

VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

FEBRUARY 2021





Table of Contents

Message from the President	2
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	8
Academic Vision	16
Student Success	23
Administrative Efficiency.....	26
Financial Impacts.....	32
Conclusion.....	34
Appendices	
Appendix A – Contributors to the Vision for a Sustainable Future	35
Appendix B – A Sustainable Path Forward Task Force: Charge and Membership	36
Appendix C – SSU BOLD: A Campus Unification and Modernization Project	37

If you need a more accessible version of this document, please contact access@salemstat.edu.

Message from the President

This past year has surely been like none other we have experienced at Salem State University (SSU). The COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of our institution, as has the renewed efforts to address the systemic racism that pervades our nation. We have been through a lot in one year, and all on our campus have been working extraordinarily hard for our students throughout.

We adapted course content, delivery models, technology, support services, facilities management, health and safety protocols, business processes, and more in order to deliver the quality educational programs we are known for at SSU. Our students worked hard to adapt to remote learning environments, which we know are not necessarily equal across our student body. They balanced the needs of family and work with school and struggled with isolation as they were separated from their classmates, faculty, mentors, and friends. This has not been an easy time for anyone, but our campus community is resilient.

We faced and overcame many hurdles over the last year, and yet we still saw many successes on our campus. SSU received recognition for its extensive work in the area of civic engagement with the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification designation. Our Bertolon School of Business succeeded in their efforts to achieve AACSB accreditation. We secured the largest private gift in state university history, which will focus on student success and retention, and have already begun the largest campaign of any state university in the Commonwealth. Lastly, and very importantly, our Board of Trustees unanimously voted to freeze undergraduate student fees for the next academic year, something that has not occurred on our campus in recent history, and we will put forward a motion to freeze graduate student fees for AY22 at an upcoming meeting.

Despite all that 2020 has brought us, we have experienced relentless and persistent enrollment and retention declines in the past 10 years that created a structural deficit in our budget long before the pandemic hit. While our enrollment and retention numbers declined significantly over the past decade, our costs have risen over the same time period. It has been difficult, but we have managed the past several years with extremely disciplined position management and cost containment. However, this trajectory is simply not sustainable, and even though COVID-19 was not the root cause of our financial challenges, it has exacerbated them and brought us to a place where we need to make changes as a campus community to move forward.

Initially projecting an estimated budget gap of \$26 million for this academic year, we worked hard to address this unforeseen challenge with the assistance of the Massachusetts State College Building Authority's restructuring of university debt, reducing operational expenses, and the university-wide furlough program. This closed the gap for this year, but these one-time solutions do not address the gaps we will face in the years to come. To assist leadership in addressing our structural budgetary challenges, I charged the Sustainable Path Forward Task Force (SPFTF), a cross-campus group of community members, to provide recommendations on how to best address our financial deficits now and going forward, with a focus on investment, realignment, growth, and reduction.

I wholeheartedly thank the SPFTF for their efforts and for the many suggestions they put forth to assist us as we forge ahead. Their work was not easy and was on a tight deadline, but the results yielded suggestions that

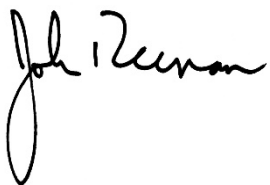
informed the President's Executive Council in the creation of Salem State University's Vision for a Sustainable Future, challenging us to examine all facets of the institution. This Vision, the community feedback that will follow, and the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) review will serve as the catalysts for the university's next strategic plan. The Vision sets a direction that allows us to collectively reimagine ways to transform our offerings and operations and to realign our resources to advance opportunities for student success.

It is important to note we were extraordinarily fortunate to receive a level state appropriation and supplementary federal support this year. Thus, we are in a far better financial position today than even when the SPFTF was charged. Our strong position today enables us to invest in programs demanded by our students as well as in the revenue generating areas that will enhance and support enrollment, like admissions, marketing and fundraising. Now is the time to be truly thoughtful and strategic about where we go from here. Our fiscal prudence and successful management of the COVID-19 pandemic positioned us to allay the significant projected deficits ahead.

This is a pivotal moment in our history, and SSU must evolve and be prepared to meet the changing interests and needs of our students and the demands of the region we serve. Our mission has not changed, and we will continue to be the premier teaching university that engages students in transformational educational experiences as outlined in our strategic plan. The continued success of our institution depends on the success of our students and our ability to enroll and retain a vibrant and active student body.

We are the North Shore's public comprehensive university, with one of the most diverse student populations in the Massachusetts system. We have a proud legacy of unlocking doors of opportunity to our students and helping them realize their own potential. There is no work more important, and it is everyone's job on this campus. We must act now to build a sustainable path forward that assures the long-term vitality of our institution. While remaining true to our mission of delivering academic excellence to the students in our region, our Vision will ensure we can provide opportunities for growth, personal fulfillment and social mobility to generations of future students, with educational equity as the lens from which we will evaluate our success.

The Vision for a Sustainable Future is a win for SSU students. They are the reason we are all here, and we must put them at the center of all that we do. Individuals come to Salem State University to build a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their communities. This is our moment to create the path to the brighter, stronger future they deserve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Keenan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

John D. Keenan
President

Executive Summary

Higher education is at a crossroads in this country with colleges and universities having to balance the changing needs and interests of students with financial challenges unlike any they have seen before. Conversations of realignment, restructuring and recalibrating programmatic offerings and operations are taking place on campuses across the country; all with the ultimate goal of serving students in the best ways possible while also achieving fiscal stability.

Salem State University (SSU) is not immune to this revisioning, and the demographic changes ahead compound our challenges, with fewer 18-year-olds in the region and significant declines in community college enrollments. However, from the work of the Sustainable Path Forward Task Force and open campus feedback, university leadership puts forth a new vision for the university with a laser focus on student success, investment, realignment, and growth so that SSU may thrive as a place of opportunity for generations to come.

The Vision for a Sustainable Future sets the direction for SSU to be a welcoming campus that is truly student-centered and student-ready, allowing us to better meet our students' needs and help them be successful in reaching their professional and personal goals. The Vision primarily intends to invest in academic areas and administrative functions that support growth; to invest in a student success collaborative; close opportunity gaps by 2030; prepare the university to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI); and achieve fiscal vitality. This work will require investment in areas of opportunity and significant savings gained through the realignment of our resources and reductions so that we may correct our structural deficit and establish a sustainable path for the future. It is challenging work but work we must do together.

Student Centered and Student Ready

The primary purpose of the of the Vision for a Sustainable Future is to provide students with the resources they need to succeed and to realign our academic offerings, support services and operations with the interests of current and future students in mind. We must stabilize enrollment through recruitment and retention and continue prudent management of compensation costs to address the university's structural deficit. Key strategies within the Vision related to student success and academic programming are highlighted below.

Investment in, and Realignment of, Academic Programs

SSU will invest in areas of student interest and the projected needs of the regional workforce with a focus on stabilizing our enrollment. These investments include faculty positions in academic areas identified for growth as capacity and demands require, while continuing to offer students a broad portfolio of liberal arts and science degree options. At this time, the areas identified for growth include athletic training (sport and movement science), biology, business, computer science, criminal justice, education, healthcare studies, nursing, psychology, and social work.

Additionally, realignments may be considered for academic programs with relatively smaller enrollments and graduates, where there are disciplinary affinities. The capacity to make strategic investments for a realigned academic portfolio will require the university's academic community to make important – and difficult –

decisions about reallocating available resources toward those departments that offer programs most clearly aligned with student interest and workforce demand. These discussions will center around enrollment data and allow faculty and administrators to explore cross-department collaborations, as well as possible consolidations that result in renewed majors intended to draw greater student interest. Any such changes must be done through the university's shared governance process.

At the same time, SSU must look at program delivery models and experiential learning opportunities that will ensure our students have a well-rounded educational journey that meets their needs and allows them to balance multiple responsibilities. With the pivot to a largely online learning environment since the onset of the pandemic, we have learned a great deal about what works and what doesn't in a virtual classroom. We now have the advantage to take all that was learned and move forward with more flexible options that allow faculty and students a variety of ways to engage in teaching and learning that strikes a better balance than the mostly in-person modality of the past and the mostly online format of today.

Reverse Enrollment Decline

With the population of prospective students decreasing steadily in the northeast, SSU faces fierce competition for students and must pursue strategies that both generate new enrollments and retain students. Retention must be our top priority. The most effective way to address our enrollment challenges is to become a student-ready institution offers supports and resources that enable students to easily navigate their educational journey, have positive and meaningful experiences, and ultimately, graduate. Retention will be key to stabilizing enrollment, and all on campus have the responsibility to support our students through their graduation.

Viking Success Collaborative

The Vision outlines the new Viking Success Collaborative, which will streamline operations among all student service offices on campus with a focus on providing students the resources and supports they need to achieve their goals. The creation of this collaborative will include clarifying staff and office responsibilities, reducing duplication of work between offices, refining the university's coaching model, and exploring opportunities to build on technology and automation in student service areas. The Viking Success Collaborative was created with SSU's Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) student population in mind, as the university believes that centralizing student support functions will eliminate systematic and sometimes invisible barriers that impact these students most. Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Sean Bennett will oversee the creation of the collaborative, guiding the work of campus leaders from academic affairs, admissions, advising, enrollment management, inclusive excellence, and student life.

Erasing Opportunity Gaps by 2030 and Preparing to become a Hispanic Serving Institution

Salem State seeks to join several higher education partners in the region to work with educational consulting firm EAB on the Moon Shot for Equity initiative. The goal of this program is to erase opportunity gaps in higher education by 2030 through the implementation of 15 best practices that remove systemic barriers across the areas of leadership; access and enrollment; academic policy and practice; and student support and belongingness.

At the same time, the university must take steps to better understand what it means to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). This work is grounded in our commitment to the current student population and the demographic trends of the North Shore region. In determining what practices and policies will make the

university HSI-ready, Salem State will center our preparation as an HSI in the voices and experiences of our existing Latinx students, their families, communities, and local organizations. SSU must be better prepared to attract, educate and support these students throughout their educational journey, and efforts taken to do so will benefit the entire student body.

Ensuring Our Long-term Financial Health

SSU's structural deficit is due to personnel reductions not keeping pace with declining enrollment, resulting in an oversized number of employees today from a time when we were a much larger institution. We are no longer one of the largest state universities in Massachusetts with 10,000 students. Our enrollments have declined by 3,000 students since 2010, because of retention challenges, changing demographics, fewer transfer students due to declining community college enrollments, and the success of the university's increasing graduation rate. With personnel costs comprising 70 percent of our expenses, this imbalance causes the deficit.

SSU has successfully reduced overall compensation costs over the past few years through a hiring freeze, eliminating vacant positions, and a voluntary separation incentive. We must continue our disciplined position management strategies and seek to achieve savings primarily through retirements, abolishing unneeded vacant positions, realignment of work and offerings, and attrition. While involuntary personnel reductions have been given serious consideration, it is not the right action to take at this time.

There are far too many significant unknowns that could benefit our financial position. Additional federal pandemic relief funding, state appropriations, the funding of SSU BOLD, savings from voluntary departures with the recently-announced retirement/separation incentive, and the impact of widespread COVID-19 vaccinations on our enrollment and housing occupancy, could positively impact our budget. These unknowns make it extraordinarily challenging to predict our future financial position at this time, and to take actions relative to involuntary personnel reductions now would be premature. While the next several fiscal years present significant uncertainty, and likely deficits, we will defer on further action until these unknowns become apparent. Successful implementation of the Vision combined with the positive impacts from the above items will allow SSU to continue meeting student needs while acting with more precision when additional data is available.

As a result of additional federal funding, level state appropriation and savings from the campus-wide furlough program, we are in a financial position much stronger than expected when the pandemic first began, with a near \$15 million managed net income projected for FY21. We commit these funds to investments in our future. Our prudent fiscal management this past year was difficult but allows us more time to realign our university and enhance our recruitment and retention practices to stabilize enrollment. The investments we make now must be strategic, data driven and focused on realigning our resources on what our students want and require to succeed.

Our financial challenges can be greatly improved by stabilizing enrollment. We can stabilize, and possibly grow, our enrollment by making intentional investments in academic areas of growth and realignment of our programs. We must be prepared to compete in the marketplace. These investments will meet the needs and interests of our students, as demonstrated by their choice of major and where there is a workforce need, while continuing to offer strong liberal arts programming.

We seek to work together to realign our campus to address these unprecedented financial challenges during a global pandemic. Our campus community has already shown its resilience as we came together to put our students first, kept the community safe, and delivered the high-quality, engaging education and experiences upon which our students rely. These are indeed difficult times, but we will prevail and better serve our students and the generations to come. Key strategies within the Vision related to administrative efficiencies are highlighted below.

Disciplined Management of Compensation Costs

SSU will continue its disciplined position management strategies and seek to achieve savings primarily through retirements, abolishing unneeded vacant positions, realignment of work and offerings, and attrition. While involuntary personnel reductions were given serious consideration, the university will not institute any at this time. Earlier this month, SSU announced an early retirement/separation incentive program that builds on efforts in recent years to find as much vacancy savings through voluntary means as possible. The current retirement incentive allows those with 20 years or more of state university service to receive a lump sum payment of \$25,000.

Addressing Infrastructure Needs

Campus infrastructure is another area in which the university will make both investments and reductions. Investments must be made strategically to provide the quality academic environments our students need to succeed and the university needs to be competitive. Reducing our footprint more than originally anticipated may be possible due to remote work opportunities that became apparent during the pandemic. Virtual office technology allows many in our community to perform the majority of their work from their own homes. Post-COVID-19, the university will evaluate how it operates going forward and which functions do not need to return to campus in the same way they did previously. Several actions will be explored to optimize space and minimize leasing, utility and maintenance costs.

Additionally, the Vision for a Sustainable Future ties in with Salem State's existing application with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance to help fund SSU BOLD: A Campus Unification and Modernization Project (SSU BOLD). This project will support areas of student interest and regional workforce need by providing much-needed new life science wet labs, nursing SIM and occupational therapy labs, and general-purpose teaching and learning spaces with updated technologies for today's student. This project is designed to enhance the overall campus experience for all students through these modernized learning environments and by consolidating the university's footprint with the sale of South Campus. SSU BOLD brings our community physically together while also reducing transportation, utilities and maintenance expenses and eliminating \$80.4 million in deferred maintenance for all buildings on South Campus and \$11 million in immediate rehabilitation costs for outdated facilities there.

Investing in Additional Revenue Generating Areas

The university will invest in revenue generating areas, including admissions, marketing, and institutional advancement. We must continue to look at new ways to connect with prospective students and donors given all that we have learned during the pandemic. Additional resources in these areas will allow SSU to attract students through wider, yet more targeted audiences while bringing in greater investment in their educational journeys through increased donor engagement.

Introduction

Since opening our doors as a Normal School in 1854, Salem State University (SSU) has attracted eager students who are driven to build a brighter future for themselves, their families and their communities. Our graduates are well known for their rigorous academic preparation, an indefatigable work ethic and grit. Over our 167-year history, our institution has adapted to the changing needs of our students, the Commonwealth, and the world. SSU has developed new academic programs in areas of high student and workforce demand; established student services and resources to support the everchanging needs of our student body; modernized parts of our physical plant to include facilities that both attract students and provide them with spaces that are aligned with the quality academic programming we offer; and reimagined the “business of being a student” with the creation of a one-stop shop for registration, accounts, and financial aid. At each turn, SSU has consistently sought innovations that best position our students for success and meet the needs of our region as a comprehensive public university.

At the same time, the foundation and ideals of higher education are being challenged throughout the country, and institutions struggle to meet the needs and expectations of their students with increasingly fewer resources. The cost burden has shifted to the students, particularly at public institutions, and the competition for enrolling the decreasing number of college-aged students has intensified.

SSU is not immune to these challenges, and we are at a place in our history where we once again must adapt. Challenges we must address include declining enrollments; declining retention rates; increased student financial need; state appropriations not keeping pace with the increasing costs of operating a 21st century public university; historical social upheaval as we combat racial injustice and strive to achieve equity on campus; and unexpected and unpredictable impacts of the current pandemic. Our university’s future depends on our collective ability to reimagine our work, making the investments and realignments necessary to ensure SSU can continue to thrive as the student-centered, public comprehensive university of the North Shore.

SSU’s Vision for a Sustainable Future stems from the current strategic plan, the work of the Strategic Path Forward Task Force, and the input from larger community discussions and reports received over the past semester, including the growth plan volunteered by the MSCA Salem Chapter. The Vision sets the direction for how we address our financial challenges within the context of transforming our campus into one that is both truly student centered and student ready.

Student-Ready Campus

The Vision of becoming a more profoundly student-ready campus is grounded in the work of Tia Brown McNair, Susan Albertine, Michelle Asha Cooper, Nicole McDonald, and Thomas Major, Jr., sponsored by the American Association of Colleges and Universities¹.

¹ Brown McNair, T., Albertine, S., Asha Cooper, M., McDonald, N., & Major, Jr., T. (2016) *Becoming A Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success*. Association of American Colleges and Universities and Jossey-Bass: A Wiley Brand. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Becoming_a_Student_Ready_College/8CWNDAAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover

The opportunities for SSU to become more student ready include, but are not limited to:

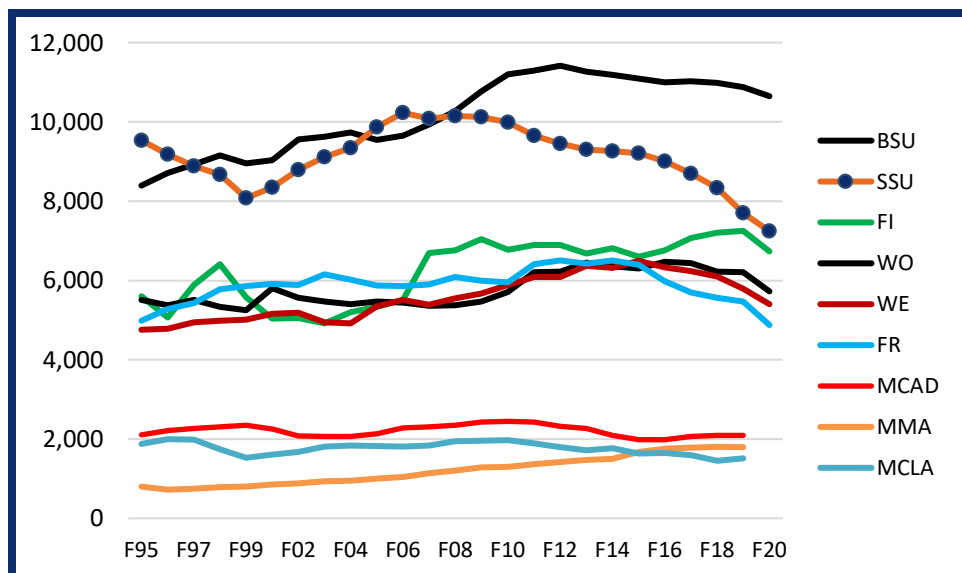
- **Belief in Students** – Demonstrating a focus on student strengths over deficits
- **Holistic Model for Student Success** – Ensuring efforts are in harmony and maximize limited resources
- **Internal and External Partnerships** – Using partnership and collaboration to minimize organizational barriers to student success
- **Community Engagement** – Engaging students as actors in the betterment of the community
- **Assessment** – Ongoing, data-based evaluation and adjustment of policies and practices that impede student success
- **Communication and Promotion** – Prioritizing the messages and experiences that make SSU an institution of choice for students across Massachusetts

With the changing demographics of our students, we must evaluate our current practices, policies and programs to ensure we are meeting students where they are, addressing their needs, and providing them with the educational path of their choice. SSU must be prepared to welcome, support and retain our students using the proven approaches to academic excellence and student support that have served our students well, while also adjusting the practices and policies that hinder our students, in order to implement new ways to foster student success and close opportunity gaps. The work that follows the Vision will provide SSU with the resources needed to ensure that we provide equal and full access to our high-quality education in an inclusive, welcoming environment for all students.

Enrollment Decline

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) reports that as a whole, the Massachusetts public higher education system is experiencing its largest, single-year decrease in fall undergraduate enrollment in the last 25 years. For the state university system, the decrease is substantial at 7.7 percent, or approximately 3,000 students, across the nine institutions. For Salem State University, as seen in Figure 1, we have experienced the worst enrollment decline of all the comprehensive state universities and specialty colleges in our system over the past decade. Our enrollment is at a 25-year low.

Figure 1 – Total Student Enrollment (measured in headcount) across MA State University System



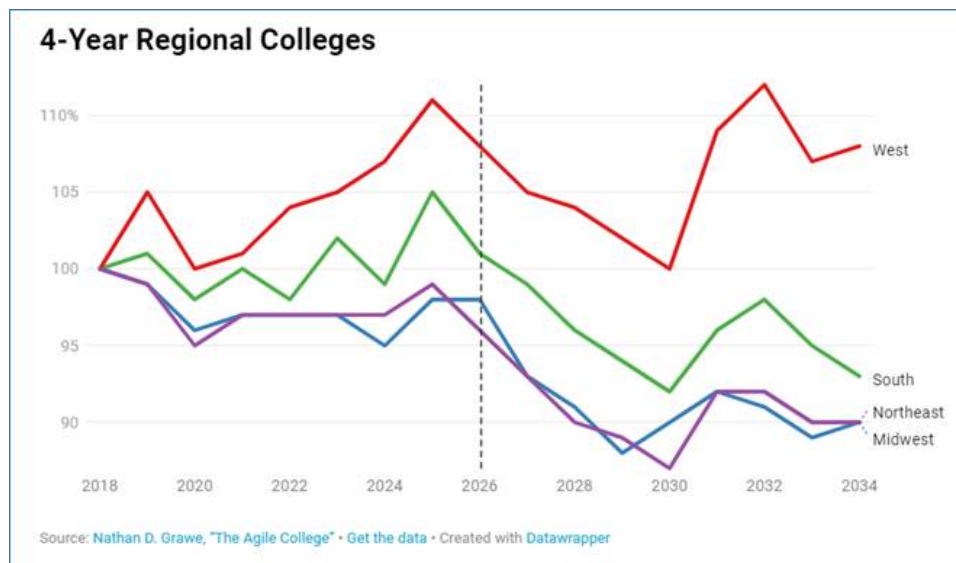
There are several factors which have contributed to the significant enrollment decline at SSU: the shrinking pool of high school students in the northeast; fewer transfer students; decreased retention of undergraduate students; and the successful increases in SSU’s graduation rate.

Shrinking Pool of High School Graduates

Enrolling a larger incoming class becomes increasingly difficult as the decline of college-aged students continues, with the most significant decline predicted in the northeast. This demographic hurdle impacts public universities like ours significantly since the majority of our students come from within the region. The predicted decline in high school graduates has already caused considerable increases in competition at the state and national level. We anticipate this trend continuing as colleges and universities seek to enroll students from a smaller pool. Through great effort and increased institutionally-funded financial aid, we have consistently enrolled over 1,000 freshmen each year, but we will not be immune to the decline predicted in the northeast and will need to enhance our recruitment and marketing to maintain this level.

We expect this decline to continue, with the steepest drop in the number of college-aged students anticipated to begin in 2026. The numbers in our region do not rise again until approximately 2030, but even then, they will not return to the levels we see today. See Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Enrollment-Demand Projections for 4-Year Regional Colleges²



Fewer Transfer Students

Transfer enrollments, which predominately come from our community college partners, traditionally made up more than half of our incoming class of students each year. The community colleges have faced the greatest enrollment declines of all public higher education institutions in the Commonwealth, with a drop of 11.6 percent, or approximately 9,000 students. The impact of this decline is visible in SSU’s transfer enrollment, where we’ve gone from enrolling close to 1,200 transfer students in 2010 to less than 600 transfer students in 2020.

² Grawe, N. How to Survive the Enrollment Bust. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. January 2021. https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-to-navigate-the-demographic-cliff?utm_source=iterable

Increases in SSU's Graduation Rate

During the past ten years, there has been an intentional focus on student progression through programming and initiatives to keep students on track to graduate. These efforts have impacted our students and graduation rates in very positive ways, and we are graduating more students each year than in the past, which has impacted our overall enrollment. For example, in six years, our four-year graduation rate went from 27.8 percent (2010 cohort) to 42.3 percent (2016 cohort).

Retention

One of the largest challenges we collectively face as a university and that has the greatest impact on SSU's enrollment is the retention of undergraduate students. While the pandemic has certainly impacted enrollment and retention this past year, retention has been an issue of concern at the university for some time. Our retention peaked in 2013 with an 81 percent first-year retention rate for first-time, full-time students. Unfortunately, the first-year retention rate has declined by over 8 percentage points for both full- and part-time undergraduates over the past few years. Students are continuing to leave at increasing rates, which results in hundreds of students failing to register each semester and leads to a significant decline in enrollment and to some students never completing their degree.

Why Students Leave

We lose students for a variety of reasons including financial, academic and personal, as well as a lack of engagement and sense of belonging on campus. It is often a combination of these factors that converge at pivotal moments during a student's educational journey that cause them to leave. This decision often results in loss of financial aid, unpaid tuition and fees that lead to debt, and a delay or interruption in their pursuit of a degree. As demographics shift and students enroll with varying degrees of preparedness and resources, SSU needs to adapt to meet students where they are and provide them with the supports they require to persist. We need to work together to keep our students enrolled beyond their third year, which significantly increases their chances of graduation and degree attainment.

Changing Student Demographics

The demographics of our student body have shifted over the past few years. We are becoming more ethnically and racially diverse and have seen an increase in first-generation students, as well as students from lower socio-economic households. Students who are the first in their family to attend college need more assistance and support navigating the college journey. Additionally, the financial need of our students has grown over the past few years, with 41 percent of our incoming students, and 37 percent of our overall students, being Pell eligible. These changes require new and additional resources to keep students enrolled and on track to graduate. As the demographics of our region continue to change, it is imperative that we respond by adjusting our programming, practices and policies to close opportunity gaps for the students across the North Shore and beyond.

Budget

Declining enrollment created budgetary challenges for SSU long before the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last few years, we have successfully managed through \$5-million, \$9-million and \$26-million projected budget gaps.

This has been accomplished mostly through centrally driven and recorded cost reductions including the following:

Compensation Savings

- Hiring freeze, tight controls on refills
- Abolishment of numerous vacant positions
- Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP)
- Closure of Preschool program
- Furlough (FY21)
- Freeze pay (FY21)
- Adjunct reductions
- C09 reductions

Support Savings:

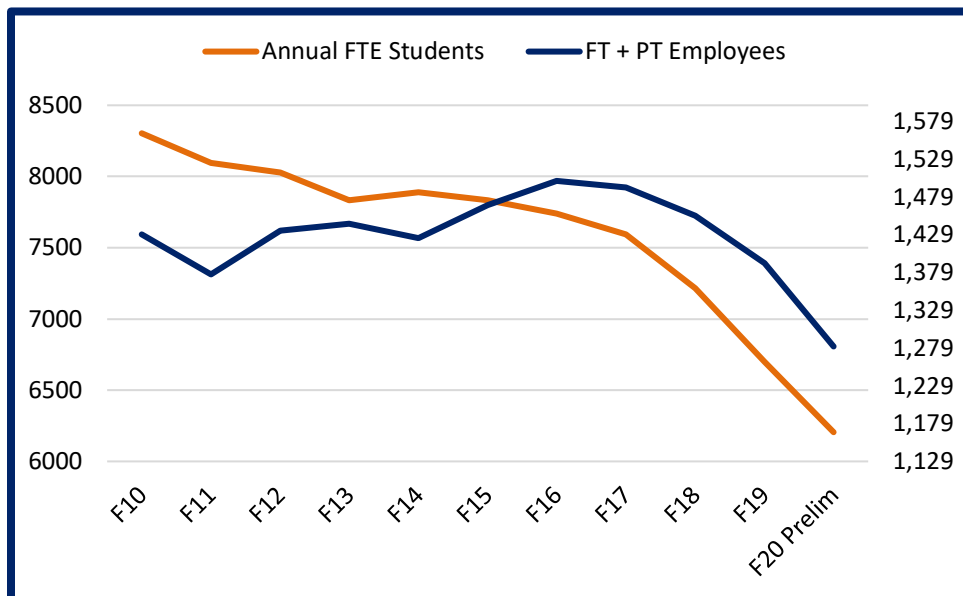
- Reduced support to SSU Assistance Corporation
- Targeted contract eliminations (Gartner, EAB, COCM)
- Contract bid/savings, i.e. photocopier, insurance, office supplies, etc.
- Travel restrictions
- Across the board operating budget reductions

Facilities-Related Savings:

- MSCBA debt restructure (FY21)
- Non-renewal of leases (Salem Diner, 57 Loring, various Enterprise Center spaces)
- Reduction in facilities project funding
- Sold 410 Lafayette Street

While these efforts have helped to balance the budget each academic year, the savings were not always strategic. Personnel costs continue to make up the largest portion of SSU’s operating expenses, at 70 percent, and our decrease in personnel has not kept pace with our decline in enrollment. See Figure 3.

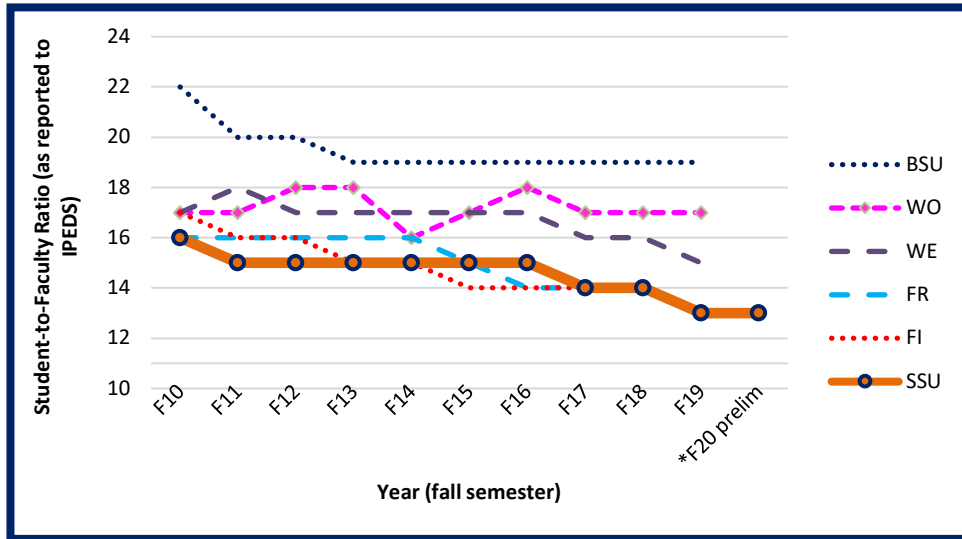
Figure 3 – FTE Students vs. Full-time and Part-time Employees



The savings gained through our very disciplined position management strategies like the hiring freeze and VSIP, often led to vacancies in areas essential to our work, causing strain across the campus. These practices, while helpful in the short term, are not sustainable nor the way we can continue if we wish to be student centered and student ready. Additionally, with our decreases in enrollment, the student-to-faculty ratio has declined from 16:1 to 13:1. This is the lowest in the state university system, not including the specialty schools. See Figure 4. As such, our goal is to return to 16:1 by 2025.

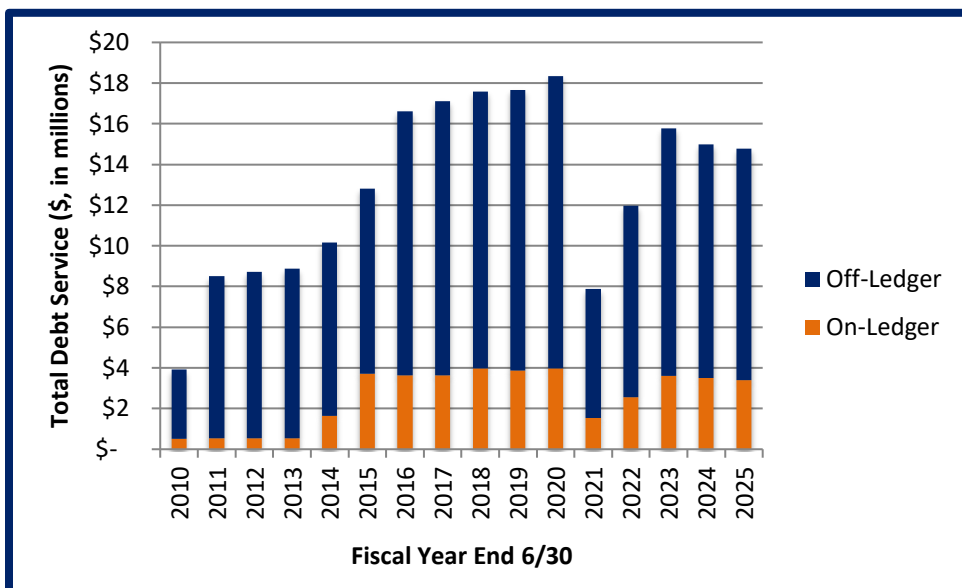
Figure 4 – Student-to-Faculty Ratios

Reported to IPEDS by the Massachusetts State Universities, 2010 to 2019



It should be noted some budget savings outlined on page 12 will only be possible for this fiscal year, as indicated by (FY21). One example that enabled us to balance the budget this year is the Massachusetts State College Building Authority’s (MSCBA’s) restructuring of debt service for the state university system. While the cost savings were significant for FY21, and the restructuring assisted greatly with cash flows, this is not a permanent solution. We will see steeper increases again in FY22 and FY23 before it stabilizes in FY24. See Figure 5.

Figure 5 – Current Total Debt Service for Salem State University



Inclusive Excellence

Inclusive excellence serves as a catalyst and resource for a broad range of institutional activities directed towards diversity, inclusion and student success. Each student matriculating at SSU represents communities, individuals and families with aspiration for a better future. To reach their goals, SSU students are propelled by institutional efforts that provide a sense of belonging.

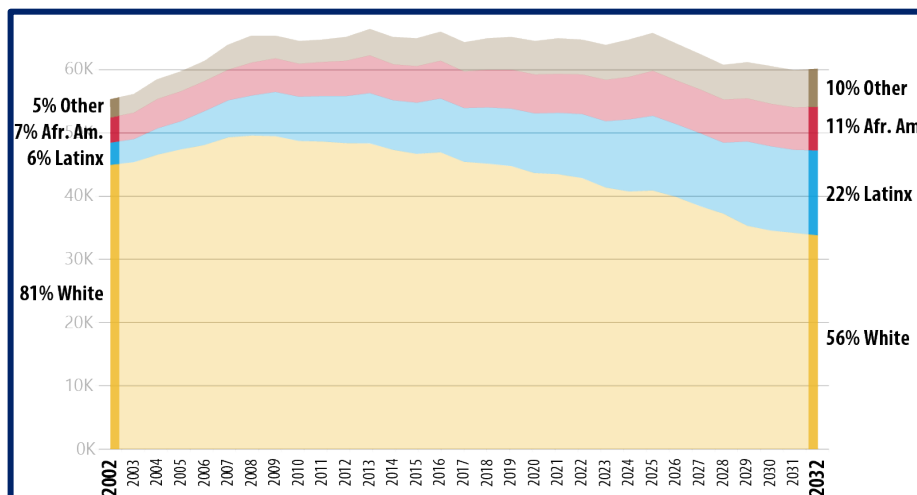
Inclusive excellence is a collective responsibility. Every member of the community has a role to play. Our Racial Equity and Justice Institute team is part of a statewide collaborative that identifies data driven practices at SSU, informing access and success opportunities with the goal of magnifying and propagating best practices. As members of the National Coalition Building Institute, we have expanded our bench strength in faculty and staff who are trained to facilitate conversations and training on diversity.

Partnering with human resources, faculty and staff, inclusive excellence established employee resource groups (ERGs) supporting retention. ERGs are collegial groups focused on creating supportive networks for a broad range of populations that might otherwise feel isolated and alone. Additionally, partnerships with human resources and academic affairs provide opportunities to support processes that include diverse candidates in the hiring process. A university where students see themselves represented potentially provides momentum to graduation and retention efforts.

Inclusive excellence's faculty fellow for diversity is a powerful partner in exploring the decolonization of the curriculum and addressing opportunities to connect students with curricula centered in rich cultural experiences. In the student space, we have expanded our outreach to student organizations and partnered aggressively with student facing offices and centers to support programming. As the goal of SSU students is to obtain a college degree, the inclusive excellence team must embrace the opportunity to take a more intentional role in university commitments to student success and the Department of Higher Education's (DHE's) Equity Agenda.

The DHE projects that as much as 22 percent of our region's high school graduates will self-identify as Latinx by the year 2032. See Figure 6. This a 16 percent increase from the population we saw in 2002. This trajectory emphasizes the importance of assessing the interests and challenges confronted by our Latinx students.

Figure 6 – MA Public HS Graduating Classes by Race



Our academic programs must align with the economy of our region as well as the demands of our students. We must align both our academic programs and our student support resources to best serve our incoming student populations. Currently, nearly 80 percent of our Latinx student population have enrolled in our highest demand programs. See Figure 7.

Figure 7 – Top 10 Majors for Undergraduate Latinx Student Enrollment

Major	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
Business Administration	245	235
Criminal Justice	134	113
Nursing	86	98
Psychology-BS	96	93
Biology-BS	79	79
Healthcare Studies	50	55
Social Work	64	53
Undeclared	38	44
Education	44	40
Sport & Movement Science	39	35
Computer Science	18	32
Total # Latinx Students	1,116	1,076
% of all Latinx Students in above programs	80%	81%

While a sense of belonging is foundational to student success, we realize the future of SSU students rests on academic performance. Like diversity, our success initiatives will only be as strong as our collective commitment. Work that increasingly compliments the efforts of every individual, office, program, classroom, and center confirms our status as an institution of choice for students on the North Shore.

Fundraising

The Board of Trustees and the Foundation Board of Directors unanimously voted to approve a comprehensive fundraising campaign in February 2020 with targeted goals to advance the institution and support our students and our mission as a regional, comprehensive public university. The goals include a substantial investment in proven high-impact retention practices that provide the foundational tools students need to pursue their interests, build lasting relationships, and achieve their degree. There is also a focused effort to increase investments in student financial aid across several critical areas, such as scholarships and completion grants, and to generate resources to support unrestricted funding across each of our schools and colleges to provide the flexible resources needed to support innovation in areas ranging from faculty research initiatives, hiring mentors to student projects and technology systems. Lastly, fundraising investment in SSU BOLD will reimagine a critical mass of SSU’s physical spaces, fostering a stronger, more cohesive campus community.

ACADEMIC VISION

Salem State University shall continue to expand its impact and influence as one of the Commonwealth's premier teaching universities, committed to its state mandate³ to offer academic programs that integrate liberal arts and sciences programs with professional education and a special emphasis on teaching and lifelong learning; and promoting a campus life that fosters intellectual, social and ethical development. We must pursue these goals with the explicit expectation that our path toward a sustainable future requires us to identify and prioritize a distinctive academic focus, based upon our established strengths and alignment with regional and state needs.

In continued efforts to realize the university's strategic plan, and in consideration of demographic declines, programmatic demands, enrollment trends, and the needs of our region, SSU must take a hard look at our academic offerings. We must invest and align our resources to best position the university to serve our current and future students and the projected needs of the regional workforce. To this end, the academic vision that guides SSU into the future must prioritize the four areas of emphasis put forth in the current strategic plan, while continuing to integrate liberal arts and sciences programs with professional education. In this endeavor, we shall retain our identity as:

- Regional – Prioritizing initiatives that serve the economic, social and cultural interests and needs of the North Shore, which has become increasingly diverse and globally-minded and has identified science and healthcare as the top workforce demands of the region
- Comprehensive – Conferring upon all SSU students the benefits of a liberal arts education as offered in a wide (but not exhaustive) range of disciplines
- A Teaching University – Focusing financial and human resources on efforts that give precedence to student learning, both in- and outside the classroom; embracing the collective efforts of every member of the campus community, faculty, administrators and staff alike.

Guided by this academic vision, Salem State University will ensure that future generations of students will have the opportunity to build the knowledge, skills, abilities, and confidence they need to be resilient life-long learners, effective community leaders, and valuable contributors to a regional economy that continues to become more globally prominent. We are committed to developing and supporting high-quality academic programs and innovative educational experiences that equip our graduates to thrive in an evolving workforce and to navigate confidently in an increasingly complex and global society. To these ends, we must rethink the academic enterprise, embracing a future that is rooted but not bound by our past. The time for change is now.

Realignment of Academic Programs

SSU has evolved from its origins as a Normal School to the comprehensive regional university it is today. In that evolution, courses of study adjusted to societal needs, demands and innovation with the common understanding that, regardless of a student's chosen area of specialization, a grounding in the liberal arts and sciences is vital. Over the most recent decade, the SSU student body has experienced several changes. Since 2010, the number of students enrolled has declined; the diversity of students' lived experiences has grown; the

³ Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. About the Public Higher Education System. February 2021. <https://www.mass.edu/system/aboutsystem.asp>

need for students to work to cover college-related costs has intensified; and matters of identity and health have become increasingly complex. As often affirmed by Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos Santiago, higher education must move away from a model that presumes the existence of “college-ready students” and toward a framework that prioritizes a need for “student-ready colleges.” In addition, the educational and professional aspirations of SSU students has shifted over time, with an increasing proportion of students choosing to pursue degrees in fields related to healthcare, human services and business.

In charting a sustainable path forward for SSU, we must acknowledge that for the past five years, the degrees with the top five number of graduates have been business, education, nursing, psychology, and social work. These five areas account for 60 percent of all degrees awarded since fall 2015. At the same time, the proportion of students choosing to pursue a major in other areas has declined, particularly in the liberal arts and sciences where nine academic units accounted for only 5 percent of all degrees awarded during the same five-year period.

The task before us is to better align instructional resources with student interests, while also continuing to offer our students a broad portfolio of liberal arts and science degree options. This will require investments in faculty positions in academic areas identified for growth, as capacity and demands require, measured through courses taken, majors, minors and degrees awarded. At this time, the areas identified for growth include athletic training (sport and movement science), biology, business, computer science, criminal justice, education, healthcare studies, nursing, psychology, and social work.

In addition to investments, realignments may be considered for academic programs with relatively smaller enrollments and graduates, where there are disciplinary affinities. The challenges inherent in any such realignment are amplified by the stark reality that as our enrollment has declined, the decrease in instructional positions, both full- and part-time, has not kept pace. Since the fall of 2015, the number of faculty – particularly full-time faculty – has decreased by 13 percent while the corresponding decline in students has been approximately 25 percent. This discrepancy has not only resulted in lower-than-desired student-to-faculty ratios, but also disequilibrium in the distribution of faculty resources across the 30 departments.

Academic realignments provide an opportunity for the university to pursue new approaches to attracting students to SSU and engaging with them to help them find fulfillment, realize their potential and achieve their goals. At the heart of these realignments are meaningful cross-disciplinary collaboration that better serve us in the future and would ultimately result in a consolidation of academic departments (e.g., from the current 30 to 22 or 24); each with more robust student enrollments and, more importantly, new, creative academic programming. Figure 8 shows the change in enrollment by department following the language of the MSCA Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article X.C.2. It presents the change in the total number of students enrolled in the total number of courses offered by each department as measured by comparing the total number of students enrolled during the current semester (SP21) with the average total number of students enrolled during the three previous comparable semesters (SP18, SP19, SP20).

Figure 8 – Change in Enrollment by Department

Department		% Chg
BSB	Accounting & Finance	-14.1%
BSB	Marketing & Decision Sciences	-23.6%
BSB	Management	-27.0%
CAS	Art + Design	-28.2%
CAS	Biology	-5.3%
CAS	Chemistry & Physics	-10.0%
CAS	Computer Science	-4.6%
CAS	Economics	-26.3%
CAS	English	-17.1%
CAS	Geological Science	-39.8%
CAS	Geography & Sustainability	-16.8%
CAS	History	-3.5%
CAS	Interdisciplinary Studies	23.5%
CAS	Mathematics	-14.9%
CAS	Media & Comm	-12.8%

Department		% Chg
CAS	Music & Dance	-25.6%
CAS	Philosophy	-42.4%
CAS	Political Science	-15.2%
CAS	Psychology	-8.0%
CAS	Sport & Movement Sci	-30.6%
CAS	Sociology	-26.1%
CAS	Theatre & Speech Comm	-22.0%
CAS	World Languages and Cultures	-31.4%
HHS	Criminal Justice	-8.5%
HHS	Healthcare Studies	8.5%
HHS	Nursing	4.1%
HHS	Occupational Therapy	8.8%
HHS	Social Work	-6.7%
SOE	Childhood Educ & Care	-0.6%
SOE	Secondary & Higher Edu	25.8%
SSU	TOTAL	-13.0%

The data in Figure 8 set the stage for more contextualized conversations about the future of each academic plan (majors, concentrations, minors, options); conversations that shall take into account a wide range of factors, many of which are laid forth in the Sustainable Path Forward Taskforce final report. The capacity to make strategic investments for a realigned academic portfolio will require the university’s academic community to make important – and difficult – decisions about reallocating available resources toward those departments that offer programs most clearly aligned with student interest and workforce demand. These discussions will center around enrollment data and allow faculty and administrators to explore cross-department collaborations, as well as possible consolidations that result in renewed majors intended to draw greater student interest. Any such changes must be done through the university’s shared governance process.

At the same time, the university must explore new opportunities for future students with an interest in studying more deeply in disciplines that can no longer be fully supported, e.g., through consortial offerings such as those offered by other Massachusetts State Universities, Northeast Consortium of Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts, or the National Student Exchange. Given increasing prevalence of digitally grounded class modalities across the higher education landscape, we are well positioned to pursue innovative intra- and inter-institutional teaching and learning collaborations, further enriching options for our students.

Experiential and Engaged Learning

A hallmark of the SSU experience is learning by doing, not only in the classroom, laboratory or studio but also in the community. While experiential and engaged learning takes on different forms, this active-learning approach addresses the needs and aspirations of students by affording them valuable opportunities to apply what they have learned; to synthesize their understanding of critical approaches and methodologies; to evaluate how they

might address issues of concern to them and their communities; and, perhaps most importantly, to create meaning and value for themselves and others. Internships, clinical and field placements, student teaching, assisting with faculty research, study abroad, and civic engagement are examples of how our faculty help students bring knowledge and skills to life. These experiences help our students develop a resume, make valuable professional connections, discover their authentic sense of purpose, and strengthen their confidence – each of which contributes to the building of social capital. Students enrolled in programs that lead toward professional licensure find such experiences explicitly built into the curriculum. For other students, engagement opportunities provide an optional enhancement to their college experience. Unfortunately, too many SSU students find themselves challenged to avail themselves of these opportunities. This must change.

Looking to the future, we must be prepared to assist students in identifying these opportunities on and off campus and establish practices that emphasize the importance of such activities, with an eye toward ensuring that every student has at least one meaningful, transformational experience outside of the classroom. Efforts to improve the institution's infrastructure for internships continue to advance through the collaboration between faculty and student life offices, such as career services. Curricular and co-curricular incentives that promote the value of engagement activities, such as the recent creation of a minor in Civic Engagement, build interest and participation. In providing these opportunities to our students, we must examine and adjust current policies and practices to eliminate any financial or structural barriers that might otherwise inhibit student participation; ensuring that every SSU student has equitable access to these vital, high-impact experiences.

Program Delivery

As we near the middle of the 21st century, SSU must attend to changing student behaviors, attitudes and outlooks regarding the modalities through which they prefer to learn, while being mindful that our students present a wide range of wants and needs. For example, we must consider how to reconcile the institution's long-standing reputation for delivering a human scale, "high touch" educational experience with evolving socio-cultural expectations regarding flexibility and customization in course delivery.

This challenge has been greatly exacerbated by the unanticipated public health demands placed upon the university by the COVID-19 crisis. Students, faculty and staff are to be commended for their ability to pivot sharply to exclusively online modalities in March 2020. However, with a large portion of courses remaining online this past academic year and very limited opportunity for in-person interaction, dissatisfaction was noted by both faculty and students with the almost fully virtual environment. We must find a balance between faculty's and students' current collective expertise, experience, confidence, and satisfaction with online learning and the future we envision.

At the same time, we must explicitly support our students as they manage new delivery formats and strive to form meaningful relationships with instructors, classmates and course content, all with an eye toward achieving their academic goals. Formulating a sustainable path forward for program delivery must begin with candidly assessing our current state and capacities, followed by establishing course delivery goals that are both aspirational and reasonable (for both faculty and students). Investments in infrastructure and training will be required to attain these goals, so students and faculty are set up for success in both physical and virtual classrooms.

Exploring, supporting and successfully adopting the full range of course delivery options will empower students and faculty as they negotiate a balance between the flexibility offered by online modalities and the connection and accountability that come with in-person interactions. For students, investment in a more diversified set of course formats allows them greater flexibility as they choose to pursue their education in spaces, times and contexts that optimally integrate their studies into their other responsibilities. For faculty, fuller deployment of HyFlex course delivery options is of particular interest as it allows them to teach students synchronously and simultaneously in person and remotely. This modality, piloted this academic year, has received a positive response but will require additional investments in both technological infrastructure and faculty professional development and support.

As the university undergoes this delivery transition, we must also rethink the “when,” “where” and “how” of scheduling classes, with the express objectives of:

- Creating strategic course rotations within each department to:
 - Reduce the number of low-enrolled sections
 - Eliminate enrollment “bottlenecks,” which can force a student to put off a course and extend time to graduation
 - Provide greater predictability for students and advisers as they collaborate on establishing a multi-year plan toward degree completion
- Improve stewardship of existing teaching spaces, making more efficient use of classrooms, seminar rooms, laboratories, and studios, especially as faculty increasingly adopt hybrid modalities, thereby opening the door for new class meeting patterns
- Establish course enrollment caps that:
 - Better align with available resources for instruction
 - Serve the teaching practices necessary for students to meet published course objectives
 - Provide for a more equitable distribution of workload among faculty within and across departments, mindful of the varying contexts in which departments operate.

These strategies will allow us to manage academic programs more efficiently and provide students –current and prospective – new and flexible avenues to travel as they progress toward a degree.

Enrollment: Recruit, Retain, Recover, Stabilize, Grow

As noted, SSU has faced steep enrollment declines over the past few years, with retention challenges playing a major role in that decline. With the future landscape for prospective students promising fewer college-going high school graduates in the northeast and fierce competition for SSU, the university must pursue strategies that both generate new enrollments and retain students, with retention being the top priority moving forward. As mentioned throughout the Vision, every member of the SSU community bears responsibility for retention.

In addition, we will create greater interest around the university’s academic programs as outlined in this Vision through strategic recruitment and marketing initiatives with the goal of increasing the number of applications and encouraging accepted students to make SSU their first choice. Working closely with academic affairs, this can be accomplished through spotlighting the accomplishments of faculty and students in various academic endeavors more frequently and creating a shared language to promote academic programs and student experiences, focusing on attributes that are unique and beneficial to the student.

A third strategy to increase enrollment is to specifically identify and attract students who have either stepped away from their studies or who might not have otherwise considered SSU. In this vein, we will engage students who have “stopped out” of their studies prior to earning a degree, encouraging them to return to the university to complete their studies. Similarly, resources must be invested to increase offerings at both the undergraduate and graduate level, ensuring that any new programming is financially and operationally viable. Priority will be given to creating distinctive, high-demand programs that offer flexible participation and opportunities for scaffolded credentialing.

Recruit

At SSU, we use research informed strategies, cross-campus collaboration, and best practices in our recruitment initiatives. In anticipation of the shifting higher education landscape in the northeast, we must enhance our efforts and continue to implement our research-backed recruitment with targeted in- and out-of-state application generation techniques, broadened marketing strategies, and strategic use of institutional financial aid. Staff collaborate across campus and in the market to increase the university’s visibility and to inform students of the many benefits of a Salem State education. We have responded with enhanced recruitment to reach college-going students, adult learners and graduate students. These include but aren’t limited to collaborations with high schools, community colleges, community-based organizations, and local business and organizations to build awareness and pipelines.

Students learn about academic programs early on through our website, information sessions, virtual and on-campus events, early college programs, and communication campaigns. We will continue our partnership with EAB to build the admissions funnel and implement strategies around enrolling new students through prescribed yield and financial aid efforts. Understanding and educating students and the community on how to access and afford a college education is an important aspect of our recruitment as is working with faculty to promote our high-quality academic offerings.

Retain, Recover and Stabilize

Increasing retention is the most impactful way to see growth in enrollment, and keeping students engaged and enrolled is a priority that requires campus-wide partnership. As a community, we can do a lot to mitigate enrollment loss by retaining our students year to year. The most effective way to do this is to become a student-ready institution that is prepared to offer support and resources that enable students to easily navigate their educational journey, have positive and meaningful experiences, and ultimately, graduate.

These support structures must benefit all students and eliminate policies and practices that disproportionately impact our diverse student body. We must also provide support and resources during the pivotal moments in a student’s journey to diminish feelings of isolation, increase a sense of belonging, and build confidence in their ability to succeed at SSU and beyond.

This support comes in many forms: intrusive advising networks and outreach, especially when students show signs of risk; formal structures to inform and guide students to on- and off-campus resources; informal, encouraging conversations with students; building engagement, community and belongingness inside and outside the classroom; and intentional, just-in-time outreach campaigns. Parents and guardians who support their students play a role in their success and should be included in their student’s educational journey. These efforts must be collaborative across all campus departments, recognizing that our students benefit most when

we work together. The Navigate tool has allowed our campus to coordinate support, and we will continue to build on these efforts, as a community.

Growth

A university-wide effort around retention is necessary to shift the enrollment loss, and move toward stability and eventually, growth. The anticipated decline in college-going high school students in our catchment area and the northeast is cause for concern, but SSU can be the college of choice for students in our region and beyond. There is also opportunity in the adult learner and graduate markets, which we are embracing. We will prioritize new partnerships and innovations, along with research informed recruitment, marketing and enrollment strategies to assist in turning this decline around.

Strategies may include:

- Institute campus-wide retention efforts
- Eliminate or change policies and practices that disproportionately impact our changing student body
- Develop mitigation strategies that address enrollment melt post admission and orientation
- Remove additional access barriers (SSU is already test optional and has fee waiver options)
- Enhance and expand initiatives with community-based organizations
- Create new pathways with community college partners with a focus on majors that meet student demand and workforce needs
- Build business partnerships and pathways for adult learners to return and complete their degrees
- Increase graduate student enrollment through enhanced marketing and partnership building with local organization and businesses
- Increase support and build awareness with local feeder high schools through early college programs and on-the-spot admissions reviews
- Ensure transparent, seamless, and user-friendly financial aid processes, including outreach on completing the FAFSA and building awareness on grant and scholarship opportunities
- Increase marketing strategies to raise awareness and promote the value of an SSU education

Student Success

SSU prides itself on putting students at the center of all we do. While this is a foundational belief of our institution, and excellent work has been done in support of our students over the years, this work often occurs in silos, resulting in inconsistent, and sometimes negative, student experiences despite our best efforts. There are pivotal moments when a student stumbles, and they feel unprepared, confused, alone, and overwhelmed. They often give up, don't enroll or drop out. With our limited resources, both human and financial, we must build a cohesive student success model that attracts students and improves retention. We must be more flexible and meet our students where they are, providing them the supports they will need to succeed.

To accomplish this, we need to embrace a universal design that lifts all students on our campus and better prepares us to truly be a "student-ready" university. We will work to replace student-deficit narratives and work toward creating policies, procedures and approaches that lead to student success. While we have made strides, our current model fails to maximize the impact of our commitments. We must take advantage of the data and technologies leveraged throughout the pandemic to improve student outcomes moving forward.

There is nothing more foundational to Viking success than feeling welcomed, supported and included on our campus. A student's sense of belonging begins during the recruitment process and continues over their four years at SSU. When we do this well, our undergraduates become leaders, peer mentors and often attend graduate school. Our efforts on student success will be aided by collaborations that are both internal and external to the university.

Viking Success Collaborative

There are currently many student service offices on campus offering a variety of functions in support of our students. To this end, the Viking Success Collaborative (VSC) will be constituted with leadership from across the university to remove barriers that traditionally impede student-success centered work. Representation will include campus leaders with expertise in academic affairs, admission, advising, enrollment management, inclusive excellence, and student life. Our campus culture must put student success above all else, and we must do so in a cohesive way. The Viking Success Collaborative will be designed to deliver services to students predicated on the concept that student support should be clearly defined, systemic and consistent through degree completion.

The collaborative will use data and technology to proactively and reactively address the needs of students. Functions to be developed for this collaborative include the refinement of a common coaching and care model, complimentary support efforts and collective action. Necessary technology and automation will be explored to further support these efforts and streamline operations for both students and staff. Success in this effort will require significant collaboration and commitment to shared goals that will benefit and support our students.

To start, the VSC will clarify staff and unit responsibilities, aligning resources to best meet student needs in order to direct students to the appropriate supports they require in a timely fashion. The goal is to eliminate confusion and minimize duplication of services, creating synergies across campus. With our Black, Indigenous and People

of Color (BIPOC) student population in mind, centralizing student support functions will eliminate systematic and sometimes invisible barriers, that impact these students most.

With both the goal to enhance our retention efforts as well as to become a campus prepared to serve and support all students, Vice President Sean Bennett will oversee this new student success initiative, working with key stakeholders across the university.

Preparation for Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Designation

The university will actively begin the process and preparation to become an HSI. This work is grounded in our commitment to the current student population and the demographic trends stated earlier in the Vision. We must center our development as an HSI in the voices and experiences of our existing Latinx students, their families, communities, and local organizations.

As part of this important initiative, we will form a cross-campus collaboration of faculty, staff, students, and community partners to determine the best path forward to be HSI-Ready. The foundational work will require the development of the requisite structures, policies and practices best aligned with our goal of better serving, recruiting and retaining Latinx students, faculty and staff, and securing a federally-recognized HSI designation. Additionally, we will further collaborations with our community college partners who already hold the HSI designation, North Shore Community College (NSCC) and Northern Essex Community College (NECC). As NSCC is a top feeder institution for SSU, and NECC is targeted for greater collaboration and recruitment, partnering with these colleges allows us to learn and expand upon what students are already experiencing prior to enrolling at SSU. As we prepare for HSI designation and strengthen practices and structures, these efforts will benefit all students.

Moon Shot for Equity – Erase Opportunity Gaps by 2030

SSU is seeking to join several higher education partners in the region to work with our proven partner EAB for the Moon Shot for Equity initiative. EAB's Moon Shot for Equity provides a promising construct for maximizing our preexisting investments in data and systems focused on student success. Considering our strong relationship and recent implementation of Navigate, this effort is a logical extension. The goal for this program is to erase equity gaps in higher education by 2030 by uniting people, process and technology to transform institutions and regions. The focus is on removing systemic barriers across four areas by implementing 15 best practices that help institutions look at their campus culture and systems. The four areas include: leadership; access and enrollment; academic policy and practice; and student support and belongingness. This is a holistic model that puts student success at the core.

Through the Moon Shot for Equity initiative, SSU will benefit from the partnership EAB has formed with national experts, philanthropies and corporate employers. The northeast region collaborative would include North Shore Community College and Northern Essex Community College. This may extend to other partnering institutions as well. Together, this collaborative would implement cohesive best practices, policies and technologies to graduate more students, in less time, for less money, and with better outcomes.

This effort aligns with the Vikings Success Collaborative and allows students, faculty and staff to continue the good work begun after the climate study, keeping us on the path for continued improvement in eliminating systemic racism and non-inclusionary policies and practices on our campus while also preparing to be HSI ready.

Most importantly, Moon Shot for Equity provides us with regional and national partners in our success efforts. Successful consortiums will have a mentorship connection with schools like Georgia State University, who have been leaders in data driven student success initiatives.

The Moon Shot for Equity initiative provides for:

- Change management and equity leadership development
- Campus climate assessment
- Review of administrative and academic barriers
 - Registration holds
 - Aligned mathematics, remediation education and academic mapping
- Retention grants
- Transfer pathways
- Degree completion programs
- Proactive advising (utilizing Navigate)
- Confidence building and belongingness (inclusive excellence)
- Leadership and cross-institutional collaboration
- Data transparency, metrics alignment and assessment

Administrative Efficiency

The university has taken a very aggressive approach over the past four years with regard to operating and compensation costs. Efforts are continually made to streamline operations, find efficiencies and create a supportive and welcoming environment for our students. Every effort has been made to take advantage of personnel vacancies across both instructional and non-instructional areas of the university so that we can serve our students as best as possible without a forced reduction in staffing.

These efforts have certainly helped in the short term over the past few years but have not done enough to prepare for the future, nor have they been as strategic in meeting the changing needs of our students and this region. Here too, the university needs to take a hard look at how we operate the administrative functions of the university as well as how it maintains, secures and prepares spaces and resources. Additionally, through a continuous improvement approach, our workforce must strive to be effective, efficient, professional, collaborative, cordial, and flexible as we serve and educate students. Employees and units must be accountable for the attainment of goals and objectives aligned with the priorities of an equitable and welcoming, student-ready university.

Vice President Karen House and Vice President Rita Colucci will explore and lead the implementation of these recommendations and the continued efforts to streamline operations of the university post-pandemic, working closely with Vice President Bennett to ensure the needs and opportunities for all students, faculty and staff are equitable moving forward.

Human Resources

Personnel

There are several factors that need to be considered to ensure efficient and appropriate staffing of a university: alignment of workforce with priorities, overall goals, and programmatic and student needs; capacity and availability of high-demand areas; goal setting and accountability; technology; morale; and financial resources. The university needs to continue to align its workforce with strategies that focus on meeting the needs and interests of our students and the region we serve and correct the structural deficit that has impacted the campus for many years. This can be accomplished through a combination of investment, realignment and reduction.

As previously discussed, investments must focus on areas identified for growth. Investment in some areas over others does not diminish the importance of other programming, but instead allows the university to provide more robust experiences and support in a more efficient manner. Realignment of programming and initiatives also aids in these efforts, by combining areas with like-content and structures to reduce redundancy in some areas and workload in others. While a very difficult decision, involuntary personnel reductions may also be considered for the long-term, best interests of this institution and the students we serve. Decisions of this nature are never made lightly and must truly look at the university as a whole, with students at the very center of all that we do.

Investment, realignment and reduction of our workforce go hand-in-hand; in order to invest in one area, we need to realign or reduce another. Importantly, reduction can be achieved in many ways. Retirements, abolishing unneeded vacant positions, and attrition can contribute greatly in this area and have at Salem State in the past, using the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) as an example.

As we look ahead to the future and adjust our workforce to fit the needs of our students across all areas of personnel, we need to ensure that our workforce is effective and efficient. We will also continue efforts to hire faculty and staff whose scholarly expertise and lived experience speak directly to the histories, cultures and contributions of our diverse student population. These practices enhance our focus on providing programming that teaches our students to think creatively and observe and analyze the world around them, while helping them become the well-rounded and engaged citizens who comprise the SSU alumni community.

Early Retirement/Separation Incentive Program (ERIP)

The university, through agreements with the MSCA, APA and AFSCME unions, is offering an Early Retirement/Separation Incentive Program (ERIP) to faculty and staff who qualify. The ERIP builds on efforts in recent years to find as much personnel savings through voluntary separations as possible; like the 2019 VSIP, which brought the departure of 22 faculty members and 60 staff. The ERIP will serve as an effective way to reduce our staffing and control costs, while serving as a positive opportunity for members of our community who benefit from the incentive.

The minimum number of ERIP slots SSU will make available to qualified employees is as follows:

- MSCA employees 50
- AFSCME employees 15
- APA employees 15
- NUP employees 5

Work Environment

The pandemic has forced our university to operate differently over the past year, with the majority of our employees working from home. Post-pandemic, certain functions and departments may remain predominantly remote, allowing for a consolidation and optimization of campus space. Many details of this permanent remote work arrangement remain to be determined. Such details will be established jointly with administration, faculty, staff, and students and in adherence with collective bargaining agreements; bearing in mind how to best serve students through this paradigm shift.

It is important to note that remote-based employees will be required to meet on campus periodically to promote community and enhance collaboration across areas. Strategies and tactics will be intentionally designed to promote engagement appropriate to building connections and improving campus morale throughout the SSU community. Opportunities for team building, professional development, campus celebrations, and similar programming will be made available for employees who no longer come to campus every day.

Campus Infrastructure

Campus infrastructure is another area in which the university will make both investments and reductions. Investments must be made to provide the quality academic environments our students need to succeed and the

university needs to compete with other institutions. These investments must be strategic and made within the constraints of the Commonwealth's processes for capital investment in public higher education with the goal of minimizing the university's contribution wherever possible.

As noted above, remote work opens many potential avenues for cost savings as they relate to facilities and infrastructure. While investments in technology were required to allow for university work to continue in a digital format, virtual office technology gives many in our campus community the ability to perform all of their work from their own homes. Post-pandemic, the university will need to evaluate how it operates going forward and which functions may not need to return to campus in the same way they did previously. Several actions will be explored to optimize space and minimize leasing, utility and maintenance costs. Opportunities for shared spaces, rotating work schedules, and remote work may also reduce the need for office space throughout campus.

Leases

A thorough review was conducted for all university leases. In most cases, early termination does not come without a steep cost or fulfillment of the remaining lease term. With opportunities for remote work or hybrid models, there are opportunities to explore renegotiations and subleasing options for spaces we no longer need.

SSU BOLD: A Campus Unification and Modernization Project (SSU BOLD)

SSU BOLD achieves some of the most immediate needs identified in the Campus Master Vision of 2013, Science Teaching Laboratory Addition Report of 2015, North Campus Precinct Study of 2018, and the Readiness Study's Project BOLD Summary Report of 2020. SSU BOLD establishes a compact and efficient campus core, while maximizing programmatic synergies and streamlining operations across our campuses. This exciting and transformative project enhances the overall campus experience for ALL students and positions us well to serve the North Shore region and prepare its future workforce. In essence, SSU BOLD takes a multipronged approach to achieving many of our capital goals in a way that utilizes SSU's and the Commonwealth's resources in the most efficient way for both time and budget. This includes the sale of South Campus; the renovation of the Horace Mann Building; the construction of a Meier Hall addition, which will house much needed, new wet labs for our life sciences; and the repurposing of underutilized space in the Frederick E. Berry Library and Learning Commons for instruction. By consolidating the university's footprint, we reduce transportation, utilities and maintenance expenses while eliminating \$80.4 million in deferred maintenance for all buildings on South Campus, and \$11 million in immediate rehabilitation costs for outdated facilities there. While no project could achieve all of the capital needs of a university at one time, this is an important and necessary first step in achieving our master vision and improving academic spaces that are outdated and critical to SSU's future success.

Cat Cove

Since the mid-1990's Cat Cove has served as the Northeastern Massachusetts Aquaculture Center (NEMAC) for the Commonwealth. At the time of its conception, the state funded NEMAC with a robust annual appropriation. Since that time, the appropriation has dwindled, resulting in a 2020 appropriation of \$12,500. Keeping the facility open in future years is estimated to cost over \$150,000 annually. This amount does not take into consideration the \$1.5M in deferred maintenance identified for Cat Cove by a 2018 DCAMM Sightlines report.

While research projects associated with Cat Cove are largely funded with external grants, SSU cannot continue to subsidize the Cat Cove facility as it has in the past. As a result, the Cat Cove facility will be scheduled for

closure effective August 31, 2021. Where possible, and if desired, the research activity conducted by SSU faculty and staff, such as the offshore, longline blue mussel farm project in Gloucester, will be relocated. Details about the closure of this facility will be developed over the course of the spring 2021 semester.

Sustainability

Sustainability remains an important priority for SSU's infrastructure from both an environmental and a financial perspective. Projects that are in process include a major lighting retrofit project that will generate significant annual savings on the utility bill; and a North Campus Energy study that is expected to provide a blueprint toward a long-term action plan to reduce greenhouse emissions, save money, and provide a comfortable and more modern HVAC experience on North Campus. Future projects, including the installation of PV arrays on a renovated O'Keefe parking lot, are also under exploration and will return utility savings once complete. While several of these strategies require up-front investment, the long-term will bring benefits to both the environment and future savings.

Technology

Technology will play an important role in enabling the Vision to be realized. Faculty and staff will be supported and provided professional development opportunities to regularly enhance their skill sets, allowing them to fully take advantage of modern work methods. ITS will identify, deploy and provide training for appropriate centrally served software that supports the administrative and academic functions of the university. Additionally, the progress made in moving to a paperless environment, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, will be incorporated into our continued operations.

Marketing and Communications

As the university's brand strategists and chief storytellers, marketing and communications (MC) increases awareness of SSU through thoughtful and proactive branding, positioning and outreach tactics to highlight the transformational aspects of a Salem State education. With cross-campus partners, MC strategically engages prospective and current students, alumni and the external community. We use data-driven metrics to inform and evaluate opportunities to promote what makes SSU, or one of our programs, stand out from our competitors, making sure prospects know that Salem State University is the right choice for them. Our marketing efforts focus primarily on prospects residing 50 miles or less from campus while supporting the university's strategic plan, marketability studies, demographics, enrollment trends, and student demand and needs.

The foundation for marketing SSU is the university's website. With over 3,239,018 unique visits each year, it is the most important tool we have to tell the SSU story. The success of the website is supported by digital and social media campaigns. MC executes both organic and paid campaigns to highlight the experience, affordability and value of a Salem State education – and to drive traffic for specific programs. Traditional outreach efforts build awareness but are expensive and do not often reach the targeted audiences we seek. Although they will remain part of our mix, we must rely on effective digital methods to reach active education shoppers and identify new prospects. In addition, our public relations team works closely with media outlets to place stories not only in local papers but also in more regional and national publications and platforms.

As a regional institution, most people in Essex County have some sort of connection to SSU. We must endeavor to make sure they think positively of us—if they don't already. People are more likely to complain about an

experience, and we often struggle to get the positive news from our campus into the greater community. One challenge with this goal is that much of this positivity is spread by word-of-mouth. A step in the right direction would be for all in the campus community to share good news and positive stories about SSU within their circles and on social media. As we strive to better connect with alumni, donors and the general public, in addition to students and prospective students, we need all current students, faculty and staff to aid in this effort. These efforts and our reputation play important roles in reaching our recruitment and fundraising goals.

All of the above feed into our brand awareness and the need to present a single concept to the regional marketplace. For years, we've endeavored to push our value proposition – a high-quality education at an affordable price – but it is not enough. Building on a series of focus groups consisting of students, faculty, staff, and market testing, we plan on launching two new campaigns “No place so close can take you so far” and, especially for the undergraduate audience, “Bring it!”

As suggested by many over the years, SSU needs to do more marketing to promote the wonderful opportunities available on our campus. This requires greater investment to position SSU more strongly in the marketplace. In FY14-17, the university invested similar special initiative funds to increase advertising. During that time, we demonstrated just how successful our campaigns were in driving traffic to our website and broadening our reach beyond traditional avenues. Our experience has only grown since then – and with the potential of new program modalities to promote, the time is now to introduce new audiences to the Salem State experience.

Fundraising

Our ambitious fundraising goal for the next campaign was determined through an intensive feasibility study, which concluded that we have a considerable amount of untapped potential in our donor pool. To take advantage of this large opportunity to connect with unengaged donor prospects, we need to make investments in more front-line fundraisers who can be dedicated to this revenue generating work. In a cross-institutional analysis that compared managed prospects relative to the total constituent count, SSU ranked in the ninth percentile. In other words, most institutions have more constituents being managed by front-line fundraisers than SSU. This puts us at high-risk of missing an opportunity to capture a portion of donor wealth, as our unmanaged prospects are being contacted more frequently and in a more personalized way by other institutions.

While we have been successful in qualifying enough prospects to meet our new ambitious campaign goal, we do not have the capacity in our current workforce to reach the entirety of this population. With our current number of front-line fundraisers, the majority of identified prospects (68.4 percent as of February 2020) are not assigned to a fundraiser, and only 32 percent have had a strategic touchpoint with our fundraising activities within 18 months. See Figure 9. Investments in this area will help us succeed in the next campaign.

Figure 9

	Gifts Needed for Campaign	Prospects Required	Prospects with an SSU Rating	Additional to be Identified	In a fundraiser's portfolio	% unassigned	% w/at least 1 touchpoint in the last 18 months
\$10M - \$25 M+	1	4	9	0	7	22%	33%
\$5M - \$9.99 M	2	8	10	0	3	70%	30%
\$1M - \$4.9 M	8	32	56	0	21	63%	39%
\$500,000 - \$999,999	6	24	53	0	12	77%	34%
\$250,000 - \$499,999	16	64	159	0	46	71%	40%
\$100,000 - \$249,999	60	240	766	0	132	83%	26%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	80	320	261	59	18	93%	22%
Totals	173	692	1314	59	239	68.43%	32.10%

Advocacy

SSU has a long history of advocacy for our students and public higher education. This work occurs from many facets of our campus including the Board of Trustees, Council of State University Presidents, university leadership, Center for Civic Engagement, students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Together we have had much success. We’ve achieved university status for the state university system, increased Pell funding, and advocated for level state appropriations, including during a public health crisis. While these successes benefit our institution, government funding of public higher education has taken significant cuts over time from which it has never recovered. We will continue our advocacy work moving forward at all levels of the government and must work together as a campus community to advocate for the resources our students need to succeed.

Additional Revenue Generation Initiatives

- Summer conferencing
- Comprehensive fundraising campaign

Additional Cost Saving Initiatives

- Mail processing center (as part of the new remote work paradigm)
- Automated workflows (consistency and efficiencies in service through technology)
- Sustainable environmental practices
- Re-examine use of space on campus including university leases
- Evaluate university cell phone policy
- Review of existing consultant contracts and policy development for future consultants
- Collaborations with area institutions for cost sharing and shared resources (i.e. facilities, technology, staffing)

Financial Impacts

To be sustainable financially, the university must match revenues and expenses, fixing the structural budget imbalance. The prudent management of the university's FY21 budget, flat state appropriations for FY21, and the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) funding provided much-needed financial relief to SSU and other institutions who are severely impacted financially by the pandemic. The combination of these items as well as savings from the furlough program provides approximately \$15 million to offset the significant deficits anticipated for the next two years. We must invest now for our future.

We will use this time to work to grow revenues through enrollment, retention, housing, dining, and conferences while reducing expenses through a variety of methods but primarily through reduction in faculty and staff. With the recent agreement with our unions, as noted earlier, SSU is providing a generous number of incentive payment slots for early retirements and separations. Together with over \$3.5 million in investments to grow revenues, the university requests cooperation from all of its faculty and staff to help maximize enrollment and related revenue in order to diminish, and preferably to eliminate, the need to reduce faculty and staff through retrenchment.

The investments the university will make to help grow revenues, totaling more than \$3.5 million, include:

- Holding FY22 tuition and fees flat
- Adding up to seven faculty positions in programs with growth potential
- Adding staff in revenue generating areas, including admissions, marketing and communications, and institutional advancement
- Increasing the marketing budget
- Preparing to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) through the Moon Shot for Equity

Savings included in the financial forecast are included in Figure 10.

Figure 10 – Financial Forecast Savings (in thousands)

Description	FY22 Forecast	FY23 Forecast	FY24 Forecast
PEC STRATEGIES			
Faculty/staff reduction*	\$0	\$0	TBD
Adjunct reduction/APR elimination	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,500
ERIP**	\$3,541	\$3,541	\$3,541
Facilities strategies	\$100	\$382	\$784
Affiliates (SSUF/SSUAC)	\$150	\$202	\$254
Other	\$127	\$377	\$452
Total Savings	\$4,168	\$5,002	TBD

*Non-ERIP retirement, attrition, retrenchment

**Assumes net 25 retirements/attrition (ERIP)

The financial forecasts seen in Figure 11 include the investments and savings discussed previously and make use of the state and federal pandemic relief funding provided in FY21. Note that the savings enumerated in Figure 10 are summarized near the bottom of the below table to demonstrate the financial future the university could potentially be facing. The positive managed net income figure for FY21 assumes that all of the \$7.5 million institutional share of the federal CRRSAA grant funds may properly be used by the university to offset revenue losses and incurred expenses due to the pandemic in a budget-relieving way. The university (and the industry) is awaiting important clarifying guidance from the US Department of Education. For simplicity, these funds are shown as FY21 although some of it may be received during FY22.

Figure 11 – Multi-Year Financial Projections

Description (\$000's)	FY2021 Budget	FY2021 Forecast 1.13	FY2022 Forecast 1.13	FY2023 Forecast 1.13	FY2024 Forecast 1.13
Results (in \$000's)					
Managed Revenue:					
Net Tuition and Fees	47,388	51,328	47,548	45,643	TBD
Federal, State, Private Grants	18,996	28,957	17,496	17,496	TBD
Auxiliary Enterprises	16,478	11,650	17,157	18,747	18,867
State General Appropriations	58,576	67,434	67,860	68,504	69,181
Other Revenue	3,308	2,772	3,772	3,772	3,772
Total Managed Revenue	144,746	162,140	153,832	154,161	TBD
Managed Expenses:					
Compensation	101,537	106,464	113,675	115,379	TBD
Support	26,571	27,325	28,055	27,396	27,851
Facility Related	16,638	13,200	20,733	23,486	22,992
Total Managed Expenses	144,746	146,990	162,463	166,261	TBD
Managed Net Income	0	15,151	(8,630)	(12,100)	TBD
Savings Not Reflected in Above			4,418	5,002	TBD
<i>FY21 Rollover Adjustment (FY21 Surplus)</i>			4,213	6,598	TBD
Adjusted Bottom Line			\$0	\$0	TBD
<i>Unused Rollover</i>			10,938	4,340	TBD

Conclusion

Salem State University remains a comprehensive public institution of higher learning for the North Shore region of Massachusetts. We will continue to offer our students an engaging, thought provoking educational experience that will prepare them to contribute responsibly and creatively to our society. The Vision for a Sustainable Future sets our path forward to ensure both our students' and the university's success. The Vision, along with the NECHE report, will serve as a starting point for the university's next Strategic Plan and sets our course moving forward, knowing full well that we will need to adapt to the everchanging needs of our students and the higher education landscape. Excellence is not a destination but a continued process.

With the investments, realignments and strategies outlined in the Vision, we can evolve into a student-ready university that is prepared to educate and respond to all student needs, while attracting prospective students with our academic offerings, cohesive student supports, campus pride, and efficient operations. This will stabilize our financial future. Based on current projections, if we do not stabilize our enrollment to address our deficits, we will likely face significant involuntary personnel reductions in FY24. We can and we will rise to the challenge collectively to avoid this fate.

The road ahead will not be an easy one but allowing our structural deficit to continue would not be responsible fiscal stewardship of the institution upon which our students and the region rely. This is a necessary path we must take to better ourselves for our students, the greater community, and the workforce of our region. SSU is among institutions nationwide making difficult decisions in a complex and changing higher education climate, but our shared passion for our students will enable us to overcome any challenge we encounter. Our dedication to their success combined with our perseverance are our greatest strengths as a university and set us apart from other institutions.

We can and will get through this together by continuing our work to provide excellent academic programs and experiences that will help our students grow, achieve social mobility, and find personal fulfillment. The commitment of our entire campus community to this Vision will ensure the success of our students for generations to come.



Appendix A : Contributors to the Vision for a Sustainable Future

John D. Keenan, President

Sean Bennett, Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion

Chunju Chen, Executive Director for Strategic Planning and Decision Support

Rita Colucci, Vice President and General Counsel

Corey Cronin, Assistant Vice President, Marketing and Communications

Cheryl Crouse, Vice President of Institutional Advancement

Adria Duijvesteijn, Senior Director of External Relations

Bonnie Galinski, Interim Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing

Karen House, Vice President for Finance and Facilities

Lynne Montague, Special Assistant to the President

Carla Panzella, Associate Vice President and Dean of Students

David J. Silva, Provost and Academic Vice President

Appendix B: A Sustainable Path Forward Task Force: Charge and Membership

The Sustainable Path Forward Task Force (SPFTF) was charged with providing the president recommendations aligned with our current strategic plan that could lead to eliminating the \$15 to \$20 million structural imbalance in our budget while maintaining student success. Recommendations were requested for three primary categories: Administration, Academic Affairs and Student Services. The SPFTF was dedicated to being as transparent about their work as possible. [The final report of the SPFTF, as submitted to the president on December 15, 2020, can be found through this link.](#)

Membership with union affiliation is listed below by subcommittee:

Co-Chairs

Monica Leisey, MSCA

Raminder Luther, NUP

Academic Affairs Subcommittee

Franklin Chilaka, APA

Ryan Fisher, MSCA

Elizabeth McKeigue, NUP

Sallyann Lopez, APA

Richie Cadet, Student Trustee

Chunju Chen, NUP

Drew Darien, MSCA

Megan Miller, APA

Joanne Carlson, MSCA

Brian Phelan, AFSCME

Mx. Christian B. Weisse, Student

Eduardo Valenzuela, NUP

Student Services Subcommittee

Lauren Hubacheck, NUP

Sam Ohannesian, APA

Stephen Maser, APA

Karen House, NUP

Frederick Plante, Student

Ben Szalewicz, NUP

Yomi, AFSCME

Jeramie Silveira, MSCA

Nicolle Wood, APA

Guorong Zhu, MSCA

Kurt von Seekamm, MSCA

Administration Subcommittee

Miranda Lam, MSCA

Ashleyne Alexis, APA

Guillermo Avila-Saavedra, MSCA

Emily O'Brien, APA

Ken Ardon, MSCA

Barbara Layne, NUP

Curt King, NUP

Stephen Little, AFSCME

Kate Jordan, Student

Mark Quigley, NUP

Nicole Harris, NUP

Jon Amari, APA



Appendix C: SSU BOLD: A Campus Unification and Modernization Project



SSU BOLD

A Campus Unification and Modernization Project

Salem State University

Letter from the President



John D. Keenan

Salem State University's (SSU's) history reflects the growth of its impact and its vital role in the Commonwealth and the local community. From its beginnings as a normal school to the large, diverse and comprehensive academic institution it is today, the university has remained true to the value of its founders, "education as the great equalizer." We are proud to be part of a public higher education system that places equity at the top of its agenda, with the goal to significantly raise the enrollment, attainment and long-term success outcomes among underrepresented student populations. SSU is poised to meet these goals and continually seeks a forward path, adapting to society's changing needs while ensuring the intellectual and economic well-being of the North Shore region of Massachusetts and beyond.

This is a momentous time in our 165-year history. While we face many challenges with a physical plant comprised of several facilities that are severely outdated or have outlived their purposes, we have prepared ourselves for this day by relocating portions of our South Campus programming and working with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance and the city of Salem to prepare the site for sale. We are also prepared to repurpose a vacant building on North Campus, our academic hub, that became available with the city's decision to move the Horace Mann Laboratory School off campus. The course for moving forward with our master vision is clearly charted ahead through SSU BOLD: A Campus Unification and Modernization Project (BOLD).

BOLD notably addresses the major capital needs of the university but also provides incredible, universal impact on our academic programs and the student experience as a whole. It right sizes our physical footprint and brings our campus community closer together, literally and figuratively. BOLD significantly improves our STEM and healthcare offerings by

providing students with the opportunity to study in modernized wet labs, simulation labs, computer labs and classrooms that will align their academic experiences with the current and future expectations of the workforce across our region and the Commonwealth. It also eliminates a sizable amount of deferred maintenance for our campus, allowing the university to focus its resources more effectively and efficiently than ever before.

The construction of new labs and the consolidation of our campus footprint will enable SSU to maximize undergraduate recruitment, retention, and completion in our high-demand science and healthcare programs, addressing the major needs identified for the North Shore's future workforce. Our existing labs are not only cramped and beyond repair, but they limit capacity and opportunities for research and the hands-on experiences our students deserve and need to be best qualified for the workforce. BOLD improves student access, equity, and success across academic programs through increased availability of labs for general education and support courses as well as increased opportunities for cross departmental collaboration.

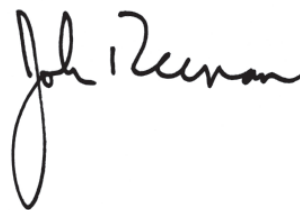
If we are to be responsible stewards of this great institution founded on the principle of education for all, we must invest in BOLD. With Massachusetts known for its top notch education, we must ensure that every student in this region is afforded the opportunity to improve their social mobility, to find their passion, and to achieve their fullest potential professionally and personally in educational facilities that will place them on an equal playing field after graduation as compared to their counterparts throughout the state.

Our Board of Trustees has fully committed their support to BOLD through what I believe is the most important vote they will take in their tenure, and perhaps in mine as well. The vote to use university funds at this level for BOLD is unprecedented in the history of capital projects for the Massachusetts State University System, but a necessary one for the project to succeed. This vote demonstrates that we at Salem State University know this is the right course of action for our students and our region.

I am extraordinarily excited about the opportunities that BOLD presents to Salem State University and am confident there is no other project on our campus or in the Massachusetts Public Higher Education System that is more comprehensive or transformative than this one. The Department of Higher Education recently reported that all investments and initiatives on our campuses need to focus on the goal of growing degree attainment with equity. BOLD does just that and will position us well to serve the region and the state for years to come.

There is indeed a brighter day ahead for Salem State University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John D. Keenan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

John D. Keenan
President





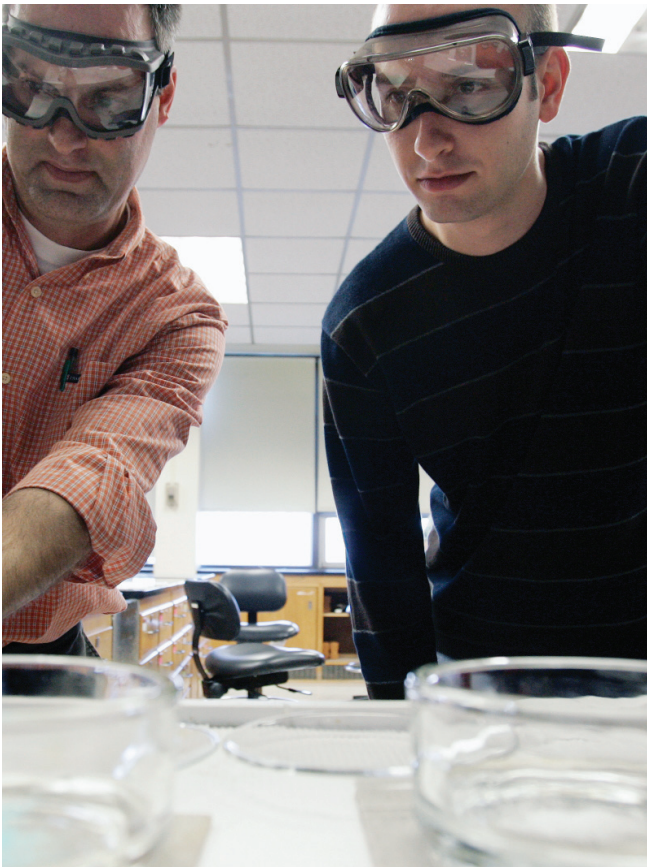
SSU BOLD

A Campus Unification and Modernization Project

SSU BOLD: A Campus Unification and Modernization Project (BOLD) addresses the major capital needs of the university identified in the Campus Master Vision (Sasaki, 2013) through its consolidation of our campus footprint and the construction and renovation of lab spaces for the life science and healthcare programs. BOLD establishes a compact and efficient campus core and maximizes programmatic synergies while streamlining operations. It also provides much needed modernized lab facilities that will give our students authentic lab experiences which correspond to those they will find in graduate school and the workforce. This exciting and transformative project enhances the overall campus experience for ALL students and positions us well to serve the North Shore region and prepare its future workforce.

As the most diverse state university in our system, SSU is already supporting the Department of Higher Education's equity goals. We attract most of our student body from the diverse, gateway communities located north and west of Boston, with our top feeder cities being Lynn, Salem and Peabody. In estimates for 2019, 44 percent of our first year students were Pell-eligible, and 40 percent identified as students of color. At SSU, our students build self-esteem and critical social capital by learning and living in a diverse, inclusive community. Employers value graduates with cultural competency skills and the ability to work effectively in teams. SSU is working diligently to leverage this asset.

Despite these successes and our ability to attract and educate underserved populations in our region, the demand for majors that will prepare our students for the future workforce of the North Shore, many of which require laboratory courses, far exceeds our current facilities. SSU routinely caps high-demand programs due to limited lab space and clinical placements. Moreover, lab support and general education science courses compound the urgent need to increase lab capacity and the need to bring academic departments in closer proximity to each other, eliminating the physical distance between programs that would otherwise collaborate.



In essence, BOLD takes a multipronged approach to achieving our capital goals in a way that utilizes SSU's and the Commonwealth's resources in the most efficient way for both time and budget. It includes the sale of South Campus; the renovation of the Horace Mann Building; the construction of a Meier Hall Addition, which will house much needed, new wet labs; and the repurposing of underutilized space in the Frederick E. Berry Library and Learning Commons for instruction.

The sale of South Campus allows SSU to unify our academic programs, physically bringing our community closer together and allowing for increased multidisciplinary collaboration that will improve student experience and retention. South Campus houses most of the programs in the Maguire Meservey College of Health and Human Services (MMCHHS) in a building that requires significant upgrades, especially in the nursing and occupational therapy (OT) simulation (SIM) labs. Their South Campus location is challenging both for students and faculty because of the physical distance, approximately one mile, and travel time between campuses. These programs are further constrained by capacity as the existing SIM lab spaces cannot accommodate student demand or

clinical experiences that could be achieved in updated facilities. In addition, the student housing located on South Campus is no longer needed as there is capacity in the residence halls on North and Central Campuses. In summary, the move will reduce operational costs and eliminate a significant amount of deferred maintenance and the need for future investments in buildings that have outlived their purpose; all while supporting the bottom line of BOLD through proceeds from the sale of South Campus.

The renovation of the Horace Mann Building makes this consolidation possible. This building was vacated in June of 2017, when the Salem Public Schools' Horace Mann Laboratory School moved off campus and into a building on Willson Street. The building has sat vacant since because of the significant amount of upgrades required to open it to university use. BOLD will allow for a complete renovation of this building and the opportunity to build new SIM labs for our healthcare disciplines. By relocating South Campus programming to North Campus, BOLD brings MMCHHS to our academic hub. Housing the majority of these programs in the Horace Mann Building provides students greater flexibility in their course scheduling, as they would no longer need to account for travel time between campuses when selecting

their courses each semester. It also allows for easier interdisciplinary collaborations for faculty in areas of mutual interest, such as cybercrime, green chemistry, crime mapping, and climate resiliency. Additionally, it provides spaces for much improved nursing and OT SIM labs with greater capacity.

The Meier Hall Addition supports the consolidation by providing increased capacity in, and easier access to, modernized lab space for the life science courses required of our healthcare majors. The addition brings seven new, state-of-the-art wet labs to SSU. It provides much needed, modernized and flexible lab space for biology and chemistry that cannot be retrofitted into the existing space built in the 1960s, while keeping all courses in these programs housed within the same building. The flexible design of the labs within the addition increases capacity for our science programs and allows for multiple programmatic uses, creating greater flexibility in course scheduling, student and faculty research, and alternative delivery methods. The addition also frees up space in Meier Hall where biology and chemistry courses are currently taught, increasing capacity for courses that require less specialized spaces, all while adding capacity for general education and healthcare support courses. Repurposing underutilized space in the Berry Library

Meier Hall Lab Existing Conditions



and Learning Commons into four new flexible teaching spaces assists the project in two ways. First, it provides swing space for classes that will need to be relocated during the construction of the Meier Hall Addition. More importantly, however, it will accommodate the remaining South Campus programming, as well as other teaching and research activities, to make the full consolidation possible. Every department on campus will have access to these spaces and will benefit from having all of our academic programs within close proximity. This renovation will also present greater opportunities for faculty professional development and collaboration as the spaces will be flexible to meet those needs.

BOLD supports the growing demand for qualified, skilled workforces in the biotech, life science and healthcare industries in our region. The 2018 Northeast Labor Market Blueprint indicates that a key challenge for our region is that not enough young people are pursuing STEM degrees to keep up with job openings

and employer demand in our area. These concerns are compounded by an aging workforce in the region and an industry desire for a diverse workforce. The Blueprint identifies healthcare and social assistance as the largest and fastest growing industries in our region. Similar to the rest of the Commonwealth, the Northeast Region has seen a growth in healthcare related occupations since 2012, and projections in these areas suggest there will continue to be a demand for healthcare professionals in the years to come with a projected growth of 12 percent overall, roughly 10,770 jobs, by 2022.

The Massachusetts Biotechnology Council estimates that by 2023, there will be an additional 12,000 jobs in the biotech industry in the state. We have also heard from regional bioscience companies and membership groups that they have a hard time finding qualified employees, and many are reluctant to move to the North Shore because they are concerned they will not find the skilled workforce needed.



BOLD supports the growing demand for qualified, skilled workforces in the biotech, life science and healthcare industries in our region.



BOLD increases SSU's ability to meet these workforce challenges and provide students with academic and technical preparation that is directly comparable to the lab environments of the companies and healthcare systems where graduates are likely to work. It also provides SSU the opportunity to expand graduate level course offerings in these areas, and enables SSU to further partner with regional industries to provide employee training, certification programs, and university-provided lab services.

At SSU, we are educating the diverse biotech, life science, and healthcare workforces of the future. The percent of underrepresented students for fall 2019 in biology is 45.4 percent, chemistry is 48.8 percent, healthcare studies is 62.8 percent, nursing is 39.4 percent, and OT is 31.6 percent. Because many of our students stay on the North Shore after graduation, these students will help diversify the workforce of the region and the Commonwealth. However, our limited and outdated labs place our students at a disadvantage, because they are not able to learn in modern facilities that provide the authentic lab experiences they will find in the workforce or graduate school. Thus, the quantity and quality of current lab spaces pose challenges not only for our students but also for the future workforce of our region.

BOLD increases SSU's ability to meet these workforce challenges and provide students with academic and technical preparation that is directly comparable to the lab environments of the companies and healthcare systems where graduates are likely to work.

SSU's current science and SIM labs are insufficient to prepare today's students and place our diverse student body at a disadvantage as compared to their peers at our sister institutions which have seen significant facility upgrades in these areas. There are intangible gains to be realized from investing in new facilities that will pay dividends in maximizing undergraduate recruitment, retention, and completion; thus meeting the program demands of our students and the future workforce needs of the North Shore while providing better and equitable avenues to help underrepresented students improve their social mobility.

SSU BOLD: A Campus Unification and Modernization Project



257,000 GSF
Deferred Maintenance: \$80,465,000

- MAP KEY:
- 1. Horace Mann
 - 2. Meier Hall
 - 3. Meier Hall Addition (design and final location to be determined)
 - 4. South Campus

Master Vision

Completed in July 2013, the Salem State University (SSU) Campus Master Vision established a plan for the university's presence in the greater North Shore region—a plan rooted in its academic mission and one that advances its role in community and economic development. The Campus Master Vision builds on and extends the ideas originally communicated in the 2007 Campus Master Plan. Significant deferred maintenance and an urgent need for modernized lab facilities have been consistently documented issues in each of the planning studies and were verified in a recent Readiness Study completed in 2019.

These studies, combined with the unprecedented opportunity of a vacant building on our academic hub, led to SSU BOLD: A Campus Unification and Modernization Project (BOLD). The four key principles that governed the 2013 plan remain intact through BOLD: flexibility, connectivity, identity and community. These principles reflect the university's aspirations to establish a compact and efficient campus core that maximizes programmatic synergies and consolidates SSU's footprint within its Central and North Campuses.

Since completion of the 2007 and 2013 planning efforts, SSU has successfully completed numerous projects to improve both the academic and student experience while addressing deferred maintenance issues within aging buildings and infrastructure. Some of these projects were completed in partnership with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), including full state funding for the Frederick E. Berry Library and Learning Commons and partial state funding (roughly 27.5 percent) for the Sophia Gordon Center for Creative and Performing Arts renovation. Other projects were completed in collaboration with the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA), which issued bonds that are repaid by student fees, including the Harold E. and Marilyn J. Gassett Fitness Center, Viking and Marsh Residence Halls, and the North Campus Parking Garage.

SSU has also funded various leases and fit-outs to accommodate administrative and academic needs with operating funds. All of these projects

demonstrate a strong commitment to implementing the Campus Master Vision and exhibit the university's willingness to contribute its own funds toward making the vision a reality. The SSU Board of Trustees strengthened this commitment with a vote in favor of supporting SSU BOLD through a combination of university cash and debt.

BOLD is the highest priority project for the university and closely aligns with our academic plan and the needs of the Commonwealth's workforce. The current science facilities in Meier Hall limit our ability to meet the demand of STEM courses both for science majors and for our healthcare disciplines as well as general education requirements. The 2013 Campus Master Vision plan documents the hyper-utilization of Meier Hall labs, both from a seat fill rate (often 100 percent) and room use rate (52 - 100 percent), well in excess of DCAMM's space standards.

BOLD is not only a high priority in terms of academic need but is also the highest priority deferred maintenance project for SSU, and perhaps for any other institution in the State University System. The sale of South Campus eliminates a total of 257,000 gross square feet (GSF) and \$80,465,000 in deferred maintenance; and 139,240 GSF and \$43,745,000 in deferred maintenance for academic spaces alone. The divestment of South Campus represents a significant opportunity for SSU and the Commonwealth. Investing in deferred maintenance in this property would only keep it operational in its current capacity and would not account for renovations that would bring a former parochial elementary school to an expanded, modern healthcare laboratory building. The isolation of this area also complicates class scheduling, transportation and parking. Rather than invest money to maintain inadequate space, the university would like the Commonwealth to divest from this campus and invest in BOLD.

BOLD purposely meets our current academic demands and industry standards, as recommended by DCAMM studies in 2007, 2013, 2015 and 2019 and Sightlines 2017.



Meeting the Needs of Our Region’s Workforce

BOLD’s programmatic focus on the life and physical sciences aligns with the high-skilled workforce needs of the North Shore region. The 2018 Northeast Labor Market Blueprint states that healthcare is facing significant workforce development challenges. Additionally, the North Shore is seeing an increase in the workforce needs of the life science industry, which includes lab technicians, lab technologists and biological technicians.

The following are estimates of SSU alumni who are already employed in the biotech, life science and healthcare industries overall and those in the Boston area specifically:

INDUSTRY	TOTAL ALUMNI	TOTAL ALUMNI BOSTON AREA
Biotechnology	561	505
Chemicals	114	98
Hospital and Health Care	3,934	3,293
Medical Devices	298	252
Medical Practices	408	335
Pharmaceuticals	380	305
TOTAL	5,695	4,788

With 20.5 percent of the 200 largest employers in Essex County as part of the healthcare and social assistance industry, long term occupational projections for the North Shore see significant increases to 2026 for nurse practitioners (28.6 percent), occupational therapists (16.7 percent), and registered nurses (15 percent). Additionally, the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council estimates that by 2023, there will be an additional 12,000 jobs in the biotech industry in Massachusetts. At SSU we are educating a diverse, future STEM workforce for the region as many of our students stay on the North Shore after graduation.

The following are the top 25 biotech, life science and healthcare companies that employ our alumni:

COMPANY	ALUMNI EMPLOYEES
Massachusetts General Hospital	263
North Shore Medical Center/Partners Healthcare*	250
Lahey Hospital and Medical Center	200
Brigham and Women's Hospital	142
Partners HealthCare (*may include NSMC)	140
Boston Children's Hospital	102
Lahey Health Behavioral Services	100
Beverly Hospital	94
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center	74
Boston Medical Center	70
Winchester Hospital	64
Lahey Health	50
CVS Health	49
Hallmark Health System	42
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute	39
Sanofi Genzyme	37
Philips	28
Takeda Pharmaceuticals (includes former Shire)	28
Cell Signaling Technology	26
Pfizer	21
Millipore Sigma	20
Biogen	18
Thermo Fisher Scientific	12
Abiomed	11
New England Biolabs	10

Science Spotlights

Alumni Spotlight

Jake Cotter '12 and Dakota Hamill '12

Jake Cotter '12 and Dakota Hamill '12 met while taking chemistry courses at Salem State University. In 2015, these alumni established Prospective Research Inc., a Beverly-based startup company that develops novel disease management solutions for the aquaculture industry. Cotter and Hamill are working on creating feed incorporated preventative disease management solutions for the industry that completely remove the need for antibiotics and medicated feed in fish.

Cotter said, "We looked at aquaculture because disease is the biggest problem in the industry, and it is extremely regulated, meaning you can't use antibiotics in farm raised fish. We figure out the chemical language to speak to bacteria to get them to turn on genes."

Cotter and Hamill often receive lab support from local college students, and since the company's inception, these alumni have mentored many Salem State students. Hamill and Cotter hire interns from their alma mater so that Salem State students gain access to modern lab resources and equipment that are not available in the Meier Hall labs from the 1960s.

"SSU students by no means lack the curiosity, drive and grit to become highly valuable contributors and leaders in the industry, but unfortunately what they do lack is an ecosystem of quality labs and industry-relevant equipment on campus that reflect how the majority of the biotech world operates," Cotter stated.

Cotter and Hamill hope to continue offering Salem State students internships as their company changes, grows and improves overtime. They see great potential for increased partnership with the university if the lab facilities matched the quality of the programming, faculty and students.

"Prospective Research has several research projects currently under development that we would love to collaborate with both SSU's biology and chemistry departments on," said Cotter. "There is no doubt in my mind that newer, state-of-the-art facilities will not only increase our ability to collaborate with and hire SSU students, but will span throughout the Commonwealth. The fact that people are graduating in the sciences from SSU, so close to Boston, a bio hub, and have to deal with such outdated equipment is just not right."

Jake Cotter '12 and Dakota Hamill '12





Keena Nicolas '20

Student Spotlight: Keena Nicholas '20

Recognizing the need to create a pipeline for the life science and biotech workforce and the importance of providing opportunities in these industries to a diverse population, the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council partnered with the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center to create Project Onramp. This internship program matches talented, first-generation students and students from low-income backgrounds with well-paid summer internships in the life science industry.

Keena Nicholas '20, an SSU chemistry major, was part of the inaugural class of interns in the summer of 2019. She recently completed a paid internship at Biogen, the Cambridge-based, multinational biotech company.

"I have eight siblings, a big family. I'm fun, energetic, and eager to learn and ready to graduate. Oh, and I love chemistry," Nicholas said.

Project Onramp helps high-achieving, passionate students like Nicholas start their careers in the life sciences by bridging the opportunity gap for promising students who may not have traditionally had access to these companies or internships.

"Project Onramp helped me decide that chemistry is my thing," Nicholas stated. "When I went to my internship at Biogen, I never thought it was a job. I was excited to go there every day. I fit in and just enjoyed my experience in the lab."

After graduating in December 2020, Nicholas plans to pursue a career in the life science industry and a doctorate degree in either forensic chemistry or organic chemistry.

Institutional Profile

About Salem State University

Located just 15 miles north of Boston, Salem State University (SSU) is one of the largest and most diverse state universities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is an important partner in the economic, cultural and intellectual vitality of the greater north-of-Boston region. Situated in the historic seacoast city of Salem, Massachusetts on more than 115 acres and five campuses, Salem State provides a diverse community of over 7,500 undergraduate and graduate students, a high quality, student-centered education; one that prepares them to contribute responsibly and creatively to a global society and to serve as a resource to advance the region's cultural, social and economic development.

The university offers 32 undergraduate degree programs in the liberal arts and sciences, health and human services, education, and business, along with graduate programs that offer degrees in 24 fields such as education, science, humanities, business, criminal justice, and nursing, among others. The university also has a continuing education division that offers both credit and non-credit programs.

SSU is known for the academic strength of its faculty who represent a wide variety of academic institutions including the most prestigious in the country and the world. The university was named a Top Producer of U.S. Fulbright Scholars in 2011 and for the 2016-2017 academic year. Faculty hold a deep commitment to teaching and learning and pride themselves on

connecting with students at an individual level. Student learning opportunities are personal and collaborative, yet large enough to broaden students' understanding of their world.

The university's students hail from 38 states and 57 countries. The university is proud that an estimated 40 percent of its 2019 freshman class self-identified as being students of color. Salem State has over 65 student groups and clubs, 15 varsity teams along with intramural sports, and hundreds of student activities scheduled throughout the year. The university has a nationally award-winning residence life program. One-third of the undergraduate degree-seeking population, including two-thirds of the freshman class, lives on campus.

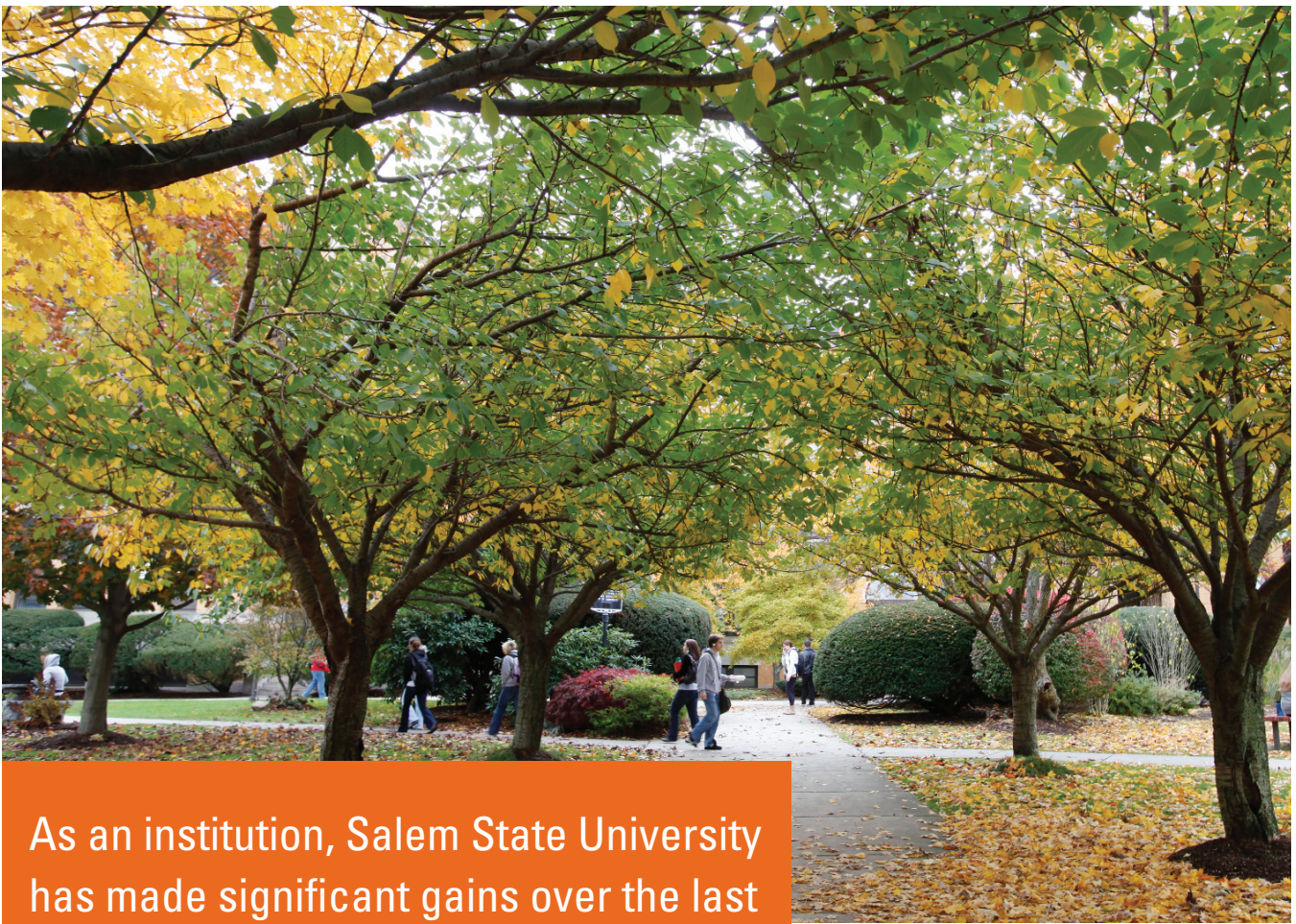
SSU leads the State University System in enrollment for biological and biomedical sciences; physical sciences; and health professions and related programs, which are major regional workforce drivers. For 15 years, SSU enrolled 26.5 percent of all courses in these areas, a proportion that exceeds all state universities in our system. As noted earlier, SSU is educating the future diverse STEM workforce with significant percentages of our underrepresented students enrolling in life science and healthcare courses. Because many of our students stay on the North Shore after graduation, these students will help diversify the workforce of the region and the Commonwealth.





SSU leads the State University System in enrollment for biological and biomedical sciences; physical sciences; and health professions and related programs, which are major regional workforce drivers.





As an institution, Salem State University has made significant gains over the last decade and is poised to continue that trend through strategic investment in its people, its facilities, and the broader North Shore community.



Points of Pride

The Comprehensive University of the North Shore—SSU is the largest institution of higher education on the North Shore and the only four-year, public university in the region. The vast majority of our students come from Massachusetts with almost 70 percent coming from within a 20 mile radius. As a public good, SSU aligns our programs with the workforce needs of the state, understanding that our graduates will need to be prepared to adapt to future industry needs. SSU is a major contributor to the region's economy; contributing in the number of people we attract to the North Shore to live, learn and work, and by supporting the region's workforce, across all industries, with our talented alumni.

Diverse Community—SSU is the most diverse public state university in the Commonwealth with an estimate of 40 percent of first-year students in 2019 identifying as students of color and about one third identifying as first-generation college students. Over the last 10 years, SSU enrolled 21,192 students of color, the largest percentage of all students of color enrolled in the State University System (22 percent); and enrolled the largest percentage of Latinx students in the system (24.5 percent). We also lead our system in the percentage of underrepresented students enrolled in the biological, biomedical, and physical sciences and healthcare related programs with 34 percent of all students in the system pursuing these programs at SSU. We have successfully increased diversity and sustained the bar for entry, while still significantly increasing completion rates and reducing achievement gaps. Known for its culture of inclusion, SSU aligns our core mission with the equity focus of the Department of Higher Education.

Student Success—SSU has worked diligently to improve student progression, and our six-year graduation rate has risen a record 21 percentage points over the last 11 years, placing us among the top seven percent of four-year institutions nationwide for graduation rate increases. Much of this success is due to the hard work of faculty, staff, and most of all, students, along with community engagement around equity and inclusion, as well as student support programming. SSU has closed the achievement gap of our African American students who have graduated 4.97 percent and 2.6 percent higher than their White peers during the last two years. There has also been

a significant increase in the six-year graduation rate for African American students over the past decade with the most recent data showing a rate of 63.2 percent. Our one-year retention rate for these students continues to rise and recently hit 84.4 percent, which is higher than the institutional average. For our Latinx students, the most recent data shows that the six-year graduation rate has also risen significantly over the past decade to 52.8 percent.

Fulbright Scholars—In the past two decades, SSU has had 20 Fulbright Scholars and four Fulbright Specialists. Three of our students have also received this distinction. Our faculty, staff, and students have been awarded Fulbright grants to research and teach in places like India, Chile, Liberia, Finland, United Kingdom, Jordan, Mexico, Greece, India, Egypt, Vietnam, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Korea, Russia, Italy, and Nicaragua. The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to build lasting connections between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Participating governments and host institutions, corporations, and foundations around the world also provide direct and indirect support to the program, which operates in over 160 countries worldwide.

Civic Engagement—Embedded in the very fabric, culture, and history of SSU is civic engagement. Our Center for Civic Engagement is responsible for developing and supporting programs that connect SSU students, faculty, staff and alumni to the greater community and providing students with experiences that will help them become productive and engaged citizens of the world. To accomplish this, the Center focuses on four main areas: advocacy, civic learning, community, and political engagement; the results of which can be seen through micro and macro-level social change. In 2019, Salem State was named to Washington Monthly's "2019 Best Colleges for Student Voting." Amid national reports of an increase in college student voting, SSU's mid-term election student voter rate in 2018 reached 47 percent, exceeding the 39 percent national average, nearly doubling since the last mid-term cycle in 2014, and earning the university a gold seal from the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge.



352 Lafayette Street

Salem, MA 01970

salemstate.edu