways; and to support classroom writing instruction by partnering with SU faculty members (80).

Since 1984, SU has been a Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) campus, committed to supporting students to strengthen their writing by training faculty to design and assess writing-intensive assignments in their disciplines (81–83). These efforts are also coordinated through the UWC. The UWC also launched a workshop series in fall 2024 for FYS courses focused on the associated course and program SLOs with detailed pre- and post-semester surveys and post-workshop surveys on student learning dispositions. About 50% of the first-time student cohort completed the pre-semester survey, providing valuable insight into students' expectations and growth mindset across the academic year through their interactions with the UWC. Collectively, SU's Writing Program (First Year Writing, University Writing Center, and Writing Across the Curriculum) recently received the prestigious Conference on College Composition and Communication Writing Program Certificate of Excellence for their "impressive work in creating equity throughout the program(s)" and highlighted "the significant expansion of the university's writing center services, outreach, and tutor preparation" (84).

Center for Student Achievement (CSA)

The Center for Student Achievement focuses on addressing key components that have traditionally challenged students in higher education, such as study skills and time management. The center offers an opportunity to develop skills that will enhance students' academic potential, including test taking, note taking, time management, study skills, and organizational tools.

Students are meet with the staff on a one-to-one basis, providing students the individualized attention they may need to achieve success. In addition, the CSA offers GENL 103, Advanced Learning Strategies, a seven-week, one-credit course that students can enroll in based on self-identification or GPA for additional academic support around general learning, time management, study skills, and tutoring.

Tutoring is available for 40 different courses. The CSA also coordinates supplemental instruction (SI), which is an academic support program that targets historically difficult courses. SI leaders support over 70 sections of instruction each semester, providing peer-facilitated study sessions that integrate “how to learn” with “what to learn.” These collaborative learning strategies create an active learning environment and facilitate higher grades for participants (85,86). At the center, students have access to study space, computers, Praxis preparatory exams, tutors, and other academic success programs. The center also highlights students who exemplify academic success in the classroom through the “Scholar Holler” program. The CSA’s tutoring program is certified as a Level 1 tutor training program by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) (87).

Discipline-Specific Tutoring and Academic Support

While the majority of tutoring is offered through the CSA, other opportunities exist through the Mathematics and Computer Science Tutoring Center (the Math Emporium) and the Chemistry Support Center. Departmental tutoring also is available in Geography, French, and Spanish.

Mathematics and Computer Science Tutoring Center (the Math Emporium): The Math Emporium is centrally located in the Guerrieri Academic Commons, opening the first day of the second week of class and remaining available until the last day of classes each semester to best serve students. Students can drop in any time during business hours to take advantage of this program. Those enrolled in lower-level courses from other departments that cover similar mathematical content to 100- and 200-level courses are welcome to use these tutoring services with priority given to students seeking help with Mathematics or Computer Science courses (88).

The Chemistry Support Center (CSC): Established in fall 2021 to provide academic assistance to SU students enrolled in chemistry courses, regardless of their major, the CSC is open Monday-Friday during spring and fall semesters, and it complements faculty office hours, making it easier for students to access help. Chemistry faculty and student tutors staff the center, offering about 30 hours per week of homework assistance, study support, and tutoring for most chemistry courses, with a focus on lower-division classes like CHEM 101, 121, 122, 221, and 222. The majority of users come from Pre-Nursing, Biology, Exercise Science, and Chemistry programs, with CHEM 121 and 221 being the most sought-after courses for assistance. The CSC averages 400 student visits per month. In fall 2023, 55% of enrolled Chemistry students utilized the center at least once (89).

Additionally, the Mathematical Sciences and Chemistry departments implement innovative strategies to support student progress. These include offering lower-level, seven-week courses for students who need additional preparation before advancing to higher-level courses, and a chemistry diagnostic test piloted in summer 2023 to improve course placement accuracy.

Advising (first-year, transfer, faculty mentors)

SU follows a faculty-centered student advising model, where students are assigned faculty mentors beginning their second year. Prior to this, each full-time, first-time (or “freshman”) college student is connected to a professional academic advisor in the Academic Advising Center. Professional academic advisors are assigned based on the student’s college/school. Exploratory Studies (undeclared) students are also assigned a professional academic advisor based on their area(s) of interest. The academic advisor is responsible for assisting the students with understanding degree requirements, planning coursework, developing their understanding of academia at the university level, and connecting them to campus resources. At the completion of their freshman year, students are assigned a faculty mentor within their major to advise them throughout the remainder of their undergraduate career. Students meet with their faculty mentor at least once each semester to schedule courses for the upcoming semester and discuss overall career goals and strategies for success. Students understand they are responsible for their own academic progress and must meet all University and departmental requirements described in SU’s academic catalog. To plan effectively, students are expected to regularly review their progress toward completion of these academic requirements through GullNet (SU’s online portal where students can see their schedules, check their grades, manage billing and financial aid matters, register for classes, withdraw from classes, etc.).

Each individual school/college is assigned a professional academic advisor who is available to complement faculty advising, while also supporting specialized tasks like graduation clearance and waiver requests. Pre-professional programs have extensive group advising specific to their fields. The Health Professions Advisory Program in the Henson School of Science and Technology, for example, helps guide students through the complex process of preparation for health-related careers (90). Other professional programs, such as Business, Social Work, and Education, have similar advising processes. Some academic units, like the Fulton School of Liberal Arts, have student peer advisors and mentors. The Fulton Student Ambassadors (FSA) are outstanding liberal arts representatives available to speak to classes, participate in events, and offer peer guidance on advising and career development (91). These students are trained by staff in both the Academic Advising Center and Career Services.

SU uses the Education Advisory Board (EAB) Student Success Platform to help professional academic advisors and faculty guide students into courses and majors where they would have a good chance of success. This platform allows faculty to analyze which courses are the best predictors of student success (i.e., graduation) within their academic major and to set the level of performance considered a “success marker” for crucial courses. Advisors can track students’ progress against these success markers and other risk factors to facilitate timely interventions for at-risk students.

Career Services

Career Services prepares students for a lifetime of success after graduation, including state-of-the-art career assessments to resume and cover letter development, to mock interviews and graduate school applications. Career counselors work with students on selecting the right major for their future aspirations and help students identify internship opportunities or summer employment that could lead to more permanent positions. Career Services hosts job fairs throughout the year, including specialized fairs for fields such as Education and Business. Career

Services also support a Career Closet, a well-organized collection of donated business attire that students can take as needed for free.

One important ongoing assessment is the First Destination Survey, which tracks students' employment shortly before graduation and six-to-nine months after graduation. The results of the survey are made publicly available on the University website, providing current and prospective students, and their families, with information that can be utilized when selecting a major. Our most recent survey of those who graduated in May 2024 noted that 54% of students planned to work full- or part-time, with another 15% of graduates headed to graduate school. 62% of students did at least one internship during their time at SU, with 25% of this group receiving full-time job offers (92–94).

Support for Diverse Student Populations

Recognizing the distinct needs of undergraduate and graduate students, SU has tailored support strategies for each population. Mentoring and leadership development programs, such as Powerful Connections and TRiO, further enhance the student experience and promote equity in outcomes. Students are introduced to these services before the semester starts through Sea Gull Start-Up and First Flock. Additionally, the University provides introductory welcome week programs for specific populations; DRC (through the STARS program), Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (through Powerful Connections), and TRiO (federal support for students who are first generation low-income, and/or have a disability). Each of these programs encourage connections and provide new students with upper class student mentors and are further described in Chapter 3.

International Student and Scholar Services

International Student and Scholar Services addresses the needs of an expanding population of international students on campus. The services are coordinated by the international student advisor, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS)-designated school official, who assists students in the completion of the various documents required to gain and maintain approved status with the DHS and Department of State. The advisor also assists international students with cultural adjustment as well as personal and academic concerns through individual counseling and/or referral. Orientation to campus and the greater Salisbury area, health and insurance information, academic and personal counseling, as well as providing cultural programs to integrate international and American students are all a part of introducing international students and scholars to their new way of life (95,96).

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The Disability Resource Center provides guidance, access to resources, and accommodations for students with disabilities. Such disabilities could include medical, psychiatric, learning disabilities, mobility, and visual and hearing impairments. After a student has self-identified to the center, by contacting the office directly, they may begin the process of registering with the DRC (97–100).

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODI) assists SU's multicultural student population with environmental adjustment. This is accomplished by maintaining open lines of

communication with faculty and staff, and systematically assessing the needs and campus experiences of the student population. Services and programs provided reflect SU’s students’ interests and concerns and serve to enhance the intellectual and multicultural experiences of all students. Sponsored activities represent a part of an institutional commitment to create and foster an environment that values diversity while encouraging an appreciation and respect for differences. Two major initiatives include:

Powerful Connections: An intercultural orientation program for students of diverse backgrounds meant to help new students acclimate to the campus community. The program provides opportunities for students to connect with upper-class students of diverse backgrounds for peer mentoring. In addition, Powerful Connections collaborates with the Academic Advising Center to support new Powerful Connections students through their sophomore year, ensuring they stay on track academically and connect with various campus resources. This program has proven to be a vital component for success for new students at Salisbury University. The program’s effectiveness is demonstrated by the second-year retention rate of 86% for the 2022 cohort, compared to 80.2% for the First-Time Student (FTS) cohort of that same year. This higher retention rate was achieved while maintaining a competitive first-year cumulative GPA of 2.79, nearly matching the overall FTS cohort’s GPA of 2.80. Notably, Powerful Connections students showed stronger retention rates compared to FTS minority students (79.3%), FTS African American students (78.5%), and FTS PELL recipients (75.6%). Likewise, the 2017 cohort data demonstrate the effectiveness of the Powerful Connections program. Among the 63 Powerful Connections students, 50.8% graduated in four years, 65.1% in five years, and 69.8% in six years. These rates consistently outperformed the overall First-Time Student (FTS) population, as well as specific subgroups such as minority students, African American students, and PELL recipients. For instance, the six-year graduation rate for Powerful Connections students (69.8%) was higher than that of the overall FTS population (67.4%) and significantly higher than FTS minority students (60.0%). These figures demonstrate the program’s effectiveness in supporting diverse student populations and promoting academic success (101,102).

Table 7. Powerful Connection Retention and Grades: 2022 Cohort

2022 Cohort	Headcount	2nd Year Retention	1st Year Cumulative GPA
Total Powerful Connections Students	43	86.0%	2.79
FTS	1,378	80.2%	2.80
FTS Minority*	415	79.3%	2.47
FTS African-American	214	78.5%	2.27
FTS PELL Recipients	405	75.6%	2.48

Table 8. Powerful Connection Graduation rates: 2017 Cohort

2017 Cohort	# of Students	4 Year Graduate	%	5 Year Graduate	%	6 Year Graduate	%
Total Powerful Connections Students	63	32	50.8%	41	65.1%	44	69.8%
FTS	1324	647	48.9%	865	65.3%	893	67.4%
FTS Minority*	325	121	37.2%	180	55.4%	195	60.0%
FTS African-American	172	68	39.5%	95	55.2%	103	59.9%
FTS PELL Recipients	319	125	39.2%	180	56.4%	193	60.5%

First Generation Sea Gull Scholars Program: SU's first programmatic commitment to supporting all undergraduate first-generation students throughout their tenure. This opt-in program for current first generation –college students fosters collaboration to ensure access, success, and celebration for these students as they navigate the higher education landscape. This is supported by a cross-divisional committee, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni working together to support this important population of students (103).

Veteran Services

One of the special student groups that SU serves is military veterans; the University has been named a Military Friendly school annually since 2009, in part due to policies for accepting military credit (104). Articulated on the Veterans page on the University's website and in the Veterans page on the Registrars site, SU reviews and accepts military credits based on an evaluation of a student's official Joint Services Transcript. Credit is awarded according to widely accepted standards:

- American Council on Education (ACE) College Credit Recommendation Service
- American Council on Education (ACE) Military Guide
- College level Examination Program (CLEP)
- DANTES Subject Standardized Test (DSST) Program
- Joint Services Transcripts (JST)
- Advanced Placement (AP) Program of the College Board
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams

Priority enrollment is offered for our veteran, active duty, and reserve students, and SU has a military activation policy that does not penalize a student due to military activation.

Additionally, faculty and staff have the opportunity to engage in support offerings, including Green Zone Training (to support SU's military-affiliated students), Safe Spaces training that fosters inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ people through strengthened organizational practices and active allyship, and the First-Generation Sea Gull Scholars Program that ensures access and success for our first-generation students throughout their time at SU (103,105,106).

Health and Wellness Support

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center offers on-campus counseling, telehealth, and a wide variety of outreach activities. Counselors support students experiencing issues, such as adjustment to college life, low self-esteem, loss/separation, sexual identity concerns, anxiety, depression, and relationship concerns. Group counseling, individual counseling, and crisis intervention are available by attending an initial appointment that is scheduled online or over the phone. Students may walk into the Center for an initial appointment or if they are in crisis. Staff members in the Counseling Center are licensed in the State of Maryland and have years of experience working with college students and their concerns. The Counseling Center offers access to TimelyCare, an external tele-mental health service provider that is free for all students. Services provided included TalkNow, 24/7 mental health support; scheduled counseling sessions with a licensed provider; psychiatric medication management; and live and on-demand yoga, meditation, and educational

sessions. Expanding its care beyond campus, the Counseling Center has a strong relationship with the Wicomico County Mobile Crisis Team.

The center is accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS), which is committed to furthering the visibility of counseling services on university and college campuses and improving their quality. IACS has evolved standards that define professional excellence and has established criteria for accreditation that reflect these standards. The Counseling Center was first accredited by IACS in 2002, and the most recent site visit took place in 2018. The Counseling Center has maintained accreditation to date (107,108).

SU Cares

SU Cares (case management) is a centralized clearinghouse of support services to help students experiencing non-academic barriers to success. SU Cares provides comprehensive non-clinical interventions, which include short-term crisis intervention, referrals to campus and community resources, wellness appointments for conduct policy violations, care connection for students involved with the Office of Institutional Equity, and support for medical withdrawals. In addition, another critical role is the active participation on the Care Team (behavioral intervention team). Additional partnerships include participation in wellness initiatives focused on ATOD (alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs). The success of this office is rooted in collaborative efforts across the campus and surrounding community. SUCARES services on average 125 students per semester (109).

Student Health Services

Student Health Services provides services to current undergraduate and graduate students. Primary care services include, but are not limited to allergy injections, chronic disease management, gynecological and well-woman exams, acute and minor illness, immunizations, physicals and health screenings, prescription services, laboratory services, psychological medical treatment and referral, STD and pregnancy prevention, self-care center with free over-the-counter medications and free condoms, and peer education and outreach. Student Health Services is staffed by Nurse Practitioners, Physicians, and a Registered Nurse. SHS has been accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care for over 15 years.

In addition, in a collaborative effort between Student Affairs and Student Health Services, SU is committed to an alcohol, tobacco, and drug-free learning and working environment and adheres to the responsibilities set forth in applicable local, state, and federal laws. All members of the University community, visitors, and guests are required to comply. The University provides education and prevention resources related to the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs and utilizes educational strategies to increase awareness of drug, alcohol, or tobacco use (110). For the benefit of our students, faculty, and staff, the University complies with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986, as well as the State of Maryland's Substance Abuse Policy (Executive Order 01.01.1991.16). Additionally, in accordance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA), each postsecondary institution in the United States that participates in Title IV student aid programs must annually distribute, in writing, to each student and employee, information about the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program. The University conducts a biennial review of the Drug and Alcohol Prevention Plan and the accompanying educational and communication strategies (110). The 2020-2025 Drug and Alcohol Prevention Plan and Annual Updates demonstrate compliance with

this policy, as well as Middle States Requirements of Affiliation, Standard II: Ethics and Integrity, criteria 8, and Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 4.

Cooperative Efforts and Continual Improvement

The University uses Navigate, an online referral system, for faculty and staff to connect students with various campus resources such as the Center for Student Achievement, Career Services, Academic Advising Center, University Writing Center, SU Cares, and others based on specific needs. This provides continuity of care between different units and provides the academic faculty advisor more context to support their advisees. Referral data can also be leveraged to track usage metrics, which, in collaboration with UARA, allows student support units to analyze the impact of their services on success indicators, including retention and graduation rates.

Impact of COVID-19 on Student Support and Lessons Learned

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unique challenges for SU as a primarily residential campus. Collaborative efforts allowed the rapid implementation of flexible learning and living options to accommodate student needs. The University offered specialized housing for students who wished to remain on campus while taking classes online, ensuring a safe living environment.

Quarantined spaces were established for sick students, and meals were delivered from Dining Services. To support student retention during this challenging time, SU provided emergency grants and distributed Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) money (111).

Academic departments across the university made specific accommodations to meet student needs while adhering to accreditation standards. Courses with laboratory components coordinated packaging and mailing of lab materials to allow continuation of learning. Academic support services were significantly adapted to meet the new reality. The Center for Student Achievement opened a testing center staffed with graduate-level proctors, while services such as the University Writing Center, the Disability Resource Center, and Academic Advising Center transitioned to online platforms.

Recognizing the importance of student engagement beyond academics, SU redesigned its student programming for online participation. The Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (CSIL) developed a variety of online program offerings, ensuring students could maintain social connections and participate in extracurricular activities despite physical distancing requirements.

Proactive steps were taken to manage communication and health concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic (112). SU created a dedicated COVID-19 webpage, serving as a central hub for clear and timely information for the campus community. In a strategic move to address the specific challenges posed by the virus, SU established Campus Health, a separate entity from its existing Student Health Services. This new unit was tasked with managing COVID-19 testing and vaccination efforts for the entire campus population, including faculty and staff. To further enhance safety measures, SU developed a comprehensive notification system that alerted relevant parties about students or employees who were unable to be on campus due to either testing positive for COVID-19 or being exposed to the virus and not yet cleared to return. This notification system has remained in place to indicate non-health related reasons that a student should not be in class.

SU established a dedicated COVID-19 archive in April 2020, which was spearheaded by the SU Libraries (113). This serves as a comprehensive repository documenting the institution's response to the pandemic and its impact on the campus community. The archive collects a diverse range of materials, including journal entries, social media posts, photographs, videos, essays, and interviews, providing a multifaceted record of this unprecedented period. By encouraging contributions from students, faculty, and staff, the project not only preserves valuable historical data but also fosters community engagement and offers a potential therapeutic outlet for reflection. This archival effort underscores SU's dedication to transparency, historical preservation, and creating resources for future research and crisis management strategies.

Through careful evaluation of the effectiveness of emergency measures implemented during 2020, SU identified and maintained several successful initiatives across various support services. The University Writing Center expanded its virtual session offerings and now trains all consultants to conduct online sessions, enhancing accessibility for all students. The Disability Resource Center continues to offer Zoom intake appointments, providing flexible options for students with diverse needs. The Center for Student Achievement maintains virtual tutoring and success coaching options. The Academic Advising Center retained virtual meeting options for both students and faculty mentors, improving scheduling flexibility and engagement. The Counseling Center's decision to continue providing TimelyCare, a 24/7 on-demand mental health support service, demonstrates the University's ongoing commitment to student well-being. Additionally, the increased hybrid offerings for events, meetings, and trainings in programs such as Social Work and Education Curriculum and Instruction reflect SU's responsiveness to evolving educational needs. These sustained changes, born from necessity but retained due to their demonstrated success, showcase SU's agility in adapting its services to better serve students and faculty, while continuously improving its educational and support offerings.

Student Conduct and Campus Judicial Affairs

Salisbury University's Code of Community Standards establishes behavioral expectations for all students to ensure the safety and welfare of the university community (114,115). Housed within the Dean of Students Office, Student Accountability and Community Standards (SACS) supports SU's educational mission by helping maintain a campus community in which high standards of courtesy and integrity are practiced by every member (116,117). The code applies to conduct on university property, at university-sponsored events, and off-campus when it affects a substantial university interest. Various behaviors incompatible with our core set of values are prohibited, including, but not limited to, acts of violence, alcohol and drug violations, disorderly conduct, academic disruption, fire safety violations, hazing, and property violations. The Code of Community Standards details procedures for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating alleged violations. A preponderance of evidence standard is used to determine responsibility, and students are allowed to have advisors present during the disciplinary process. Possible sanctions range from warnings to dismissal from the university. The appeal process is clearly described in the Code of Community Standards. Disciplinary records are maintained separately from academic transcripts and are typically retained for five years or until graduation, with records of suspensions and dismissals kept indefinitely.

Cases involving allegations of academic misconduct are handled through Academic Affairs and the Academic Policies Committee (APC), a Faculty Senate committee that includes one Faculty member elected by and from each unit except the Library, and one Faculty member elected at-large; one undergraduate student selected annually in a manner determined by the Student Government Association; one graduate student selected by the Graduate Student Council in consultation with the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research; and the Dean of Students. Ex officio members include the Provost, the Registrar, and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The academic misconduct policy details procedures for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating alleged academic misconduct, as well as the process for student appeals (118).

SU has established the Student Academic Grievance Policy to give students a forum in which to address concerns related to academic matters (e.g. grade disputes and professional program dismissals when they do not involve an academic integrity violation). The policy provides a method for aggrieved students to express substantive complaints about academic matters and have them resolved in a timely fashion. If differences cannot be informally resolved, the student can begin the formal grievance process, which is coordinated through the Office of Academic Affairs (119).

Students may also file grievances involving issues of equal opportunity and affirmative action, sexual discrimination and misconduct, and other forms of discrimination with the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). The OIE is led by the Associate Vice President of Institutional Equity and Title IX Coordinator, who is responsible for training, prevention, and compliance on all issues regarding potential harassment or discrimination and is listed as the primary contact on sexual harassment posters displayed in all residence halls. Three additional staff specialize in compliance resolution, fair practices, and diversity. All student conduct processes are documented through Maxient.

A comprehensive list of policies, procedures and points of contacts for University students is readily available and students are expected to familiarize themselves and fully utilize any and all administrative policies, procedures and/or resources provided by the University (120).

Periodic Evaluation and Assessment

Periodic assessment and evaluation are necessary for continuous improvement. Examples of periodic assessments related to MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), III (Design and Delivery of the Study Learning Experience), IV (Support of the Student Experience), V (Educational Effectiveness Assessment), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement) are referenced below. These reports examine the effectiveness of various academic support services and provide evidence of data informed decision-making.

Annual

- Annual Academic department reports (121)
- College and Career Readiness, 55% Degree Completion Goal Report (122)
- Course Evaluations (123)
- Center for Student Achievement Assessment Reports (124)
- Center for Student Involvement and Leadership Assessment Reports (125)
- Counseling Center Assessment Reports (108)

- Dashboard Indicators Report (126)
- Faculty Extra-Instructional Productivity Survey (127)
- Financial Aid Assessment Reports (128)
- GULL Week Assessment Reports (36)
- Housing and Residence Life Dashboard and Reports (129)
- Managing for Results/Performance Accountability Report (130)
- Orientation, Transition, and Family Programs Assessment Reports (131)
- Programs on Cultural Diversity Report (132)
- Student Accountability and Community Standards Reports (117)
- Student Health Services Assessment Reports (133)
- TRIO Report (134)

Periodic (every two to five years)

- Academic Program Review (Progress Report and full review every seven years) (21,22)
- Academic Advising Center Assessment (135)
- Alumni Survey (136)
- Campus Climate Study (137)
- Carnegie Community Engaged Campus Report (69)
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report (38)
- Student Satisfaction Surveys (138)

Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

While SU demonstrates strong adherence to MSCHE standards, there are always opportunities for improvement and innovation, particularly in response to evolving student needs, academic programs, and workforce demands. A specific area for improvement has been identified in Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment.

SU's centralized assessment approach, managed by the University Analysis, Reporting, and Assessment (UARA) office, is a unique strength. UARA oversees university-wide assessments and supports individual schools, departments, and student support offices in their assessment efforts. UARA provides expertise in various accountability areas, including Academic Program Review, Accreditation, General Education, Institutional Research, Strategic Planning, and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, among others. UARA is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating institutional data in numerous reports on a regular basis based on State and federal reporting requirements. While UARA's website offers comprehensive resources and data to support data-informed decision-making, the working group's review found that the utilization of this information across the university community could be more clearly demonstrated. For instance, although GULL Week data on Student Learning Outcomes for General Education is readily available, the translation of these findings into classroom practice, especially across different modalities and regional centers, could be more explicitly documented.

As SU's student population diversifies and the University employs a new General Education program in fall 2024, improving communication around the assessment cycle will be crucial. This includes clearly demonstrating how assessment findings inform classroom instruction, student support, and program development.

Recommendations:

1. Create more opportunities for sharing assessment results and best practices to inform program development and support student success.
2. Establish an assessment strategy specific to First Year Seminar and Experiential Learning.

Salisbury University demonstrates a strong commitment to meeting and exceeding MSCHE standards. The University's comprehensive academic programs, robust student support services, emphasis on high-impact practices, support for faculty development, well-designed General Education program, and culture of assessment and continuous improvement provide an exceptional educational experience. By addressing the identified areas for improvement in assessment communication and utilization, SU will further strengthen its ability to prepare students for success in their personal and professional lives, in alignment with its mission of empowering active citizenship, gainful employment, and life-long learning in a democratic and interdependent world.

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Chapter 3

Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration (Standards I, II, III, VI)

This section demonstrates compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), III (Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement). SU’s core values include diversity and inclusion in recognition of the considerable educational benefits gained from engaging with people and ideas from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. SU is committed to providing the campus with the tools and resources needed to ensure that SU is a welcoming and inclusive living and learning environment – one that prepares students to excel in a global workplace and in diverse communities.

Introduction

A diverse and inclusive campus community brings invaluable quality to SU’s educational experience and work environment – strengthening 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. Inspiring a campus culture of inclusive excellence, support, and collaboration is one goal of the institution’s *2020-25 Strategic Plan*, and a commitment of the Salisbury Seven principles, which state:

- We will invest in the people who deliver on the promises we make to our students.
- We will have a continual commitment to inclusion, diversity, opportunity and equity, and the cultivation of a sense of belonging.

Diversity on Campus

In fall 2023, the University enrolled 7,030 undergraduate and graduate students. Of those students, more than 30% were from racially and/or ethnically diverse backgrounds (Chart 2) (1). The University has increasingly emphasized its desire to maintain a diverse campus, which is readily affirmed in the University’s trends and benchmarks. By comparison, in fall 2022, approximately 28% of SU’s overall student population were from racially and/or ethnically diverse backgrounds. Even more significant is

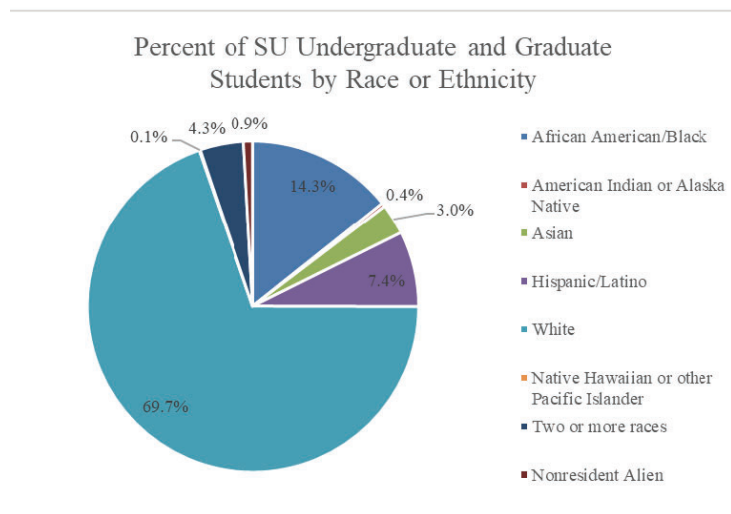


Chart 2. Percent of SU Students by Race or Ethnicity

the 10-year growth in racial and ethnic diversity on campus, which has grown by six percentage points, from 24% of our student population in fall 2013 to 30% in fall 2023 (Table 9). While overall enrollment has declined by 19% during the same 10-year period, the racial and ethnic diversity of our students has continued to increase.

This same trend of increased racial and ethnic diversity on campus is also seen among SU’s faculty. In fall 2013, 12% of SU’s faculty were from racial or ethnically diverse backgrounds, whereas 21% of faculty identified as such in 2023 (2,3).

SU’s commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging remains at the forefront of our priorities, and is demonstrated in the increased racial and ethnic diversity seen on our campus. As an institution, SU upholds and respects the diverse range of values and perspectives expressed by our community, and we have highlighted this commitment throughout our planning processes.

	% Minority	
	Fall 2013	Fall 2023
Minority Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty	16.1%	28.4%
Minority Non-tenure-Track/Other Faculty	8.9%	11.9%
TOTAL Minority Faculty	12.3%	21.0%
Minority Undergraduate Students	24.6%	30.3%
Minority Graduate Students	18.2%	30.7%
TOTAL Minority Students	24.2%	30.3%

Table 9. Percent Student, Faculty, and Staff Minority: Fall 2013 vs. 2023

Institutional Planning

SU has demonstrated a strong commitment to fulfilling Standard I: Mission and Goals, criteria 1, 3, and 4, as it relates to setting goals aligned with our institutional mission to create a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives. Through initiatives, support programs, and inclusive policies, SU has created a welcoming campus environment where all members of the University community feel respected, valued, and empowered to thrive. These programs and initiatives underscore SU’s dedication to promoting respect, diversity, and inclusivity as core values of the institution. Here, specific SU policies, procedures, and structures that demonstrate compliance with Standard II: Ethics and Integrity, criteria 1-5, are highlighted through various initiatives and evidence-based practices.

SU’s commitment to fostering a climate of respect and support is embedded across all levels of the University. Community members are reminded of this commitment through the mission, *Strategic Plan*, and Salisbury Seven pledges.

1. SU Mission Statement: 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 (4).
2. Strategic Plan: Goal 2: Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration (5)

3. Salisbury Seven Pledges (6):

- We will invest in the people who deliver on the promises we make to our students.
- We will have a continual commitment to inclusion, diversity, opportunity, and equity and the cultivation of a sense of belonging.

At SU, the strategic planning process is a collaborative and inclusive endeavor that involves key stakeholders from across the campus community. SU's most recent *Strategic Plan* began in 2020 and will conclude in 2025 (5).

Strategic Planning Policies and Process

Throughout fall 2018, conversations occurred with the governance groups to determine important issues for the University to consider in the coming years. The strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) identified by these groups were summarized into seven topics that guided focus groups held in spring 2019.

1. Affordability, Accessibility, and Attracting Students
2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
3. Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship
4. External Partnerships and Community Engagement
5. Academic Programs and Student Success
6. Funding Model and Business Practices
7. Campus Environment and Spaces

During spring 2019, SU hosted 21 focus groups for campus constituents to attend, as well as two additional focus groups for the SU Foundation and Alumni board members. Approximately 246 faculty, staff, and students registered to attend at least one of 21 focus group sessions (94 faculty, 126 staff, 26 students). For those unable to attend a focus group in person, a Canvas discussion board for Strategic Planning was created, and a method for submitting anonymous feedback was created. During the focus group sessions, a presentation on current higher education trends was shared to help inform the development of strategies the University could include in its next Strategic Plan. Following this presentation, each attendee was asked to consider several potential strategies that were developed as a result of the fall 2018 SWOT discussions with the governance groups. During these working sessions, attendees were asked to discuss these strategies and develop additional strategies with other attendees. Finally, attendees at each table displayed their collective ideas and everyone was asked to review all strategies and vote for those they thought should be prioritized. Time was provided at the end of each focus group session to discuss (7,8).

Certain themes and priorities were identified in the focus groups. Next, the draft plan was reviewed for alignment with State and USM-level priorities (9–11). Table 10 demonstrates the alignment between the State, USM, and SU plans.

Table 10. Alignment of State, USM, and SU Goals

2022 Maryland State Plan for Higher Education	State Performance Accountability Report (PAR) and Managing for Results Report (MFR)	USM Strategic Plan	SU Strategic Plan: 2020-2025
Goal 1: Access: Ensure equitable access to affordable and quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents.	Goal 2: Utilize strategic collaborations and targeted community outreach to benefit the University, Maryland, and the region.	Priority 5: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Goal 2: Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration
	Goal 3: The University will foster inclusiveness as well as cultural and intellectual pluralism.	Priority 2: Access, Affordability, and Achievement	Goal 3: Educate students for success in academics, Support Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence
			Goal 4: Deepen Engagement with Our Community
Goal 2: Success: Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success.	Goal 1: Provide a quality undergraduate and graduate academic and learning environment that promotes intellectual growth and success.	Priority 1: Academic Excellence and Innovation	Goal 1: Enrich Academic Success and Student Development
	Goal 4: Improve retention and graduation rates while advancing a student-centered environment.	Priority 5: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Goal 2: Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration
			Goal 3: Support Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence
Goal 3: Innovation: Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success.	Goal 2: Utilize strategic collaborations and targeted community outreach to benefit the University, Maryland, and the region.	Priority 3: Workforce and Economic Development	Goal 1: Enrich Academic Success and Student Development
	Goal 1: Provide a quality undergraduate and graduate academic and learning environment that promotes intellectual growth and success.	Priority 4: Research	Goal 3: Support Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence
	Goal 4: Improve retention and graduation rates while advancing a student-centered environment.	Priority 1: Academic Excellence and Innovation	Goal 4: Deepen Engagement with Our Community
			Goal 5: Enhance Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability

The final draft of the *Strategic Plan* included specific objectives the University wanted to achieve over the 2020-2025 strategic plan period. The *Strategic Plan* was subject to review and approval by relevant shared governance bodies, and upon approval, was disseminated widely throughout the University (5,12). Communication channels include the University website, town hall meetings, and other forums. SU demonstrates its compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 1 and 2, through its inclusive strategic planning process clearly linked to our institutional mission.

One important development to SU's planning process was implemented for the *2020-2025 Strategic Plan*. Recognizing the changing landscape of higher education when the plan was implemented in 2020, it was with promised that the University would revisit the plan and adjust periodically, if necessary.

Periodic Assessment and Revision of SU's Mission, Priorities, and Strategic Plan

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Mission of the University is periodically reviewed and revised. Additionally, in accordance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, progress toward achieving our *Strategic Plan* goals and priorities is evaluated annually. While the goals of *Strategic Plan* are comprehensively reviewed and updated every five years, periodically, the University will update the plan when evidence and trends suggest revisions are necessary.

Revisions to the Strategic Plan

In Maryland, when the Governor ordered mandatory shutdowns, it meant that higher education had to quickly pivot to new and innovative ways of educating students. As discussed in Chapter 2, SU transitioned its courses online so students could complete their coursework for the spring 2020 semester in the safety of their homes (13). Despite the monumental challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the success and resilience of our students, faculty, and staff persisted.

Throughout the pandemic, SU continued to make progress toward goals outlined in the *2020-2025 Strategic Plan*. The University worked tirelessly to maintain the academic quality of our programs and courses while protecting the health and safety of our campus community. Several surveys were conducted during the pandemic to determine if students were satisfied with the academic rigor of their courses and how we could improve course delivery given the social distancing constraints we were required to follow (14). However, the effects that COVID-19 had on our metrics of success could be seen in enrollment and retention rate declines. The University anticipated that over the next several years, there would be both short- and long-term impacts. As a result, changes to the *Strategic Plan* were made to adjust our priorities.

In March 2021, the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee divided into three subgroups to discuss each of the *Strategic Plan* goals and provide suggested modifications to the associated strategies and objectives. These suggestions incorporated lessons learned from the pandemic and new practices to ensure SU could continue to accomplish its strategic priorities. Many of the changes focused on adding or removing language from various objectives or strategies of each Strategic Goal (15–17).

During the pandemic, the University invested in faculty development opportunities to ensure hundreds of faculty could continue to offer quality educational programs and experiences through hybrid, remote, and fully online modalities. In addition, student support services such as the Center for Student Achievement, Academic Advising Center, University Writing Center, Counseling Center, and many others modified their services to provide both online and face-to-face support to students. The Office of Student Affairs personally spoke with over 80% of the student body early in the lockdown process to collect feedback and offer support (14). We learned that continuing to offer online and/or hybrid services was necessary. As a result of the resiliency and commitment of SU's students, faculty, and staff, we confronted these challenges together as a campus community.

Updates to the Budgeting System and Process

Another important update since the implementation of the *2020-2025 Strategic Plan* involves aligning budgetary allocations, staffing, and resources with the identified priorities. These improvements to our planning process demonstrate compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 3-5, 8, and 9. The Strategic Planning and Budgeting System (SPBS) is an online tracking tool used by various offices on campus to input strategic initiatives relevant to their unit and to the Strategic Plan (18).

For fiscal year 2023, the SPBS transitioned to tracking all major projects/initiatives aligned with the *Strategic Plan*. To ensure relevance, the alignment of the project with pertinent *Strategic Plan* goal(s) is identified. Next, key performance indicators or metrics are identified as well as projected milestones and associated personnel and estimate budget costs. A project lead must also be identified. This information is then used by the President's Cabinet, SPBC, and the Strategic Innovation Council (SIC) to assist with planning for the upcoming year. In the spring, any office with projects identified in the SPBS must share updates on their progress by inputting actual milestones accomplished and costs into the system.

The SPBS can be viewed by all faculty, staff, and students. The online system improves the efficiency of reviewing and providing updates on strategic priorities related to the University's *Strategic Plan*. It also establishes a monitoring mechanism to regularly assess progress, utilizing a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators. The strategic planning process at SU emphasizes adaptability, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the institution and its diverse stakeholders. This adaptive approach allows SU to respond effectively to emerging opportunities and challenges. The strategic planning process often integrates feedback from diverse perspectives to ensure that the final plan reflects the collective aspirations and needs of the University community. Additional information about the financial planning and budgeting processes at SU will be provided later in this chapter.

Managing for Results (MFR)/Performance Accountability Report (PAR) Assessments

By law, Maryland public colleges and universities must produce a report for the Governor and General Assembly, which is reviewed by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Both agencies have combined their request into one submission, called the Managing for Results (MFR)/Performance Accountability Report (PAR). The MFR/PAR is a strategic planning, performance measurement, and budgeting tool that emphasizes outcomes, accountability, and improvement in State government (19). Each institution describes how its mission is aligned with the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education, sets accountability goals and objectives, and identifies performance measures/assessments/KPIs. As SU's *Strategic Plan* has been linked to the State Plan, accomplishment of the goals outlined in the MFR/PAR also demonstrates progress toward institutional goals. Throughout the MFR/PAR, there is evidence of strategies developed to achieve the goals of the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education and SU's *Strategic Plan*. There is also evidence demonstrating how SU uses the data to improve student achievement and the curriculum. SU must review its goals, objectives, and performance measures annually for the MFR/PAR and provide data to show progress toward those goals. Should SU not make progress toward a goal, it must explain the lack of progress and indicate what it will do to address the situation. The MFR/PAR includes metrics and benchmarks for

enrollment, diversity, retention rates, graduation rates, graduate outcomes, and other key institutional and State objectives. Additional examples of metrics and outcomes included in the MFR/PAR can be found in Chapter 4.

USM Dashboard Indicator Metrics

Annually, the USM prepares a standard list of Dashboard Indicators (DBIs) for each USM campus which allow the BOR to examine progress made by each campus toward achieving identified goals in the USM Vision 2030 strategic plan (10,20). As SU's *Strategic Plan* has been linked to the USM strategic goals, see Chapter 3, the DBIs are a good tool to assess SU's progress toward accomplishing institutional goals. The data reported in the DBIs includes indicators related to facilities renewal, space utilization, enrollment, financial aid, student success, economic development, fiscal responsibility, and faculty. Institutional effectiveness is indicated through progress and benchmark indicators, some of which are set by performance peer data while other benchmarks are set by the BOR or the State. While the USM BOR uses this data to compare USM campuses, SU uses the data to evaluate progress on accomplishing enrollment, retention and graduation, and financial goals. As many institutional offices are involved in initiatives that impact this progress, the data is widely shared and discussed. The University commonly uses the DBIs to demonstrate evidence of its success in accomplishing our goals to the USM BOR and the State.

In accordance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 1, 2, 3, 4, and 13, additional metrics, reports, and summaries are provided to campus regularly to track institutional progress towards accomplishing our strategic priorities.

Institution-Level Reports:

- **Annual Report** Annual institutional report outlining the accomplishments from the prior year and future directions for the upcoming year (21).
- **Dashboard Indicators Report** Annual report and data demonstrating alignment of institutional level goals with USM goals and provides metrics to measure progress (20).
- **Enrollment Projections 2020-2024:** Annual 10-year projection for institutional enrollment (22).
- **Institutional Dashboard** Demonstrates enrollment, credit hours, and degree targets and progress through trend data (23).
- **Legislative Testimony 2018-2024** The University is required to present legislative testimony before the Maryland General Assembly in even numbered years during the legislative session. The President's testimony usually entails information regarding strategic programming efforts, highlights of University successes, and relevant data regarding particular legislative initiatives. The University is also required to answer any questions that are submitted by the Department of Legislative Services (24).
- **Managing for Results/Performance Accountability Report:** Annual report and data that demonstrates alignment of institutional level goals with State and USM goals and metrics to measure progress (19).
- **State of the University Address:** Annual Presidential address to the campus community outlining the accomplishments from the prior year and future directions for the upcoming year (25).

- **Strategic Planning and Budgeting System (SPBS)** Tracking tool for annually monitoring progress towards *Strategic Plan* goals. The SPBS tracks metrics, costs, and achievement of major projects funded for a given fiscal year (18).
- **Strategic Plan Metrics Dashboard** Planning dashboard updated annually demonstrating progress towards accomplishing the *Strategic Plan* KPIs (26).
- **Strategic Plan Highlights and Accomplishments:** Publications and presentations demonstrating progress towards the *Strategic Plan* goals and priorities (27).

Unit-Level Planning

The widespread involvement of the campus in the strategic planning process has benefited SU in many respects. The open and frequent communication about the *Strategic Plan* goals has ensured alignment of unit-level plans with our institutional priorities. To be compliant with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, all units are required to regularly evaluate their achievement of unit-level goals and use assessment results to improve the unit. Each Vice President sets unit-level goals aligned with the University's *Strategic Plan* and Salisbury Seven during their annual review with the President (28). These unit-level goals are then used to set department-level goals for department. Specific departmental reports are referenced below under the "Unit Level" heading and copies are provided in the Evidence Inventory. Each department may develop their own assessment procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of achieving departmental goals, but standard practice includes identifying metrics or KPIs and reporting on this data periodically. Finally, all staff set goals aligned with departmental goals through the annual PMP procedures (29,30).

The planning processes for individual units and departments are overseen at multiple levels to ensure alignment with the University's *Strategic Plan*. Similar to the process utilized by the USM and MHEC, Vice Presidents and Associate/Assistant Vice Presidents certify that the strategic plans developed by departments under their administrative office are aligned with the SU *Strategic Plan*. Some examples of unit-level plans and assessment reports are listed in Chapter 1 and can be found in the Evidence Inventory under Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement (28). Not only does the University regularly assess its progress towards *Strategic Plan* goals, but USM, MHEC, and DBM also annually require updates on the progress through the Managing for Results/PAR reporting processes (19).

Through these multitude of processes, SU ensures it is systematically assessing the *Strategic Plan*, prioritizing decisions, and allocating resources according to these priorities. Additionally, SU ensures unit-level plans are aligned with the University Mission and *Strategic Plan* and is monitoring toward these goals at multiple levels. Examples of unit-level plans can be found in the Evidence Inventory and include:

Unit Level

- **Academic Department Reports:** Reports submitted by to school/college Deans demonstrating accomplishments related to school/college level and SU's *Strategic Plan*. Reports include highlights and progress toward KPIs (enrollment, student credit hours, degree production) for the academic year (31).
- **Academic Program Review Reports:** Periodic reports that include an evaluation of fiscal and human resources, review of program-level outcomes with institutional goals,

identification and trend analysis of KPIs, and forecasting future needs. These reports include an internal evaluation and a review by an independent external reviewer (32).

- **Annual Budget Reports:** Report examining the institution's financial plans and providing a clear sense of understanding in the financial investments made toward realizing our mission. The report provides key information on SU's policies, goals, values, and priorities (33,34).
- **Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation Annual Report:** An annual look at KPIs for teacher educator programs in the Seidel School of Education, including accomplishments, challenges, and priorities for the school (35).
- **Climate Action Plan:** The Climate Action Plan is a framework that shapes the University's efforts to achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (36).
- **Faculty Extra-Instructional Productivity Survey:** Report tracking KPIs related to faculty productivity outside the classroom, including publications, research, service (on and off campus), and other scholarly activities (37).
- **Facilities Master Plan 2014-2023:** A framework for the physical growth and change of SU (2014-2023) based on projected enrollment growth and space needs. (Reviewed and updated in 2019) (38,39)
- **Fulton School Annual Reports:** Report summarizing activities and accomplishments within the Fulton School of Liberal Arts, including year-over-year advancements made by the school (40).
- **General Education Assessment Plan and Timeline:** Provides a timeline for assessing the SU General Education student learning outcomes (SLOs) and the assessment aligned with each of the SLOs (41).
- **Honors Strategic Plan 2014-2019** (42)
- **Information Technology Strategic Plan 2020-2025** (43)
- **Performance Management Process (PMP):** Employees set annual objectives for the upcoming fiscal year, evaluate progress on the prior year's objectives, and receive feedback from their supervisors. Annual objectives are set based on institutional priorities identified in the *2020-2025 Strategic Plan*. Each Vice President identifies the priorities for their division/unit, and objectives for staff are set based on these (29).
- **President's Advisory Team Minutes:** Transparent summaries of President's Advisory Team Meetings that demonstrate the progress initiatives are making toward institutional priorities and *Strategic Plan* goals (44).
- **President's Cabinet Reports:** Reports made by Vice Presidents each semester to President's Cabinet demonstrating progress initiatives are making toward institutional priorities and *Strategic Plan* goals (45).
- **Programs of Cultural Diversity Annual Report:** SU's annual report to the USM on programs related to cultural diversity and metrics of success of these programs (3).
- **Seidel School Strategic Plan** (46)
- **Strategic Planning and Budget Committee Presentations:** Reports demonstrating progress initiatives are making toward institutional priorities and *Strategic Plan* goals (47).
- **SU Libraries Strategic Plan:** The SU Libraries Strategic Plan identifies specific unit-level objectives for library, which are aligned with the Salisbury Seven goals (48)

- **SU Libraries Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan:** The SU Libraries Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan lays out the diversity, equity, and inclusion goals of the Libraries as a whole, guided and organized by the Libraries' Diversity and Inclusion Committee (49).

Structures Related to Planning

Prior to fall 2023, the University engaged students, faculty, staff, governance groups, and external partners on the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (47). The committee collaborated to identify institutional priorities, set goals, and develop strategies to achieve them. The SPBC, led by the Associate Vice President of Planning and Assessment, was primarily responsible for the review and revision of the SU *Strategic Plan*, as well as communicating this information across all segments of the campus communities, including the shared governance entities. During the development of a new strategic plan or modification of the current plan, transparency and inclusivity of the planning process is secured by engaging the SU community, at large, through a public call for feedback and focus groups.

During all planning processes, the University seeks engagement of the Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate Long Range Academic Planning Committee, Graduate Student Council, Student Government Association, Staff Senate, Adjunct Faculty Caucus, and other strategic planning committees. The President's Cabinet, and ultimately the President, review and approve the *Strategic Plan*. In 2023, President Lepre added the Salisbury Seven (6) as an addendum to the SU *Strategic Plan*, which will conclude in 2025. In addition to the aforementioned groups, for our next plan, feedback obtained from the Middle States Self-Study working groups and the MSCHE visiting team will also be used to inform future planning processes, programs, and initiatives.

While engaging in self-reflection during the Self-Study process, the President's Cabinet, in collaboration with the SPBC and Associate Vice President for Planning and Assessment, reassessed the effectiveness and efficiency of the structures assisting with strategic planning at SU (Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 8 and 9). We found that many groups on campus play an important role in ensuring that institutional efforts and resources are devoted to accomplishing our *Strategic Plan* and the Salisbury Seven. However, there was a great deal of overlap between the membership and charges of these committees. As such, there was often redundancy in the information shared at these committee meetings (50). At the same time, and discussed previously in Chapter 1, the Salisbury Seven called for a commitment to fund innovative ideas, known as the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF), which would help the University attract and retain students. To provide oversight of the SIF, the Strategic Innovation Council (SIC) was formed in summer 2023. As such, a thorough review of the campus' planning needs and these four committees was needed.

While it is important to be transparent and widespread in our communication with the campus community, we believed we could increase efficiency and engagement with a few modifications to these groups. Previously, three committees, the President's Advisory Team (PAT), SPBC, and Governance Consortium played a role in planning at SU.

In consultation with the SPBC and President's Cabinet, the following changes were made:

1. To remove redundancy, the SPBC and their associated duties were re-distributed to a newly formed SIC and the existing Governance Consortium. By splitting out the duties of the SPBC to two smaller committees, the work can be more focused and meetings will be targeted with specific tasks and outcomes.
2. The SIC will coordinate meetings between their committee and the Governance Consortium Coordinating Committee at least twice a semester to review strategic initiatives and progress.
3. In addition to their current charge, the SIC will manage the SPBS and provide annual updates on *Strategic Plan* and Salisbury Seven initiatives. The SIC will also report progress toward accomplishing the *Strategic Plan* goals and the Salisbury Seven to the PAT at least once a semester.
4. In addition to their current charge, the Governance Consortium will be responsible for sharing information related to initiatives and costs associated with the *Strategic Plan* and Salisbury Seven with their associated governance bodies.
5. The SIC and Governance Consortium will collaborate to provide an annual report to campus on the University's *Strategic Plan* and Salisbury Seven progress and accomplishments, including associated costs.

This revised structure was utilized during AY2023-24. As the University approaches its next strategic plan, it is again revisiting the oversight and management of the strategic planning process. In fall 2024, the President announced the appointment of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) (51). This 20-member committee will spearhead a year-long process to develop the next strategic plan. The SPSC will be responsible for managing the strategic planning process from start to finish and for producing the final product. This will include planning and hosting listening and feedback sessions, working with our communication team to ensure robust communication with the community, collecting and reviewing data, helping to build and overseeing smaller working groups once themes are established, assuring that the plan produces clear objectives that are measurable and achievable, and ensuring a transparent and fair process. This continuous assessment of the structures related to strategic planning and resource allocation provides further support that SU is in compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 8 and 9.

Financial Resources, Planning, and Budgeting Process

SU's robust financial planning policies, procedures, and structures demonstrate the University's compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 3-5, 7, 8. Funding decisions for public higher education in the State of Maryland occur at multiple levels with checks and balances across several entities. In accordance with Article III, Section 52 of Maryland's Constitution, the Governor of the State of Maryland establishes the basis for State spending. The Department of Budget Management (DBM) helps the Governor by managing and administering state funds and resources. The allocation of funds and resources is typically decided during the legislative session held sometime between January and April. At this time, bills, guidelines, and regulations are also proposed, discussed, and decided on. These decisions inform the financial guidelines and mandates for the year. Once these decisions are made, MHEC consults with the Department of Legislative Services (DLS), DBM, and the USM to determine how the State funds are allocated for higher education. The USM was created to help support the institutions of higher education within the state. With leadership from the BOR, the

USM office works directly with DBM and public universities to coordinate academic programs, long-range planning and resource management, private fund raising, and financial stewardship.

Capital Projects

SU is in compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 10. Capital projects, infrastructure, and technology are closely linked to planning and budgeting. The USM Policy on Facilities Master Plans_VIII-10.00 mandates that institutional facilities master plans are routinely reviewed and updated, describe optimal development consistent with the institutional mission, include projections and assumptions that span 10-20 years, and are consistent with State requirements for facilities master plans (52). The USM reviews and approves the Facilities Master Plan (FMP) and certifies that it meets all of the policy requirements (38). Additionally, SU must provide annual updates to the USM on the University's deferred maintenance and facility renewal needs (53,54).

SU's FMP provides a framework for physical growth, based on enrollment projections and space needs, over the next 10 years. The FMP is regularly reviewed and formally updated every 5-10 years. The current plan, spanning 2014-2023, was developed with the involvement of the campus community, city and county officials, and neighbors. An FMP update on the accomplishments and achievements was provided in 2019, and the University is in the beginning phases of developing the next FMP and plans to have it completed in spring 2025 (38). The plan is highlighted in the University's *Strategic Plan* to ensure alignment between both plans. A review of the FMP clearly demonstrate SU's commitment to quality unit-level planning, which links to the University's *Strategic Plan* goals, involves extensive communication and feedback, includes unit-level goals and timelines, assigns responsibility to the Associate Vice President of Facilities and Capital Management (for review and task completion), and provides evidence and data demonstrating the need for capital projects based on the insufficiency of current space and resources. Continual efforts are made to share important planning documents internally and externally (55).

Additionally, the FMP provides the evidence SU needs to request new or renewed facilities from the USM and the State. The President periodically provides testimony to the Maryland House and Senate Capital Budget Subcommittees, the Department of Budget and Management, and the BOR Finance Committee (56). On an annual basis, the University identifies goals and objectives that determine capital project priorities. These goals and objectives are tracked and reported on a semi-annual basis for progress and completion. The University has made annual requests for capital projects with limited success. Since 2016, SU has received \$19.2M in funding from the State for renovations to Blackwell Hall (57). Since the last Self-Study, SU also received approval from the USM to use Institutional Funds to complete the following projects: Maggs Natatorium Renovations (\$10M), Severn Hall Renovations (\$6.5M), Baseball Stadium Relocation (\$8M), and 3D Arts Building Renovation (\$3M). Additionally, Institutional Funds were used for dozens of other smaller projects, less than \$1M, which include maintenance projects not included in the Facilities Master Plan (38).

The Maryland Space Guidelines Application Program (SGAP) is used by MHEC, DBM, DGS, the Maryland Office of Planning, and the Board of Public Works to evaluate individual construction projects and long-range planning to determine higher education space needs to be considered for capital funding. They provide standards for computation of space allowances

using space categories listed in the national Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) Space Classification System. Annually, SU must submit an institutional space inventory and space surplus/deficiency report as a part of the guidelines (58). There is a State-mandated process for requesting additional funding for operating expenses for State projects that include additional net square footage. Those items include full-time staffing, part-time staffing, utilities, services, transportation, supplies, and equipment. They are entered into DBM's Capital Budget Information System as part of each capital budget.

In addition, each year, Capital Improvement Plan and System Funded Construction Program requests are submitted to the USM to be reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents. In turn, the USM sends preliminary recommendations, and the University responds in writing to the preliminary recommendations. That narrative provides an update on progress toward the University's capital project goals and any changes in priorities that have occurred. In many instances, the requests coincide with priorities as established in the most recent FMP forecast priorities and opportunities in advance. For instance, properties that are strategic for short- or long-term expansion may become available for acquisition. Capital project requests and approvals also may be affected by significant donations from private entities that permit the University to advance projects that would otherwise have to wait.

Financial Plans and Audits

SU also goes through robust audit processes by the State of Maryland and the USM to ensure transparency and equity. The University is in compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 7. The USM Policy on External Audits (59) mandates that an annual independent audit confirms the financial stability of the USM and each of its universities (60). The USM maintains an Office of Internal Audit (USMIA) that conducts regular financial, operational, investigative, and information systems and follow-up reviews for all the USM's 12 constituent institutions to ensure that they are operating effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with applicable policies, standards, regulations, and laws. The USM maintains a Committee on Audit consisting of seven Board of Regents members.

SU also is audited through the State of Maryland through the Office of Legislative Audits (61), which is part of the Maryland General Assembly's Maryland Department of Legislative Services (DLS). The auditing services provided by DLS assist the General Assembly in its oversight responsibilities and lead to improved performance throughout State government. The Evidence Inventory includes the following evidence demonstrating compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement.

Criteria 5

- Budget Tracking by Division (62)
- Enrollment Projections (22)

Criteria 6

- IPEDS Data-Human Resources 2019-2024 (63)
- IPEDS Data-Finance 2019-2024 (64)
- Expense Analysis of Related Costs FY2019-2024 (65)

Criteria 7

- USM Financial Dashboard Indicators FY21-23 (66)
- Debt Accounting (67)
- USM Debt Summary (68)
- USM Debt Policy Presentation (69)
- Tuition Discount Rates (70)
- State Appropriations 2020-2025 (71)
- USM Bond Ratings (72)

Criteria 8

- Financial Statements (73)
- Audit Reports (60)

SU's business model is sound from both a revenue and cost perspective. While the level of funding the University receives from the State is largely prescriptive in nature, the University uses the *Strategic Plan* as the road map for the allocation of new resources. This is due primarily to the continuous focus on student success by SU and the careful stewardship of resources. The University has focused on linking resource allocations with its strategic planning process to determine institutional priorities and funnel resources to the initiatives that preserve SU's academic mission and ensure student learning and success (33,34).

Internal Budget Process

SU is in compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 3-5, 8, and 9. The University has demonstrated an intentional and comprehensive approach to its financial planning process, with a focus on continuous assessment, improvement, and adaptability to opportunities and challenges. SU periodically updates its resource allocation process to improve effectiveness and efficiency (criteria 9). The budget process at SU identifies institutional priorities (criteria 3), determines the adequacy of current and future fiscal and human resources (criteria 4), assigns responsibility for budgeting decisions (criteria 5), and periodically updates the resource allocation process based on this information (criteria 9).

The University's resource allocation reflects a commitment to aligning financial and human resources with strategic priorities. Additionally, The President's Cabinet and PAT openly and transparently discuss resource allocations and decisions. Meeting minutes from the PAT where campus leaders discuss what resources are available and the budgeting of those dollars across campus are publicly available for campus to review (44). The PAT includes administrators, staff, faculty, and student representatives. Moreover, the President and Vice President for Administration and Finance provide regular campus budget updates through campus-wide sessions, governance group meetings, and email communication (74-77). Academic Affairs sends out regular campuswide communication through its monthly First Monday emails and meets monthly with the Faculty Senate to provide updates and respond to questions (78,79). Additionally, Dean's Council and SPBC/SIC meetings are held regularly where additional budgetary discussions occur (47). Schools/colleges have their own department-level advisory groups made up of faculty, staff, and outside constituents. The University's commitment to an

open and inclusive planning process (Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement) occurs at multiple levels.

SU has made deliberate efforts to ensure that funding is allocated to programs and initiatives that directly contribute to the achievement of its strategic goals. This includes investments in faculty development, technology infrastructure, and student support services, among other areas identified as critical to the strategic plan. The University's internal budgeting process has evolved significantly over the past five years.

In 2019, SU adopted an allocation budgeting process where each of the five divisions (Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, Advancement and External Affairs, Office of the President, and Student Affairs) were allocated a certain percentage of total revenue to meet their planned expenses. These percentages were based on three years of actual expenses (FY16-18) and the allocation of the total budget to the divisions. Additional initiatives, deemed above-the-line of a division's base budget, were decided by the President's Cabinet. These additional allocations could be designated to a division for special projects related to the *Strategic Plan* and would increase the base budget of that division. A final budget was derived based on these divisional proportions. Each division would determine their priorities and functional area allocations and submit their proposed total budget for discussion and review by the President's Cabinet. Actual expenses were reviewed at the departmental and division level and adjusted for the upcoming year budget based on plans or initiatives adopted in the division or at the program level.

In fiscal year 2022, with the budget template fully implemented across campus, the SPBC reintroduced the use of the SPBS for tracking metrics, costs, and achievement of any above-the-line project funded for that fiscal year (18,62,80). The SPBS is an online tracking tool developed at SU to monitor institutional progress toward our *Strategic Plan* goals. The SPBS is used by various offices on campus to input strategic initiatives relevant to their unit and to the *Strategic Plan*. Offices must include a description of the project, key performance indicators (KPIs), a timeline for accomplishing the KPIs, and an estimated budget. At the end of each fiscal year, offices must update their project on the initiatives and present results to their Vice President and/or the SPBC. In fiscal year 2022, the SPBC reinstated the SPBS by including all initiatives funded above the line in the system. This allowed the group to easily track and summarize annual institutional progress. Since fiscal year 2023, all major initiatives linked to the Strategic Plan are included in the SPBS (18).

During fiscal year 2024, SU's internal budget process was enhanced to increase flexibility, visibility, and collaboration between the SU Budget Office and SU Budget Administrators. To ensure resources were better allocated based on current needs, budget type, and linkage to strategic priorities, the Budget Office continued a strategic shift away from divisional budget allotments (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Administration & Finance, etc.). The Budget Office worked diligently to design tools for departments/schools that forecasted costs and provided data for informed decision-making. These tools helped departments to reconceptualize their approach while limiting the logistical changes within the current budgeting system.

To provide guidance around resource allocation and spending in FY25, the University leadership communicated with budget administrators a list of investment priorities (74,75,81). These

priorities support SU's mission, *Strategic Plan*, and Salisbury Seven – providing a road map for budget development for the FY25 cycle. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Priorities include:

- Invest in initiatives that indicate a strong return on investment by attracting, recruiting, and retaining first-year, graduate, and transfer students, including, but not limited to, high-impact practices, high-quality teaching, and new academic programs that educate students in areas with high workforce needs.
- Invest in initiatives that close the graduation gaps for students eligible for need-based financial aid, as well as students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Invest in equity, access, and inclusion initiatives that create a greater sense of welcome and belonging for all students and employees.
- Invest in comprehensive student support services, including, but not limited to, academic advising, counseling, career services, and tutoring programs.
- Invest in marketing that targets prospective students, highlighting what makes SU unique, including sharpening our social media strategy.
- Invest in the recruitment, retention, and recognition of SU's hard-working faculty and staff, improving our communication strategies, and streamlining our processes and procedures.
- Invest in initiatives that will strengthen our institutional identity, further engage our alumni network, and increase our fundraising abilities.

The transition away from divisional budget allotments allowed SU to focus on the unique differences between budget types and ensure a fresh evaluation of expenses occurring during the budgeting cycle. Currently, our budgeting process is structured around a framework developed for three different types of budgets:

1. **Academic Schools:** These budgets will rely on school/college-specific data like enrollment information and course schedules and will follow their own strategic financial plans for the year as determined by the Dean of each school and college. Each financial plan specifically supports SU's educational mission and academic excellence.
2. **Administrative Departments/Offices:** These budgets encompass many of our essential administrative services. Budgets in this area typically have a higher percentage of fixed costs and variable forecasting abilities. As we aim to optimize operations and enhance collaboration across campus, the Budget Office is pre-populating the PeopleSoft budgets after analyzing historical spending over the last 10 years. All pre-populated information can be altered as budgets are worked on.
3. **Auxiliary Services:** These budgets are highly complex and unique due to the revenue-generating activities and services that support our core mission but operate on a more self-sustaining basis (though not always). Because each auxiliary department operates very differently, the Budget Office must work with each area individually to develop tools and strategies to ensure financial accountability and data informed decision-making.

The budget process runs from March-May each year and begins with departments and schools discussing and developing financial plans for the coming year. These plans should include discussions of the investment priorities and how funds will be allocated to support these

priorities. After successfully engaging with department/school-specific processes, budget data for the next year is entered into the current budget system using a budget template provided by the Budget Office. The template includes budgeted and actual expenses for the last two fiscal years by account code. These templates are provided to assist in the formulation of the new fiscal year budget. After reviewing the budget template and other information gathered during this process, departments/schools submit their proposed budget for the coming year. Detailed justification for each line item should be provided.

The allocation of resources is a collaborative process including several University constituents. The President's Cabinet share information with the President's Advisory Team, governance groups, and through campuswide emails on a regular basis for both review and discussion purposes. There are also several governance committees that assist with budgeting and resource allocation. The Vice President of Administration and Finance meets with the Faculty Senate Financial Affairs Committee, University Consortium Fiscal Advisory Committee, and the Faculty and Staff Senates regularly to provide updates, make presentations, and ask for input on budget matters as needed/requested. The President periodically meets with the governance groups, including the University Consortium, to keep them informed on significant matters impacting the State and University and to solicit questions and feedback (74,81).

The processes described above demonstrates how SU engages in continuous improvement and careful financial planning which focuses on linking resource allocations with our *Strategic Plan* and institutional priorities (Standard VI: VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 3-9). By doing so, SU has been able to preserve its academic mission and ensure a campus climate where students, faculty, and staff feel welcomed and supported.

Procedures, Training, and Initiatives Supporting Faculty, Staff, and Student Development

The University values and cultivates learning among its students, faculty, and staff. SU continues to expand professional development and training opportunities and create inclusive spaces that support networking, foster professional growth, and inspire innovative ideas. By exploring ways to expand benefits, recognition, and rewards programs, the institution hopes to improve the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff – especially those from diverse backgrounds. Through these strategies, the institution hopes all members of the campus community feel a sense of belonging and connection.

Campus Climate Study

The *Strategic Plan* Goal of Inspiring a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration was modified in a number of ways after the COVID-19 pandemic. To support diversity and inclusion on campus, the University altered its strategies in Objective 2.1 to expand and require professional development and training programs for students, faculty, and staff. The University also made a commitment in Objective 2.2 to exceed best practices in terms of diversifying applicant pools and ensure departmental policies are aligned with professional development opportunities. To further support faculty and staff, a strategy in Objective 2.3 was

modified to include transparent communication regarding information about career pathways and ladders. The continuous assessment and improvement of our *Strategic Plan* demonstrates SU's compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 8 and 9.

During the development of SU's *2020-2025 Strategic Plan*, one consistent theme from the focus groups was the importance of SU's continued commitment to increasing diversity and creating a welcoming campus environment. While the University conducts regular campus climate assessments, it had been several years since the last climate study was completed (82). To understand the current campus climate, the University enlisted the services of Rankin and Associates, a consulting firm with more than two decades of experience in campus climate research. SU's assessment focused on the learning, living, and working climates on campus. The objective of the assessment was to identify and address institutional climate strengths and challenges that existed at SU. In spring 2020, an anonymous survey sent to all faculty, staff, and students provided members of the campus community with the opportunity to describe their personal experiences and observations and offer suggestions for improvement to help enhance the campus climate at SU.

As a result of this assessment, the University was able to examine which community members felt most/least comfortable on campus, and ways in which SU could improve the comfort of others. Additionally, the assessment helped determine if gaps existed based on gender identity, racial/ethnic identity, sexual identity, or ability status (82). Approximately 21% of SU students, faculty, and staff responded to the survey. Data was disaggregated to examine results separately for faculty, staff, and students as well as based on race/ethnicity and gender. Results of this survey were distributed in an institution-wide presentation and summary report in fall 2020 (82,83).

Based on the results, a Campus Climate Implementation Committee (CCIC) was created to provide recommendations to address the study's findings (84). There are many examples of how the University has used this data to improve policies, procedures, and structures related to Standard II: Ethics and Integrity:

- Require diversity and inclusion training for all new students and employees.

One recommendation from the CCIC addressed was to create a requirement for all new students and employees to complete diversity and inclusion training. This was implemented as a form of preventative education to help reduce the occurrence of policy violations (85). In addition, at least every five years, director-level and above employees must complete training on standards of professional conduct and workplace bullying. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are also embedded as a part of the faculty tenure and promotion process. This will be described in greater detail in a subsequent section on employee evaluation policies and procedures.

- Provide comprehensive diversity and inclusion trainings for faculty, staff, and students to be eligible to serve on search committees.

SU implemented additional in-person training for all search committee members. This included training through the Office of Human Resources on best practices in reviewing applicant materials and developing interview questions (86). In 2024, the Office of Human Resources announced new online training resources for search and selection committees. These materials, made available through Vector Solutions, provide information and best practices in attracting, interviewing, and hiring diverse candidates.

- Appoint an interim Director of Multicultural Student Services.

With the retirement of the Director of Multicultural Student Services in spring 2020, there was a temporary gap in leadership within Multicultural Student Services. The University took time to thoroughly review the various functions of the office as well as other campus offices responsible for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. The result was the creation of a new office with direct access to the President's Office, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), and the hiring of a Director of Multicultural Affairs and Program Administrative Specialist. Most recently, in 2024, the University created an additional position, the Vice President for Inclusion, Access, and Belonging, to oversee this and several other functions to support a welcoming campus climate (87).

- Implement a leadership development program for staff

Employees shared that they wanted more leadership and professional development opportunities. In spring 2023, SU implemented SULEad to provide opportunities for growth. The University values its employees, and SULEad is a program to encourage employees to stay and develop their skills right where they currently work. The program provides professional development designed to support learning about various aspects of University operations and network with others from across campus. In June 2023, the first cohort of 10 SULEad staff completed the program. The second cohort of SULEad launched in fall 2023 with 12 employees taking part in the program (88).

SU's commitment to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive campus environment that respects individual abilities, differences, needs, and potentials is reflected in the many policies and initiatives created to support students, faculty, and staff. The University is able to implement programs that support its mission and Strategic Plan through intentional financial planning. To improve communication and transparency, the University releases an annual report each year detailing the accomplishments and highlights achieved (21). The President also presents the State of the University address annually to increase transparency and communication across campus (25).

Anti-Racism Summit

For the past three years, SU has sponsored an Anti-Racism Summit designed to provide an opportunity for dialog, learning, and action (89). The Anti-Racism Summit is part of a broader institutional effort to be intentional about talking about racism and its effects on SU and organizational systems in general; teaching concepts and solutions for positive social change that address institutional, structural, and interpersonal racism; and doing the necessary and difficult work personally and collectively to improve race relations at SU and in our various communities.

The annual summit may include guest presenters, panel discussions, topical sessions, student spoken word, and/or campus updates on diversity and inclusion efforts.

Safe Spaces Training

SU offers training aimed at reducing the often unwelcoming and even hostile environments in which LGBTQIA+ people navigate in their daily lives. Safe Spaces training participants understand their role and responsibility in creating a more welcoming environment on campus and beyond.

Green Zone Advocate Training

Faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in training to be advocates for veterans (90). Green Zone advocate training is an initiative to support military-connected students by designating campus spaces as “safe places.” Once training is completed, faculty and staff receive an emblem to display outside their offices to designate them as an area supportive of the unique needs of military-connected students.

New Employee Training

SU provides comprehensive training during the onboarding process for all new employees. This training includes Sexual Misconduct and Other Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination Policies and Procedures, Policies Prohibiting Non-Sex Based Discrimination, and Acceptable Use of Computing the Technology Resources (85,91).

New Faculty Orientation

All new faculty participate in the New Faculty Orientation program to receive training and information regarding important topics like the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Title IX, and other compliance issues, while also being introduced to other faculty, staff, and administrators with whom they will be working (92,93).

Drug and Alcohol Prevention Training

As mentioned in Chapter 2, SU is committed to an alcohol, tobacco, and drug-free learning and working environment and adheres to the responsibilities set forth in applicable local, state, and federal laws. All members of the University community, visitors, and guests are required to comply. The University provides education and prevention resources related to the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs and utilizes educational strategies to increase awareness of drug, alcohol, or tobacco use (94).

Information Technology Training

Salisbury University’s Office of Information Technology maintains and enforces a series of information security and technology use policies and training in accordance with the USM and the State of Maryland (95).

LinkedIn Learning

SU provides all of its employees access to a large network of online training through LinkedIn Learning. With LinkedIn Learning, employees can develop skills needed to advance their careers and receive personalized course recommendations based on their experiences.

Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) Partnership

Beginning in 2024, SU partnered with ACUE to offer faculty and staff the opportunity to complete online modules to earn certifications or microcredentials. Faculty can complete 25 modules that focus on essential competencies for effective teaching over the course of two semesters to receive their Effective Teaching Practices certification, the only certification recognized by ACUE. Participation in Fostering a Culture of Belonging is available to faculty and staff; upon completion of modules covering topics like microaggressions and implicit bias, participants review a FCB microcredential (96).

Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFE)

CAFE, launched in 2022, provides four primary pillars for faculty: Teaching and Pedagogy, Research and Scholarship, Professional Development, and Personal Wellness (97). Some recent initiatives to come from CAFE include an Open Pedagogy Across the Curriculum series, a Summer Writing Accountability Program, a Grant Writing Workshop, and an Inclusive Pedagogy unConference (98). CAFE works closely with the Faculty Senate's Faculty Development Committee to organize formal development opportunities each semester. The committee developed a Teaching and Learning Conference, hosted each spring, where faculty may present their work and learn from their colleagues.

Office of Instructional Design and Delivery (ID&D)

ID&D supports the instructional design and delivery needs of faculty engaged in teaching and learning of online, hybrid, and traditional courses (99). The office provides professional development and support for effective pedagogical practices and instructional software. ID&D offers frequent workshops for faculty interested in incorporating technology into their courses and maintains numerous instructional videos to assist faculty in course development (100).

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)

Since its founding in 1984, SU's WAC program has been committed to improving student writing across the University (101,102). In following guidance from the national Writing Across the Curriculum initiative, SU's WAC program shares the philosophy that writing should happen across the academic community and throughout a student's educational experiences. The WAC program provides a variety of resources and tools to faculty to improve student writing. In addition, WAC seminars are offered every fall and spring semester. The eight-week seminar is available to any faculty member teaching a course at SU.

Student and Faculty Fellows

Additional efforts to support the creation of an inclusive, supportive, and collaborative campus environment include the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) Faculty Fellows Program. The ODI offers both Faculty and Student Fellows Programs (103), which provide resources for special projects related to creating a greater sense of belonging on campus. In 2023, the ODI introduced the First-Generation Sea Gull Scholars Program, providing support for first-generation undergraduate students at SU (104). Additionally, school- and University-level grants are available for faculty.

General Education Curriculum

As discussed in Chapter 2, SU’s recently updated General Education curriculum was the result of many years of careful review and feedback about best practices in higher education. This inclusive process involved feedback from various shared governance groups, students, faculty, staff, and alumni. To better align with SU’s mission and Strategic Plan, SU’s new curriculum includes a requirement that all students complete at least three credits related to SU’s Signature Diversity and Inclusion student learning outcomes (105,106). Signature outcomes from the General Education Committee include the addition of courses and credits related to diversity and inclusion, civic and community engagement, and environmental sustainability. In addition, these new student learning goals demonstrate how SU has used results to improve the curriculum (Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, criteria 8) and how the curriculum is aligned with the University mission and *Strategic Plan* and are focused on student learning (Standard I: Mission and Goals, criteria 1-3).

Disability Resource Center (DRC) STARS

The DRC Stars (Student Transition, Access, Retention, and Success) is a pre-semester experience program that embraces disability as a dimension of diversity and offers students with disabilities an opportunity to gain a head start on their university experience (107). DRC STARS launched virtually in fall 2020 and served over 60 incoming and transfer students with disabilities. Of the first three cohorts of DRC STARS, 96% were retained or graduated by fall 2022. The fall 2023 cohort saw 100% retention to spring 2024 (108).

DRC AccessAbility Advocate Training

The DRC AccessAbility Advocate Training Program is designed to promote disability awareness and understanding throughout the campus community with the development of skills and knowledge necessary to foster an accessible and inclusive living-learning environment for individuals with disabilities at SU (108).

Table 11. DRC AccessAbility Training Participation: 2021-2023

	Spring 2021	2021-22	2022-23
Participants	239	178	281
Training Sessions	10	52	107

Powerful Connections

The University’s longstanding Powerful Connections program has been serving SU’s diverse students for more than 20 years. Powerful Connections is a pre-entry summer program that provides opportunities for students from underrepresented groups to learn about campus resources ahead of new student arrival (109,110). Powerful Connections students are connected with peer mentors whom they meet with throughout the year. Additionally, students build connections with diverse faculty and staff, which serve as additional resources and mentors.

TRIO

The TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program is an educational opportunity project funded by the U.S. Department of Education that helps first-generation students, students with financial need, and students with disabilities achieve their academic potential and personal goals. The TRIO office is staffed with a Program Director, administrative support staff, graduate assistants,

and student ambassadors (111). The TRIO program advocates and coordinates services for qualified students to help them develop the academic, interpersonal, and social skills they need to be successful at SU (112).

In addition to these programs and initiatives, SU supports the professional development of its faculty through many different avenues, including financial support of scholarly activities and educational programming throughout the year. Funding for scholarship and professional development is available through academic departments, Deans, University Research Services, the SU Foundation, and many other funds. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, the Strategic Innovation Fund also provides funding opportunities for innovation ideas proposed by students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, the University continues to support faculty sabbaticals on a regular basis. For SU to inspire a campus culture of inclusive excellence, support, and collaboration, we must effectively support the continual development and growth of all of our students, faculty, and staff. This requires a network of collaborative structures working together to provide students, faculty, and staff with educational opportunities informed by multiple points of view, life experiences, abilities, ethnicities, cultures, and belief systems.

Institutional Structures Committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The University has accomplished many aspects of this *Strategic Plan* goal since the development of the plan in 2020. For example, the University developed and implemented components of a comprehensive diversity and inclusion plan, which included the creation of a new Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) and the creation of a new position, the Vice President for Inclusion, Access, and Belonging. The Vice President for Inclusion, Access and Belonging reports directly to the President and oversees the Disability Resource Center (DRC), ODI, and Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). Many of the institution's structures related to diversity, equity, and inclusion are housed in the Wight Center for Equity, Justice, and Inclusion. The Wight Center for Equity, Justice, and Inclusion serves as the home of SU's ODI, as well as the University's African Diaspora Center, American Asian Pacific Islander Center, American Sign Language Zone, DRC, Latinx Center, LGBTQIA+ Resource Center, and Women's Center. These structures help to support the success of students, faculty, and staff (Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 1).

Disability Resource Center

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides guidance, access to resources, and reasonable accommodations, modifications, services, and aids to qualified students with documented disabilities per the Americans with Disabilities Act, Higher Education Opportunity Act, and other applicable laws (108). The work of the DRC is grounded in the social adapted and empowerment models of disability, with a focus on "disability as diversity." Available services include academic and/or housing accommodations/services, academic skill-building sessions, general check-ins, test proctoring, peer mentoring, DRC AccessAbility training series (mentioned previously), referrals to on- and off-campus resources, and assistive technology exploration/training.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

The ODI provides students, faculty, and staff with educational opportunities informed by multiple points of view, life experiences, abilities, ethnicities, cultures, and belief systems. The office is committed to providing campus with the tools needed to ensure SU is a welcoming and inclusive living and learning environment that prepares students to excel in a global workplace and in diverse communities. The ODI plays a crucial role in advancing a culture of equity, respect, and understanding within the University community. It serves as a central hub for initiatives aimed at embracing and celebrating the rich tapestry of identities, backgrounds, and perspectives present among students, faculty, and staff. The office fosters an inclusive environment through educational programs, cultural events, and dialogue forums that promote awareness, sensitivity, and appreciation for diversity. It collaborates with various campus departments and student organizations to develop strategies and policies that promote diversity and inclusion across all facets of university life. The ODI includes the Wight Center for Equity, Justice, and Inclusion; Powerful Connections Program; First Generation Sea Gull Scholars Program; and the Faculty Fellows Program. SU encourages the formation of affinity groups where students, faculty, and staff from similar backgrounds or identities can come together to share experiences, offer support, and promote advocacy (113). These groups serve as valuable resources for fostering a sense of belonging and respect among members of the University community.

TRIO

The TRIO Student Support Services program is an educational opportunity project funded by the U.S. Department of Education to help first-generation students, students with financial need and students with disabilities achieve their academic potential and personal goals. The TRIO program advocates and coordinates services for qualified students to help them develop the academic, interpersonal, and social skills they need to be successful at SU (111).

Office of Institutional Equity

The OIE supports and advances the University's commitment to create an inclusive environment free of discrimination and supportive of all. The OIE serves as a pivotal entity dedicated to fostering an inclusive and respectful campus environment. It operates with a mission to ensure adherence to federal and state regulations regarding discrimination and equal opportunity policies. This office is committed to promoting equity and accessibility across all facets of university life, including employment, education, and campus activities. It manages all aspects of the Fair Practices and Affirmative Action programs, as well as Title IX compliance. It actively addresses issues related to discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct by providing resources, support services, and avenues for resolution. Through proactive education, training initiatives, and policy development, the OIE endeavors to cultivate a campus community that values and prioritizes equity, fairness, and mutual respect among all members. OIE oversees several policies and processes designed to protect individuals from harassment or mistreatment which will be described in greater detail in subsequent sections of the Self-Study report.

Policies and Procedures Related to Hiring and Retaining Diverse Faculty and Staff

As a USM institution, there are multiple levels of oversight at SU to ensure compliance with all State and Federal employment policies (114,115). At the State and System level, the University must comply with policies set by MHEC and the USM BOR. These two entities also ensure that State policies follow all Federal policies. Specifically, as it relates to faculty and staff evaluation policies and procedures, SU's faculty evaluation policies and procedures, outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*, are in compliance with the USM Policy on Evaluation of Performance of Faculty_ II-1.20 (116). Similarly, SU's policies and procedures for evaluating staff are aligned with BOR Policy-USM Policy on the Performance Management Program_ VII-5.20 on Performance Evaluation Programs (Staff Employee Handbook) (29,117).

Hiring, Evaluation, and Promotion Policies and Procedures

At the institution level, the Office of Human Resources oversees the recruitment, hiring, and evaluation policies and procedures for the University. Additionally, in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources, the OIE develops the University's Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies to ensure compliance with all State and Federal policies and requirements (118). This process includes, but is not limited to, getting input and participation from the campus community through the shared governance groups (i.e., Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Adjunct Faculty Caucus, Student Government Association, and Graduate Student Council). Drafts and final versions of the policies are reviewed for legal sufficiency by both the SU Office of the General Counsel and the Office of the Attorney General of the State of Maryland, Higher Education Division. To ensure continued compliance, the policies are periodically reviewed and revised. The OIE sets institutional standards for, among other things, all employment decisions including hiring, promotion, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertisement of vacancies, layoffs and terminations, compensation and benefits and selection. Included among those policies and procedures are:

- Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (119)
- Non-Sex-Based Prohibited Discrimination Policy (120)
- Title IX Notification (121)
- SU Policy and Procedures Prohibiting Sexual Misconduct (122)
- USM Policy on Sexual and Discriminatory Harassment (123)

The University believes it must create a campus environment free from harassment and intimidation, that values inclusion, and respects individuals' broad and varying values and beliefs. To accomplish this priority, the University has thoughtfully developed and periodically reviews the hiring process for all new faculty and staff. The Office of Human Resources meets with all search committees early in the recruitment process to ensure understanding and commitment to fair and equitable hiring practices. Following feedback to streamline the hiring process, in 2023, the University hired Deloitte Human Resources to conduct a thorough review of the human resources function of the University (124). Following this review, many improvements were implemented to help increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Office of Human Resources, the usability of their website, the position request process, and performance evaluations.

Following the consultant report, the Office of Human Resources reviewed the organizational structure of the division to improve effectiveness and efficiency (125). Position duties were updated, and a partnership was established with IAB for a more interactive process to accommodations under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). In 2024, the Office of Human Resources developed a comprehensive website outlining a simplified hiring process from start to finish (126,127). The development of a single, new Position Request Form replaced the multiple forms and steps previously used by hiring managers and search committees. Through the consolidation of these forms into a singular Position Request Form, the time from request to posting of new positions was significantly reduced. In addition, the updated Office of Human Resources website offers enhanced accessibility to policies, procedures, and an estimated timeline for position approval and positing (128). Finally, the Office of Human Resources implemented new online training resources using Vector Solutions to offer search and selection committees information and best practices in attracting, interviewing, and hiring diverse candidates.

Once new faculty and staff are hired, the University has outlined policies and procedure for periodically reviewing performance which are included in the *Faculty Handbook*, *Staff Employee Handbook*, and Memorandum of Understanding between SU and Maryland Classified Employees Association (29,129). As previously mentioned, the University must adhere to all USM and MHEC policies in the development of all employee evaluation policies and procedures. These handbooks and agreements are periodically reviewed and updated as a part of the shared governance structure. More details about the shared governance structure at SU can be found in Chapter 6.

Faculty Review, Tenure, and Promotion Policies, Procedures, and Structures

To ensure compliance with Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, criteria 2, all SU faculty are held to high standards in teaching, professional development, and service, and are regularly evaluated to ensure they continue to perform at a high level throughout their careers. Articulated in the *Faculty Handbook*, all faculty are evaluated annually by their department chairs, with pre-tenure faculty also being reviewed by a departmental tenure and promotion committee (130).

Each department may develop their own evaluation procedures, but standard practice includes student evaluations of each course (which is required for all faculty at every level); an annual self-evaluation describing teaching, professional development, and service activities; and the department chair's assessment of the faculty member's performance. These evaluations may include observations each semester by senior faculty members for pre-tenure faculty. Departmental tenure and promotion guidelines are presented to new tenure-track faculty upon their arrival at SU. These guidelines serve as a rubric against which their annual evaluations take place to ensure that pre-tenure faculty are making satisfactory progress towards tenure.

Full-time non-tenure track (FT-NTT) faculty are an important part of SU's instructional staff. While they do not have the same research and service expectations as tenured and tenure-track faculty, FT-NTT are held to a high standard in the classroom. The evaluation of full-time non-tenure track faculty follows the same process as that of tenured faculty (yearly evaluations by the chair of the department, but no departmental tenure committee review). In addition, as outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*, each department must provide full-time non-tenure track faculty with a

“memo of professional expectation” at the time of hiring. Evaluation criteria must be approved by the relevant Dean and by the Provost. These policies and procedures are periodically reviewed by Faculty Senate, the University’s shared governance group representing non-tenure track faculty.

Faculty seeking tenure or promotion face a more extensive evaluation process, including assessment by department committees, the Chair, their school Dean, a university-wide committee for promotion, and ultimately the Provost and President. The general guidelines for tenure and promotion are described in the *Faculty Handbook* (131). When establishing departmental-specific tenure and promotion procedures, all departments must follow the BOR Policy-II-1.20 and general University tenure and promotion guidelines outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*, which establish the minimum guidelines. The University’s Faculty Senate has standing committees, including the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, Academic Policies Committee, and Promotions Committees, which periodically review and provide recommendations and revisions to the policies outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*. These committees offer feedback on the *Faculty Handbook* on a continual basis, reviewing various sections periodically as needed. By making these policies and procedures easily accessible and regularly submitting reports to the Faculty Senate, SU ensures that faculty policies are continually reviewed and updated through an inclusive and transparent process.

At SU, a robust framework for addressing faculty concerns, as outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*, is available within the academic catalog on SU’s official webpage (116). Chapter 2 addresses procedures for faculty appeals for appointment, rank, tenure, and promotion. The Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee plays a crucial role in gathering information, conducting hearings, and making recommendations to the Provost regarding tenure appeals. The committee operates transparently, providing an annual report to the Faculty Senate (132). Additionally, the Faculty Welfare Committee serves as a grievance hearing board for matters related to promotion and merit pay decisions. They engage in mediation, information gathering, and offer counsel. This committee makes recommendations directly to the Provost regarding proposed actions.

Departmental tenure and promotion guidelines must be periodically reviewed and approved by tenured faculty within the department and ultimately approved by the Dean. Faculty applying for tenure or promotion must submit a portfolio following an established checklist that includes their annual evaluations and evidence of effective teaching, professional development or creative activities, and service. Typically, these portfolios include syllabi, course evaluations, publications and other evidence of scholarly activity, and reflective writing on the applicant’s teaching, scholarship, and service (131).

SU faculty utilize Watermark Faculty Success as a digital portfolio tool for tracking their activities and accomplishments in the areas of teaching, research, and service. All new faculty since 2014 are required to use Watermark Faculty Success to create their tenure and promotion portfolios, while it is optional for faculty hired earlier. Additionally, tenured faculty undergo a thorough post-tenure review process every five years. While each department develops their own post-tenure review process, all must follow general guidelines outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*. Faculty are assessed in teaching and advising, professional development, and service; peer evaluation is a required element of the review.

Moreover, the University is dedicated to periodically assessing the ethics and integrity of our evaluation processes and ensuring their alignment with our University mission and *Strategic Plan*. As the University's 2020-2025 *Strategic Plan* outlined important goals focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion, it was important that faculty efforts toward accomplishing these priorities were recognized and considered as a part of the tenure and promotion process. As such, in 2020-21, the Office of Academic Affairs conducted a review of tenure and promotion policies and procedures across all academic departments and at peer institutions. The results of this report were shared with the Faculty Senate for their consideration (133). In May 2021, the Faculty Senate appointed a faculty working group to (1) examine current University-wide guidelines in terms of the specific criteria and clarity of communication of the role of diversity, equity, and inclusion in tenure and promotion; (2) research best practices and challenges associated with more explicit recognition of diversity, equity, and inclusion activities in the tenure and promotion processes; (3) recommend specific criteria that could be adopted at the University-level to recognize and reward diversity, equity, and inclusion contributions in the tenure and promotion process; and (4) review best practices and make recommendations regarding how to best support diversity, equity, and inclusion related faculty work. This working group reported their findings and made recommendations to the Faculty Senate in September 2021 (134). In April 2023, the Faculty Senate adopted a resolution to include diversity, equity, and inclusion teaching initiatives as a part of the tenure and promotion process (135,136).

Employee Evaluation Policies, Procedures, and Structures

As described above, the annual Performance Management Process (PMP) is overseen by the Office of Human Resources and outlined on their website and in the employee handbooks (129,137). All SU staff employees, including PIN and Contractual II employees, are evaluated annually as a part of the PMP (29). Annual reviews are optional for Contractual I employees. In addition, the Faculty Senate has adopted an assessment instrument for the evaluation of department chairs, program directors, Associate Deans, Deans, the Provost, and the President (138). More information about the evaluation process for the Vice Presidents and President can be found in Chapter 6.

Each year, employees set annual objectives for the upcoming fiscal year, evaluate progress on the prior year's objectives, and receive feedback from their supervisors. Annual objectives are set based on institutional priorities identified in the 2020-2025 *Strategic Plan*. Each Vice President identifies the priorities for their division, and objectives for staff are set based on these. These University evaluation policies adhere to the BOR VII-5.20 Policy on Performance Evaluation Programs (117). This is one process used to assign responsibility, evaluate progress, and work toward continuous improvement in accomplishing our institutional goals.

The PMP itself is periodically assessed to determine if it is an effective process for annual review and evaluation. As a result of the University working with an external consultant to provide feedback on the human resources function at SU, the Office of Human Resources created a single Staff Performance Assessment Form for both exempt and non-exempt employees that better align with SU's institutional needs and new human resources management system, Workday (29). The new form ensures all employees and supervisors annually review and update employees' job descriptions on file. Employees who are completing duties significantly and substantially beyond their current job description can request a Position Reclassification. This

process is outlined on the website and in the *Staff Employee Handbook* (129). Conversely, if gaps are found between current job duties and the job description, supervisors may follow the Progressive Discipline process outlined in the *Staff Employee Handbook* and on the website.

One additional result of the human resources assessment was the development of a supervisor feedback survey. The University heard this request as well during the 2020 Campus Climate study. As a result, in spring 2024, a survey was developed and administered to all employees. This survey allowed employees to provide feedback on their direct supervisors through an anonymous survey (139). Through this process, it allows supervisors to identify areas of strength and improvement. Additionally, the Office of Human Resources uses these results to assist in a more comprehensive review of supervisor performance. While each supervisor was provided with their individual results to use for improvement during their own PMP, an institutional summary showed generally positive results. Of the 72 respondents, 89% reported that their manager seeks input from all team members and 79% felt that their manager recognizes and rewards their contributions to the department in a meaningful way. Additionally, 82% reported that their manager treats people fairly without showing favoritism.

Fostering a Climate of Respect and Support

SU is committed to fostering a climate of respect and support among all of its community members. Two of the seven pledges outlined in the Salisbury Seven focus on this commitment:

- We will invest in the people who deliver on the promises we make to our students.
- We will have a continual commitment to inclusion, diversity, opportunity, and equity and the cultivation of a sense of belonging.

SU demonstrates this commitment through many policies and practices including discrimination and grievance policies, academic and intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights, and conflict of interest, and nepotism policies. SU's Evidence Inventory provides a copy of our Institutional Federal Compliance Report demonstrating all relevant policies and procedures and where they are made publicly available (140).

Discrimination

The OIE, formed in 2012, is the administrative unit charged with educating the campus about issues regarding discrimination and harassment and has the primary responsibility of investigating any claims of discrimination. The OIE oversees SU's adherence to all applicable government laws and regulations related to higher education, ensuring legal compliance and accountability. Working with the USM, SU's Office of Human Resources oversees a process where all new employees, employees at the Director-level and above, and faculty Chairs are required to complete harassment and discrimination training (141). SU assigns and tracks completion of this training, known as the USM Thinking and Acting Ethically program (142). Evidence of SU's compliance includes SU's policies and procedures prohibiting sexual misconduct and other sex- and gender-based discrimination (Title IX) and SU's policies prohibiting non-sex-based discrimination (120,122). In addition, SU is required to comply with all applicable USM BOR policies related to discrimination (143,144).

Title IX

SU is in compliance with Title IX of the Higher Education Act Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. Any form of sex discrimination (which includes acts of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual violence) is prohibited by Title IX. Retaliation for asserting claims of sex discrimination is also prohibited under Title IX. All SU faculty and staff are required to complete the online Preventing Sexual Harassment class or a face-to-face workshop offered upon a departmental request. The SU Policy and Procedures Prohibiting Sexual Misconduct and Other Sex- and Gender-Based Discrimination is publicly available on the University's website under Equal Opportunity and procedures for filing a claim are readily available via the OIE website (122,145,146). Additionally, every two years, SU and other Maryland institutions are required by MHEC to conduct a sexual assault campus climate survey. SU most recently conducted this survey in spring 2024 (147). This survey and report provide data in compliance with State and Federal Title IX regulations. This provides additional evidence of compliance with Standard II: Ethics and Integrity, criteria 8. The report provides institution-level data on incidents of sexual assault and misconduct. Additionally, the report requires campuses to examine trends in their survey responses and provide an analysis and action steps based on the data. The report includes activities, services, and programs that have been developed as a result of the findings.

Anti-Discrimination Laws

SU is in compliance with all State and Federal discrimination laws and prohibits discrimination on the basis of non-sex based legally protected categories, such as marital status, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, religion, veteran status, or other legally protected status. The SU Policy Prohibiting Non-Sex Based Discrimination and procedures for filing a claim are readily available to the public via the OIE website (146,148,149).

SU's Title IX Policy and Procedures Prohibiting Sexual Misconduct and Other Sex- and Gender-Based Discrimination and SU Policy Prohibiting Non-Sex Based Discrimination are widely published and regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the campus community and reflect current legal requirements (150,151). The most recent revisions to the policies occurred in August 2024. The continuous review and revision of these policies underscores the University's commitment to creating a campus environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Complaint and Grievance Policies, Procedures, and Structures

While significant measures are in place to assure fair and equitable treatment to faculty, staff, and students, opportunities to hear grievances and address concerns are important to fostering a campus culture of inclusivity, support, and collaboration. SU offers a robust framework to address such issues (152,153). All of SU's grievance policies and procedures are overseen by the USM BOR and must adhere to their policies (154,155). Institutional compliance with all policies is verified on a four-year cycle through audits by the State of Maryland's Office of Legislative Audit. The USM exercises off-cycle follow-up and additional compliance audits for various campus offices.

Structures Related to the Grievance Policy

The University has numerous offices and structures in place to support a fair and impartial grievance policy and process that allow for grievances to be addressed promptly and equitably (116,141,153,156). The OIE plays an integral role in the development and management of grievance policies and procedures. In addition, the Offices of General Counsel and/or Human Resources may be utilized as necessary to assist with matters related to grievances. The grievance policies and procedures are widely published and regularly reviewed by the aforementioned offices to ensure SU continues to meet the needs of the campus community and reflect current legal requirements. Additionally, the Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee plays a vital role in regularly reviewing and providing recommendations on all policies pertaining to faculty (157). The role of faculty in the development of academic policy is also overseen by the BOR (158).

The Division of Student Affairs oversees the student accountability component of University governance through the creation, adoption, and implementation of the Code of Community Standards, which applies to all student conduct (159,160). The Code of Community Standards, also known as the Student Code, outlines every student's rights and responsibilities, including policy definitions, what constitutes a policy violation, hearing procedures, appeal process, and sanctions. The Student Code is reviewed and updated annually. The DRC is responsible for ensuring equal access to SU's programs and services for self-identified students with disabilities. The DRC provides accommodations and access to resources and services to students with permanent and temporary conditions (161). The Code of Community Standards is reviewed and updated on an annual basis, including a review by the Dean of Students, University General Counsel, and the State Attorney General's Office. In 2024, the reporting structure of the DRC was modified from the Division of Student Affairs to the Vice President of Inclusion, Access, and Belonging (162). This adjustment was made to more appropriately align key offices focused on providing the campus with the tools and resources needed to ensure that SU is a welcoming and inclusive living and learning environment.

Documented and Disseminated Grievance Policy and Procedures

The University has clearly documented grievance policies that outline procedures for addressing complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, and staff. This policy is readily accessible to all members of the University through various channels, including, but not limited to:

- University Website: SU prominently displays its grievance policy on its official website, ensuring students, faculty, and staff can easily access and familiarize themselves with the procedures for filing grievances (116,152,153,156,163)
- Code of Community Standards: The Code of Community Standards, referenced in the preceding section, sets out the standards of behavior for all students that promote the safety and welfare of our campus community. As such, it outlines expectations and related policies and procedures for students accused of academic or behavioral misconduct. The Student Academic Misconduct Policy underscores the commitment to integrity and addresses cases such as lying, cheating, plagiarism, and misappropriation of intellectual property. In the event of a student appealing an academic misconduct filed by a faculty member, the faculty member is given an opportunity to respond within five days. The Student Grievance Policy provides a structured process for appealing

committee findings. Either party can appeal the decision within 10 working days, providing written notice to the Provost with supporting documentation (164,165). Students who have an academic concern that is not specifically related to charges of academic misconduct (grade disputes, for example) may follow the Student Academic Grievance Policy to address their complaint (156,166).

- Faculty Handbook and Staff Employee Handbook: SU provides faculty and staff with access to resources and training materials related to the grievance policy to ensure that they are equipped to handle grievances effectively and impartially. The *Faculty Handbook* also includes information about the grievance hearing boards, as well as student academic misconduct policies and procedures (116,153,163).

The University's grievance policy is designed to ensure fairness, impartiality, and transparency in the resolution of complaints and grievances. Key features of the University's grievance procedures include:

- Neutral Resolution Process: SU employs neutral mediators and investigators to facilitate the resolution of grievances in an impartial and objective manner. These individuals are trained to uphold the principles of fairness and equity throughout the grievance process.
- Due Process Protections: The University's grievance policy includes provisions for due process protections, such as the right to a fair hearing, the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses, and the right to appeal decisions made during the grievance process.
- Confidentiality and Privacy: SU maintains strict confidentiality and privacy measures to protect the rights and privacy of individuals involved in the grievance process. Information related to grievances is handled with sensitivity and discretion to ensure the integrity of the process.

The University is committed to addressing grievances promptly, appropriately, and equitably to promote a supportive and inclusive campus environment. A summary of student academic and conduct appeals, as well as faculty and staff complaints and resolutions can be found in the Evidence Inventory (165–167). SU demonstrates its commitment to timely and equitable resolution through:

- Defined Timelines: SU's grievance policy establishes clear timelines for each stage of the grievance process to ensure that complaints are addressed in a timely manner. These timelines help prevent unnecessary delays and provide clarity to all parties involved.
- Supportive Resources: The University offers support services and resources to individuals involved in the grievance process, including access to counseling, advocacy, and legal assistance, to ensure that they receive the support they need during what can be a challenging process.

SU has demonstrated a strong commitment to fulfilling Standard II: Ethics and Integrity, criteria 2, 3, and 9, through its establishment of a fair and impartial hiring, evaluation, and grievance policies that are designed to create a climate of respect among all campus constituents. Through its documented policies and procedures, fair and impartial practices, and commitment to timely and equitable resolution, SU has created a supportive and inclusive campus environment where complaints and grievances are addressed with integrity and respect for all parties involved.

Moreover, through the regular review of these policies and procedures, the University illustrates its commitment to adhering to and continuously improving its campus policies and procedures.

Academic and Intellectual Freedom

The University has several policies, procedures, and structures in place that provide evidence of SU's compliance with Standard II: Ethics and Integrity, criteria I. In addition to including information on appeals for faculty appointment, rank, tenure and promotion, the *Faculty Handbook* also outlines areas associated with academic freedom (168). At SU, academic freedom – encompassing research, publication, determining standards, internal criticism, and participation in public debate – is a fundamental right for our faculty members. The Faculty Senate Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee is empowered with multiple responsibilities to both educate the campus about academic freedom and to serve as an adjudicator of any cases where this principle is challenged, as well as review and recommend changes to the academic freedom policies and procedures. The University's commitment to embracing and promoting academic freedom is evident throughout the *Faculty Handbook*. The Faculty Grievance Policy, available in the *Faculty Handbook*, maintains that any faculty member who believes their academic freedom has been restricted can appeal to the Faculty Senate committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee for a formal hearing.

In 2012, the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) adopted a resolution defining academic freedom, delineating five specific freedoms: freedom of research and publication, freedom to determine standards of the profession, freedom of teaching, freedom of internal criticism, and freedom of participation in public debate (169). CUSF also recognized that “the concept of academic freedom is accompanied by a corresponding concept of responsibility to the University and its students.” Plagiarism, abuse, and illegal activities or speech are expressly removed from any protections under academic freedom.

For many faculty, intellectual property rights are closely related to academic freedom. At SU, the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research oversees any issues regarding intellectual property. The University is in compliance with the USM Policy on Intellectual Property_ IV-3.20, and SU policies are published in the *Faculty Handbook*, Chapter 7 (170,171). SU's Intellectual Property Policy (IPP) and Academic Freedom Resolution are disseminated across campus through a variety of channels, including:

- The University's website: The IPP and Academic Freedom Resolution are both posted on the University's website so that faculty, staff, and students can easily access them Faculty Senate (169,170)
- Faculty and Staff handbooks: The IPP and Academic Freedom Resolution are both included in the faculty and staff handbooks, so that new faculty and staff members are aware of these policies as soon as they join the University (116,163).
- Training sessions: The University offers training sessions on intellectual property rights and academic freedom for faculty, staff, and students. These training sessions cover the basics of the University's IPP and Academic Freedom Resolution, as well as how to protect intellectual property rights and academic freedom in the classroom and in research.

In addition to these formal channels, the University also disseminates information about intellectual property rights and academic freedom through informal channels, such as town hall meetings, faculty and staff meetings, and student meetings.

Conflict of Interest and Nepotism

The University, along with the USM, maintains policies and procedures designed to ensure potential conflicts of interest affecting remuneration, contractual relationships, employment, family, financial, and other interests are disclosed (172,173). Working with the USM, SU's Office of Human Resources oversees a process where certain employees are required to submit annual financial disclosure filings to the Maryland State Ethics Commission. These employees must submit an annual financial disclosure to the State of Maryland and complete the two-hour, state-mandated, Ethics training within six months of starting in their position and then every five years thereafter. Additionally, all employees at the Director-level and above, including Faculty Chairs, must complete the Ethics training within six months of starting in their position and every five years thereafter. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, SU assigns and tracks completion of this training, known as the USM Thinking and Acting Ethically program, for all Directors and above employees (142). In fall 2023, 136 employees were assigned the training with an 80% completion rate. Completion of mandatory training is a part of every staff member's annual PMP evaluation. Additionally, the USM BOR maintains policies on the employment of members of the same family, and SU is required to provide an annual nepotism report to demonstrate compliance with the policy (172). Under this policy, members of the same family may work at the University, but they may not be in a supervisor/subordinate relationship. In the rare event where it is in the University's best interest to employ family members in a supervisor/subordinate relationship, special accommodations can be made with the President's approval (or BOR as necessary). In these cases, the University will develop a written plan with alternative procedures for supervision and evaluation of the family member(s). Through these University and BOR policies, SU demonstrates its compliance with criteria 4 under Standard II: Ethics and Integrity.

Periodic Evaluation and Assessment

Periodic assessment and evaluation are necessary for continuous improvement. Examples of periodic assessments related to MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), III (Design and Delivery of the Study Learning Experience), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement) are referenced below. These reports include metrics related to planning, institutional resources, and institutional improvement.

Annual

- Annual Academic department reports(31)
- Annual Budget Report (33,34)
- Annual Report (21)
- Academic Program Review Reports- including enrollment and degree completion goals (32)
- University System of Maryland Dashboard Indicators Report-for peer comparisons and benchmarks (174)
- Administrator Evaluation Survey (138)
- Enrollment Projections (22)

- IPEDS Survey-Finance (64)
- Managing for Results/Performance Accountability Report (19)
- Performance Management Process (PMP) (29)
- Programs of Cultural Diversity Report (3)
- Supervisor Feedback Survey (during PMP process) (139)
- USM IRIS Dashboard (175)

Periodic (every two to five years)

- Academic Program Review (includes a Progress Report and full review every seven years) (176)
- Alumni Survey (177)
- Campus Climate Study (82)
- Student Accountability & Community Standards Dashboards and Reports (178)
- Dining Services Dashboard and Assessment Report (179)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan (180)
- Event Technical Services Assessment Report (181)
- Facilities Master Plan (38)
- Guerrieri Student Union Dashboards and Report (182)
- MHEC Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey (147)
- Office of Human Resources Assessment (Consultant Report) (124)
- Supervisor Feedback Survey (139)

Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

SU demonstrates a strong commitment to meeting all MSCHE standards. During the Self-Study process, SU identified areas where it can continue to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

Through the aforementioned human resources assessment and the 2020 Campus Climate study, additional improvements to the faculty and staff onboarding processes should be considered to make campus more welcoming to new employees. While Academic Affairs offers New Faculty Orientation each semester and includes web-based ongoing resources including an early career faculty guidebook and new faculty tips and tricks, there is a more decentralized approach to staff orientation and onboarding (183). This can make the adjustment to campus challenging for new staff members. Some faculty and staff receive comprehensive orientations to the University, while others receive less robust services. A closer look to see how onboarding can be better coordinated and comprehensive could make campus more welcoming to new employees.

With the upcoming development of the next Strategic Plan, opportunities exist to revisit the structure of the existing planning committees. In addition, through this process, the University will reimagine how our institutional priorities are established, which strategies should be implemented to achieve our goals, and how to assess and communicate our progress.

Moreover, with the addition of the new Vice President for Inclusion, Access, and Belonging, campus should develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan for inclusion, access, and

belonging. A strategic plan for inclusion, accessibility, and belonging is essential to cultivate a campus culture of inclusive excellence, support, and collaboration. This plan would ensure that every member of the University community, regardless of background or ability, feels valued and respected. Ultimately, a commitment to inclusion, accessibility, and belonging aligns with SU's mission of promoting learning and scholarship but also creates a vibrant and dynamic campus environment where every member can reach their full potential.

Recommendations

- Develop centralized staff onboarding processes to more effectively welcome new employees.
- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for inclusion, access, and belonging.
- Utilize the upcoming strategic planning process to configure a planning committee to prioritize institutional needs, recommend strategies for achieving our goals, and track and communicate our progress.

Evidence Referenced

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4. Salisbury University Mission & Values
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6. Salisbury Seven
7. Salisbury University Strategic Plan Methodology
8. Strategic Plan Feedback
9. MHEC Maryland State Plan for Higher Education
10. USM Strategic Plan Vision 2030 Executive Summary
11. SU Alignment with USM Strategic Plan
12. Strategic Plan Feedback
13. COVID-19 communication
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15. Post-COVID Changes to Strategic Plan
16. Post-COVID Update to Strategic Plan
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148. Office of Institutional Equity_webpage
149. OIE Training Programs
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151. Salisbury University Policy Prohibiting Non-Sex Based Discrimination
152. Student-Complaint-Resolution
153. Employee Complaint Resolution
154. USM Policy on Faculty Grievances_II.4.00
155. USM Policy on Grievances for Non-Exempt and Exempt Staff Employees_VII.8.00
156. Student Grievance Policy
157. Academic Policies Committee Annual Report 2022-23
158. USM Policy on the Role of Faculty in the Development of Academic Policy_II-3.00
159. Code of Community Standards
160. Code of Community Standards 2022-23
161. DRC Student Grievance Policy and Procedures
162. Salisbury University Organizational Chart
163. Staff Employee Handbook
164. Student Academic Misconduct Policy_webpage
165. Record of Student Conduct Appeals_2021-2023
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167. Record of Employee Complaints and Resolutions
168. Faculty Handbook - Academic Freedom Chapter
169. Academic Freedom Resolution CUSF 2015
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174. Dashboard Indicators Reports for peer comparisons

175. Institution Data Dashboard for Salisbury University- USM IRIS
176. MHEC APR Schedule_Fall 2024-Fall 2034
177. Alumni Survey 2018-23
178. Student Accountability & Community Standards Reports 2021-2024
179. Dining Services Dashboard and Assessment Report
180. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan
181. Event Technical Services Assessment Reports
182. Guerrieri Student Union Dashboards and Reports
183. Staff Orientation Program_webpage

Chapter 4

Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence (Standards I, II, IV, VI)

Throughout this section, we will demonstrate compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), IV (Support of the Student Experience), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).

Introduction

Access to public higher education, in which affordability is a critical factor, is essential to social development and the future of our knowledge-based economy and democratic society. Equity in opportunity is a core humanistic value, and education is the primary means by which people gain access to rewarding careers, prosperity, and personal fulfillment.

As SU approaches its 100th anniversary, we are mindful of the strides we must make in improving access to higher education for *all* citizens. Aligning our campus with the broader demographic trends of our community and State reflects our commitment to equity of opportunity and our obligation to continue the University's good stewardship of public resources.

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 is preparing for this trend by developing targeted strategies to meet the needs of college-bound students and those seeking graduate, professional, and continuing education. There is substantial evidence to support that SU's modest class sizes and emphasis on integrated mentoring promotes student development and success. Because of this evidence, our goal is to continue to pursue reflective instruction and mentoring to fit the needs of students enrolled at SU. In conjunction, this strategy will allow for marginal enrollment growth at SU's regional centers and in online programs. Additionally, SU will explore opportunities to expand its reach by offering alternative enrollment pathways designed to serve an increasingly diverse student population, including more flexible course schedules to accommodate early college and non-degree and non-traditional enrollments, and increasing graduate student enrollment.

As a public, comprehensive university, an important part of SU's mission is to provide an affordable education to its students. Goal 3 of SU's *2020-2025 Strategic Plan* identifies strategies that will be used to develop comprehensive financial aid and tuition plans to maintain the University's affordability. This will help ensure SU's access and affordability while accommodating the changing landscape of higher education.

Goal 3 seeks to articulate SU’s distinctive identity and reputation and communicate this broadly. This is further supported through the Salisbury Seven to:

- strengthen our institutional identity and reputation
- strategically grow to serve the needs of the Eastern Shore, the State of Maryland, and the nation while holding fast to our identity as a student-focused institution that doesn’t just say it cares about its people, it shows it with every decision

The longstanding and continued commitment to maintaining the character of the University will be paramount as SU approaches its centennial celebration in 2025. Through effective communication of SU’s academic excellence and student outcomes, we can consistently demonstrate the power and value of the SU experience – which enables our students to achieve their full potential as individuals, professionals, and community members. This strategy will help to ensure that, as we approach our second century, the promise of excellence will continue to draw new generations.

Access

SU is one of the State’s most efficient producers of high-quality graduates at a reasonable price, educating the leaders of tomorrow for Maryland and beyond. SU continues to rebound from the enrollment impacts of the global pandemic, particularly with new transfer students at the undergraduate level. Moreover, positive indicators in first-year and graduate enrollment headcounts and retention rates give the institution confidence that we are entering a growth phase. During the pandemic, SU’s yield rate dropped from 24% to 18% in fall 2020, but fall 2022 and 2023 saw a slight increase in yield to 19%. SU’s 2024 enrollment projection detail enrollment goals and KPIs including increasing yield to 25% (1). The University has taken steps to improve these rates by adding new yield campaigns for our admitted students, giving families new opportunities to engage with campus – both directly on campus as well as off-site events in crucial counties.

Table 12. First-Time Student Applications, Acceptances, and Enrollments: 2013, 2017-2023

First-time Students	Fall							
	2013	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Applied	8,912	8,171	8,983	8,421	8,701	7,691	8,108	8,090
Accepted	4,896	5,313	5,585	6,190	6,754	6,650	7,383	7,170
Enrolled	1,246	1,328	1,289	1,470	1,218	1,217	1,382	1,376
Acceptance Rate	55%	65%	62%	74%	78%	86%	91%	89%
Yield Rate	25%	25%	23%	24%	18%	18%	19%	19%

While overall enrollment declined 1% between fall 2022 to fall 2023, SU brought in the third largest first-time cohort, 1,376 students, in institutional history. As a primarily residential institution, SU has seen strong residential and auxiliary revenues from maintaining or exceeding residential capacity. Graduate enrollment remained stable from fall 2022 to fall 2023. The new Graduate School is engaging in several enrollment initiatives as it looks to grow over the next decade. The Graduate School has a goal to increase graduate enrollment to 12% of our

institutional enrollment. In fall 2023, graduate students represented 10.7% of SU’s overall enrollment, up from 10.5% the previous year. Through new program exploration, including a recently launched master’s program in Public Communication, and a new comprehensive social media campaign, the Graduate School is laying the groundwork to expand to meet institutional goals (2).

Table 13. Total Institutional Enrollment by Classification: 2013, 2018-2023

	2013	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-Yr. Chng	10-Yr. Chng		
Undergraduates											
First-Time Students	1,246	1,289	1,470	1,218	1,217	1,384	1,376	87	7%	130	10%
Total Freshmen	1,647	1,798	1,950	1,678	1,595	1,737	1,838	40	2%	191	12%
Total Sophomores	1,857	1,714	1,658	1,603	1,383	1,242	1,272	(442)	-26%	(585)	-32%
Total Juniors	2,180	1,920	1,866	1,747	1,674	1,493	1,381	(539)	-28%	(799)	-37%
Total Seniors	1,975	1,896	1,879	1,882	1,714	1,581	1,476	(420)	-22%	(499)	-25%
Second Bachelor's	108	116	106	113	89	92	89	(27)	-23%	(19)	-18%
Unclassified/Non-Degree	237	206	227	127	240	233	225	19	9%	(12)	-5%
Total Undergraduates	8,004	7,650	7,686	7,150	6,695	6,378	6,281	(1,369)	-18%	(1,723)	-22%
Graduates											
Post-Baccalaureate	-	-	-	1	1	1	3	3		3	
Masters	562	743	767	804	731	644	642	(101)	-14%	80	14%
Post-Masters	-	11	14	23	16	14	15	4	36%	15	
Doctoral	9	80	80	76	65	63	56	(24)	-30%	47	522%
Post-Doctoral	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-		-	
Non-Degree	68	83	70	70	62	23	31	(52)	-63%	(37)	-54%
Total Graduates	639	917	931	974	875	745	749	(168)	-18%	110	17%
Grand Total	8,643	8,567	8,617	8,124	7,570	7,123	7,030	(1,537)	-18%	(1,613)	-19%

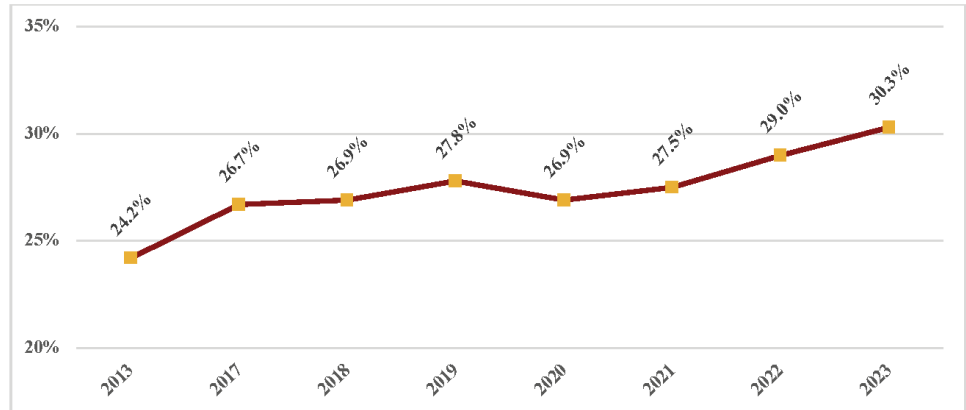
The University’s institutional enrollment projections, discussed in greater detail in the Enrollment Goals and Planning section, outline SU’s enrollment strategy over the next 10 years. This includes strategic growth in our first-time student cohorts and graduate student enrollment.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As discussed in Chapter 3, diversity, equity, and inclusion are common themes throughout SU’s mission, *Strategic Plan*, and Salisbury Seven. SU’s enrollment trends provide further evidence of this commitment. The fall 2022 and fall 2023 semesters brought SU the second and third largest and most diverse first-year classes in the University’s history. Additionally, SU continued to diversify the entire student body. Since fall 2013, SU has increased the known racial minority

rate 6.1% for the total institutional student demographic from 24.2% to 30.3%. During the same period, graduate enrollment was also more racially diverse than ever before. Students identifying as a racial minority comprised 28.8% of the overall graduate enrollment in fall 2023, up from 16.6% in fall 2013 (3).

Chart 3. Institutional Enrollment of Known Minority and Non-Resident Percentage: Fall 2013, Fall 2017-2023



Assessment of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Access Goals

SU regularly tracks progress on our student diversity goals – and institutional overall enrollment goals – through a number of KPIs and reports. As evidence of compliance with Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 6, examples of SU’s periodic assessment of our diversity, equity, and inclusion enrollment goals are provided through the following reports.

Managing for Results/Performance Accountability Report: SU is required by law to annually report on our student diversity goals through the MFR/PAR process. As discussed in Chapter 3, the MFR/PAR is a strategic planning, performance measurement, and budgeting tool that emphasizes the use of resources to achieve measurable outcomes, including enrollment goals (4). Included in this report are KPIs and targets related to student diversity enrollment. Table 14

Table 14. MFR/PAR Enrollment Goals and Metrics

MFR Goal 3. The University will foster inclusiveness as well as cultural and intellectual pluralism.							
Obj. 3.1	Increase the percentage of African American undergraduates from 14.4% in FY 2019 to 15.4% in FY 2024.						
Obj. 3.2	Increase the percentage of minority undergraduates from 26.3% in FY 2019 to 26.8% in FY 2024.						
Obj. 3.3	Maintain the percentage of economically disadvantaged students attending SU at the FY 2019 rate of 52.1% into FY 2024.						
Performance Measures	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Percentage of African American undergraduates	14.4%	14.7%	14.2%	13.2%	14.1%	15.4%	15.6%
Percentage of minority undergraduates	26.3%	26.8%	26.6%	27.0%	28.6%	28.8%	28.9%
Percentage of economically disadvantaged students	52.1%	54.1%	52.9%	50.9%	45.9%	52.1%	52.3%

demonstrates SU's most recent enrollment data and targets for undergraduate African American, minority, and economically disadvantaged students.

SU must review its goals, objectives, and performance measures annually for the MFR/PAR and provide data to demonstrate progress toward achieving those goals. When progress is not made, SU must provide an explanation and provide a plan for improving results the following year.

Programs of Cultural Diversity Report: The USM Programs of Cultural Diversity Report requires all system-level schools to annually provide updates toward accomplishing our student diversity goals (5). The report demonstrates the alignment of our diversity goals with our institutional mission and *Strategic Plan*. Additionally, key accomplishments and KPIs achieved during the prior year and goals for upcoming year are identified.

Communities of Interest Report: A new, annual report required by the Maryland General Assembly, known as House Bill 678 (HB678), requires all Maryland institutions to report on targeted recruitment and outreach efforts for communities of interest (6). For SU, communities of interest include new incoming minority students. This report requires annual reporting on targeted recruitment efforts for the prior year and those planned for the following year. The narrative includes KPIs and targets that must be updated annually to determine if progress has been made.

Structures to Support a Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Student Experience

Chapters 2 and 3 of the Self-Study provide detailed information about the existing University structures that support and create a welcoming campus climate for all students, faculty, and staff. This section briefly highlights those related to the diverse student experience from recruitment through matriculation.

SU engages with prospective students early as a participant in the Pathways to Possibilities Middle School Engagement Program – a six-week mentorship program designed to introduce middle school students to the diverse world of higher education. Each week, dedicated University representatives guide students through various college programs and options, igniting curiosity and supporting the path toward college. For high school students, SU planned an overnight visitation event for students and families of diverse backgrounds known as the Mosaic Experience (7). This event is offered in conjunction with Admitted Students Day and provides incoming students with lodging, SU swag bags, and free registration to the SU's Powerful Connections program.

Once students matriculate to SU, ODI offers incoming students from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to participate in the Powerful Connections program (8). Powerful Connections provides peer mentoring and activities that help make the transition to life at SU easier. The TRIO Program works with underserved, first-generation students by helping them academically through coaching, money management, mentoring, and connecting with our CSA (9). The DRC makes sure that students who have a self-identified disability are given equal access and reasonable accommodations (10). The DRC continues this work through their DRC STARS (Student, Transition, Access, Retention, and Success) Program helping new students transition to SU through peer mentorship (11). The English Language Institute (ELI) works with international

students by providing English language courses to ease their transition to life in the U.S. (12). More information about many of these resources can be found in Chapters 2 and 3.

Enrollment Goals and Planning

As a part of SU's mission, we strive to recruit exceptional and diverse undergraduate and graduate students from across Maryland, the U.S., and around the world. Through a comprehensive enrollment planning process, SU demonstrates compliance with Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 6, and Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 1, 2, 4, and 9.

SU's most recent *Strategic Enrollment Plan* identified nine guiding strategies for the 2019-2022 period (13). These strategies and the plan have been extended through 2024 with the intention of creating the next *Strategic Enrollment Plan* in collaboration with the *University Strategic Plan*.

The *Strategic Enrollment Plan* is just one example of the many unit-level plans that support the University Mission and *Strategic Plan*. This plan provides guidance on where to focus institutional resources to best support enrollment and student success goals. SU's enrollment goals support the Salisbury Seven, the USM's *Vision 2023*, and MHEC's *2022 State Plan for Higher Education*.

As the Middle States Self-Study process allowed the institution to collect feedback from numerous students, faculty, and staff that will be used to inform the development of the next *Strategic Plan*, the development of the *Strategic Enrollment Plan* was reasonably delayed to better align with our institutional planning process and cycle. It should be noted that SU's Office of Enrollment Management continuously uses KPIs to evaluate progress toward enrollment goals and the success of initiatives being implemented. This includes how initiatives impact the recruitment, retention, and success of students.

Assessment of Enrollment Goals

The Office of Enrollment Management tracks enrollment goals daily to assess SU's position in meeting institutional enrollment goals. Enrollment dashboards are publicly available to campus through the UARA office website (14). These dashboards provide official University data that students, faculty, and staff can use to explore enrollment, degree, and credit hour trends (14). Additionally, the Office of Enrollment Management uses Slate, a customer relationship management (CRM) system, as an all-in-one platform to view live data for all aspects of admissions. Slate allows the Enrollment Management team to administer and review applications in a single platform. The system provides daily reports that allow for real-time review of the entire admissions funnel. Enrollment Management also works with Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) and their historical dashboard to help drive decisions and monitor goals.

The Office of Enrollment Management sends weekly reports to the President's Cabinet and regular reports are sent to various campus leadership teams (15). These reports detail the current status of new student recruitment and current student enrollment at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Weekly reports also detail new and current student enrollment, average aid awards, revenue per student, retention data points, and projections on future enrollment. Data is

assessed regularly, and future actions are adjusted and determined based on the data. To assist with recruitment, regular reports, which include new and current student enrollment data, are provided to campus leadership, including Academic Affairs and the school/college Deans, and advisory groups.

Additionally, regular retention reports provide information on the persistence of the previous cohorts into their second year at SU (16). Adjustments in overall recruitment and retention activities are made as needed throughout the cycle based on these reports. Annually, SU participates in a statewide communication campaign required by Maryland legislation. As a part of the MHEC Near Completer's Initiative, SU identifies previous students who are no longer attending the University, have achieved a GPA of 2.0 while in college, earned at least 90 credit hours, and are eligible for reenrollment (17). Once these former students are identified, the Academic Advising Center reaches out to them to offer assistance and develop plans for re-enrollment. Of 275 students identified in June 2023, 80 (29%) have completed and 50 (18%) were persisting as of spring 2024.

Moreover, statewide processes ensure long-term planning and evaluation of institutional enrollment plans. As previously mentioned, SU annually reports to MHEC and the USM current enrollment data and future enrollment goals as a part of the MFR/PAR process (4). The USM and MHEC annually require SU to submit 10-year enrollment projections detailing enrollment goals, including new student recruitment and retention goals (18). The enrollment projections and goals are comprehensive and include enrollment at all levels, including dual, undergraduate, graduate, and regional site enrollments. They are operationalized and proposed by Enrollment Management and UARA to the President's Cabinet, where they are reviewed and approved annually following an assessment of the prior year's results. These assessments are used to determine the recruitment strategy and the scholarship plans for the upcoming year based on the prior year's results, including yield rates for each merit scholarship level. As the enrollment projections are developed, KPIs and benchmarks, including retention and yield goals, are re-evaluated. Once the enrollment plan is set for that particular year, the plan is communicated at all levels of the institution. The Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management shares the plan immediately with the entire Enrollment Management team, Deans Council, Department Chairs across the schools and colleges, and then in various meetings and formats across campus as needed (19). The Dean of the Graduate School shares graduate enrollment goals with the relevant graduate staff and faculty.

Resources and Structures Supporting Enrollment and Student Success

The University continually evaluates its resources and structures in an effort to improve effectiveness and efficiency (Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 6). In 2023, a strategic decision was made to move the Enrollment Management function from Student Affairs to Academic Affairs. This transition facilitated improved communication and collaboration between both areas in support of institutional enrollment goals. In 2024, a new Office of Enrollment Marketing was established under Enrollment Management. This strategic move was made to enhance the focus on developing targeted marketing initiatives that would effectively engage prospective students and directly support our enrollment goals and program-level marketing.

The Office of Enrollment Management and its team of six primary offices are positioned to assist students and their families from day one, educating prospective families about SU and the application process, to the onboarding and orientation to campus, and then supporting students academically, ensuring they succeed in the classroom. Enrollment Management is comprised of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions; Enrollment Marketing, Financial Aid and Scholarships; Regional and Affiliate Operations; and Orientation, Transition, and Family Programs.

SU’s Enrollment Action Team (EAT) conducts research and provides recommendations on overall enrollment actions at SU (20). The EAT is comprised of several subgroups, each designed to be action-oriented and consist of staff and faculty members. These subgroups are co-chaired by members interested in the subject matter and with a focus on shared governance. Group members generate new and creative recommendations to improve enrollment as it pertains to their targeted subgroup and these actions would be reported out to the larger EAT group. The EAT provides updates to the PAT and their work supports the *Strategic Enrollment Plan*.

The University continually evaluates its resources and structures in an effort to improve effectiveness and efficiency. In fall 2024, a new cross-divisional Student Success Council was created to bring the campus student success leaders together for regular opportunities to collaborate and problem-solve ways to address the barriers students face as they work toward graduation. This group will replace the EAT and includes members of the Enrollment Management team and will set students up for success from admission through graduation and beyond.

Admissions Policies and Procedures

SU’s admissions policies and procedures are ethically designed, clear, and transparent (Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 1). SU’s Evidence Inventory provides a copy of our Institutional Federal Compliance Report demonstrating all relevant policies and procedures and where they are made publicly available (21). These policies and procedures ensure that students are academically prepared and provided with all required public disclosures (Table 15).

Advertising and Disclosures to Prospective Students

SU is committed to honesty and accuracy in all of its publications and advertising, including materials provided to internal audiences and for student recruitment (Standard II: Ethics and Integrity, criteria 6). The University provides information to prospective

Table 15. Required Disclosures, Policies, and Procedures

Academic Calendar	Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program	Refund Policies
Accreditation Status	Grading Policies	Retention Rates
Admissions Policies	Licensure Exam Performance	Satisfactory Academic Progress
Academic Program and Career Path Requirements	Licensure or Profession Requirements	Student Financial Assistance
Authority to Grant Degrees	Placement Rates and Student Employment After Graduation	Transfer of Credit Policies
Completion and Graduation Rates	Program Completion Requirements	Withdrawal Policies
Cost of Attendance		

students and their families in many ways. Through Slate, Admissions can engage with and communicate with prospective students, giving them details on their program, campus, financial aid, events, and admittance information. SU continually strives to make information for prospective students transparent and easily accessible. A comprehensive website redesign occurred in 2019, which made information easier to access and understand. The Admissions Publications website has information for various types of students including:

- The Undergraduate Viewbook, which gives students an overview of the student experience and the things SU values (22).
- Sammy the Sea Gull publication is distributed at every new student event and available in the Admissions House. It includes cost of attendance and other quick facts so that students are given clear information prior to even enrolling at SU (23)
- Sea Gull Success Stories brochure highlights graduates and their accomplishments (24).
- Financial Aid card gives information at a glance on FAFSA, scholarships, and directs people to the net price calculator (25).
- Transfer Admissions card addresses the main questions transfer students ask regarding transferred credits, deadlines, scholarships, and academics (26).
- The Nationally Competitive Fellowships Office offers many scholarship opportunities with fellowship lists and resources clearly listed (27).
- Fulbright Top Producer postcard (28).
- Graduate Studies and Research Office publishes *ReSearch* magazine annually, which highlights academic achievements (29).
- Student consumer information is found at the bottom of the SU homepage and has everything from computer use to the student handbook (30).
- The Clarke Honors College webpage shows prospective students what programs are under the college as well as information for current students. The application, housing, course lists, and student association are all easily accessible and in one place (31).
- The Clarke Honors College's student-led magazine, *The Saunterer*, has garnered awards for its excellence. This publication showcases the varied backgrounds and talents of Honors students, emphasizes the close collaboration between students and faculty, and highlights opportunities for deeper engagement with both the campus and the wider community (32).

The University's commitment to accurate and comprehensive information on expenses, financial aid, scholarships, loans, and grants is evident when reviewing our Financial Aid website and demonstrates SU's compliance with Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 2 (33). The Financial Aid website clearly articulates what students can expect on their bill for tuition and fees, housing, meals, and averages for things such as books and travel via the Cost of Attendance (34,35). Net price calculators allow students to input information about family finances, GPA, and extra curriculars to get an estimate of how much students could expect to receive in aid (36). Further, new financial aid packages sent out this year both through Slate and through a mailing to their house provide evidence of the accuracy and transparency in this process (37).

Students and families often request information about campus safety. The Salisbury University Police Department (SUPD) distributes information regarding the Clery Act every year and is accessible at all times on their website (38,39). There are also crime stats and safety information that include fire, emergency preparedness, and crime prevention (40).

To keep families of students involved in the happenings on campus, SU utilizes Campus ESP, a Family Experience Portal that allows parents, family members, and supporters to stay informed about SU happenings, news, events, and information (41). With an easy-to-use platform, users quickly have access to hundreds of articles about Salisbury University's campus. Account holders have the option to opt-in to weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly emails. Additionally, the Family Advisory Council meets four times a year to discuss topics of interest and concern for families (42). Minutes are sent out to committee members via CampusESP.

Undergraduate Admissions

The USM BOR Policy on Undergraduate Admissions provides the basis for admissions policy at SU and outlines basic requirements for applicants to USM institutions (both freshman and transfer students) (43). The BOR policy includes guidelines for minimum coursework required and what documentation students need to provide. It also indicates which types of transfer students are recognized as eligible to transfer. The policy includes definitions for early admission students and allowable exceptions, and it provides guidance on special populations such as homeschooled students, non-degree students, and students coming from other Maryland institutions.

The University's commitment to transparency and shared governance is evident at every stage of the enrollment management process, from creating a recruitment strategy to making admissions policies and criteria easily available to prospective students. The Admissions webpage includes frequently asked questions, application evaluation criteria, information about Advanced Placement exams, and other important information students and their families can use to apply to SU (44). The webpage also includes a Live Chat feature for students to communicate directly with a member of the Admissions staff. Additionally, Admissions staff use social media outlets to share information with current or prospective students and their families. More recently, the Office of Admissions has developed virtual tours of the campus for the University website. These tours can entice prospective students to come to campus in person and are essential for international students and parents who might not have the time or financial resources to visit campus prior to admittance.

Regular communication with prospective students is a critical component of the overall admissions strategy. Initial contact is typically made through email following an inquiry, visit, or application, but Admissions staff also log hundreds of phone calls with prospective students, meet daily with on-campus visitors, and provide information sessions on campus and around the region. Student callers also reach out to prospective students two nights per week during the semester. Members of the Office of Admissions work to ensure that SU's Admissions policies align with those outlined by the BOR (45–49).

Transfer Student Policies and Procedures

Similar to other institutions, SU's transfer student enrollment has declined significantly over the last 10 years. Since 2013, new transfer student enrollment has decreased 43%. While this decline began in 2015, the drop in transfer students was more substantial following the COVID-19 pandemic, see Table 16.

Table 16. Transfer Student Applications, Acceptances and Enrollments: 2013, 2017-2023

First-time Students	Fall							
	2013	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Applied	2,229	1,935	1,864	1,642	1,408	1,503	1,327	1,281
Accepted	1,597	1,422	1,302	1,219	1,016	1,083	936	933
Enrolled	915	831	747	695	546	586	510	521
Acceptance Rate	72%	73%	70%	74%	72%	72%	71%	73%
Yield Rate	57%	58%	57%	57%	54%	54%	54%	56%

While the percentage of students from outside of Maryland has increased since 2019, the size of SU’s overall incoming transfer class has declined by 25% since 2019. However, SU did see slight increases (2.2%) in the fall 2023 transfer class compared to fall 2022. Additional increases were also seen in spring 2024, with 14.3% growth in spring transfer student enrollment over spring 2023. SU is optimistic that it will experience incremental increases in transfers and attribute this to several improvements Admissions has implemented:

- Undergraduate Admissions counselors now assume a transfer territory in addition to their first-year applicants, lowering the counselor-to-applicant ratio for transfer students and supporting the transfer pathway.
- SU improved its transfer credit tool through an enhancement that allows students to upload their transcripts and have it reviewed by an AI-assisted mechanism that generates a “transfer credit report.” This provides for a rapid response for prospective transfer students who want to know how long it would take to graduate from SU.
- SU refined and increased the transfer merit scholarships to improve yield on specific academic tiers.
- Admissions counselors increased the number of recruitment visits to all community colleges in Maryland.

Most transfer students to SU come from our community college partners, which means how quickly enrollment rebounds at community colleges is a concern of the University. As a result, SU approached its growth model conservatively and evaluated the effectiveness of initiatives using the following KPIs:

- Yield Rate of Transfer Students – 65%
- Spring enrollment class accounting for 50% of the annual headcount to account for overall housing capacity
- Increase regional program headcount from fall 2023 to fall 2027 by 22.7%

SU follows the State of Maryland transfer admissions policies, which require four-year public universities to accept transfer students from Maryland community colleges. All transfer applicants are evaluated by the Office of Admissions and must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale; for students who have attended more than one institution, a cumulative average from all previous college work

attempted at regionally accredited community colleges and four-year institutions attended is computed.

- Have earned a minimum of 24 transferable semester hours of college-level credit from a regionally accredited community college or four-year college or university. If they have earned fewer than 24 credits, they are admitted as first-time students.
- Have left the last institution of attendance in good academic standing and with a clear disciplinary record.

The Registrar's Office ensures continued compliance with Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 2 and 3, and confirms the University has fair and transparent transfer credit, prior learning, and credit by exam policies consistent with State requirements. These policies are published on the institution's Transfer Admissions website and include the award of traditional and non-traditional credit policies (50). Comprehensive transfer credit information for undergraduate and graduate students is also available in the Academic Catalog (51).

The transfer application process, admissions requirements, credit policies, and frequently asked questions are readily accessible to prospective students on the University's Transfer Admissions website and include links to articulation agreements with other universities as well as information on the ARTSYS system, which shows students how courses will transfer from Maryland community colleges to four-year universities (46,49,50,52,53). The policies are guided by the State's requirements for transfer credit evaluation legislatively in the COMAR Standards (54). Additionally, comprehensive transfer credit information for undergraduate and graduate students is available online in the Academic Catalog (51).

Course transfer rules are established through consultation with appropriate faculty. The Registrar's Office provides course descriptions and syllabi for faculty evaluation for transferability. Transfer credit is awarded to preserve the integrity of the program and associated learning outcomes. The interaction between the Registrar's Office and academic departments ensures course transfer evaluations consider the University's SLOs and program specific requirements. Curriculum and or accreditation changes trigger a review of existing transfer course evaluations. At any time, faculty can request a change to existing transfer credit rules through the Registrar's Office as circumstances warrant.

Graduate Admissions

As discussed in Chapter 2 of the Self-Study, a major achievement was the transition of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research to SU's new Graduate School. The Graduate School supports SU's efforts to grow graduate enrollment, advance graduate research, and provide all graduate students with a strong sense of belonging. SU offers 15 master's degrees and two doctoral programs across various disciplines. Much like SU's undergraduate enrollment, graduate student growth slowed in the wake of COVID-19. While graduate enrollment had been growing through 2020, there was significant decline in 2021 and 2022. One of SU's enrollment goals is to increase graduate enrollment to 12% of overall institutional enrollment. In fall 2023, graduate students comprised 10.7% of institutional enrollment and graduate enrollment increased 0.5% from fall 2022. Overall, graduate enrollment is up 17.2% since 2013. Similar to the undergraduate student population, graduate students are more racially diverse than ever before. Students identifying as a racial minority now comprise 28.8% of the overall graduate student

enrollment in fall 2023, up from 16.6% in fall 2013. Additionally, we have seen the percentage of our out-of-state students increase from 18% in fall 2022 to 24% in fall 2023 (55).

Table 17. Graduate Student Enrollment: 2013, 2017-2023

Fall Semesters	2013	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	10-yr chng
Total Graduate Headcount	639	932	917	931	974	875	745	749	110
MD Residents (geographic residency)	564	766	771	789	807	730	613	582	18
% MD Residents	88.3%	82.2%	84.1%	84.7%	82.9%	83.4%	82.3%	77.7%	
Out-of-State	64	108	95	90	107	92	82	97	33
Armed Forces Europe or Pacific	-	47	43	38	46	42	41	54	54
Nonresident Alien	10	8	8	13	12	10	9	14	4
Other ¹	1	3	-	1	2	1	-	2	1
									-
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	-	2	-	1	2	2	1	-
Asian	2	10	10	14	15	17	15	11	9
Black or African American	79	104	127	137	136	124	93	119	40
Hispanic/Latino	13	11	16	19	23	19	40	49	36
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	-	4	3	1	1	1	1	3	3
White	516	726	699	682	724	649	547	507	(9)
Two or more races	10	24	30	37	30	25	24	28	18
US Nonresident (NRA)	10	8	8	13	12	10	9	14	4
Unknown/Unspecified	8	45	22	28	32	28	14	17	9
Total GRADUATES	639	932	917	931	974	875	745	749	110
Total Known Minority	105	153	188	208	206	188	175	211	106
Total Known Min + NRA	115	161	196	221	218	198	184	225	110
Known Minority	16.6%	17.2%	21.0%	23.0%	21.9%	22.2%	23.9%	28.8%	
Minority + Nonresident Alien	18.2%	18.2%	21.9%	24.5%	23.1%	23.4%	25.2%	30.7%	
Unknown	1.3%	4.8%	2.4%	3.0%	3.3%	3.2%	1.9%	2.3%	
Average Age of GRADUATE students	30.6	31.8	31.6	31.5	31.2	31.5	31.3	32.1	

To increase interest, applications, and enrollment in graduate programs at SU, the Graduate School engaged with the marketing firm Orange 142 and committed financial resources to launching new marketing campaigns that target regional students with the highest likelihood of enrollment and who have shown interest in graduate programs. These efforts helped graduate application data for fall 2024 already, representing a 32.8% increase in admitted students from fall 2023's class, as well as an increase of 18.4% in students who have already committed to an SU graduate program. Additionally, recent changes in modality for multiple graduate programs in education are targeted to increase access and enrollment.

To further improve marketing and graduate admissions procedures, the Graduate School Dean coordinates regular meetings with the graduate program directors to manage and standardize processes across the various programs. The Dean also communicates and coordinates with the Graduate Council for Graduate School decisions (56,57). The Graduate Council is the coordinating body for graduate study in the University and serves as an advisory board to review appeals on matters concerning the interpretation of regulations governing graduate study and the degree programs related to the University (58). The council approves all changes in the graduate curriculum, evaluates trends in graduate education, and makes recommendations to the Faculty Senate concerning the mission of graduate education and the utilization of resources to meet the needs of its graduate constituency. The decisions of the Graduate Council are subject to review by the Faculty Senate and final approval of the Provost of the University. Additionally, a Graduate Student Council (GSC) was developed in 2012 to serve as the official political and social body for the graduate students at SU (56).

SU's graduate admissions policies, procedures, and communications are clearly stated on the Graduate Admissions website (59). The Graduate Admissions webpage includes the University's Academic Catalog, *Graduate Student Handbook*, tuition and fee information, information on financing graduate school and assistantships, and other helpful information for prospective graduate students to review (59–61). The *Graduate Student Handbook* includes all policies and procedures related to admission and enrollment, including transfer credit policies, time limitations, and withdrawal procedures (51).

FERPA and Student Records

SU is in compliance with Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 3. Included in the *Undergraduate* and *Graduate Student Handbooks* is information about SU's commitment to adhering to the mandates of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Additional information about the law is readily available on the University website on the Registrar's Office page and is sent annually via email (62). There, students and their families can learn about their rights under the law, including how to waive their rights (63,64). Additionally, all new faculty participate in the New Faculty Orientation program, where they receive training and information regarding important topics such as FERPA, Title IX, and other compliance issues (65). The University allows students to waive their FERPA rights through their GullNet student account; students can specify which records they would like to make available to specifically identified people (64). The Registrar's Office maintains student academic records following the USM BOR Policy on Records Management Retention (66), which was established in 1997. All University policies related to record retention can be found in the Evidence Inventory (67). The Registrar's Office electronically stores student records indefinitely. Hard copies of records are retained for two years and then destroyed.

The Dean of Students oversees the maintenance of student disciplinary records. The University Policy on Student Disciplinary and Conduct is available in the Code of Community Standards and the University website. Disciplinary and conduct records are retained for no less than five years (68).

Student health records are overseen by Student Health Services and are subject to all federal laws protecting privacy. Under the University's Patient Rights, all student records and disclosures are

treated confidentially. Students are entitled to a copy of Student Health Services' Notice of Privacy Practices as well as the right to approve or refuse release of records and information except when a release of records is required by law (69,70). Similarly, the SU Counseling Center maintains confidentiality of student information in compliance with Federal and State laws as well as codes of professional ethics to protect the confidentiality of information shared in counseling (71). In accordance with Federal and State laws, as well as codes of professional ethics, the Counseling Center protects the confidentiality of information shared in counseling. No student information is provided outside the Counseling Center without written permission from the student. Exceptions to this policy include cases of imminent danger to self or others, suspected abuse of children or elders, or court subpoena.

Orientation, Transition, and Family Programs

SU recognizes the importance of welcoming students to campus at every opportunity. This is especially important when students arrive for their first semester at SU. The Office of Orientation, Transitions, and Family Programs (OTFP) provides a comprehensive program for all new undergraduate students (72). These programs are designed to introduce new students to academic life, campus culture, and available resources at SU.

There is a continuous review of these programs to ensure that students have a successful transition to campus. In summer 2019, following feedback from families and students, a rebranding of Orientation 101 and 102 took place. New students and families were often confused about what each of these orientation requirements included. In an effort to reduce confusion about the programs, a campaign to better inform students and families was launched, which included changing the names to Sea Gull Start-Up and First Flight, respectively. On their website, students can find the Orientation Guidebook and Checklist, which provide key information to help new students become acquainted with various campus resources and learn about important policies and procedures (73,74).

All new students, including first-year, transfer, residential, and commuter students participate in Sea Gull Start-Up and First Flight (75). Students attend Sea Gull Start-Up in the months prior to beginning their first semester at SU. During Sea Gull Start-Up, students learn about academic expectations, information specific to their major and course selection, and discover resources available at SU to support their success. First Flight is SU's multiple-day program facilitated by student leaders, held prior to the first day of fall semester classes in August. First Flight provides valuable information about becoming part of the SU community, making friends, and getting involved. The OTFP uses a survey to collect feedback to assess the effectiveness of programming and improve the following cycle (76).

One example of how survey data was used to improve the program followed several years of low attendance at the Sea Gull Rec event held during First Flight. The Sea Gull Rec event doubles as an opportunity for students to learn about Campus Recreation facilities and as an optional evening event for new students. From 2023 to 2024, the event was reevaluated and reimagined into the Rec After Dark event. This new event became a cross-divisional collaboration between OTFP (Academic Affairs), Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (Student Affairs and Auxiliary Services), and Campus Recreation (President's Office). The reimagined program was significantly more well attended. More importantly, the event provided students with many

opportunities to learn about club sports offerings, engage with fellow new students through recreation activities, and explore the different campus facilities available to them. The event was coupled with the New Student Welcome and Class Photo, which occur in Sea Gull Stadium. This allowed the University to build on the energy from this event and leverage the fact that all new students were already together in an athletic facility.

Additionally, in recent years there has been intentional efforts to engage with the families of students – both prospective and current. OTFP has worked hard to help foster a strong connection between the University and the supporters of our students. Families are very engaged in the Family Experience Portal (41), a partnership between the University and the vendor CampusESP. This platform is used to communicate with families throughout the enrollment funnel and when their student is fully matriculated, sending email prompts to registered family members with alerts about changes in semester credit hours, billing, end-of-semester GPA, and other pertinent information. Through the portal, family members can also sign up to participate in the Family Webinar Series – a full virtual series hosted each semester with four to five webinars for families, covering content that is crucial during that time of the semester (examples include housing and residence life, academic resources, counseling resources, and more). SU also created the Family Advisory Council (FAC) in 2023 (42). The mission of the FAC is to engage the parents and families of students to increase their support of the University through events, programs, and fundraising, and act as an instrument for addressing the needs and concerns of student families. In its second year, the FAC has provided additional creative ideas and acted as a sounding board for the University. Finally, OTFP partners with Alumni on Homecoming and Family Weekend – the signature event that invites both alumni and families to campus to engage with students, get a feel for the campus community, and uphold that Sea Gull spirit!

Alignment of Mission and Brand

An objective of the strategic planning process was to develop and articulate an identity that distinguishes SU as an outstanding public regional comprehensive university committed to academic excellence and student success (Objective 3.3). As competition for enrollment continues to increase, it's even more important to promote what makes SU unique. Additionally, one of the Salisbury Seven commitments was to strengthen our institutional identity and reputation.

The first strategy for accomplishing this institutional priority was to conduct a brand exercise to examine and reimagine SU's current identity and values (Strategy 3.3.10). SU's Marketing and Communications Team began a request for proposals process to identify a partner to engage in this brand exercise in summer 2019. With the Thorburn Group selected, the brand exercise was originally scheduled to begin in March 2020. Unfortunately, this launch directly coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. SU turned this challenge into an opportunity, only delaying the project until fall 2020. Once pandemic-induced higher education enrollment downturns became evident nationwide, it became even more critical for SU to have a consistent brand promise, pillars, guide, messaging, and visual identities to embrace.

Phase One of the project was research and discovery. This included qualitative discussions in September 2020, promotion and completion of electronic surveys in October 2020, and discovery

presentations with SU stakeholders in December 2020. This, along with frequent group discussions, improved the ability to receive input informing brand strategy development from various stakeholder groups, including students, employees, alumni, donors, parents, and the community – thus enhancing collaboration. The exercise also served to inject pride in SU and positivity and involvement among SU audiences.

Phase Two of the project was brand development, followed by launch and continued rollout. Shared governance and other constituents were involved in the development and testing. Brand training workshops were held for faculty, staff, and student leaders across campus. Despite experiencing challenges and limitations with engaging sections of the campus community in the rebrand as a result of the pandemic, SU successfully launched its new brand in October 2021 with a promise statement and the tagline, “Make Tomorrow Yours” (77).

As the pandemic subsided, the full campus embraced and reflected the award-winning new brand throughout 2022 and beyond. The brand was successfully incorporated across marketing and communications efforts, including recruitment materials, paid advertising, website, social media, and messaging. The project arrived at a core sense of identity for the institution: “SU is home to inspired students and educators, fostering rich opportunities and a broad world view to challenge ourselves to shape the future. SU is the place where “tomorrow” begins.” All information related to SU’s brand can be found on SU’s website (77), including a brand guide, messaging, visual resources, and Inclusive and Affirming Language Guide (78).

Additionally, as the University transitioned into the new brand with an increased focus on attracting and retaining students, organizational changes were made to support these goals. As mentioned previously, the Office of Enrollment Management now has a new Office of Enrollment Marketing to enhance its focus on developing targeted marketing initiatives to effectively engage prospective students and more directly support enrollment goals and program-level marketing. Concurrently, the other functions under Marketing and Communications transitioned into a new University Communications Team, with the Publications Office rebranded as Creative Services and Brand Strategy. This realignment consolidated campus efforts in creative content and brand management under one cohesive unit and elevated the University’s visibility and appeal within the competitive landscape of higher education.

Affordability

Objective 3.2 of SU’s Strategic Plan states that the University strives to increase affordability to support the continued enrollment of a diverse student body. We seek to achieve this goal by continually refining our financial aid strategy, developing additional scholarship opportunities, and keeping tuition affordable. SU is also committed to making textbooks affordable for students, the Open Educational Resource Library has further information and lists of free Open Educational Resources available to student (79). Faculty can also use the Ebsco Faculty Select tool to view and request free course materials (80). SU ensures this through continuous review of financial aid awarding and never increasing in-state tuition by more than 2%. Out-of-state tuition is also kept affordable by only increasing between 2-3% each year. SU has been recognized by several publications for its affordability, including *Money* magazine, which again named SU among “The Best Colleges in America.” SU received a four-star rating (out of five) on *Money*’s

2024 list of campuses highlighted for excellence. For its rankings, *Money* examines educational quality, affordability, and alumni success. Also, for the 12th consecutive year, *Washington Monthly* magazine named SU one of its “Best Bang for the Buck Colleges.” SU was ranked among the top 70 in the U.S. among master’s-level universities, and in the top 130 for value among all universities in the Northeast.

Like most universities, COVID-19 had a negative impact on enrollment and affordability. To keep tuition affordable, the federal government provided additional financial aid. SU also modified merit scholarships and financial aid packages to attract more students and make it possible for them to enroll.

Financial Aid

As the demographics of the State change, SU expects there will be a growing need to assist families in navigating the complexities of higher education, particularly in financial aid. As discussed in the Advertising and Disclosures to Prospective Students section of this chapter, SU is in compliance with Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 1. The University’s commitment to accurate and comprehensive information on expenses, financial aid, scholarships, loans, and grants is evident on our Financial Aid website. SU’s compliance with Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 2, is accounted for through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (33).

The University promotes access and affordability in many different ways, including financial aid and the Sea Gull Promise Program (81). The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships keeps costs transparent by having a Freshman Net Price Calculator, and Transfer Student Net Price Calculator. (34). The office also supports families by offering information sessions on the new simplified FAFSA process. The office is in constant contact with RNL, SU’s external consultant for optimizing yield and financial aid. RNL provides data-informed guidance to SU about the ideal tuition amount to yield the highest number of students.

The partnership with RNL advises on trends and how financial aid packaging will affect projected enrollment, allowing for informed decision making. Enrollment Management meets monthly with Administration and Finance to monitor institutional aid and overall financial aid awarded to current and prospective students. This gives multi-divisional oversight of funds being awarded to students. Communication of this data and trends are shared across divisions, so staff are aware of upcoming changes and their impact on the enrollment management plan. Annually, recruitment and institutional aid data are reassessed based on a thorough internal review with RNL of the outcomes from the previous year. Recommendations on how to improve the upcoming cycle are made to the President’s Cabinet based on these assessments.

While SU remains below the average discount rate nationally for public schools, the institution remains confident that its current awarding strategy effectively leverages institutional aid dollars to yield the greatest number of students while maintaining a strong net revenue rate per student at the undergraduate level.

Scholarships

Merit scholarships are determined at the time of admission by the Office of Admission. Students must submit the SU Scholarship application for institutional/foundation scholarships annually for consideration. The SU Scholarship application opens December 1 every year. If a foundation scholarship requires financial need, FAFSA results are reviewed to ensure they have demonstrated need. SU Academic Works has qualifiers set for each scholarship and matches students for each student (82). SU is one of the nation's top producers of Fulbright Scholars and the Nationally Competitive Fellowships Office works closely with students for these merit-based monetary awards that allow enriching experiences outside of the classroom (27). The Types of Aid website provides prospective and current students with thorough information on the types of different aid available, as well as criteria that must be met (83).

SU provides Academic Works Scholarships, Graduate Scholarships and Studentships, and the Good Neighbor Scholarship for undergraduate and graduate students, along with academic-based Presidential and Transfer Student Scholarships (33,60,82,84). Unlike the Good Neighbor Scholarship, which is for students in certain states, SU offers a Sea Gull Nation Scholarship (began fall 2024) for any student who is not a resident of Maryland.

Academic Excellence

Academic excellence is measured through SU's student achievements. While Chapter 2 of the Self-Study focused on the achievement of student learning outcomes and the programs SU provides to support student success, this section focuses on student achievement related to timely progress and degree completion. SU has clearly stated ethical policies and processes to retain and facilitate the success of the students admitted to the University (Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience, criteria 1). SU routinely analyzes and uses student achievement data to inform and implement strategies to improve the outcomes of our students.

Student Achievement

The University's commitment to transparency extends to its communications with potential and current students. SU abides by all disclosure requirements set forth in the Higher Education Opportunity Act. Through the UARA Student-Right-To-Know website, disclosures – including student retention and graduation rates, teacher education and nursing licensure exam pass rates, and alumni career and graduate school placements – are all readily available (85).

Retention and Graduation Rates

Despite the impacts of the pandemic, SU maintained a relatively strong second-year retention and six-year graduation rates. For the fall 2022 cohort, 80% of students returned for their second year at SU. SU's second-year retention rates increased four percentage-points this year. Even more significant were the increases for African American (79%), Hispanic (79%), and Pell (76%) students. Notably, the rates for these populations are similar to our overall rates. SU regularly uses disaggregated data to examine student outcomes and the impact of initiatives created to improve student success. We attribute these increases to the student support programs described in Chapter 2. For more than a decade, SU's TRIO Student Support Services Program

has helped low-income, first-generation students thrive as undergraduates. Multicultural Student Services continues to operate the Powerful Connections pre-orientation and transition program for multicultural students to assist with recruitment, retention, and creating a sense of belonging for students participating in the program. The addition of the First Generation Sea Gull Scholar program provided SU with its first programmatic commitment to supporting all undergraduate first-generation students throughout their tenure at SU.

Table 18. Retention and Graduation Rates, 2015-2023 Cohorts

Fall Cohort First-Time Full-Time	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Six-Year Graduation Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
TOTAL									
Six-Year Graduation Rate	72%	69%	67%						
2nd Year Retention	84%	83%	83%	81%	78%	80%	76%	80%	
Cohort Size	1,185	1,327	1,324	1,285	1,467	1,214	1,214	1,376	1,374
AFRICAN AMERICAN									
Six-Year Graduation Rate	63%	62%	60%						
2nd Year Retention	81%	81%	81%	83%	71%	73%	71%	79%	
Cohort Size	130	149	172	156	182	134	130	213	191
HISPANIC									
Six-Year Graduation Rate	67%	69%	56%						
2nd Year Retention	83%	79%	82%	79%	74%	80%	61%	79%	
Cohort Size	58	61	68	78	88	81	84	104	134
LOW- INCOME (PELL)									
Six-Year Graduation Rate	66%	61%	61%						
2nd Year Retention	81%	78%	81%	74%	74%	73%	68%	76%	
Cohort Size	245	298	319	282	343	273	286	405	400

Like many institutions, COVID-19 impacted our retention and graduation rates. While SU’s retention rates are recovering, improvements in graduation rates have been slower. For the 2017 cohort, 67% of the students graduated within six years, a two percentage-point decline from the prior year. Even more significant were the increases for African American (60%), Hispanic (56%), and Pell (61%) students. Rates remained stable for Pell students, while rates for African American students matched those of the overall cohort. Six-year graduation rates for Hispanic students declined 13 percentage-points. However, this represents a small population of students at SU where graduation of only a few students dramatically impacts the overall rate. SU remains fully committed to the timely graduation of all our students.

SU’s six-year graduation rates are similar to our USM peer institutions. The most recent six-year average graduation rate for the USM was 68% (2017 cohort), while SU graduated 67% of its students (2017 cohort). The USM Dashboard is a tool the University routinely uses to track our rates compared to the USM averages and other USM institutions (86). This allows us to look at peer data and determine if student achievement at SU is aligning with statewide trends. Other measures of student achievement are described in two annual reports of institutional effectiveness, as measured by the State and the USM, the MFR/PAR and the USM Dashboard Indicators.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the annual MFR/PAR is used by the State to evaluate SU’s attainment of student achievement KPIs such as graduation and retention rates. This data is reported annually and is disaggregated for African American and minority students to allow the identification of any achievement gaps (4). Table 19 demonstrates SU’s most recent retention and graduation rate data and targets for undergraduate African American and minority students.

Table 19. 2023 MFR/PAR Student Achievement Goals and Metrics

Goal 4. Improve retention and graduation rates while advancing a student-centered environment.							
Obj. 4.1	Maintain second-year retention rates of SU first-time, full-time freshmen of 80% in FY 2024.						
Obj. 4.2	Maintain second-year retention rates of SU first-time, full-time African American freshmen 78% in FY 2024.						
Obj. 4.3	Maintain second-year retention rates of SU first-time, full-time minority freshmen 78% in FY 2024.						
Performance Measures	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Second-year first-time, full-time retention rate at SU (or another public university in Maryland): All students	84.2%	80.5%	79.3%	80.3%	78.4%	80.0%	80.6%
African American students	84.4%	86.5%	76.4%	75.4%	73.9%	78.0%	78.0%
Minority students	83.7%	78.1%	75.2%	79.1%	74.0%	78.0%	78.0%
Obj. 4.4	The six-year graduation rates of SU first-time, full-time freshmen will increase from 72.0% in FY 2019 to 73.5% in FY 2024.						
Obj. 4.5	The six-year graduation rates of SU first-time, full-time African American freshmen will increase from 66.4% in FY 2019 to 67.9% in FY 2024.						
Obj. 4.6	The six-year graduation rates of SU first-time, full-time minority freshmen will increase from 65.6% in FY 2019 to 67.1% in FY 2024.						
Performance Measures	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Six-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time freshmen from SU (or another public university in Maryland): All students	72.0%	75.4%	73.0%	74.9%	73.2%	73.5%	73.4%
African American students	66.4%	69.1%	67.5%	71.5%	69.6%	69.8%	70.0%
Minority students	65.6%	71.5%	65.0%	72.6%	68.2%	68.5%	68.8%

These rates differ from institutional rates (IPEDS) as they include students that started at SU that were retained or graduated from any Maryland public institution (87). Each year, SU must provide a report describing trends and efforts to improve student success when benchmarks are not achieved.

In addition, SU regularly tracks the success of transfer students through our annual participation in the Student Achievement Measure (SAM) initiative (88). SAM is a transparency initiative to track students across institutions to create a more complete picture of undergraduate student progress and completion within the higher education system. SU annually tracks completion and transfer rates for first-time and transfer students through this initiative. As many of SU's transfer students, approximately 71% (FY23), arrive with at least 30 credits completed, it's important to track various graduation rates. Currently, 60% of SU's full-time transfer students graduated from SU within three years. Another 4% graduated from another institution after transferring from SU. Additionally, four- and six-year graduation rates are higher for transfer students than first-time students. By comparison, 72% of SU's full-time transfer students graduate within four years, compared to 52% of first-time, full-time students. Within six years, 75% of full-time transfer students and 67% of first-time, full-time students have graduated.

SU continually assesses the effectiveness of its various student success initiatives and structures to improve effectiveness. In fall 2024, a new cross-divisional Student Success Council brings our campus student success leaders together for regular opportunities to collaborate and problem-solve ways to address the barriers students face as they work toward graduation. Additionally, as a part of this increased focus on student success, both the Center for Student Achievement and the University Writing Center were unified under the direction of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success. This change will allow these centers to more readily collaborate with other Academic Affairs units, such as the Academic Advising Center, which are heavily involved in key student success work.

Additionally, acknowledging the intersecting identities of many participants, the offices overseeing Powerful Connections, DRC STARS, College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) Scholars, and TRIO convened to explore synergies that could enrich the support networks of program participants. In a notable example, during fall 2023, participants from CAMP and TRIO came together to attend a Delmarva Shorebirds Minor League Baseball game, fostering connections beyond the campus and integrating students into the local community. Likewise, Powerful Connections and DRC STARS orchestrated a crossover day in the same semester, intertwining programming to cover learning styles, identity exploration, and shared experiences. The day concluded with a vibrant cookout featuring food, games, and collaborative t-shirt decoration.

To assess student success and the impact of interventions, each program adheres to distinct reporting requirements. Notably, TRIO, as a grant-funded entity, not only submits data to the University but also provide specific information to their grant offices (89). All programs rigorously collect quantitative data, encompassing metrics such as grade point averages, retention rates, graduation rates, and service hours. Additionally, qualitative data is collected through event surveys, semester-end surveys, and insightful focus groups (11,90). This multifaceted data approach is crucial in ensuring that each program attains its intended outcomes.

Collaborating closely with the UARA, each program guarantees the accuracy of data collection and reporting within the university framework.

Graduate Outcomes

While we want students to graduate in a timely manner, SU is also committed to ensuring the success of students after graduation. Academic departments provide Departmental Fact Sheets for prospective and current students to review, which give a snapshot about the department, faculty, curriculum, and potential career opportunities (91). Prospective and current students also may review assessment results to see how well students are accomplishing the General Education student learning outcomes identified in the Academic Catalog (92).

While individual academic departments survey graduates and alums periodically at the departmental level, the University collects data from all graduates. Each semester, graduating students are asked to complete the First Destination Survey. With the assistance of UARA, the Career Services administers this survey to track students' employment and graduate school plans shortly before graduation. The results of the survey are made publicly available on the University website, providing current and prospective students, and their families, with information that can be utilized when selecting a major (93,94).

The University also tracks graduate outcomes by annually surveying alums one year after graduation to collect information on employment, graduate school attendance, and satisfaction with their SU education. Additional summaries of graduate satisfaction, employment rates, and graduate school attendance are found in the annual alumni survey summaries (97). These rates are publicly available on SU's Student Right-to-Know website (85). Separate reports are created to showcase the accomplishments and satisfaction of graduates within each of the schools/colleges. This data is shared annually to the State in the MFR/PAR report. In this report, SU must provide targeted benchmarks and give evidence of progress toward these goals. Table 20 demonstrates SU's MFR/PAR student achievement data (4).

The most recent survey results included on the 2023 MFR/PAR are based on students that graduated between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021, and had a 10% response rate. Results revealed that 100% and 99% of SU graduates are satisfied with their level of preparation for graduate school (Objective 1.3) and employment (Objective 1.4), respectively. Of those graduates seeking employment, 98% were employed within one year of graduation (Objective 2.1). These results affirm that SU provides a quality education, makes graduates readily employable and prepared to be successful in their future careers and life. MFR/PAR 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). The MFR/PAR requires annual reporting and accountability for our licensure pass rates for nursing and teacher education graduates. This data is publicly available on the Student Right-to-Know website (85). At 89%, SU remains well above the average Maryland NCLEX pass rate (77%) for B.S.N. programs (Objective 1.1). In fact, SU has the highest NCLEX pass rate in the State of all B.S.N. programs. The School of Nursing continues its concentrated efforts (e.g., tutoring, NCLEX review course, etc.) to increase its pass rates and maintain an academically rigorous curriculum.

Table 20. MFR/PAR Graduate Goals and Metrics

Goal 1. Provide a quality undergraduate and graduate academic and learning environment that promotes intellectual growth and success.							
Obj. 1.1	Maintain the percentage of nursing graduates who pass the nursing licensure exam on their first attempt within 5 percentage points of the fiscal year (FY) 2019 rate of 99% into FY 2024.						
Obj. 1.2	Maintain the percentage of teacher education graduates who pass the teacher licensure exam at or above 97% into FY 2024.						
Obj. 1.3	Maintain the percentage of SU graduates who are satisfied with their level of preparation for graduate or professional school at 99% into FY 2024.						
Obj. 1.4	Increase the percentage of SU graduates who are satisfied with their level of preparation for employment from 94% in FY 2017 to 95% in FY 2024.						
Performance Measures	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Nursing National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX) pass rate	99%	92%	95%	95%	89%	94%	95%
Teaching (Praxis II) pass rate	100%	95%	92%	85%	77%	97%	97%
Satisfaction with preparation for graduate school	N/A	100%	95%	100%	100%	99%	99%
Satisfaction with preparation for employment	N/A	97%	94%	92%	99%	94%	95%
Goal 2. Utilize strategic collaborations and targeted community outreach to benefit the University, Maryland, and the region.							
Obj. 2.1	Maintain the percentage of graduates employed one-year after graduation at the FY 2017 rate of 94% into FY 2024.						
Performance Measures	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Percentage of bachelor's degree graduates employed one year after graduation	N/A	97.0%	94.0%	97.7%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%

The Professional Education Unit of the Seidel School of Education requires all graduating students seeking a degree in a Professional Education area to take the relevant licensure exams as required by MSDE for licensure in their certification area. For the 2023 MFR, 77% of students graduating in 2021-22 who took the Praxis II passed the exam (Objective 1.2).

Employability

During academic year 2023-24, three of SU’s academic programs, Philosophy, Art, and English, underwent a rigorous review and certification process through Quality Assurance Commons (95). This process requires program faculty to complete a self-study and review curriculum to provide evidence that their program helps faculty (and then students) understand what Essential

Employability Qualities are, recognize why they are important to employers, and articulate how they have developed them through their academic or training program. The certification process examines eight Essential Employability Qualities, including communication, teamwork, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, learning and adaptability, professionalism, responsibility, and digital literacy. Following their review, all three programs received the Essential Employability Qualities certification (EEQ CERT) for their comprehensive and integrated framework for employability. For academic year 2024-25, the University is soliciting five additional programs to complete the EEQ CERT self-study, with plans to have all academic programs certified within the next five years.

Periodic Evaluation and Assessment

Periodic assessment and evaluation are necessary for continuous improvement. Below are examples of periodic assessments related to MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), IV (Support of the Student Experience), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement). These reports include enrollment, retention rates, graduation rates, degree completions, and/or other metrics related to access, affordability, and academic excellence.

Annual

- Annual Academic department reports (96)
- Alumni Survey (97)
- College and Career Readiness, 55% Degree Completion Goal Report (98)
- Cohort Default Rates (99)
- Course Evaluations (100)
- Dashboard Indicators Report-for peer comparisons and benchmarks (101)
- Eligibility and Program Approval Report for Federal Student Aid Programs (102)
- Enrollment Projections (1)
- First Destination Survey (93)
- GULL Week Assessment Reports (92)
- IPEDS Survey-Fall Enrollment (3)
- IPEDS Survey-Graduation Rates (87)
- IPEDS Survey-Outcomes Measures (103)
- Managing for Results/Performance Accountability Report (4)
- Programs of Cultural Diversity Report (5)
- Program Participation Agreement for Financial Aid (104)
- Strategic Use of Institutional Aid (105)
- Student Achievement Measure (SAM) data (88)
- USM IRIS Dashboard (86)

Periodic (every two to five years)

- Academic Advising Center Assessment (106)
- Academic Program Review Reports- including time-to-degree, retention rates, graduation rates, and degree completion by program (107)

- Financial Aid Assessment Reports (108)
- Housing and Residence Life Dashboard and Reports (109)
- Orientation, Transition, and Family Programs Dashboard and Report (110)
- Program Review Determination Letter (111)
- Strategic Enrollment Plan (13)
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report (112)
- Student Satisfaction Surveys (106)
- TRIO Report (90,113)

Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

Throughout the Self-Study process, SU has utilized the feedback and information from the working groups to examine our institutional strengths and weaknesses. The working groups identified a strength in the Office of Enrollment Management. Through this, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions has an extensive communications plan through Slate, and enrollment targets are constantly communicated to key offices across campus. The messaging to prospective students is consistent, accurate, and aligned with our institutional brand. Additionally, the reimagining of orientation and creation of the OTFP provides a comprehensive program for all new students and their families to feel welcomed as soon as they arrive on campus. Once here, student support programs provide consistent opportunities to assist students in meeting our student achievement goals. Notably, the Center for Student Achievement is our main support system that helps maximize students' academic potential. With the integration of this office under Academic Affairs, new synergies are being created. While numerous offices on campus assist with student success initiatives, centralizing these efforts will improve consistency and allow for greater communication.

Recommendations

- Create collaborative opportunities for offices that contribute to student achievement and success and provide centralized oversight to assess outcomes.
- Develop communication strategies that promote and share student successes, outcomes, and achievements.

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- | | |
|--|---|
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Chapter 5

Community Engagement and Sustainability (Standards I, VI, VII)

This section demonstrates compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement), and VII (Governance, Leadership, and Administration).

Introduction

As a regional comprehensive university, SU recognizes its pivotal role in contributing to the educational, economic, cultural, and social needs of the Eastern Shore region and beyond. This chapter examines how SU fulfills its obligation as a “steward of place” through Goal 4 of the *2020-2025 Strategic Plan*, Deepening Engagement with Our Community, and Goal 5, Enhancing Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability (1,2). These intertwined priorities reflect SU’s dedication to fostering mutually beneficial partnerships, promoting civic responsibility, and cultivating a sustainable future. Externally validated by our 2020 Carnegie Community Engaged Campus designation and numerous sustainability accolades, SU’s efforts span many initiatives, from academic programs and student volunteerism to innovative research and community-based projects (3). This chapter explores the structures, policies, and practices that support these endeavors; assesses their impact; and identifies opportunities for improvement. Since our last Self-Study, SU celebrated numerous achievements in the realm of community engagement and sustainability including:

- SU’s 2020 designation as a Community Engaged Campus by the Carnegie Foundation
- Integration of Civic and Community Engagement and Environmental Sustainability required courses in the new General Education program (4)
- The 2023 We the People Award for Excellence in Civic Learning and Community Engagement from the AASC&U (5)
- The designation as a United Nations Millennium Campus since 2020, with 41 SU students being named UN Millennium Fellows, designing projects to assist in achieving the UN Foundation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- Recognition as a Top Performer in Energy in the 2024 Sustainable Campus Index (6)

Mission and Goals: A Shared Vision

SU demonstrates compliance with MSCHE Standard I, criteria 2-3, through its commitment to community engagement and sustainability. SU’s Mission Statement emphasizes empowering 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.” This mission directly informs the institution’s approach to leveraging academic programs and opportunities to meet student and community needs.

The *2020-2025 Strategic Plan* further exemplifies this commitment, with two of its five goals specifically focused on supporting regional sustainability through community engagement: Goal 4, Deepening Engagement with Our Community, and Goal 5, Enhancing Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability (7). In alignment with the *Strategic Plan*, the Salisbury Seven pledges reinforce SU's dedication to community engagement (8). Two pledges particularly emphasize this priority:

- SU will strategically grow to serve the needs of the Eastern Shore, the State of Maryland and the nation while holding fast to our identity as a student-focused institution ...
- SU will be known for our innovative, high-impact practices and our belief that we are educating the whole person for a lifetime of civic leadership and community service.

These commitments demonstrate institutional support (Standard I, criteria 1 C-D; Standard VI, criteria 6) and drive decisions on resource allocation, strategic initiatives, and planning, ensuring that community engagement and sustainability efforts are integrated into all aspects of university operations. While supported by SU's administration, all shared visions and goals are born out of a commitment to collaborative goal-setting that reflects the interests and needs of the entire community. As discussed in Chapter 1, SU's *2020-2025 Strategic Plan*, which includes community engagement and sustainability goals, was developed in 2019 through a collaborative process involving 21 focus groups with input collected from 246 faculty, staff, students, and administrators (9). Additionally, recognizing the importance of our community partners, members of both the SU Foundation and Alumni board participated as well. Other examples of SU's commitment to community engagement and sustainability initiatives include:

- In 2020, the Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE) coordinated efforts across campus to apply for the Carnegie Community Engaged Campus designation (3,10). This process was instrumental in establishing a campuswide definition of community engagement, which now guides many of SU's community-related goals and initiatives. The collaborative nature of this effort helped to align various departments and units around shared community engagement objectives.
- The Office of Sustainability, in collaboration with the University Sustainability Committee, plays a key role in developing SU's sustainability goals (11). The creation of the Climate Action Plan, which sets specific targets and actions to move SU toward carbon neutrality, involved input from campus stakeholders and aligns with institutional sustainability objectives (12).
- The development of the new General Education program with requirements of civic and community engagement and environmental sustainability exemplifies SU's commitment to integrating community engagement and sustainability into its core curriculum (4). As described in Chapter 2, this comprehensive revision process was initiated by the Faculty Senate and involved collaboration of multiple stakeholders, including faculty, students, alumni, and administrators.

A notable outcome of the new General Education program is the requirement that all students complete courses in both Civic and Community Engagement and Environmental Sustainability.

Faculty-led committees established guidelines and procedures for approving these courses, ensuring alignment with institutional student learning outcomes while maintaining academic rigor. For Civic and Community Engagement courses, a rubric based on best practices focuses on three key elements: grounding in the academic language and goals of the primary discipline, reciprocal partnership with external entities accounting for at least 25% of course grade or time, and dissemination of student work outside the classroom (13). Environmental Sustainability courses concentrate on understanding and communicating sustainability concepts and address one of the following: applying cultural and ethical perspectives, identifying and using scientific evidence, analyzing sustainability issues across multiple scales, developing skills for implementing sustainable solutions, or understanding interconnections between multiple disciplines (14).

These requirements support specific learning outcomes, including students will:

- demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to participate actively in civic and community"
- describe the interconnections of natural, human, and social systems, including strategies to improve ecological integrity, human well-being, and/or social equity.

This inclusive approach to curriculum development demonstrates SU's commitment to integrating diverse perspectives and ensuring its academic programs reflect and support the institution's mission and strategic goals for community engagement and sustainability.

Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement (Standard VI)

As a regional comprehensive University, SU's mission emphasizes and supports how we can engage with the Eastern Shore community and contribute to its sustainability. As evidence of compliance with Standard VI, criteria 1-2, SU supports and continuously assesses the quality of our community engagement through the Town Gown Council. The Town Gown Council, which meets at least twice each semester, plays a crucial role in providing community input on University goals and initiatives (15). This council includes community, city, county, and University leaders, serving as a platform for soliciting ideas and feedback that enrich campus activities and educational programs. The University periodically surveys the local community to collect feedback about the perceptions of SU and our relationship with the community (3). This anonymous survey asks respondents questions on topics such as campus events, classes, and interactions with faculty, students, and staff. In fall 2018, 301 community members responded. From that survey, SU found that the community was largely pleased with Town-Gown relations but wanted to expand methods of communication about cultural events on campus and deepen engagement with the faculty. To that end, SU has developed a publication, *Panorama*, to share upcoming campus cultural and academic events with the entire community (16). The addition of digital signage strategically located on campus near a major highway also acts as a strategy to share information about our upcoming campus events with the local community. A more important finding highlights perceived alignment between University goals and the interests of the general community. In the 2018 survey, 80% of the 301 respondents agreed that University goals align with the interests of the general community. This represents a substantial

improvement over the previous assessment, conducted in 2016. In 2016, 60% of respondents believed University goals aligned with the interests of the general community (17).

The SU Foundation (SUF) Board of Directors, comprised of community members and alumni, contributes to institutional goal setting by providing perspectives on how the University can best serve its broader community (18). Established in 1973, the SUF accumulates funds through gifts and investments to support SU's educational programs, athletics, and scholarships (19). It serves as a bridge between the University and corporations, foundations, businesses, and donors, fostering a dynamic relationship with the community. This inclusion of community constituents demonstrates SU's compliance with Standard VI, criteria 1-2.

In line with Standard VII, criteria 1, the SUF Board's bylaws and policies outline a transparent governance structure, defining its roles, responsibilities, and relationship with the University (20). Board members' professional expertise and community involvement offer valuable insights into enhancing the educational experience at SU and supporting its mission (21).

Institutional Structures Supporting Community Engagement and Sustainability

SU has established a robust infrastructure to support its community engagement and sustainability initiatives, demonstrating commitment to these priorities through dedicated offices, programs, and resource allocation. This infrastructure spans multiple divisions and offices, ensuring comprehensive support for these institutional priorities. Furthermore, the SU Foundation, Inc. is a positive asset in broadening the campus community to include alumni, families, and friends (18). This multi-faceted approach ensures community engagement and sustainability efforts are integrated across the institution, supported by appropriate resources, and aligned with SU's mission and strategic goals.

Community Engagement and Sustainability Centers and Opportunities

Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE)

PACE, overseen by Academic Affairs, plays a crucial role in integrating community engagement as an element within academic programs, while the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (CSIL) under Student Affairs offers regular opportunities for students to engage outside of the classroom (10,22). The collaborative efforts of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs emphasize our institutional commitment to embedding community engagement within both academic life and extracurricular opportunities. PACE, formally part of the Fulton School of Liberal Arts, provides services and support to the entire campus. In 2020, PACE successfully established a campuswide definition for community engagement that focuses on “the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial creation and exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.” This definition now serves as the primary guide for rubrics evaluating Civic and Community Engagement courses required under the General Education program (13). Much of this work was made possible because PACE

offered faculty professional development in civic engagement pedagogies since 2014, and the Civic Engagement Across the Curriculum program is now available as a free, fully online, and asynchronous offering for all SU faculty and staff (23).

PACE oversees the largest campus Nonprofit Leadership Alliance program in the United States (24). This program provides formal training and certification in nonprofit purposes, laws, and management strategies. Students and community members who complete the program must engage in formal coursework, internships, reflections, and networking. They are then recognized with a Certified Nonprofit Management certificate. The program helps to focus student interest in workforce preparation toward nonprofits, working to meet community needs.

PACE also oversees the Presidential Citizen Scholars (PCS) Program, which prepares students to be community leaders through civic scholarship and community action (25). Over three semesters, Scholars meet with members of the community to identify and research an issue – culminating in a PCS Capstone Project. Recent projects include efforts to combat youth homelessness, bioremediation of urban spaces, and educational outreach to a local middle school to provide menstruation resources. Many of these projects became institutionally sustained, like the Food for the Flock food pantry, originally established in 2018 to address food insecurity among SU students (26). Most recently, in collaboration with the Wicomico County Local Management Board, the Somerset County Local Management Board, the City of Crisfield, and the City of Salisbury, the PCS launched a survey to investigate the assets and strengths of the communities in Wicomico and Somerset Counties (27).

Business and Economic Development Centers

SU maintains several offices and programs that support business development and economic sustainability in the region. Since 1987, the Perdue School of Business has supported business development by hosting regional sales and marketing competitions. The Philip E. and Carole R. Ratcliffe Foundation Shore Hatchery entrepreneurship competition has been hosted by the school since 2013 (28). Through this competition, small business owners and entrepreneurs compete twice a year for a share of a \$200,000 prize pool and mentorship. In the past decade, recipients reported estimated profits of about \$100 million, creating nearly 700 jobs (29).

The Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) plays a crucial role in SU's economic engagement with the community. BEACON provides a wide range of services, including strategic planning support, listening sessions, economic forecast predictions, and economic impact studies for various organizations. Since its inception, BEACON has assisted in distributing \$16 million in external funding toward 750 projects and has facilitated more than 200 strategic plans. The network's impact is substantial, having completed over 40 economic impact studies, including one that estimated SU's regional economic impact at \$480 million in 2016. BEACON not only benefits the community but also provides students with valuable experiential learning opportunities, further strengthening the connection between SU and its surrounding region (30–32).

An outreach of the Perdue School of Business, the Eastern Region Maryland Small Business Development Center (SBDC) serves the citizens of Maryland by improving the success of small businesses through low-cost training, no-fee consulting and research, with offices at SU;

Chesapeake College in Wye Mills, MD; and the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce in Cambridge, MD (33). The SBDC provides small business owners with training and consultations with certified, professional business counselors, many of whom have owned or managed successful businesses. The SBDC is a part of a state and national network which is designed to develop and strengthen small businesses, thereby contributing to the growth of our local, state, and national economies (34).

In 2021, SU expanded the physical space of its small business and economic development outreach beyond campus by opening the Dave and Patsy Rommel Center for Entrepreneurship in downtown Salisbury. The Rommel Center for Entrepreneurship provides business and prototyping resources, including a full makerspace, for students and community members. The Center for Entrepreneurship benefits students, community members and local small business owners, who have the opportunity to share their expertise with SU students. The downtown location of this facility intentionally places our students on the frontlines with other area business, government, and community leaders to increase their exposure and offer opportunities for collaboration (35).

The Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC), founded in 2004, partners with various government levels and organizations to develop data-driven decision-making tools (36). The ESRGC is an outreach unit of SU and a joint effort with the Mid-Shore Regional Council and Tri-County Council of the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland. The cooperative has established over 50 partnerships with municipal, county, regional, state, and federal governments as well as private and non-profit organizations and is the Eastern Shore's leader in GIS services. In addition to serving the local community, the ESRGC provides internships to SU students that offer real-world, hands-on experience. By employing more than 200 interns over the last 16 years, the ESRGC is providing practical training to the next generation of geospatial professionals.

Additionally, collaborations between SU's various centers have led to the development of award-winning data tools. The ESRGC and BEACON partner with other economic and workforce development professionals to conduct the Eastern Shore Business Sentiment Survey, designed to gauge the opinions of the region's business leaders asking for input on a range of topics, from general business concerns to conditions in their own industries (37). The data tools used in the project were recognized with regional and national accolades including the Maryland Economic Development Association's 2022 Economic Development Program Award, the 2022 International Economic Development Council Silver Award, and the 2022 National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award. These partnerships provide opportunities to students, faculty, staff, and local communities while supporting SU's institutional mission to "actively contribute[s] to the local Eastern Shore community and the educational, economic, cultural, and social needs of our State and nation."

Specialized Institutes and Centers

SU has several specialized institutes and centers for the diverse educational needs of the community. The Academy for Leadership in Education (ALE) focuses on developing leadership skills for educators and aspiring administrators (38). The Bosserman Center for Conflict Resolution combines academic research with practical training in conflict resolution and peace-

building (39). The Institute for Developmental Research advances and disseminates knowledge in various areas of developmental psychology to support child, adolescent, and family well-being (40). The Institute of Retired Persons (IRP) provides continuing education opportunities, including a speaker series, for individuals aged 50 and above (41).

Community-Based Youth and Educational Programs

SU also offers a number of educational programs for children and families in the community. By introducing local elementary through high school students to SU's campus early and often, the University hopes to build connections that encourage high school students to pursue a postsecondary degree at SU. The Summer Enrichment Academies engage young learners in the sciences, arts, humanities, leadership, and college readiness skills (42). For literacy development, the Seidel School of Education's May Literacy Center has aided over 1,000 local children in improving their reading comprehension over three decades through intensive literacy tutoring (43).

The Eastern Shore Child Care Resource Center (ESCCRC) is a Maryland grant-funded agency that works with childcare providers and other early educators, community organizations, and families to help promote the availability of quality childcare services in Somerset, Worcester, Wicomico, Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot counties. The ESCCRC is a member of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network, with funding provided by the Maryland State Department of Education through Maryland Family Network, and SU (44).

In 2023, SU's Department of Early and Elementary Education received a nearly \$2.5 million Maryland Rebuilds grant from the Maryland State Department of Education to fund the Cradling the Early Years Apprenticeship Program. This program aims to help current childcare workers and instructional assistants earn bachelor's degrees and teaching certifications, addressing critical workforce needs in early childhood education by increasing earning potential for these educators. By covering all tuition and fees and offering flexible virtual and hybrid learning options, the program removes significant barriers for working adults pursuing their degrees and teaching certificates. This grant-funded initiative aligns with SU's mission to contribute to the educational and economic needs of the State and region (45).

Educational outreach extends beyond the classroom with two music programs. PRESTO provides instruction in multiple instruments and voice for students of all ages and abilities (46). The Salisbury Youth Orchestra offers a full orchestra experience for eighth to twelfth grade musicians, complementing school music programs. These initiatives collectively provide comprehensive educational opportunities, utilizing University resources and community support to enrich the learning experiences of local youth.

Community Service Organizations

SU's ShoreCorps, an AmeriCorps State Program, operates under the oversight of the Maryland Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism and maintains a close relationship with PACE, collaborating on numerous community projects. As the largest AmeriCorps program in the state, ShoreCorps engages more than 200 members, primarily students, in community service.

ShoreCorps partners with approximately 30 non-profit organizations across the region, focusing on at-risk youth and senior citizens. The program's impact is substantial; on average, students receive approximately \$300,000 in tuition support annually, and last year alone contributed approximately 83,000 hours of community service. Through these efforts, ShoreCorps exemplifies SU's commitment to fostering strong community engagement and supporting both student development and local non-profit organizations (47,48).

The Center for Healthy Communities (CHC), established in 2020, promotes College of Health and Human Services efforts in community-based learning, community service grants, workforce development, and professional continuing education opportunities. Programs include the School of Social Work's Behavioral Integration in Pediatric Primary Care and the School of Nursing's Faculty Academic and Mentorship Initiative of Maryland. In 2020, the CHC received a \$1.98 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to establish the SU Eastern Shore Opioid-Impacted Family Support Program, aimed at increasing the number of Opioid Navigator Community Health Workers in high need areas (49).

The University's partnership with the Eastern Correctional Institution (ECI) facilitates meaningful interactions between philosophy students and individuals incarcerated at a local medium-security prison (50). These exchanges occur through book discussions and support for the ECI Ethics Bowl team. This program supports Strategic Plan Strategy 4.4.1 to develop a mechanism to encourage students, faculty, and staff to participate in civic and community engagement efforts. The ECI program offers students insights beyond traditional classroom learning, exposing them to the realities of incarceration while fostering dialogue on complex issues. For incarcerated participants, the program provides intellectual stimulation, opportunities for self-reflection, and a connection to the outside world, potentially aiding in their rehabilitation process.

Cultural Engagement

To promote reciprocal engagement between campus and the greater community, SU offers hundreds of cultural and academic events annually that are open to the public (16). The Cultural Affairs Office brings world-renowned performers to Salisbury, including the Russian National Ballet, Vienna Boys Choir, and Grammy-winning Spanish Harlem Orchestra. SU's performing arts programs, such as the Bobbi Biron Theatre Program, Jackson Music Program, and SU Dance Company host regular performances for the community. The University also hosts several musical groups that involve both students and community members, including the Salisbury and University Chorales, Salisbury Pops, Salisbury Symphony Orchestra, and Salisbury Youth Orchestra. The Brown and Church Carillon, a 48-bell traditional carillon housed in the Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons, offers daily music and live performances.

SU maintains several cultural institutions that serve as educational resources for the community. The Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture preserves and provides access to historical materials and artifacts pertaining to the Delmarva region. The Franklin P. Perdue Museum of Business and Entrepreneurship offers interactive exhibits on business history and models. SU Art Galleries, with locations on campus and in downtown Salisbury, showcase

contemporary art from students, and local and national artists. The Museum of Eastern Shore Culture, also located in downtown Salisbury, highlights folklife, traditional arts, and the rich regional heritage of the Eastern Shore and the Delmarva Peninsula

In partnership with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, SU operates Delmarva Public Media, which includes two National Public Radio affiliates: WSCL 89.5 (fine arts and culture) and WSDL 90.7 (rhythm and news). Additionally, SU supports PAC 14, Inc., a community-oriented television programming service.

These initiatives collectively demonstrate SU's dedication to cultural engagement, the arts, local history, and providing educational opportunities that extend beyond the classroom to benefit the entire community.

Environmental Sustainability

SU is proud of the growing number of partnerships we have developed locally to improve the economic and social sustainability of our region. In addition, to advance our mission and values, the University continues to be dedicated to modeling best practices to conserve natural resources and increase environmental awareness on campus and within our region. Goal 5 of SU's *Strategic Plan* highlights this commitment (2).

In 2021, a Climate Action Plan was developed in collaboration with the campus and shared governance (12). The plan outlines specific targets and actions to move SU toward carbon neutrality by 2045. To track progress towards this objective, SU uses the University of New Hampshire's SIMAP program to monitor and publicly report carbon emissions (51). The university continuously analyzes building performance to increase efficiency across campus. All new construction and renovation projects are required to meet at least LEED Silver standards, with the Blackwell Hall renovation project aiming to transform one of the least efficient buildings on campus into a carbon net-zero facility. Additionally, SU plans to fully electrify its fleet vehicles by 2031 (52,53).

SU's sustainability efforts have gained national recognition, with the university ranking #29 in the Princeton Review's Top 50 Green Colleges in 2024 (52). This accolade has further motivated the campus community to identify and implement additional sustainability measures. In 2023, SU submitted its first AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) report, showcasing the university's dedication to creating a sustainable campus community (54). This comprehensive report was a collaborative effort involving multiple departments across campus, and will serve as a benchmark for our current sustainability status and will be used to identify areas for improvement as we work towards our 2045 carbon neutrality goal (55,56).

Knowing that public education and awareness plays a significant role in creating a sustainable future, the Office of Sustainability has spent the last year visiting campus stakeholder groups including the President's Advisory Team, Deans Council, shared governance meetings, and student affairs, to share information on current and upcoming initiatives (57). Likewise, the Student Government Association (SGA) is actively involved in promoting sustainability initiatives on campus and in the community. Some major events sponsored by the SGA include the Big Event community service project, I Love Salisbury community service project, Recycle

Madness, and Passport to Salisbury (58). The SGA also proposed the creation of the SU Green Fund in 2015, which provides grant-funded support for students and other campus members to undertake climate- or sustainability-related projects. The Green Fund is coordinated by a student-led Green Fund Committee, providing further infrastructure support for students to engage with issues of sustainability (59). The public nature of those projects (e.g., campus garden; solar-powered charging stations) means that community members can also benefit.

Alumni and Family Engagement

Engaging alumni, families, and friends with the SU community is largely coordinated by the Alumni Engagement and Giving Team, and the SU Foundation (18,60). The Alumni Engagement and Giving Team partners with the Alumni Association to reach former students and involve them in the campus community. Alumni are reached each month through the *e-Gull News* publication, each semester through the Alumni Engagement Phonathon, and twice yearly through *The Sea Gull* magazine (61–63). SU is also a member of the USM Alumni Relations Council, a system-wide body that provides an opportunity to share strategies and best practices for engaging alumni (64). Additionally, many alumni return for the Sea Gull Century bike ride. Hosted annually by the SU Foundation, the Sea Gull Century draws approximately 3,000 cyclists from across the nation for picturesque 100-mile and 100-kilometer routes from campus through the Lower Shore and out to Assateague Island (65).

Collaboration across divisions is a common practice especially when it comes to connecting alumni and friends of the University back to SU. The Office of Alumni Engagement and the President's Office have teamed up to have President Carolyn Ringer Lepre meet alumni and friends of Salisbury University with the SU on the Road campaign. This grassroots effort serves as a platform for the President to travel all around Maryland and across the United States to meet alumni and friends of SU in their backyards to facilitate feedback as well as to cultivate potential donors.

Engagement with parents and families of current students is coordinated by the Office of Orientation, Transition, and Family Programs, which provides relevant resources and helps coordinate the SU Alumni Homecoming and Family Weekend each year (66). Parents and family members also have access to the Family Experience Portal, an online portal that generates news alerts and content specific to their students (67).

Impact of COVID-19 on Community Engagement and Sustainability Efforts

Though COVID-19 hampered many existing avenues for community engagement, SU excelled in pivoting to alternative methods to reach beyond campus. While in-person events were suspended, SU transitioned to virtual formats and continued to offer an impressive array of arts and educational opportunities to the community. This practice continues today, as many SU events are livestreamed to an increasingly global community. The pandemic also created an opportunity to forge new community partnerships particularly in the area of crisis response. SU faculty led efforts to assist the community in many ways, including 3-D printing face masks for first responders, offering interpretation services at testing sites, creating virtual physical

education videos for local schools, and organizing vaccination clinics for underserved populations. The Seidel School of Education financially supported all education majors enrolled in initial licensure programs to become Google Class Certified, and these students supported SU's partner schools by creating hybrid instructional models as students returned to schools in de-densified fashion. University facilities were used to provide testing and vaccination sites, as well as quarantine space for recovering patients. SU's involvement with the Lower Shore Vulnerable Populations Task Force was recognized by the USM in awarding Dr. Corinne Pubill, of the Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies Department, the Board of Regents Award for Excellence in Public Service (68).

Periodic Evaluation and Assessment

Periodic assessment and evaluation are necessary for continuous improvement. Examples of periodic assessments related to MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement), and VII (Governance, Leadership, and Administration).

Annual

- AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) (55)
- Annual Academic department reports (69)
- Center for Student Involvement and Leadership Assessment Reports (70)
- Cultural Diversity Report (71)
- Dashboard Indicators Report (72)
- Fulton Annual Reports (48)
- Guerrieri Student Union Dashboards and Reports (73)
- GULL Week Assessment Reports (74)
- Housing and Residence Life Dashboard and Reports (75)
- Managing for Results/Performance Accountability Report (76)
- Orientation, Transition, and Family Programs Assessment Reports (66)
- Seidel School of Education Dispositions (77)
- SU Carbon Emission Tracking Report (51).
- SUF Impact Report (19)
- Shore Hatchery Annual Reports (29)
- Student Accountability and Community Standards Reports (78)

Periodic (every two to five years)

- Alumni Survey (79)
- Campus Climate Study (80)
- Carnegie Community Engaged Campus Report (3)
- Climate Action Plan (12)
- Optimal College Town Assessment (17)

SU uses a multi-faceted approach to evaluate progress on community engagement and sustainability goals, utilizing regular internal assessments and periodic external evaluations.

Internal Assessment

UARA regularly assesses student attitudes and experiences with the community. Assessment of student knowledge and skills comes via GULL Week, the General Education assessment program. GULL Week surveys include seven questions associated with Caryn Musil's Civic Learning Spiral to assess students' perceived importance of, and satisfaction with, their relationship to the community, knowledge of social issues, ability to address social issues, and experience assessing community needs. Specific questions include the importance and satisfaction of engagement with the local community; percentage of students involved in civic or political activities in their local, home, state, national, and/or international communities; and the frequency of this involvement. Additional questions focus on assessing civic attitudes and competencies.

Various campus offices contribute to data collection efforts related to student engagement and community involvement. Athletics, the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership, and the Volunteer Center track student volunteer hours, with the latter monitoring community requests and reported hours. The Seidel School of Education documents the clinical hours completed toward licensure and monitors student performance in over 40 partner schools around professional dispositions (77). Each academic school maintains records of internship opportunities, including those tied to credit-bearing courses. Student Affairs assesses community engagement through multiple initiatives, including the Neighborhood Compact, Town-Gown Council, and events like the Big Event and I Love Salisbury, as well as tracking conduct outcomes and community complaints (70,73). Athletics enhances community engagement by designating certain home games for special purposes, such as youth interaction events, awareness games for causes like pediatric cancer and mental health, and fundraisers like LAX for Leukemia. In fact, SU ranks first in the nation among all Division III schools in community service hours according to Helper Helper (81). These engagement efforts are assessed through various metrics, including participation rates, attendance, and funds raised when applicable. While each department maintains its own data-collection mechanisms, reports are shared widely with relevant stakeholders to provide a comprehensive view of the institution's community impact.

External Evaluation

In addition to the MSCHE reaccreditation process, SU undergoes periodic assessment through the Carnegie Engaged Campus Elective Classification. The University's successful application in 2020 provided external validation of SU's approach to community engagement. This classification process, occurring every six years, involves a comprehensive review of community engagement efforts across campus. Similar to MSCHE accreditation, this process involves forming a representative team including members from across the campus and community and collecting a range of representative data and evidence from as many areas as possible.

In recent years, external assessments recognized both the extent and effectiveness of community engagement and sustainability efforts. SU was designated as a Community Engaged Campus by the Carnegie Foundation in 2020 and received the We the People Award for Excellence in Civic Learning and Community Engagement from the AASC&U in 2023 (5). Likewise, environmental sustainability efforts have led to numerous recognitions, including 11 Leadership in Energy and

Environmental Design (LEED)-certified buildings, arboretum status from the American Public Gardens Association, Tree Campus USA recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation, listing as an official Monarch Watch butterfly waystation, BEE Campus USA designation, and multiple recognition by the Maryland Department of National Resources Forest Service and Forestry Council (53).

Use of Assessment Results

The results from these assessments inform continuous improvement efforts at SU, shaping both strategic planning and new initiatives. For instance, the development of the new General Education program was directly influenced by assessment data and now incorporates new requirements for courses in Civic and Community Engagement; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and Environmental Sustainability. This curriculum change reflects SU's commitment to adapting its educational offerings based on community needs and demographic shifts.

Likewise, the growth and success of SU's annual Festival Latino demonstrates how SU is using assessment of demographic trends to inform its community engagement initiatives. By recognizing the increasing Hispanic population in the area and responding with a culturally relevant event, SU has adapted outreach efforts to better serve and connect with this growing segment of our local community. This free, family-friendly event celebrates Hispanic culture with a diverse array of attractions, including vendors, authentic cuisine, and live music. The event's broad sponsorship, involving multiple university departments and programs such as Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies Department, the Fulton School of Liberal Arts, the College Assistance Migrant Program, Latin American Studies Program, Sociology Department, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Admissions, TRIO Student Support Services, and the Organization of Latin American Students, demonstrates a University-wide commitment to celebrating diversity and engaging with the growing Hispanic community in Salisbury and the surrounding region.

In the realm of environmental sustainability, assessment data drove the creation of the Climate Action Plan, which sets specific targets to move SU toward carbon neutrality (12). An outcome of this is the renovation of Blackwell Hall, which will serve as a centralized hub for student services, housing offices such as Admissions, Advising, Financial Aid, and the Counseling Center, among others. Notably, the building is slated to become one of the first net-zero buildings in the University System of Maryland, featuring an underground geothermal heating and cooling system (82). This aligns with SU's longstanding commitment to sustainability and shows how assessment of environmental impact informs infrastructure decisions and resource allocation.

Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

Since the last self-study, SU made significant efforts to improve community engagement and sustainability initiatives across campus. Key accomplishments include implementing a new General Education curriculum with specific learning outcomes for civic engagement and environmental sustainability, regularly assessing student efforts and attitudes, and securing numerous externally-funded grants to bolster outreach and solutions addressing community needs. This demonstrates SU's commitment to fostering meaningful connections with the community and promoting environmental stewardship, but additional opportunities exist. The recommendations that follow aim to address these areas for improvement, which would allow

SU to build on its strong foundation to create even more meaningful connections with the local community and enhance environmental initiatives.

Recommendations

- Generate clear, measurable outcomes to accompany institutional priorities and planning documents.
- Centralize information and resources for more efficient collection and dissemination of community engagement and environmental sustainability opportunities and efforts.
- Establish campuswide awards for community engagement for faculty, staff, students, and community partners.
- Improve support systems for faculty, staff, and students to engage with communities via externally funded grants.

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Chapter 6

Requirements of Affiliation and Standard VII

Throughout this section, we will demonstrate compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and Standard VII (Governance, Leadership, and Administration). SU is in compliance with MSCHE policies and procedures, relevant government laws and regulations, and has demonstrated a strong commitment to meeting these requirements through various policies, procedures, and structures. SU's Evidence Inventory provides a copy of our Institutional Federal Compliance Report demonstrating compliance with all relevant State and Federal policies and procedures and where they are made publicly available (1).

Compliance with Government Laws and Regulations

Grievance policies and procedures are widely published and regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the campus community and reflect current legal requirements. SU adheres to all applicable government laws and regulations related to higher education, ensuring legal compliance and accountability. Evidence of SU's compliance includes:

Title IX

SU is in compliance with Title IX of the Higher Education Act Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. All SU faculty and staff are required to complete the online Preventing Sexual Harassment class, or a face-to-face workshop offered on departmental request. More information about SU's compliance with Title IX and Standard II can be found in Chapter 3. Evidence of SU's compliance, including related policies, procedures, and training to prevent sexual misconduct and other sex- and gender-based discrimination, can be found in the Evidence Inventory.

Anti-Discrimination Laws

SU is in compliance with all State and Federal discrimination laws and prohibits discrimination on the basis of non-sex based legally protected categories, such as marital status, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, religion, veteran status, or other legally protected status. The Salisbury University Policy Prohibiting Non-Sex-Based Discrimination and procedures for filing a claim are public and readily available via the Office of Institutional Equity website. More information about SU's compliance with all State and Federal discrimination laws and Standard II can be found in Chapter 3 (2,3). Evidence of SU's compliance, including related policies, procedures, and training to prevent discrimination, can be found in the Evidence Inventory.

Required Information for Students and the Public

SU provides comprehensive and accurate information to students and the public regarding programs, services, policies, and outcomes. This information is accessible through the University

website, official publications, and other communication channels (4). More information about SU's compliance with all State and Federal required student and public disclosures and Standard II can be found in Chapter 3. SU's Evidence Inventory provides a copy of our Institutional Federal Compliance Report documenting compliance with all relevant State and Federal policies and procedures and where they are made publicly available (1).

Representation of Accreditation Status

SU represents its accreditation status in all official communications, publications, and promotional materials (5). The University clearly identifies its accrediting agency, MSCHE, and prominently displays accreditation status to students, faculty, staff, and the public. SU's Evidence Inventory provides a copy of our Institutional Federal Compliance Report documenting evidence of the University's public disclosure of our accreditor and licensing agencies (1).

Full Disclosure of Institutional Data

SU maintains transparency and accountability through the full disclosure of institutional data related to assessments, graduation rates, retention rates, certification and licensure pass rates, and other key performance indicators. This information is regularly updated and made available to stakeholders for review and analysis (4,6). More information about SU's compliance with all State and Federal required student and public disclosures and Standard II can be found in Chapter 3. SU's Evidence Inventory provides a copy of our Institutional Federal Compliance Report documenting compliance and full disclosure of institutional data and where this data is made publicly available (1).

Procedures to Ensure Compliance with Federal, State, and Commission Policies, Regulations, and Requirements

SU's data and disclosures are reviewed and updated annually by UARA and the Office of the General Counsel. As a USM institution, SU's administration is overseen by the USM and BOR, which is responsible for providing general oversight of academic, administrative, and fiscal operations, and formulating USM policies. The BOR serves as SU's primary governing body and operates under a series of bylaws, policies, and procedures. Through the application of these policies, including periodic and standardized reporting processes, the USM and BOR certify institutional compliance with Federal and State laws and regulations. In adherence with Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration, criteria 1 and 2.

In addition, SU operates under the oversight of the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), the statewide coordinating board responsible for establishing policies and procedures for all postsecondary entities in the State, including colleges and universities (both public and private), community colleges, and for-profit schools. MHEC is a 12-member commission appointed by the Governor and is led by the State Secretary of Higher Education. Both the USM and MHEC provide a dual level of oversight of SU's policies and procedures to ensure compliance with Federal and State laws and regulations. Verification of compliance occurs at multiple levels through:

- periodic and annual reports,
- annual data file submissions,
- regular meetings between University officials and MHEC’s Education Policy Committee,
- regular meetings with the USM and representatives on the:
 - Academic Affairs Advisory Council
 - Vice Presidents of Student Affairs Committee
 - Institutional Research Committee
 - Diversity and Inclusion Council
 - Academic Transformation Advisory Council
 - Council of University Presidents
 - Council of University Faculty
 - Council of University Staff
 - USM Student Council

Furthermore, many of the USM and MHEC reporting requirements also serve to ensure continued compliance with MSCHE Policies and Procedures. For example, the University demonstrates compliance with the following.

Verification of Student Identity in Distance Education

SU implements robust measures to verify student identity in distance and correspondence education programs – in accordance with MSCHE guidelines. The University uses secure authentication methods and monitoring tools to ensure the integrity of online learning environments and protects against academic misconduct. Further, SU must comply with the MHEC Policy on Instruction Delivered by Distance Education (7). SU’s Office of Instructional Design & Delivery recommends that faculty use the Respondus Lockdown Browser and webcam to facilitate verification of student identity as well (8–10).

Requirements of Affiliation

SU adheres to MSCHE’s Requirements of Affiliation, which outline the standards and expectations for member institutions. The University regularly assesses its compliance through several required MSCHE-reporting processes, including the Annual Institutional Update and Self-Study processes.

Timely and Accurate Disclosure of Substantive Changes

SU affirms timely and accurate disclosure of substantive changes affecting the institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, and sites. SU maintains a process for identifying and reporting substantive changes to MSCHE in a timely and accurate fashion through the Office of Academic Affairs workflow processes and guidelines. The University assesses the potential impact of proposed changes on its accreditation status and engages with the USM, MHEC, and MSCHE for compliance with reporting requirements. The USM policies and procedures on Degree and Curricular Requirements (III-7.00), the Review and Approval of New Academic Programs (III-7.01), and the Review and Abolition of Existing Academic Programs (III-7.02) ensure the timely and accurate disclosure of changes impacting the institution (11–13).

Structures that Ensure Compliances with Federal, State, and Commission Policies, Regulations, and Requirements

SU has a clear decision-making process and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability and is in compliance with Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement, criteria 5. SU maintains timely and accurate information for all of its operations and is held accountable to many different external agencies for oversight. Both the USM and MHEC have broad oversight of SU and are responsible for developing State and system-level policies with which the University must comply. These agencies regularly review institution-level policies to confirm their adherence to all state and federal policies ensuring our compliance with Standard II: Ethics and Integrity, criteria 8. Additionally, several SU offices are responsible for ensuring that the University follows its own policies. These include, but are not limited to:

Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)

The OIE oversees SU's adherence to all applicable government laws and regulations related to higher education, ensuring legal compliance and accountability. More information about OIE can be found in Chapter 3.

Office of University Analysis, Reporting, and Assessment (UARA)

UARA is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating institutional data in numerous reports on a regular basis based on State and Federal reporting requirements. UARA provides expertise in various accountability areas, including Academic Program Review, Accreditation, General Education, Institutional Research, Strategic Planning and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, among others. More information about UARA can be found in Chapter 2.

Office of the General Counsel (OGC)

The OGC is utilized as needed to ensure the University appropriately interprets and applies State and Federal regulations. The OGC provides legal services to SU, including all of its schools, colleges, and administrative offices. More information about the Office of the General Counsel can be found in Chapter 3.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Evaluation

In accordance with Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration, criteria 4, all SU employees are evaluated annually as a part of the Performance Management Process (PMP). Each year, employees set annual objectives for the upcoming fiscal year, evaluate progress on the prior year's objectives, and receive feedback from their supervisors. Chapter 3 provided detailed information about the Human Resources PMP. These written policies adhere to the BOR VII-5.20 Policy on Performance Evaluation Programs.

Each level of leadership has an organized evaluation process. The USM Chancellor establishes goals for the President, which are then prioritized in the PMPs of the Vice Presidents. Examples of the metrics and goals set by the President for each of the Vice Presidents can be found in the Evidence Inventory (14). The strategic goals of SU's own *Strategic Plan* are aligned with those

of the USM, so that projects associated with the *Strategic Plan* are prioritized. The Vice President may then opt to incorporate components of these priorities into their administrators' and supervisors' annual PMP evaluation plans. This is one method used to assign responsibility, evaluate progress, and work toward continuous improvement in accomplishing institutional goals.

The President completes an assessment of the Vice Presidents, while she is annually assessed by the Chancellor and Regents. The Vice Presidents have evaluation processes for their administrative offices outlined in the aforementioned PMP documentation. The Deans are assessed by the Provost annually and department Chairs are evaluated annually by their Dean. As described in Chapter 3, the PMP process applies to all University staff. Additionally, the Faculty Senate has adopted an assessment instrument for the evaluation of department Chairs, program Directors, Associate Deans, Deans, the Provost, and the President (15). The assessment of the BOR does not occur on an individual basis; individuals serving on the BOR are political appointees of the Governor of Maryland. Organizationally, the USM is overseen by the BOR and the BOR assesses the Chancellor.

Presidential Qualifications and Evaluation

SU is in compliance with Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration, criteria 3, The USM BOR is charged with the responsibility of hiring Presidents for its 12 member institutions. According to Article V of BOR bylaws, the Regents must conduct a thorough search and consult with the USM Chancellor before appointing a President. SU's current president, Dr. Carolyn Ringer Lepre, was selected to lead the University in 2022 after a national search. Dr. Lepre's curriculum vitae, which is available in the Evidence Inventory, demonstrates her very strong qualifications for the position; she holds a Ph.D. in Mass Communication from the University of Florida and has previously served in several leadership positions, including Dean of Communication and the Arts at Marist College, as well as Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Interim President at Radford University (16).

Each USM President is evaluated annually by the USM Chancellor. The Chancellor sets specific goals for each President, who then writes a self-evaluation describing progress toward the goals. The Chancellor and President meet to review the Chancellor's assessment and identify any areas requiring improvement. In addition to annual evaluations from the USM Chancellor, President Lepre is subject to an intensive performance review by the BOR every five years. This review, outlined in BOR VII-5.01, includes an assessment of the President's performance in 12 key areas, including strategic planning, fiscal management, academic excellence, community outreach, and external relations.

The daily operations of the President's Office are assisted by the Chief of Staff/Vice President of Public Affairs and Strategic Initiatives, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Engagement, and the Senior Advisor to the President. The University's partnerships with the local community, other governmental entities, and State elected officials are managed by the President's Office, though offices across campus have involvement as needed. Building and nurturing these relationships are critical to the success of the President and the University. In addition, the University's General Counsel serves as a direct report to the President.

Since the last Middle States review, significant advancements were made to increase institutional management of Fair Practices/Affirmative Action programs, as well as Title IX compliance. Previously, diversity and inclusion efforts were overseen by a Director of Diversity, and the President's Chief of Staff handled sexual harassment and discrimination complaints. As Title IX responsibilities as defined and clarified by the Department of Education increased, the Office of Fair Practices and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/Affirmative Action (AA) was created. To allow for more coordinated efforts surrounding diversity, inclusion, fair practices, and EEO/AA, the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) was formed in 2013 to subsume all of these responsibilities. This office advances the University's commitment to create an inclusive environment free of discrimination and supportive of all by leading campus efforts to provide training, prevention and compliance for Fair Practices/AA programs and Title IX throughout our campus. In 2024, SU hired a new Vice President for Inclusion, Access, and Belonging, creating a new division and Cabinet-level position. The OIE reports to the new Vice President. More information on OIE can be found in Chapter 3.

Senior Leadership Qualifications and Evaluation

The organizational structure of the University consists of six primary divisions overseen by SU's President: Academic Affairs; Administration and Finance; Advancement and the SU Foundation; Student Affairs and Auxilliary Services; Public Affairs and Strategic Initiatives; and Inclusion, Access and Belonging. SU's organizational chart outlines the University's reporting structure and offices aligned with each primary division (17). Each of these divisions is led by a Vice President who reports directly to the University's President. Curriculum vitae for all Vice President members can be found in the Evidence Inventory (18). Although possible for senior leaders to be promoted from within, at SU they are most frequently selected through intensive search processes, generally involving a national search. For example, the most recent search for the Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs took place in Academic Year 2022-23. The President appointed a search committee, co-chaired by the Vice President for Advancement and President of the Faculty Senate, with representation from faculty from each school, the Library, Student Affairs, the President's Cabinet, and a student. Once finalists had been identified, the entire campus community was invited to review the final candidates' qualifications online and to attend open sessions where the finalists answered questions. After receiving feedback from multiple constituencies, the President appointed Dr. Laurie Couch as Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs beginning in July 2023. The transparency and rigor of this search process are typical for senior-level hires at SU (19–22). SU's organizational structure and qualifications of its administration provide evidence of the University's compliance with Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration, criteria 4.

Academic Affairs Leadership

Academic Affairs is led by the Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, assisted by the Associate Provost and Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Success. Each of the five academic schools/college is led by a Dean and Associate Deans (or school Directors in the College of Health and Human Services). The SU Libraries and Instructional Resources, the Clarke Honors College, and the Graduate School/Office of Research each are led by Deans. Further, International Education is led by an Assistant Provost, and Enrollment

Management, which recently moved into Academic Affairs, is led by an Associate Vice President. The Provost is the responsible administrator for collaborating with the shared governance groups of Faculty Senate and the Adjunct Faculty Caucus, while the Dean of the Graduate School is responsible for collaborating with the Graduate Student Council. These individuals were hired through competitive search processes.

Administration and Finance Leadership

Among the departments and functions within the Division of Administration and Finance, which is led by the Vice President of Administration and Finance, are: Architectural and Engineering Services/Capital Projects, Budget, Campus Sustainability and Environmental Safety, Financial Services, Human Resources, Information Technology, Physical Plant, Procurement, and University Police. These operations provide safety, a beautiful campus, and essential services to faculty, staff, and students. The Vice President of Administration and Finance is the responsible administrator for collaborating with the shared governance group of Staff Senate. The University hired a new Vice President of Administration and Finance in 2023 through a competitive national search.

Advancement Leadership

The Division of University Advancement is led by the Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Engagement, who oversees Advancement Services, Development, and Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving. The Vice President also serves as the Executive Director of the Salisbury University Foundation, Inc., which raises, invests, and contributes funds to advance the University's Mission. The Foundation has been instrumental in keeping the University on its upward trajectory. Private giving provides the crucial resources needed to enhance student life and academic excellence at SU. The Foundation is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of business and civic leaders from throughout the region. The Board is responsible for the Foundation's policies, procedures, and overall direction. Their professional expertise and community involvement allow them to offer valuable insights into the Foundation's efforts to better the educational experience at SU. The Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Engagement and Executive Director of the SU Foundation was hired in 2017.

Student Affairs & Auxiliary Services Leadership

The Division of Student Affairs and Auxiliary Services consists of a dedicated group of professionals who are committed to creating a positive and energetic campus community for all students. The Division is led by the Vice President of Student Affairs and Auxiliary Services, who works in collaboration with the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students, Director of Housing and Residence Life, Director of the Counseling Center, Director of Dining Services, Director of Conference Services, and Director of the Bookstore. These administrators help students reach their maximum potential as individuals and scholars. The Division strives to create a nurturing, student-centered environment, focusing on helping students succeed at SU and throughout life. The Vice President of Student Affairs and Auxiliary Services is the responsible administrator for collaborating with the shared governance group of Student Government Association. The Vice President of Student Affairs and Auxiliary Services was hired in 2011 following a competitive national search.

Public Affairs and Strategic Initiatives

The division is led by the Chief of Staff and Vice President of Public Affairs and Strategic Initiatives, who oversees the Office of University Analysis, Reporting and Assessment as well as University Communications, comprised of Digital Strategy, Public Relations, and Creative Services and Brand Strategy. Additionally, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Engagement and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications report directly to the head of the division. The Chief of Staff and Vice President of Public Affairs and Strategic Initiatives is the responsible administrator for collaborating with the Shared Governance Consortium and the University's Town-Gown Council. The division was established as a result of an organizational restructure in 2023, with the Chief of Staff assuming oversight of the offices listed here.

Inclusion, Access, and Belonging Leadership

Established in 2024, the Division of Inclusion, Access, and Belonging is comprised of the Office of Institutional Equity, the Disability Resource Center, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Other leaders in the division include the Equity and Title IX Coordinator, Director of the Disability Resource Center, and Director of Multicultural Affairs. The inaugural Vice President of Inclusion, Access, and Belonging was hired through a rigorous national search process.

Information and Decision-Making Systems

The University administration has multiple sources of information to help guide decision making. University Analysis, Reporting, and Assessment (UARA), which supports the President and all Cabinet-level positions through the Chief of Staff/Vice President for Public Affairs and Strategic Initiatives, provides institutional effectiveness and assessment expertise to assist campus leaders in making informed decisions. The staff of the UARA research and write numerous reports throughout the year in response to USM, MHEC, and legislative requests, as well as serving as a resource for on-campus inquiries.

Governance Groups

Campus-level governance resides in multiple bodies, including Faculty Senate, Adjunct Faculty Caucus, Staff Senate, Graduate Student Council, and the Student Government Association (23). While each of these shared governance bodies operates independently of each other, a Governance Consortium consisting of representatives from each group convenes to discuss matters that transcend boundaries. Policies and procedures for all administrative and governance bodies are readily available on the University's website. SU is in compliance with Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration, criteria 1.

Faculty Governance

The Faculty Senate meets biweekly during the academic year; meetings are open to the entire campus community, and agendas and minutes are posted on the Senate website (24–27). The President and Provost attend and provide updates at the meetings. Academic deans and other senior administrators are also recurrent attendees of Senate meetings. Senators are elected to three-year terms that are staggered to ensure a mix of new and returning senators each year. Each academic school can elect up to three senators to represent faculty in their school, SU Libraries faculty elect one senator, and there are six at-large positions. The Senate elects a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Webmaster, who each serve one-year terms. The Senate officers meet with the Provost bi-weekly to discuss any topics of concern. The Faculty Senate President is also

a member of the System-wide Council of University System Faculty, President's Advisory Team, and the Governance Consortium Coordinating Committee.

Currently, there are 16 standing committees of the Senate that focus on a wide range of issues of interest to faculty, including academic policies, admissions, assessment, and curriculum (25,28). The committees meet as necessary and make recommendations to the Senate or other appropriate campus offices. As the officially recognized voice of the faculty, Senate resolutions hold significant weight in the shared governance structure of the University.

In 2013, SU created an Adjunct Faculty Caucus as a forum for adjunct faculty to participate in shared governance. Adjunct faculty elect Caucus members annually; the Caucus meets with the Provost and the Vice President for Administration and Finance at least once a semester to discuss topics of specific concern for adjunct faculty. The President of the Adjunct Faculty Caucus is a member of the President's Advisory Team (PAT) and the Consortium Coordinating Committee (29,30).

Staff Governance

The Staff Senate makes recommendations to the President regarding issues affecting non-faculty employees. Bylaws identify the mission of the Staff Senate and govern membership, duties, committees, and the purpose of the governing body (31). Its membership consists of all exempt, non-exempt, and contingent employees not covered by collective bargaining (NCBCB). Each category of staff elects its own Senators. The voting membership of the Executive Committee of the Staff Senate consist of 14 elected Senators of whom there are six exempts, two non-exempts, two contingent (exempt and/or non-exempt), and four Council for University System Staff (CUSS) representatives. Staff Senate minutes and agendas are posted on the University website. The Staff Senate President is also a member of the PAT and the Governance Consortium Coordinating Committee.

Student Governance

The Student Government Association (SGA) represents SU undergraduate students and is responsible for advocating for student needs to the administration and offering a variety of student and community programs and services. The SGA organizes opportunities for students to provide feedback on issues that affect them. Comprised of 11 Executive Board members and 35 Senators, SGA is governed by a constitution and bylaws (32,33). The SGA executive body meets weekly, and the SGA Forum occurs every other week. The SGA Forum offers any student an opportunity to bring a concern or question to the forefront. In addition to the SGA executive body, the SGA Senate also meets weekly and sponsors legislation in support of student needs and interests. The SGA is advised by Vice President of Student Affairs and Auxiliary Services and the Director of Student Activities. The SGA President is also a member of the PAT and the Governance Consortium Coordinating Committee.

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) was created in 2011 and is advised by Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The GSC is guided by the GSC Constitution and uses their work to advocate for graduate students (34). The GSC works with University administration, shared governance groups, USM officials, the Board of Regents, and lawmakers to promote the needs and provide support to SU's graduate students. The GSC President is also a member of the PAT and the Governance Consortium Coordinating Committee.

Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

SU complies with MSCHE’s Requirements of Affiliation and federal regulations and Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration. While the separate governance bodies do important work on their own, the primary benefit to the University as a whole comes as a product of collaboration between the administration, governance entities, and the students, faculty, and staff they represent. SU embraces a collegial culture of mutual respect. Evidence of this collaboration is manifest in the process of creating critical documents such as the *Strategic Plan*

Through the Self-Study, it was noted by the working group that SU has robust policies to ensure on-going compliance. However, there are some opportunities for continued growth and improvement.

Recommendations

- Build and continually update a digital repository of key compliance documents used in the Self-Study that can be used by the broader campus community.
- Utilize effective change management principles to navigate the significant pace of change experienced as a result of the implementation of new ideas and initiatives and ensure that the changes continue to yield desired results.

Evidence Referenced

1. MSCHE Institutional Federal Compliance Report SU 2024
2. Salisbury university policy and procedures on sex discrimination 2024
3. Salisbury University Policy Prohibiting Non-Sex Based Discrimination
4. Student Consumer Information_webpage
5. SU_Accreditation_MSCHE
6. Student Right To Know_webpage
7. COMAR 13B.02.02.16
8. Online Learning Policy
9. RoA9.Verification of Distance Learner Identity Setup Instructions
10. Verification Of Student Identity in Distance Education Policy
11. USM Policy on Degree and Curricular Requirements_III 7.00
12. USM Policy on the Review and Abolition of Existing Academic Programs_III 7.02
13. USM Policy on the Review & Approval of Academic Prog that do not Require New Resources_III 7.01
14. President’s Cabinet Goals and Metrics
15. Annual Administrator Survey
16. Carolyn Ringer Lepre CV 2024.pdf
17. Salisbury University Organizational Chart
18. President’s Cabinet Curriculum Vitae
19. Documentation from two recent administrative leader searches
20. USM Presidential Search Guidelines
21. SU_President_Search_Prospectus
22. SU_Provost_Profile
23. Governance Bodies Constitutions and Bylaws
24. Faculty Senate_webpage
25. Faculty Senate Committees
26. Faculty Senate Minutes_4 examples
27. Faculty Senate Bylaws
28. Faculty Senate Committee Reports_combined
29. Faculty Handbook Chapter 10_Adjunct and Consulting Faculty
30. Adjunct Faculty Caucus
31. Staff Senate Bylaws
32. Student Government Association Constitution
33. Student Government Association Bylaws
34. Graduate Student Council Constitution

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The Self-Study process has been a campuswide collaboration that has resulted in self-reflection and institutional improvement. The University has used this process to identify areas of strength and opportunity that will be used to inform the development of our next *Strategic Plan*.

Chapter 2-Working Group 1: Enrich Academic Success and Student Development

This chapter demonstrated SU’s compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), III (Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience), IV (Support of the Student Experience), V (Educational Effectiveness Assessment), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).

During development of the Self-Study, the working group reflected on two internal recommendations related to enriching academic success and student development:

MSCHE Standard(s)	Recommendations	Responsible Area(s)	Deadline	Goal(s)
3 and 4	Create more opportunities for sharing assessment results and best practices to inform program development and support student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AVP of Academic Affairs & Student Success• AVP of Planning & Assessment	Fall 2025	
5	Create an assessment strategy for First Year Seminar and Experiential Learning courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AVP of Academic Affairs & Student Success• AVP of Planning & Assessment• GEOC	Fall 2025	Develop and approve an assessment plan that allows SU to pre- and post-test students on the General Education SLOs.

Chapter 3-Working Group 2: Inspire a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence, Support, and Collaboration

This chapter demonstrated SU’s compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), III (Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).

During development of the Self-Study, the working group reflected on three internal recommendations related to inspiring a campus culture of inclusive excellence, support, and collaboration:

MSCHE Standard(s)	Recommendations	Responsible Area(s)	Deadline	Goal(s)
2	Develop centralized staff onboarding processes to more effectively welcome new employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AVP of Human Resources VP for Inclusion, Access, & Belonging 	Fall 2026	
1 and 2	Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for inclusion, access, and belonging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP for Inclusion, Access, & Belonging 	Spring 2026	
1 and 6	Utilize the upcoming strategic planning process to configure a planning committee to prioritize institutional needs, recommend strategies for achieving our goals, and track and communicate our progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP for Inclusion, Access, & Belonging Dean, Perdue School of Business 	Spring 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect feedback from the Strategic Planning Steering Committee on the oversight of the next Strategic Plan. Develop a standing committee to continually review progress toward accomplishing the Strategic Plan goals and associated budget.

Chapter 4-Working Group 3: Support Access, Affordability and Academic Excellence

This chapter demonstrated SU’s compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), II (Ethics and Integrity), IV (Support of the Student Experience), and VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).

During development of the Self-Study, the working group reflected on two internal recommendations focused on student success and achievement:

MSCHE Standard(s)	Recommendations	Responsible Area(s)	Deadline	Goal(s)
4	Create collaborative opportunities for offices that contribute to student achievement and success and provide centralized oversight to assess outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AVP of Academic Affairs & Student Success 	Fall 2024	Create the Student Success Council.
4	Develop communication strategies to promote student successes, outcomes, and achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AVP of Academic Affairs & Student Success AVP of Planning & Assessment 	Fall 2025	Conduct a review of existing data and reports to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which programs/offices contribute to student retention and graduation, Which students are most at-risk for dropping out, and What additional data is needed to improve retention and graduation rates.

Chapter 5-Working Group 4: Deepen Engagement with Our Community

This chapter demonstrated SU’s compliance with MSCHE Standards I (Mission and Goals), VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement), and VII (Governance, Leadership, and Administration).

During development of the Self-Study, the working group reflected on three internal recommendations related to deepening engagement with our community:

MSCHE Standard(s)	Recommendations	Responsible Area(s)	Deadline	Goal(s)
6	Generate clear, measurable outcomes for institutional priorities and planning documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP for Inclusion, Access, & Belonging Dean, Perdue School of Business AVP of Planning & Assessment 	Spring 2026	Develop metrics linked to the next Strategic Plan and create a website to share them with campus.
6	Centralize information and resources for more efficient collection and dissemination of community engagement and environmental sustainability opportunities and efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP for Public Affairs & Strategic Initiatives PACE UARA 	Spring 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a formal framework through which SU faculty and staff can share ideas and suggestions across campus. Investigate methods for more effective communication with community organizations, including a flexible webspace that can be easily updated. Maintain Carnegie Engaged Campus Classification.
1 and 2	Establish campus-wide awards for community engagement for faculty, staff, students, and community partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP for Public Affairs & Strategic Initiatives 	Spring 2026	
1 and 3	Improve support systems for faculty, staff, and students to engage with communities via externally funded grants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dean of Graduate Studies and Research 	Fall 2026	

Chapter 6-Working Group 5: Standard VII and Requirements of Affiliation

Chapter 6 demonstrated SU’s compliance with the MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration.

During development of the Self-Study, the working group reflected on two internal recommendations related to document management and change implementation:

MSCHE Standard(s)	Recommendations	Responsible Area(s)	Deadline	Goal(s)
2 RoA	Build and continually update a digital repository of key compliance documents used in the Self-Study that can be used by the broader campus community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Provost • AVP of Planning & Assessment • Chief Information Officer 	Spring 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with IT to create the digital repository. • Identify documents to include and update and the frequency of the updates. • Assign responsibility for which offices will provide the document updates.
7	Develop effective change-management principles to navigate the significant pace of change experienced as a result of the implementation of new ideas and initiatives and ensure that the changes continue to yield desired results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President’s Cabinet 	Fall 2025	

As SU approaches its centennial in 2025, we remain dedicated to our mission of providing an exceptional educational experience, fostering community engagement, and preparing students for success in a global society.

List of Common Acronyms

AAAC	Academic Affairs Advisory Council (USM)
AAAHHC	Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care https://www.aaahc.org/
AAC	Academic Advising Center https://www.salisbury.edu/academic-offices/advising-center/
AAC&U	American Association of Colleges and Universities http://www.aacu.org/
AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business http://www.aacsb.edu/
AAHE	American Association for Higher Education and Accreditation, Inc. (formerly AAHE) http://www.aahea.org/
AAQEP	Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation https://aaqep.org/
AASCU	American Association of State Colleges and Universities http://www.aascu.org/
AAUP	American Association of University Professors http://www.aaup.org/aaup
ABLE	Applied Business Learning Experience http://www.salisbury.edu/able/
ACE	American Council on Education http://www.acenet.edu/Pages/default.aspx
ACS	American Chemical Society https://www.acs.org/
ADA	American Disabilities Act http://www.ada.gov/
AFACCT	Association of Faculties for the Advancement of Community College Teaching http://www.afacct.csm.edu/about_afacct.html
AFC	Adjunct Faculty Caucus
AP	Advanced Placement https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/home
APAC	Academic Program Advisory Committee (USG) http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/about/leadership/apac
APR	Academic Program Review
BEACON	Business Economics and Community Outreach Network http://beacon.salisbury.edu/
BOR	Board of Regents (University System of Maryland) http://www.usmd.edu/regents/
CAAHEP	Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educator Programs https://www.caahep.org/
CADR	Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution http://www.salisbury.edu/cadr/
CAFE	Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/cafe/
CALEA	Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies https://calea.org/
CCNE	Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education https://www.aacnursing.org/ccne-accreditation

CEPH	Council on Education in Public Health https://ceph.org/
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
COARC	Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care https://coarc.com/
COMAR	Code of Maryland Regulations http://www.dsd.state.md.us/COMAR/subtitle_chapters/13B_Chapters.aspx
COOP PLAN	Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan
CORGE	Council on Research and Graduate Education
CRT	Coordinated Response Team
CSA	Center for Student Achievement https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/center-for-student-achievement/
CSWE	Council on Social Work Education https://www.cswe.org/
CUSF	Council of University System Faculty (USM) https://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/SystemFaculty/index.php
CUSS	Council of University System Staff (USM) http://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/SystemStaff/index.html
DBED	Department of Business and Economic Development http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/12dbed/html/dbed.html
DBM	Department of Budget and Management (State) http://dbm.maryland.gov/pages/default.aspx
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
DRC	Disability Resource Center
DSS	Disability Support Services http://www.salisbury.edu/students/dss/
DTCC	Delaware Technical and Community College http://www.dtcc.edu/future/
ESHEC	Eastern Shore Higher Education Center (Chesapeake College)
ESAC (P)	Eastern Shore Association of College (Presidents from Cecil Community College, Chesapeake College, Salisbury University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Washington College, and Wor-Wic Community College)
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (1974) http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html
FDC	Faculty Development Committee http://www.salisbury.edu/campusgov/facsenate/09-10/committees.html#fdc
FDI	Faculty Development Initiation (TLN Grant)
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
FTEF	Full-time Equivalent Faculty
FTES	Full-time Equivalent Students
FT-TT	Full-time Tenured/Tenure Track (faculty) (SU/USM)
FT-NTT	Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track (faculty) (SU/USM)

GA	Graduate Assistant
GAC	Guerrieri Academic Commons
GEAR UP	Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs
GE	General Education
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GSC	Graduate Student Council
GSR	Office of Graduate Studies and Research https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/graduate-studies-and-research/
IACUC	Institutional Animal Care Animal Use Committee https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/graduate-studies-and-research/compliance/iacuc/
ICAO	(Inter-segmental Committee of) Chief Academic Officers
ICC	Inter-institution Commission (USM)
ID&D	Instructional Design & Delivery http://www.salisbury.edu/instructionaldesign/
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/
IRB	Institutional Review Board https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/graduate-studies-and-research/compliance/irb/
ISL	Institute for Service Learning (SU)
IVN	Interactive Video Network http://www.umats.ums.edu/ivn.cgi
LESSEN	Lower Eastern Shore Shared Educational Network (SU, UMES, and Wor-Wic College)
MAA	Minority Achievement Action
MCEA	Maryland Classified Employees Association http://www.mcea.org/
MD	State of Maryland
MHEC	Maryland Higher Education Commission http://www.mhec.state.md.us/
MICUA	Maryland Independent College & University Association
MIST	Mid-Atlantic Institute of Science and Technology
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSCHE	Middle States Commission of Higher Education http://www.msche.org/?Nav1=ABOUT&Nav2=STAFF&Nav3=&strPageName=STAFF
MSDE	Maryland State Department of Education http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE
NAACLS	National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences https://www.naacls.org/
NASM	National Association of Schools of Music https://www.naacls.org/
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association https://www.ncaa.com/
NCATE	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education http://www.ncate.org/
NCFDD	National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity https://www.facultydiversity.org/

NC-SARA	National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements https://nc-sara.org/
NCUR	National Conference on Undergraduate Research http://www.salisbury.edu/ncur22/
NSF	National Science Foundation
OCR	Office for Civil Rights http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html
ODI	Office of Diversity and Inclusion
OIE	Office of Institutional Equity
OSP	Office of Sponsored Programs https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/graduate-studies-and-research/sponsored-programs/
OURCA	Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/graduate-studies-and-research/ourca/
PACE	Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (SU) http://www.salisbury.edu/pace/
PAT	President's Advisory Team http://www.salisbury.edu/president/pat/
PCR	President's Conference Room
PDS	Professional Development School
PI	Principal Investigator
PMP	Performance Management Process
PRR	Periodic Review Report (Middle States)
PT-NTT	Part-Time Non-Tenure-Track (faculty)
ROA	(Middle States') Requirements of Affiliation
QUE	Quality in Undergraduate Education (Chesapeake College, SU, and Wor-Wic College grant project)
SBDC	Small Business Development Center http://www.salisbury.edu/SBDC/
SCUP	Society for College and University Planning http://www.scup.org/page/index
SECU	State Employees Credit Union http://www.secumd.org/html/index/index.cfm
SGGC	Shady Grove Governing Council http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/about/leadership
SHELRB	State Higher Education Labor Relations Board https://laborboards.maryland.gov/higher-education-board/
SIC	Strategic Innovation Council
SIF	Strategic Innovation Fund
SGA	Student Government Association http://www.salisbury.edu/campusgov/sga/
SLO	Student Learning Outcomes
SOAP	Student Organization for Activity Planning http://orgs.salisbury.edu/soap/
SPBC	Strategic Planning and Budget Committee
SPBS	Strategic Planning and Budgeting System

SSLC	Scarborough Student Leadership Center
SSPT	Self-Study Planning Team
SSSC	Self-Study Steering Committee
SSO	Salisbury Symphony Orchestra http://www.salisbury.edu/sso/
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics http://www.stemedcoalition.org/
STEP	Standards-based Teacher Education Project
SUSRC	Salisbury University Student Research Conference http://www.salisbury.edu/susrc/
SU	Salisbury University https://www.salisbury.edu/
SUF	Salisbury University Foundation, Inc. https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/advancement/university-foundation/
TETC	Teacher Education & Technology Center http://www.salisbury.edu/tetc/index.html
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TT	Tenure-Track Faculty
UARA	University Analysis, Reporting and Assessment http://www.salisbury.edu/iara/
UCC	University Curriculum Committee
UDS	University Dining Services http://www.salisbury.edu/dining/
USDOE	US Department of Education https://www.ed.gov/
USM	University System of Maryland http://www.usmd.edu/usm/
UMCP	University of Maryland College Park http://www.umd.edu/
UMES	University of Maryland Eastern Shore http://www.umes.edu/
URS	University Research Services
USM E & E	USM Effectiveness and Efficiency http://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/EEWorkGroup/eeproject/
VAP	Visiting Assistant/Associate Professor
WAC	Writing Across the Curriculum
WWCC	Wor-Wic Community College http://www.worwic.edu/

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