

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**February 24, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Zahlaway-Belsito, Butts, Cadet, Chisholm, Contreras, DeSimone, Katzman, Mattera, Murphy, Russell and Lutts. Also present and participating at the meeting were President Keenan and Board Secretary Montague.

**ABSENT:** None

In accordance with the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 30A and amended by Executive Order issued March 13, 2020, suspending parts of the Open Meeting Law to allow public remote participation and participation by the public body remotely, The Board of Trustees met on February 24, 2021. All votes were taken by roll call.

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**I. CALL TO ORDER** - Chair Lutts called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

*Call to Order*

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**II. CONSENT AGENDA** – The first matter of business was the Consent Agenda. Chair Lutts reviewed the list of meeting minutes for approval on the board’s consent agenda. Hearing no discussion, a motion was offered by Trustee Murphy and seconded by Trustee Chisolm, and upon a roll call vote, it was unanimously,

*Consent  
Agenda  
Approval*

**VOTED: To approve the Consent Agenda of February 24, 2021 (CA-20-03)**

Voting in the affirmative: Zahlaway Belsito, Butts, Cadet, Chisholm,  
Contreras, DeSimone, Katzman, Mattera,  
Murphy, Russell and Lutts (chair)

Voting in the negative: None

Absent: None

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**III. STUDENT FOCUS** – The next item was the Student Focus segment. Chair Lutts introduced Student Government Association (SGA) President Meghan DeVea. DeVea is a junior in the school of business and studying international studies as well. She plans to attend law school. In addition to her studies, DeVea works as an RA in the dorms. Chair Lutts noted that

*Student Focus*

in his experience, the person at the front desk is the one who really know what is going on so he appreciated that President DeVeau would join the board to share student concerns.

President DeVeau thanked Chair Lutts for the invitation to speak on behalf of the students. DeVeau shared that as the president of the SGA, she does see and hear a lot with regard to student experiences and that she had compiled some of that information.

DeVeau noted that it was obvious that students are experiencing very high financial burdens which is very common. She thanked the board for not raising tuition and fees for next year to ensure, at the very least that students won't have to worry about paying more than they are already paying.

President DeVeau shared that with COVID there are many issues impacting the community and that the RAs are doing their best with the dorms and that the student organizations are also extending themselves with programming to keep the community feeling on campus. DeVeau stated that as a member of two executive board groups, she is trying her hardest to make people want to sit through an extra hour of Zoom, which is difficult because Zoom fatigue is real. There is a lack of community feeling and some students miss socializing and going to the dining hall to connect with friends. There is also the realization that it must be difficult to teach online and then there are some students who are concerned that being online makes it difficult to make a connection with faculty. An additional concern is that some students feel like the amount of classwork has increased and some class grades can be based on what was discussed in class and whether a student can show they retained the material. DeVeau said that there are some professors who are trying to teach remote classes the same way they would in person. Sometimes this is successful and it feels like the students never left the classroom. Other times it does not work and leaves the students feeling very distant from the professor and classmates. Lastly, there is an issue with students feeling as if they must appear on Zoom or camera at all times. Professors try to be equitable but if some students may be at home with younger siblings in the background with parents at work. It may also be that students have to take classes while at work. It is a sad reality.

President DeVeau said she appreciated that several of the issues mentioned may not be resolved immediately; however, Chair Lutts asked to hear some of the issues that concern students and she hoped that this information – a lot of it COVID related - was helpful. She thanked Chair Lutts and the Board of Trustees.

Chair Lutts thanked SGA President DeVeau for taking the time and sharing her perspective with the board. Lutts said that hearing students' concerns is helpful to board as it makes decisions and moves forward with its business. Chair Lutts stated that the board looked forward to meeting with the SGA at its future meeting.

#### **IV. BOARD ACTION:**

**FY22 Graduate School University Fees** – Trustee Katzman introduced the Graduate School fee motion which would be discussed by Vice President and CFO House and then presented by Trustee Russell. VP House appreciated the opportunity to discuss the motion to freeze graduate fees for next year for FY 22. This is the same action that we took with regard to the undergraduate rates. We will keep the rates flat the same as FY21 for the graduate students, and they are enumerated in the attachment motion.

*Board Action:  
Approval of  
Graduate Fees  
FY22*

Then with no further discussion, Trustee Russell read the administration’s recommended motion, hearing no objections or modifications, the motion was seconded by Trustee Murphy and upon a roll call vote it was unanimously,

**VOTED: The Board of Trustees of Salem State University hereby approves the rates for graduate tuition and /or fees for the category of students as shown on Exhibit 1. The rates shall be effective for the fall term of the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year and Summer 2022. These fees are the same as for the 2020 – 21 (FY2021) year. (FF-20-03)**

Voting in the affirmative:	Zahlaway Belsito, Butts, Cadet, Chisholm, Contreras, DeSimone, Katzman, Mattera, Murphy, Russell and Lutts (chair)
Voting in the negative:	None
Absent:	None

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**V. PRESIDENT’S REPORT:**

President Keenan began his report by acknowledging that it had been a full year since the university began addressing the COVID-19 pandemic as a campus. He thanked the campus community for its flexibility, patience, and resilience. Unlike many colleges, SSU has kept cases relatively low on campus. This is truly a community effort to be proud of. Sadly, many on campus have been directly affected by the pandemic – or know someone who has been. However, there is tremendous hope for the future brought by COVID-19 vaccines, and SSU is excited to play a role in the regional distribution of the vaccine. None of us know exactly what higher ed will look like post-COVID, but we do know that it won’t be the same.

*President’s Report*

Higher education was facing a systemic reckoning long before the pandemic arrived. COVID-19 is only accelerating the pace of change. The number of new high school graduates in New England is expected to continue shrinking; and institutions face concerns over cost, increased competition, and more online alternatives. Since 2016, at least 17 New England colleges have shut down or merged. Salem State will not be among them, but we must adapt.

At Salem State, our student body has declined by 3,000 students over the past 10 years. Personnel declines have not kept pace – and compensation makes up 70 percent of our budget. This has created a structural deficit that is unsustainable in the long term.

Late last year, President Keenan named a Sustainable Path Forward Taskforce (SPFTF) that included 34 faculty, staff, administrators, and students, and asked them to make suggestions for closing this structural deficit and to identify areas for growth. He thanked the SPFTF for their time and thanked everyone on campus who provided data and recommendations through their process.

After receiving these suggestions in December, President Keenan worked with his senior leadership team to analyze and build on what was put forward. From that, the administration created the Vision for a Sustainable Future that was shared with campus earlier today.

In many ways, this crossroads in higher education has created an opportunity for us -- to look at every aspect of our campus and ask ourselves if it aligns with the needs of our students -- and to truly position ourselves to be student-centered now and in the future.

We must realign our student services, resources, and academic offerings to meet student needs and demands. Doing this successfully benefits our students and will also help stabilize enrollment by increasing retention and recruiting more students.

In our efforts to be student centered and student ready, the Vision introduces the intention to create the Viking Success Collaborative. Its purpose is to remove barriers that have historically stood in the way of student success -- creating a more seamless experience for all. Student support must be cohesive and consistent from application to graduation. The collaborative will function as a network of student resources that includes academic affairs, admissions, advising, enrollment management, inclusive excellence, and student life. It will use data and technology to inform our decisions and be proactive.

President Keenan has asked Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion Sean Bennett to oversee this new student success initiative. Vice President Bennett not only has experience in this area, but he will bring an equity lens that is essential to this work. To serve our students well, we must be focused on closing opportunity gaps on this campus.

We plan to take part in the Moon Shot for Equity, an initiative and collaboration with educational consulting firm EAB, who you may be aware also provided us with the Navigate tool. It aims to erase equity gaps in higher education by 2030 through uniting people, process and technology to better serve our students. Aligning with the Moon Shot for Equity's best practices will help us remove systemic barriers for students as outlined in the Viking Success Collaborative.

It will also work in tandem with our efforts in preparing to become a Hispanic Serving Institution. The demographic trends in our region indicate that we will be serving a growing Latinx student population in the years ahead. It is highly likely we will hit the twenty-five percent threshold by 2025.

We must work together as a campus community to ensure we are prepared to serve these students well. This will require investments that will not only make their time on our campus more successful -- but will also benefit our entire student body. Putting students first also means investing in academic areas with high student demand and growth potential. Taking cues from our students is part of what it means to be a student-centered university, and we will be adding faculty positions in some of our high demand programs that currently have need.

We would be doing our students a disservice if we did not pay close attention to the data on where they are choosing to major. Since 2015, sixty percent of our graduates have been in the five academic areas of business, education, nursing, psychology, and social work. As we prepare to be a Hispanic Serving Institution, it is also important to note that eighty percent of our Latinx students are enrolled in our top ten highest demand programs.

While most of our students are concentrated in five majors, there are nine academic programs that account for only five percent of degrees awarded. We will work with faculty, department chairs, and deans to explore opportunities to enhance these departments. This could include combining majors to create new programs designed to increase student interest. Of course, any such program changes must be done through the university's shared governance process and will take time to implement.

President Keenan noted that current and incoming students will be able to complete their degree in their chosen major. The president also emphasized our continued commitment to the liberal arts. As a comprehensive public university, we will always offer liberal arts programs. The president also appreciates the value these courses bring to our general education curriculum as we seek to educate the whole student.

President Keenan is confident that we can maintain our commitment to the liberal arts while also ensuring that the areas with the highest student demand are receiving the resources they need. In addition to investing in faculty, we plan to add staff in the revenue generating areas of admissions, marketing, and institutional advancement.

A large part of this goal is to stabilize our enrollment, and of course, support our fundraising efforts. We have recently seen the impact these efforts have with the historic \$6 million gift from Alumna Kim Gassett-Schiller and her husband, Philip Schiller. Appreciating our students' needs, their gift will help 50-75 undergraduate students every year overcome their last financial hurdle before graduation, among other things. Gifts like these are truly transformative for our students. This work reaffirms our commitment to better support our Black, Indigenous and People of Color student populations. These completion grants are also among the Moon Shot for Equity's best practices to be implemented.

President Keenan and his team looked at how to ensure Salem State's long-term strength, they did have to consider whether involuntary personnel reductions were necessary. President Keenan said that he was pleased to announce that due to a number of factors we have decided NOT to have retrenchments at this time. Frankly, there are far too many significant unknowns right now.

We have yet to see whether there will be another federal stimulus; how much we will save through our latest voluntary retirement and separation program. The impact of COVID-19 vaccinations on our enrollment and housing occupancy; and whether we'll receive state funding for SSU BOLD. In short, COVID-19 has created a number of factors that have yet to be quantified; and such a drastic action should not be made unless we are certain it's the only option available. This is especially important given the human cost this would bring to our colleagues on campus.

Although we are not planning any retrenchments for academic year 2022, we can't rule it out in the years ahead. Our multi-million-dollar structural deficit remains, and it must be addressed. Ideally, our surplus from this year (including campus-wide furloughs) provides a buffer to make investments now without retrenchments.

President Keenan's hope is that we can work together to stabilize our enrollment in order to avoid retrenchments in the future. That is what the Vision for a Sustainable Future is designed to achieve by aligning our resources with our students' needs and interests. This will take teamwork and collaboration across campus -- and a mindset that enrollment and retention are everyone's job. We must come together around the shared goal of serving our students. We are kicking off a community input process that will seek feedback from our entire campus on this Vision, including open forums with students, faculty and staff in the coming weeks, as well as other opportunities to share input. We have also created a web page for this Vision. I hope that you will visit [salemstate.edu/forward/slash/vision](http://salemstate.edu/forward/slash/vision) and direct people there for details.

President Keenan stated that his job is to ensure our students are able to achieve the brighter future they envision when they arrive on campus and to position us for strength long after my tenure.

As the North Shore's public comprehensive university, we must ensure we are here for students for generations to come. Higher education is indeed changing, but it remains the best investment toward increased economic opportunity and personal fulfillment.

Education is the great equalizer. The decade ahead promises enrollment challenges perhaps unprecedented in the history of higher ed. Working together -- as we have to overcome this pandemic -- we can also succeed in the face of this challenge. We must seize the moment to ensure we are providing the best opportunities possible for our students, now and in the future.

## **VI. CHAIR'S REPORT:**

Chair Lutts then gave a brief report. He stated that many who know him may be aware that he is in the business of investing and in that role he has been studying companies and organizations for over thirty-eight years. His job is to find successful growing companies to allow my clients funds to grow. What he has learned in this work, is those organizations that are focused on the customers' needs and wants usually adapt their services or products to satisfy customers. These are the companies and organizations that thrive and grow in their work. He noted that organizations that are successful over the years have similar qualities including 1. They pay attention to customers and clients – they often survey and quiz them....they find out what they want and give it to them 2.They are willing to change and adapt to new circumstances.3. They are able to overcome obstacles to change – they simply find a way to change.

Chair Lutts said that the Salem State University community too must be willing to change and adapt – those that do not adapt will be replaced by others that do. We must find ways to work together and to adapt and be responsive to our students. We are in existence to serve and meet the needs of approximately 7000 students. Being student-centered must be our top priority. If we do this properly... we succeed and grow – if we do not then we struggle and do not grow. This is where we are today – we are not connecting with our target students. For many reasons they have been leaving us over the past decade. We must change to reverse this recent trend we need to offer more of the programs that students and employers want. We must grow our programs where expanding demand is in our region.

He urged all of those in the Salem State University Community to do everything in their power to help the university adapt and be relevant to students. Help us make the right changes so we can connect properly with students and once again be in apposition to grow and prosper.

Chair Lutts ended his comments and introduced the next segment which was the Open Forum. He then introduced Vice Chair Butts to moderate the segment.

## **VII. OPEN FORUM:**

**Topics from the SSU Community** - Vice Chair Butts noted that there were over two hundred individuals participating on today's meeting and that the board had only received three questions or topics. She hoped that if there were concerns that the board would hear suggestions from the community. Vice Chair Butts explained that the board would take the first portion of the segment to discuss the questions received, and then have live discussion from individuals who had raised their hands to provide comments. The first question was regarding a letter submitted by the Professor Kitanov on behalf of the philosophy department.

Chair Lutts stated that on February 17, the faculty members of the Philosophy Department sent an open letter to the Board of Trustees. In this letter, they presented their concerns about the future of

*Chair's Report*

*Open Forum:  
Topics from SSU  
Community*

the university, the future of their department, and the future of Philosophy Major, which has been in existence for seven years.

On behalf of the Board, Chair Lutts acknowledged receipt of the letter and the issues that were raised. He has asked President Keenan to discuss the matter with Provost Silva regarding the points made in this letter. He wanted to assure the Department of Philosophy that the board of Trustees respect very much the value of Philosophy in higher education. We are proud of the accomplishments of the department as noted in your letter. The board is confident that Philosophy is an important component of higher education and will continue to be so in the future.

At issue here in the University is the fact we have not been successful in maintaining and growing our enrollment over the last decade (we now serve less than 7000 students when ten years ago we were over 10,000 students). We simply do not have the resources of the university in the right areas. We have asked the administration to help identify those growth areas where we are confident we can grow enrollment – today this seems to be the health care programs, science oriented programs and other programs that we are confident have additional demand. Since we do not have unlimited resources this will mean we will have to realign these resources which will mean making some realistic changes in the number of programs we offer. To reestablish growth again and serve the most students we need to be flexible in shifting resources to the areas where we can grow.

As we move forward with discussions about a Sustainable Path Forward for Salem State, I must stress that we must prioritize commitments and investments. Contrary to what the letter implies, no decisions about adding, restructuring, or eliminating academic programs have been made; those conversations are subject to shared governance.

On behalf of all the Trustees, I thank Professor Kitanov for his letter and bringing his concerns before the board.

With no additional comments on the matter, Vice Chair Butts moved to the second question received which asked the board to comment on public funding for higher education.

Trustee Katzman offered that the board is focused on ensuring that the university has the right resources needed to support the programs that students want. Enrollment has declined by 23% from SSU's high of 10,000 students. If you remember the 10,000 Reasons Capital Campaign, SSU's enrollment is 7,000 today. We have to make investments in the areas of growth, healthcare studies, nursing, biology, business, psychology, and sport and movement science. In all these areas, we need to add faculty, develop curriculum. We also need to provide modern labs, which has not only needed to educate students appropriately, but also an issue regarding equity for our student body. We can't save our way to prosperity. We need to make investments and find the resources to make such investments, understanding that a significant amount will have to come from reallocating our existing resources. Trustee Russell added that every member of the board is a strong advocate for public funding of higher education. The trustees understand that tuition is now four times lower than what they paid when they attended SSU. In addition, when the trustees were in school, the state paid two thirds of the university's expenses so attending college is very different today so advocacy for public higher education has to be even stronger. There have been numerous letters sent and signed by the board to advocate for more funding dollars. Trustee Mattera worked diligently over many years when he was the chair, and now as the segmental representative on the BHE and Chair Lutts has met with the Secretary of Education on behalf of the university. Trustee Katzman has also met with the Secretary and other trustees have done similar advocacy. Trustee Russell noted that every time she meets with the Governor, she shakes his hand and reminds him of her role as a trustee and funding for public higher education. And then there are meetings and

advocacy letters from the Council of Presidents (COP) and External Affairs in addition to the trustees work.

Trustee DeSimone added that there is a shortfall in the expenses of the university and the public funding for those. This is the case all over the country. One way that we can backstop the loss of revenue and the ability to grow our programs is through private philanthropy. Private philanthropy is what will support the Salem State priorities of students, success, scholarship paid and capital improvements that will attract and prepare our students for today's and tomorrow's workplace. Those are the reasons for our approval of a fundraising campaign with a goal of \$50 million, twice that of our previous campaign and the most ambitious goal of all the state universities. The school is not unrealistic as seen by the wonderful, generous gift by Kim and Phillip Schiller. Two trustees serve as campaign chairs, trustee Katzman and myself, and all trustees contributed generously in December, 2019 to strengthen our case for state approval of the Project BOLD Initiative. We expect and we eagerly anticipate intense involvement in this campaigns fundraising appeals.

Trustee Chisholm stated that higher education is facing unprecedented challenges. It is a Darwinian moment for higher ed. These decreases in enrollment are reflected here at Salem State in our own student faculty ratio, the lowest student system. And without adjustments, this will only continue to decline over the next decade. Conversations about realignment, restructuring, recalibrating programmatic offerings, and, yes, even retrenchment are taking place across campuses all over this nation, not just here at Salem State. We have excellent programs here. We have fantastic students, dedicated faculty. We need to come together to collectively reimagine ways to transform our programs to offer them more efficiently to meet the changing demands of our students and our workforce needs.

Vice Chair Butts then discussed teaching grants and offered her time and talent to the university in any way necessary. She asked Provost Silva if he could add to the opportunities available on campus and creative approach for funding. Provost Silva suggested that the university does have some personnel on campus who are supporting limited grant activities. Grants are coming not just from the federal government but also from corporations. Most recently we received a wonderful grant from Eastern Bank for our School of Education.

Trustee Butts expressed her appreciation for the information. Mention was made that Visiting Lecturer Matthias Rudolph of the English Department was available to clarify an earlier question regarding public funding of education.

Matthias introduced himself as an adjunct at the English department at Salem State. And stated that his question was in-part answered. It really had to do with the board's position on the importance of public funding to the mission of Salem State. And it is a question also about the ideals of public funding. The idea that public money is invested into the university for the public good, that we participate in educating students who can be public citizens and contribute to society. I had questions about the steps the board is undertaking to secure public funding and to advocate for greater public funding in the universities. I understand that's relatively difficult in the financial climate that we're in. And I'm grateful for some of those responses. My question was prompted by a concern that the course of the university is charting sets out on a path that seems to be largely independent of public funding. And that is focused on prioritizing workforce requirements for the students and that these requirements are by nature geared towards private interests and entrepreneurial interest rather than the public interests. And how the board of trustees wants to balance the commitment towards the public good in the steps.



Vice Chair Butts offered that there was some mis-direction around the focus; however, she hoped that what he heard was that the board was offering was a multi-pronged approach. Matthias thanked the board for the discussion.

Vice Chair Butts then moved to the last topic which was submitted for discussion which was communication. Butts stated that there have been several attempts to meet mostly with faculty in small group discussions prior to the pandemic. It will be critical to have productive conversations with the entire campus community. Most important will be to focus on student success.

Trustee Contreras affirmed that having productive conversations was necessary for the future of the university and that technology had been essential during COVID. She was looking forward to the university moving forward with the Vision Report and engaging with the entire community.

Trustee Mattera added that he was looking forward to re-engaging with the students and that in his ten years of experience on the board, working with the student had provided some of the most demanding and rewarding engagements. The students pushed the divestment from fossil fuel and Black, Brown and Proud worked with the campus to make real changes. We also have met with the Student Government Association to have great discussions and to understand the campus climate, how students felt about their engagement, with faculty with each other. It has led to better understanding.

Trustee Cadet agreed that she is seeing the work on both sides and she echoed SGA President DeVeau's earlier comments that students are having a difficult time during COVID and we need to keep students everyone's number one priority.

Trustee Murphy said that she witnessed the commitment to SSU during her participation on the Sustainability Taskforce. She observed a very committed community, both faculty and staff.

Trustee Zahlaway said that she also felt excitement and commitment from the community and that she was here for the long haul. She owed her professional career to SSU and wanted to give back to the community and plan for the long-term vision of our incredible university.

Trustee Katzman offered that meetings and dialogue that took place last winter were a highlight of his time while on the board. It was before COVID and people could talk before and after meetings. That dialogue was meaningful and he looked forward to those meeting again. He highlighted reaching out to faculty several times in the past. Engaging for the betterment of our students is the most important thing.

Trustee Butts thanked the board for the discussion and turned the comment period over to Corey Cronin to moderate.

**Comments** - Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Creative Services Corey Cronin introduced the first commenter Salem Chapter MSCA President Dr. Tiffany Chenault (Note – speakers were allowed three minutes of meeting time to present comments. Their comments are printed here in full.)

*Comments*

President Chenault greeted the board and meeting attendees. She stated that public educators, and her colleagues share in the mission of providing high quality education to students across the Commonwealth. Resolving financial difficulties and elimination of faculty staff and academic programs would undermine and eliminate that mission. Anti-educator practices that would damage Salem State's academic integrity are never the answer. The report released today by President

Keenan reverses course on retrenchment of programs, at least as it states at this time. President Chenault thanked the president for listening to students and employees, including the MSCA.

President Chenault stated that the administration's plan focuses on how to build a stronger university by building important issues such as student retention, reducing opportunity gaps for our students of color and managing spending in non-instructional areas such as reducing facility leases are also to be commended. She hoped that the release of this plan and its reassurance that retrenchment and layoffs were no longer on the table and the immediate future provides feeding room to Salem State's faculty, staff, and students who have struggled with constant anxiety about retrenchment program cuts during a pandemic and a period of national racial discord. But it is clear that our conversations with the university's academic executives and trustees on key issues must continue.

Some of the key issues we need to work together to address include working on racial equity and justice, investing in liberal arts and humanities and achieving financial stability. In conserving our work on racial equity and justice, we must consider the needs of our students who often come from different socioeconomic disadvantaged backgrounds. And as a public institution with a mission to serve the public good, we have a moral obligation to provide our students with access to broad range of programs and services that will contribute to their success and help them achieve their life goals. They deserve no less. We must honor their right to chart their own course and determine their own life goals rather than dictate those goals to them based on stereotypical expectations, other options or perspectives. To do so we must focus on improving nonwhite student campus experience, establish a commitment to anti-racist policies and practices and invest in comprehensive degree options, opportunities and services, repel eligible first gen, the students of color, including but not limited our Latinx student body.

Assistant Vice President Cronin introduced the next speaker Professor and Chair, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies and Coordinator of American Studies Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello.

Professor Duclos-Orsello stated that the report issued today stops short of calling for retrenchment and layoffs, issues of great concern among many constituents of our campus community. While I am grateful for this stay of execution, I would like to speak about the plan's vision for continued disinvestment particularly in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, which raises crucial concerns about equity and antiracism at SSU. I hope that my comments will assist with discussions about "realignment" moving forward. I bring extensive experience in both Higher Ed. and non-higher ed settings to this moment.

One month ago, hundreds were inspired when Dr. Angela Davis spoke here about two concerns many of us hold deeply: 1) that an interdisciplinary liberal arts education offering full degrees in the arts, humanities and social sciences is indispensable in the struggle for racial equity and social justice; and 2) that affordable public higher education is an integral element of the 21<sup>st</sup> century abolitionist movement.

SSU deserves high marks for offering the majors lauded by Dr. Davis. So I come here to caution our Trustees and academic executives against the path of "realignment" suggested by today's report. To follow that path would cause irrevocable harm to our students, who excel in majors in the very fields Dr. Davis identified as critical, contributing to both the state's [Equity Agenda](#) and our mission "to serve the communities of the North Shore," a diverse population disproportionately impacted by our nation's opportunity gap. Identifying these programs for "realignment" and threatening them with possible retrenchment should "realignment" not occur is a mistake, especially if equity and cost-savings are your goals.



The report calls for prioritizing investments in only a handful of tracks...plans based on dubious projections of future employer needs, and problematic data on “student interest” (tied as that is to what SSU markets, how robustly, and manufactured enrollment declines). We also wrongly tie majors to specific career paths, despite the fact SSU grads across majors succeed and lead in life and work.

If enacted, today’s plan will contribute to a nationwide trend of educational segregation: a pattern in which the children of those who have means can pursue degrees in any field they want at elite and private universities, while those whose best option is public higher ed. are prevented from doing the same, thanks to a national pattern of short-sighted programmatic cuts and mergers that we must resist. We should not shrink options for low-income, first generation or BIPOC students. Austerity in the form of program limitation is a form of colorblind racism.

To claim that the young people looking at SSU don’t “want” the same degrees as those elsewhere begs the question of what we are telling them about the limits of their dreams. No one questions the value of a Harvard student majoring in arts, humanities, or social sciences. We should all be troubled by the idea of reconsidering our commitment to offering these crucial areas of study on the flimsy grounds of “student demand” or “workforce needs,” when we are a public institution with a public mission to serve the public good.

For three - five years, SSU’s academic executives have strategically disinvested in the very programs today’s report characterizes as unprofitable or shrinking. Yet these programs have been asked to compete with those that are well-funded, well marketed and well-liked by members of this Board. To suggest that disinvestment and lack of marketing of “shrinking” programs is unrelated to the idea of “student demand” is illogical and disingenuous. We cannot claim to pursue an antiracist equity agenda if we tell our prospective students that they must shrink or change their passions to fit **your** vision. How can you justify limiting young people’s dreams?

Dr. Davis was clear: serving our students means that alongside professional tracks we boldly market and fund liberal arts majors. It is not either/or. She called on students to pursue these later degrees. We must heed Dr. Davis’ words as we consider the implications of realignment in these critical areas, and make a conscious choice not to participate in the de jure segregation of higher education. Our students deserve better. Thank you.

## **IX. OLD BUSINESS:**

Provost Silva introduced the last segment which was an update on NECHE. Before delving into the topic Silva made an important announcement. SSU’s application for its bachelor of Liberal Studies has been approved by the Board of Higher Education. Provost Silva thanked all of those who helped to make it possible including Professor Duclos-Orsello and Dean Gasparich.

Provost Silva then turned his attention back to NECHE and explained it is peer driven, evidence-based, voluntary and iterative. The evaluation that we’re about to undergo is not absolute, but it is relative to our mission and the NECHE standards.

The three areas of focus, NECHE wants to know about institutional effectiveness, continual improvement and also public assurance, that we have the information we need to assure the public that we are providing degrees that are of the highest quality. Provost Silva explained the components of the NECHE evaluation and said that the self-study report, which has now been completed and he thanked Bruce Perry among all others for really being the point person to keep

that report moving forward. He then noted that SSU will have NECHE virtual visits on April 11th and April 14th. Following the virtual visits the NECHE team will produce a draft report. We will have an opportunity to comment on issues of fact, and then it will go before the NECHE Board. NECHE will make a decision in the fall of '21 either to continue our accreditation as it is, or to offer some other recommendation. There are nine standards listed and the one that is most germane to the Board of Trustees is standard number three, which speaks directly to organization and governance. Provost Silva asked that any questions regarding the accreditation process be directed to his attention. (See attachment)

**X. NEW BUSINESS:** None

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**XI. ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business to come before the Board and on a motion made by Trustee Katzman and seconded by Trustee Murphy, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 6:13 pm.

Voting in the affirmative: Zahlaway Belsito, Butts, Cadet, Chisholm,  
Contreras, DeSimone, Katzman, Mattera,  
Murphy, Russell and Lutts (chair)

Voting in the negative: None

Absent: None

\* \* \*

Respectfully submitted,



John Keenan  
President



Lynne Montague  
Secretary to the Board of Trustees





Salem State University  
Board of Trustees  
February 24, 2021

Consent Agenda

Approval of the following Meeting Minutes and Committee Reports:

Board of Trustees: November 4, 2020

Institutional Advancement, Marketing & Communications: January 27, 2021

Academic Affairs & Student Life: January 27, 2021

Finance & Facilities: January 27, 2021

Risk Management & Audit: January 27, 2021

Board of Trustees: January 27, 2021

Board of Trustees Executive Session: January 27, 2021

\*Minutes are posted separately



# Vision for a Sustainable Future

February 24, 2021

# Viking Success Collaborative

- Remove barriers that stand in the way of student success
- Provide consistent and cohesive student support from application to graduation
- Led by Vice President Sean Bennett with collaboration from key stakeholders across the university

# Erasing Opportunity Gaps and Improving Equity on Campus

- Moon Shot for Equity: Close opportunity gaps by 2030
- Remove structural barriers for students
- Prepare to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)

# Academic Investments

- Hire faculty in growth areas that currently have need
- Since fall 2015, 60% of SSU degrees were in business, education, nursing, psychology and social work
- Nearly 80% of Latinx students at SSU are enrolled its top 10 most in-demand majors

# Realigning Academic Programs

- Since 2015, nine academic units accounted for five percent of degrees
- Work with departments to explore combining and invigorating under-enrolled majors through shared governance
- Current students and those that have been accepted for the fall of 2021 will be able to complete their degree in their chosen major

# Investing in Added Growth Areas

- In addition to academic growth areas, the Vision calls for adding staff members in revenue generating areas including:
  - Admissions
  - Institutional Advancement
  - Marketing

# Retrenchments NOT included in FY22 Budget

- Unknown external factors make budget projections challenging (federal funding, attrition, vaccinations, SSU BOLD funding)
- Vision is designed to better serve students and stabilize enrollment
- Involuntary personnel reductions are possible in FY24 if the Vision is not successful

# More Information and Community Feedback

- Student, faculty and staff open forums and additional meetings to be announced in coming weeks
- Visit [salemstate.edu/Vision](http://salemstate.edu/Vision) to learn more and provide feedback on the Vision



## FY 2022 Fee Rates

### **Overview**

Tuition and mandatory fees are proposed to remain the same for graduate students for FY22 as in FY21, both for in-state and out-of-state graduate students. In-state graduate students in a Price Group 2 course will be charged \$486.55 per credit while out-of-state graduate students will pay \$576.55 per credit.

### **Course Fee**

The course fee funds the bulk of the university's educational and general activities that are not funded by state appropriation.

### **Capital Improvement Fee**

The improvement fee provides funding for maintenance and repair of facilities.

The attached document shows the distribution of all graduate programs across the three price groups. The only changes in price groups pertain to selected programs which are being discontinued.

The accompanying motion was not presented to the Finance and Facilities Committee for consideration at its January 27, 2021 meeting. Certain consultations were underway. Upon completion of discussions and financial analysis, the university administration recommends that the graduate student charges be frozen for FY22. Further, the administration has consulted with the chair and co-chair of the Finance and Facilities Committee, who concurred with bringing the motion forward to the full Board of Trustees to consider.

## REQUEST FOR TRUSTEE ACTION

**Date:** February 24, 2021  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Karen P. House, Vice President for Finance and Facilities  
**Subject:** FY 2022 Graduate School University Fees  
**Requested Action:** Approval

**MOTION**

University administration recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the following motion pertaining to graduate fees for FY 2022.

**Recommended motion**

The Board of Trustees of Salem State University hereby approves the rates for graduate tuition and /or fees for the category of students as shown on Exhibit 1. The rates shall be effective for the fall term of the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year and Summer 2022. These fees are the same as for the 2020 – 21 (FY2021) year.

Trustee Action:

Trustee Approval Date:

Effective Date:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Schedule of Student Charges  
2021-22 Academic Year**

<b>IN-STATE</b>	<b>Fall 2021</b>	<b>Spring 2022</b>	<b>Summer 2022</b>
	<b>Per Credit</b>	<b>Per Credit</b>	<b>Per Credit</b>
<b><u>Graduate - Price Group 1</u></b>			
<b>Tuition</b>			
In-State	\$140.00	\$140.00	\$140.00
<b>Fees</b>			
Course Fee	\$281.95	\$281.95	\$281.95
Capital Improvement Fee	\$17.40	\$17.40	\$17.40
<b>Total Tuition and Fees</b>	\$439.35	\$439.35	\$439.35
Out-of-State			
<b><u>Graduate - Price Group 2</u></b>			
<b>Tuition</b>			
In-State	\$140.00	\$140.00	\$140.00
<b>Fees</b>			
Course Fee	\$329.15	\$329.15	\$329.15
Capital Improvement Fee	\$17.40	\$17.40	\$17.40
<b>Total Tuition and Fees</b>	\$486.55	\$486.55	\$486.55
Out-of-State			
<b><u>Graduate - Price Group 3</u></b>			
<b>Tuition</b>			
In-State	\$140.00	\$140.00	\$140.00
<b>Fees</b>			
Course Fee	\$392.90	\$392.90	\$392.90
Capital Improvement Fee	\$17.40	\$17.40	\$17.40
<b>Total Tuition and Fees</b>	\$550.30	\$550.30	\$550.30
Out-of-State			
<b><u>Graduate School Fees</u></b>			
<b><u>Course Fees</u></b>			
Lab Fees	\$25-\$500 per course		
Clinical Fees	\$15-\$100 per course		
Field Placement Fee for MSW Courses	\$100-\$250 per course		
Institute Fees	\$100 per institute		
<b><u>Application Fees</u></b>			
Graduate Admissions	\$50.00		
Comprehensive Exam Application	\$50.00		
<b><u>Late Fees</u></b>			
Late application for degree	\$50.00		
Late payment (tuition and fees)	\$50/month		
Payment plans (enrollment fee from TN)	\$40/semester		
Institutes (winter session/summer)	Varies depending on course		

All charges are subject to change.

### Schedule of Student Charges 2021-22 Academic Year

<b>OUT-OF-STATE</b>	<b>Fall 2021</b>	<b>Spring 2022</b>	<b>Summer 2022</b>
	<b>Per Credit</b>	<b>Per Credit</b>	<b>Per Credit</b>
<b>Graduate - Price Group 1</b>			
<b>Tuition</b>			
Out-of-State	\$230.00	\$230.00	\$230.00
<b>Fees</b>			
Course Fee	\$281.95	\$281.95	\$281.95
Capital Improvement Fee	\$17.40	\$17.40	\$17.40
<b>Total Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>\$529.35</b>	<b>\$529.35</b>	<b>\$529.35</b>
Out-of-State			
International Students-Supplemental Charge (Per semester excluding summer) \$375.00			

<b>Graduate - Price Group 2</b>			
<b>Tuition</b>			
Out-of State	\$230.00	\$230.00	\$230.00
<b>Fees</b>			
Course Fee	\$329.15	\$329.15	\$329.15
Capital Improvement Fee	\$17.40	\$17.40	\$17.40
<b>Total Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>\$576.55</b>	<b>\$576.55</b>	<b>\$576.55</b>
Out-of-State			
International Students-Supplemental Charge (Per semester excluding summer) \$375.00			

<b>Graduate - Price Group 3</b>			
<b>Tuition</b>			
Out-of-State	\$230.00	\$230.00	\$230.00
<b>Fees</b>			
Course Fee	\$392.90	\$392.90	\$392.90
Capital Improvement Fee	\$17.40	\$17.40	\$17.40
<b>Total Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>\$640.30</b>	<b>\$640.30</b>	<b>\$640.30</b>
Out-of-State			
International Students-Supplemental Charge (Per semester excluding summer) \$375.00			

<b>Graduate School Fees</b>		
<b>Course Fees</b>		
Lab Fees	\$25-\$500 per course	
Clinical Fees	\$15-\$100 per course	
Field Placement Fee for MSW Courses	\$100-\$250 per course	
Institute Fees	\$100 per institute	
<b>Application Fees</b>		
Graduate Admissions	\$50.00	
Comprehensive Exam Application	\$50.00	
<b>Late Fees</b>		
Late application for degree	\$50.00	
Late payment (tuition and fees)	\$50/month	
Payment plans (enrollment fee from TN)	\$40/semester	
Institutes (winter session/summer)	Varies depending on course	

All charges are subject to change.

**Salem State University**  
**Graduate Price Groups**

Program	Program
<b>Price Group 1</b>	<b>Price Group 2</b>
<b>Master's Programs</b>	<b>Master's Programs</b>
English (MA)	Behavior Analysis (MS)
History (MA)	Counseling (MS)
<b>Education - Master's Programs</b>	<b>Education - Master's Programs</b>
Chemistry (MAT)	Criminal Justice (MS)
Early Childhood Education (MEd)	Geo-Information Science (MS)
Elementary Education (MEd)	Industrial/Organizational Psychology (MS)
English (MA/MAT)	Mathematics (MS)
English (MAT)	Nursing (MSN)
English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (MAT)	Social Work (MSW)
History (MAT)	<b>Education - Master's Programs</b>
Leadership in Physical Education & Movement Studies (MEd)	Higher Education in Student Affairs (MEd)
Library Media Studies (MEd)	School Counseling (MEd)
Mathematics (MAT)	<b>Education - Licensure Only Programs</b>
Middle School Education (MED)	School Adjustment Counselor (Initial Licensure Only)
Middle School Math (MAT)	School Counseling
Physical Education (MAT)	<b>Graduate Certificate Programs</b>
Reading (MEd)	Applied Behavior Analysis
Secondary Education (MED)	Clinical Trial Management
Spanish (MAT)	Computer Science
Special Education (MEd)	Counseling
<b>Education - Licensure Only Programs</b>	Geo-Information Science
Early Childhood Education	Nursing Education
Elementary Education	Sport Development and Management
English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	
Mathematics	<b>Price Group 3</b>
Middle School Education (Initial Licensure Only)	<b>Master's Programs</b>
Reading	Accounting (MS)
Special Education	Business Administration (MBA)
<b>Graduate Certificate Programs</b>	Occupational Therapy – Direct Entry (MS)
Autism Spectrum Disorders	Occupational Therapy (MS)
Digital Studies	<b>Graduate Certificate Programs</b>
Global Policy Analysis	Business
Holocaust and Genocide Studies	Financial Planning
Public Policy and Administration (closed to new entrants)	
Public History	
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages	
Writing and Rhetoric Studies	
Teacher Leadership	
<b>Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS)</b>	
Educational Leadership	

Graduate non-matriculated students will be charged at the Price Group 2 rate.

## An Board of Trustees Overview of Salem State University's Decennial NECHE Re-Accreditation

### About Accreditation

In the United States, accreditation of institutions of higher education is conducted *not* by the Federal Government but by regional accrediting bodies that have been recognized jointly by the [US Department of Education](#) and the [Council for Higher Education Accreditation](#).

- a. For SSU, the regional accreditor is the [New England Commission of Higher Education](#) or NECHE (rhymes with “catchy” or “kvetchy”).
- b. NECHE is a membership organization that is governed by an elected board and managed by an administrative team with headquarters in Burlington, MA.
2. The goals of the accreditation process are assessing institutional effectiveness, improvement and public assurance.
3. Regional accreditation in the US relies on a voluntary, a peer-review process. The reviewers provide valuable external perspectives to the institution and to the Commission.

### The Comprehensive Evaluation

At the core of the accreditation process is a decennial comprehensive evaluation.

- a. SSU's next accreditation visit will take place on **April 11 – 14, 2021**.
- b. In the current public health context, NECHE has determined that all visits will be **virtual**. (A one-day on-campus inspection will take place soon thereafter.)
2. The comprehensive evaluation has three distinct components:
  - a. **AN INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY**, in which the university evaluates how well it meets the Commission's [Standards for Accreditation](#) and makes realistic, specific projections for improvement.
    - The Self-Study is both product & process, lying at the heart of the accreditation process.
    - SSU's Self-Study was submitted to NECHE and the site visit team on earlier this month.
    - A copy of the self-study report's first pages is provided below.
  - b. **A MULTI-DAY SITE VISIT**, conducted by a trained group of peer volunteers.
    - Each visiting team is led by an institution president: for SSU's review, the team leader is President Joe Bertolino (“President Joe”) of Southern Connecticut State University.
    - Reviewers may not review an institution located in their own institution's state.
  - c. **A REVIEW AND DECISION** by the Commission.
    - NECHE will review SSU's evaluation reports and decide on SSU's accreditation status during the fall semester 2021.

For more on regional accreditation, visit [Higher education accreditation in the United States - Wikipedia](#).

## **The Preparation Process at SSU**

Working committees formed for each of NECHE's nine standards for accreditation, with Provost David Silva, Academic Vice-President and NECHE Accreditation Liaison Officer leading these efforts. Over 70 faculty, administrators and staff have been engaged in creating Salem State's 2021 Self-Study Report. As noted above, Salem State will virtually host a team of Commission trained volunteers for a site visit on April 11-14, 2021.

Earlier this month, SSU submitted to NECHE its self-study report, which covers each of the Commission's nine [Standards for Accreditation](#):

- Standard 1: Mission and Purposes
- Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation
- Standard 3: Organization and Governance
- Standard 4: The Academic Program
- Standard 5: Students
- Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship
- Standard 7: Institutional Resources
- Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness
- Standard 9: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

## **The Purpose of *The Standards***

The Commission's standards are utilized by institutions to self-reflect, determine concerns and successes, and develop future areas of growth or enhancement, as well as to respond to the specific areas of focus identified by the Commission from the most recent Interim Report (issued five years after a comprehensive evaluation). Presenting a concise picture of the institution, the Self-Study seeks to capture a sense of a University's history, an understanding of its present, and a vision of its future. By clearly identifying its strengths and challenges, each institution has the opportunity to celebrate its successes and demonstrate its ability to use analysis for improvement.

## **What Trustees Might Expect to Discuss with the Site Visit Team**

There is not set of proscribed questions or issues that must be addressed with the Board of Trustees in its meeting with the NECHE site visit team. What one might anticipate being possible topics are:

- The Board's understanding of NECHE's cites two main goals for accreditation: public assurance and continual improvement.
- The Board's assessment of the governance process at Salem State, and the Board's role in that process.
  - NECHE seeks candor about how the Board works to advance the institutional goals; at the same time, NECHE also take seriously the "boundaries" of governing bodies.
- The Board's perspective of Salem State's challenges, priorities and prospects.

Note: The Mount Ida experience weighs heavily on NECHE and their teams, so it could be an example to cite with our Board (e.g., "there should be no surprises for the Board"). Here is a March

2019 letter from the AGO to the DHE Commissioner that provides more information: [Mount-Ida-Letter-031319-1.pdf \(seachangeap.org\)](#).

**Important final note: “It’s not an audit”**

The NECHE Comprehensive Evaluation process is not an audit; rather it is a reflective process for the university. Hence, unlike an audit (which can be “clean”), there’s no such thing as a “clean” accreditation report: the Comprehensive Evaluation Report becomes part of an iterative process. As such, we should anticipate that the final report will acknowledge success and identify the four or five most important items for the institution to focus on moving forward. The best outcome of this process: To continue in our current status (accredited) with a series of areas to report back to NECHE about in the future, perhaps in five years, perhaps sooner, especially given the uncertainty of the pandemic.

A detailed itinerary for the site visit (April 11-14) is currently under development. As is standard NECHE practice, members of the site visit team will want to meet with members of the Board of Trustees. You will be advised as to the date and time.



## KEY OVERVIEWS FROM THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

### **Introduction: The Self-Study Process**

In 2016, the NEASC Commission voted to accept Salem State University's interim report, noting five areas of necessary focus for its 2021 comprehensive evaluation self-study. These areas of emphasis were: 1) developing its next strategic plan and implementing a comprehensive, integrated approach to planning and assessment; 2) evaluating the impact of changes in university leadership on the institution's transition from college to university; 3) continuing the enhancement of student learning and using the results to support continuous improvement; 4) achieving its goals to increase graduation rates; and 5) integrating its planning process with financial planning, and increasing faculty engagement in these matters. Preparing for documented progress in these five areas, in addition to the comprehensive self-study, began shortly after NECHE's 2016 notification.

During the last five years, considerable progress has been made in addressing the areas of emphasis, as reported in the self-study. The current strategic plan incorporates institutional metrics tracked by the strategic planning and decision support office (Standard Two). President John D. Keenan proposed an aspirational agenda in his 2018 inauguration speech, including accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business and achievement of the Carnegie Community Engaged Classification, both of which were achieved (Standard Three). New and on-going initiatives to assess and improve student learning and outcomes were implemented among departments and institutionally (Standards Four and Eight). Student graduation rates continued to increase, exceeding 59% among undergraduates (Standard Eight). Progress on integrating financial planning and enhancing cost containment and transparency continues through implementing multi-year financial plans, decision rubrics, debt re-structuring, and a voluntary separation program (Standard Seven). In addition to these five areas, SSU also reports on enhancements made by the School of Nursing to assure compliance with the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing's requirements (Standard Eight).

To prepare for this self-study and comprehensive evaluation, President Keenan named Provost David Silva to oversee the reaccreditation process. In fall 2018, Provost Silva assembled a group to support this effort. The leadership team included Chunju Chen, Executive Director, Strategic Planning and Decision Support; and Emerson Baker, Vice-Provost. Selected to co-chair the self-study report and join the leadership team: Monica Leisey, Professor, Social Work; Carla Panzella, Associate VP and Dean of Students; and Bruce Perry, Assistant Dean, Enrollment Management and Student Life. All team members attended one or more of the four preparatory workshops led by NECHE.

SSU's NECHE leadership team met regularly to develop the campus committee structures needed to prepare the self-study. The Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) Salem Chapter sent out a call to the faculty community for participation. Calls for members were also made through campus communication channels. The provost appointed faculty, administrators, and staff to serve on the nine working committees established to address the NECHE standards. To support the collaborative work of the committees, a SharePoint site was developed.

The leadership team continued to meet monthly. Leadership team members developed plans and recruited for the self-study effort at meetings of the President's Executive Council (PEC); the university's Leadership Cabinet; and academic department chairs and graduate program coordinators, held during the spring and summer of 2019. A July 2019 kick-off event was organized to orient working committee members to the project.

The three co-chairs formed a steering committee to regularly convene the leaders of each of the nine committees. The steering committee also met monthly during the academic year. Most of the enrollment and student-related data first forms for the committees' use were prepared by the strategic planning and decision support office. The Leadership Cabinet (a group of over 100 campus administrators, faculty department chairs, and graduate program coordinators) was further engaged to collect more evidence for the working committees, such as institutional data and a timeline of university developments.

In January 2020, a half-day collaborative planning and writing workshop, NECHE-Fest, was led by Provost Silva for all working committee members. This creative and celebratory event was also open to the campus, inviting those who did not serve on a working committee to learn about the accreditation effort. First drafts from the working committees were completed by March, with most second drafts completed by June, although writing and editing continued throughout the summer. Some key committee members were less able to participate because of immediate institutional needs resulting from the pandemic. Fortunately, sufficient progress on the self-study had been made by March 2020 to allow the project to proceed seamlessly.

Each standard was reviewed in September by small independent groups from the university's Leadership Cabinet. Nancy Schultz, English Professor Emeritus, was engaged to serve as the editor for the self-study report. While writing and editing continued, the drafts for each standard were posted in the university's intranet, Polaris, as they were revised in September, November, and December. Excerpted drafts were sent to new campus leaders and for areas that spanned across several standards (e.g., graduate school, inclusive excellence, continuing education, student life, alumni affairs, and first-year experience) related to their work. Open forums were held in October and December to invite campus feedback, while NECHE co-chairs met with the Student Government Association members to review the report in November. The self-study draft was also sent to NECHE in December for review by and feedback from a Commission member.

As a final review of the self-study by the working committees and to prepare for the virtual site visit, NECHE-Fest II was held in early January 2021. Subsequently, the editor and leadership team completed revisions of the report. The president and the provost reviewed the final version, which was submitted to NECHE in late January. In anticipation of the April site visit, a communications plan was developed, which includes announcements in February and March to the local community, reminding them that the institution will be undergoing its ten-year accreditation and inviting their participation as we together come to the conclusion of this important collaborative effort.

## Institutional overview

*"I firmly believe the ...words of Horace Mann- 'education...is the great equalizer.' It's easy for this to get lost in the day-to-day routine on campus, but we must remember that through our work at Salem State, we are fighting for equality. We are promoting democracy. We are advancing social justice."*

--President John D. Keenan, from his inauguration speech on January 18, 2018

Salem State University (SSU) is an institution that has continually transformed itself since its founding as a normal school inspired by the ideas of Horace Mann, known as the "father of American public education." This comprehensive four-year public university in Massachusetts boasts a long [history](#) as an innovator in the field of education. Founded as Salem Normal School, it was the fourth such institution in Massachusetts, and the tenth in America. It welcomed its first class in 1854 and its first Black graduate, the abolitionist, educator, writer, and women's rights activist, [Charlotte Forten](#), received her degree in 1856. The institution's original motto, *Progredi*, "progress," underscores its evolution from Salem Normal School in 1854 to Salem Teachers College in 1932 to Salem State College in 1960 and, most recently, to Salem State University in 2010. SSU's commitment to both institutional and social progress drives it to fully embrace the transformations brought by each new chapter in its history.

Today, Salem State serves 6,686 full-time and part-time undergraduate and graduate students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, representing 37 states and 48 nations. Located 15 miles from Boston in the historic city of Salem, in Essex County, SSU offers 31 baccalaureate majors and 39 master's degrees. With more miles of coastline than the state of New Hampshire, Salem is located in the region of Massachusetts known as the North Shore. An integral part of the greater Salem community for 167 years, the university has over 65,000 [alumni](#), approximately 80% of whom are Massachusetts residents, and 67% live within 30 miles of campus.

SSU takes pride in its community connections and in a long tradition of partnership with the North Shore community, and particularly with the city of Salem. These partnerships—with the business community, with local governments, with the nonprofit sector, and others—are rooted in its academic programs and in its role as a significant economic resource for Salem, Essex County, the North Shore region, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As a federally designated Title III eligible institution, Salem State serves a growing student body from traditionally underserved populations, including low-income students, students with disabilities, veterans, non-traditional age students, and students of color, opening doors of opportunity for the next generation of students and citizens.

One of nine regional state universities in Massachusetts, Salem State has historically cultivated excellence in teacher training, expanding its majors over time to prepare the next generation of social workers, entrepreneurs, nurses, occupational therapists, and more. Over 75% of the 1,546 undergraduate degrees awarded in academic year [2019-20](#) were earned in business, nursing, psychology, education, biology, criminal justice, sport and movement science, media and communication, and social work. The academic units within the university

are the Maguire Meservey College of [Health and Human Services](#) (includes the School of [Nursing](#) and the School of [Social Work](#)), College of [Arts and Sciences](#), Bertolon [School of Business](#), [School of Education](#), School of [Graduate Studies](#), and School of [Continuing and Professional Studies](#).

Transformative change and significant transitions have characterized Salem State's last decade, and most especially the years since the university's 2016 NEASC [Interim Report](#). This period of regional change, institutional pressures, and disruption has been met with planning, investment, innovation, and data-informed decision-making to address the challenges facing the university. In 2018, Salem native John D. [Keenan](#) was inaugurated as the university's fourteenth President. Leadership transitions occurred in all senior [administrative](#) positions in the last five years except for provost and academic vice president and the vice president for finance and facilities, resulting in an evolving organizational structure to oversee the institution.

Academic excellence continues to be an institutional strength. The university achieved national or international recognition from 13 [accrediting](#) bodies, most recently the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, while also attaining the elective Carnegie classification for Community Engagement. Since 2016, the university has added a new residence hall, Viking Hall, and opened a student parking garage.

**Mission and Purposes:** Salem State University's (SSU) current [mission](#) statement was developed by a multi-disciplinary institutional group and approved by the Board of Trustees ([BOT](#)) in 2008. Its mission was subsequently reaffirmed in 2017 by the Trustees as the first step in developing the university's current [strategic plan](#).

**Planning and Evaluation:** The next strategic planning process is in the beginning stages with the charge to review the mission and develop a new plan for 2022. (The institution requested and was given permission by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE) to extend the current strategic plan from 2021 until 2022.) The university intends to use this extension to fully evaluate the current strategic plan and to design a process that once again engages our community in a transparent partnership. This accreditation report and its findings will set the stage for the process.

As institutional and regional pressures have grown, data have been critical to inform university leadership decision-making in addressing this changing landscape. The development of the [business intelligence](#) unit since 2016 provides real time data about a wide range of key performance indicators. Right-sizing the faculty/student ratio, course optimization, reducing reliance on adjuncts, financial aid leveraging, and EAB partnership efforts are some outcomes of this informed data-driven decision-making.

**Organization and Governance:** The university is overseen by a state-appointed Board of Trustees and led by President Keenan and his executive team. Since 2018, there has been administrative restructuring through attrition and the implementation of a hiring freeze and voluntary separation program. Through its system of tri-partite internal governance, SSU ensures the appropriate consideration of relevant perspectives; decision-making aligned with expertise and responsibility; and timely action on institutional plans, policies, curricular change, and other key considerations. The governance process assures faculty are given the primary role in overseeing the integrity of the university's academic offerings.

**The Academic Program:** The university continues to enhance its program review [cycle](#) using data on student outcomes and program effectiveness to ensure institutional consistency in evaluating academic programs. Undergraduate and graduate programs at Salem State are externally [reviewed](#) or [accredited](#) by state or national licensing authorities. Satisfying the requirements of so many [accrediting](#) bodies – most recently [AACSB International](#) for our business programs – speaks to the high standards and quality of the university's academic programs. The School of [Graduate Studies](#) has strong programs taught by appropriately credentialed faculty; 92% hold terminal degrees, and many with extensive, relevant professional experience.

**Students:** As has long been the case, students continue to be drawn largely from the local region, as 40% of new [first-year](#) students hail from the surrounding communities North of Boston in 2020. In recent years, as the demographics of our region have shifted, so too has our student profile; the incoming class of [2024](#) is more diverse (40.7% of new undergraduates are students of color) than the new students in the SSU class of [2019](#) (27.6% of first-year students were from BIPOC groups in fall 2015). Current students cite cost, financial aid, academic reputation, and geographic setting as most important factors in their decision to enroll (Student Satisfaction [Index](#), 2020).

As transfer student enrollment has become more competitive regionally, SSU's number of transfer students has dropped from 752 in fall 2016 to 394 in fall 2020. Furthermore, continuing education's undergraduate head count fell considerably (from 1,571 in fall 2010 to 760 by fall 2020). In the early years of the 2010 decade, the institution invested in building projects aimed to increase residential student populations to support long term institutional stability. This strategic goal has not achieved the desired impact, as shifting priorities among Generation Z students – who frequently choose cost and value over debt, which includes forgoing an on-campus living experience -- have decreased the residential population pool.

**Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship:** As a regional teaching university, SSU places a high value on instructional excellence in service to meaningful learning. Teaching effectiveness of faculty is assessed each semester using contractually approved evaluation forms coupled

with observations by department chairpersons. Courses are taught in a variety of instructional formats with the majority, 77.5%, being lecture (including face-to-face, hybrid and online modalities), 7% Laboratory, 5% Seminar, 4% Clinical, and the remaining instructional formats all under 2% each (studio, field studies, discussion, directed studies, student teaching, internships, activity, practicum, independent study, honors thesis, and graduate thesis).

Faculty and librarians are actively engaged in the shared governance of the institution particularly regarding academic issues as is laid out in Article VII of the [MSCA](#) contract. The service provided by faculty is critical to the function of the department and university. Additionally, many faculty are active in national and international professional associations, serve as peer-reviewers for journals and grant award panels, and participate in a wide range of roles in the surrounding community. SSU faculty and librarians

are hired with strong credentials and, in the face of their considerable teaching and advising responsibilities, are exceptionally active and productive [scholars](#). Many of SSU's faculty have national and international profiles as scholars and have been earned various [awards](#), including Whiting Grants and Fulbright fellowships.

**Institutional Resources:** Salem State continues to meet budgetary challenges through continual improvement efforts to gauge selective reductions of programs and services, re-inventing of systems and structures, and data-informed investments (VSIP, civic engagement). Following an initial hiring freeze implemented in 2018 to cut costs, an innovative voluntary separation program was implemented, lowering annual personnel costs by over \$6M through a net reduction of 50 positions, while allowing for targeting hiring of 32 positions in key areas.

**Educational Effectiveness:** Resource strains notwithstanding, SSU continues to educate its students effectively. When compared to New England public institutions, 2019 SSU first year (FY) and senior (SR) students reported higher levels of experiential learning, institutional support and opportunities on several [NSSE](#) (National Survey on Student Engagement) items directly related to the values articulated in the mission statement. Although many students continue to meet institutional academic standards, other students struggle to achieve and persist as non-academic factors (pre-dating and exacerbated by COVID-19) undermine their success. In response to these changing circumstances, university leadership has reallocated increased resources to student support services, early intervention systems, financial aid, fundraising, and diversified staff and faculty. There has also been support for increasing the number and impact of pedagogical high-impact practices ([HIPs](#)).

Students are encouraged to participate in experiential or authentic scholarly experiences during their course of study. This can include directed studies, independent research,

undergraduate research, honors theses, graduate research (thesis and nonthesis options), practica, clinical experiences, and internships. According to 2019 [NSSE](#) results, over 62% of seniors participated in two or more HIPs, while 45% of first-year students participated in at least one HIP. Graduate programs that require internships/practica are standardized by their accrediting bodies. In a review of SSU Master's degree graduates, 23% in 2019 and 24% in 2020 completed a substantial experiential learning course (e.g., internship, clinical, field experience, and student teaching).

**Integrity, Transparency and Public Disclosure:** To cultivate a data-driven culture, the university has invested practices and affiliated technologies such as Synario, Power Business Intelligence (BI), and EAB Navigate, so that all pertinent university data is available to faculty, staff and leadership our daily operations and student success factors. Examples of evidence of the integrity of university actions span four areas: 1) accountability in reporting institutional data; 2) remedying academic challenges; 3) demonstrating support for values, such as freedom of expression, academic freedom, equity and inclusion; and 4) responsibly addressing university sustainability.

The university posts a wide variety of information on its website to help inform and attract students to campus. SSU maintains many tools to communicate with students and the public and has committed to effectively sharing key information.

**Institutional Characteristics Form** Revised September 2009

Date January 29, 2021

1. Corporate name of institution: Salem State University
2. Date institution was chartered or authorized: September 14, 1854
3. Date institution enrolled first students in degree programs: 1854 – 2 year; 1932 Bachelor’s degree
4. Date institution awarded first degrees: 1856 diploma; 1936 Bachelor’s degree
5. Type of control:

Public	Private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent, not-for-profit
<input type="checkbox"/> City	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious Group (Name of Church) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Proprietary _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: (Specify) _____
6. By what agency is the institution legally authorized to provide a program of education beyond high school, and what degrees is it authorized to grant? Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts as per MGL c.15A section 22:  
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15A/Section22>
7. Level of postsecondary offering (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than one year of work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First professional degree
<input type="checkbox"/> At least one but less than two years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Master’s and/or work beyond the first professional degree
<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma or certificate programs of at least two but less than four years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work beyond the master’s level but not at the doctoral level (e.g., Specialist in Education)
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree granting program of at least two years	<input type="checkbox"/> A doctor of philosophy or equivalent degree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Four- or five-year baccalaureate degree granting program	<input type="checkbox"/> Other doctoral programs _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
8. Type of undergraduate programs (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Occupational training at the crafts/clerical level (certificate or diploma)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liberal arts and general
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupational training at the technical or semi-professional level (degree)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher preparatory
<input type="checkbox"/> Two-year programs designed for full transfer to a baccalaureate degree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____



9. The calendar system at the institution is:

Semester     Quarter     Trimester     Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. What constitutes the credit hour load for a full-time equivalent (FTE) student each semester?

- a) Undergraduate    12 credit hours
- b) Graduate            9 credit hours (some graduate programs are FT at 6 credits)
- c) Professional        N/A

11. Student population:

a) Degree-seeking students:

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
Full-time student headcount	4,424	626	5,050
Part-time student headcount	869	767	1,636
FTE	5,950.5	1,169	7,119.5

b) Number of students (headcount) in non-credit, short-term courses: 252

12. List all programs accredited by a nationally recognized, specialized accrediting agency.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Accredited since</b>	<b>Last Reviewed</b>	<b>Next Review</b>
Art – BA, MAT	National Association of Schools of Art & Design (NASAD)	1986	2017	NASAD 2026-27
Biology, Nuclear Medicine Technology, BS	Joint Review Committee-Nuclear Medicine Technology	2006	2018	Mid Cycle report due 2022
Chemistry, BS	American Chemical Society (ACS)	1983	2015	Report due June 30, 2022
Computer and Information Studies, BS	Computing Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology	2004	2015	2021-22 Self-Study due July 1, 2022
Music, BA	National Association of Schools of Music	2009	Spring 2016	2021-22
Athletic Training, BS	Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education	1997	2009-10	2022-23; Self-Study due July 1, 2022
Theatre, BA, BFA	National Association of Schools of Theatre	1999	Fall 2010	April 2022; postponed due to COVID-19 and on-site visit requirement
Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Middle School Education, Special Education, Reading, Principal/Assistant	Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation	1952 (NCATE); 2006 (NAEYC); 2006 (CEI)	2013	N/A; not applying for re-accreditation in 2020; quality will be certified via the MA DESE approval process

Principal, BS, CAGS, M.Ed.				
Spanish, Physical Education, Biology, Chemistry, English, History, Mathematics, English as a Second Language, BS, BA, MAT	Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation	1952 (NCATE); 2006 (NAEYC); 2006 (CEI)	2013	N/A; not applying for re-accreditation in 2020; quality will be certified via the MA DESE approval process
Nursing, BSN, MSN	Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education	2003	Fall 2012	Fall 2022; Nursing submitted Interim Report to CCNE on June 1, 2018
Occupational Therapy, MS	Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education	2003	2018	2027
Social Work, BSW, MSW	Council on Social Work Education	1979 – BSW 1991 - MSW	2019	2026
Accounting & Finance, Management, Marketing & Decision Sciences, BS, MBA, MSA	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business	2021	2021	2025-26

13. Off-campus Locations. List all instructional locations other than the main campus. For each site, indicate whether the location offers full-degree programs or 50% or more of one or more degree programs. Record the full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE) for the most recent year. Add more rows as needed.

	Full degree	50%-99%	FTE
A. In-state Locations			
Beverly	Y		21.2
Cambridge	Y		14.3
Melrose	Y		16.7
Newburyport	Y		16.8

Revere	Y		37
Salem	Y		15.7
B. Out-of-state Locations			
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

14. International Locations: For each overseas instructional location, indicate the name of the program, the location, and the headcount of students enrolled for the most recent year. An overseas instructional location is defined as “any overseas location of an institution, other than the main campus, at which the institution matriculates students to whom it offers any portion of a degree program or offers on-site instruction or instructional support for students enrolled in a predominantly or totally on-line program.” **Do not include study abroad locations.**

Name of program(s)	Location	Headcount
N/A	N/A	N/A

15. Degrees and certificates offered 50% or more electronically: For each degree or Title IV-eligible certificate, indicate the level (certificate, associate’s, baccalaureate, master’s, professional, doctoral), the percentage of credits that may be completed on-line, and the FTE of matriculated students for the most recent year. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of program	Degree level	% on-line	FTE
RN-BSN	BS	100	16.33
Fire Science	BS	100	27.66
Library Media Studies	MED	100	11.25

16. Instruction offered through contractual relationships: For each contractual relationship through which instruction is offered for a Title IV-eligible degree or certificate, indicate the name of the contractor, the location of instruction, the program name, and degree or certificate, and the number of credits that may be completed through the contractual relationship. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of contractor	Location	Name of program	Degree or certificate	# of credits
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

17. List by name and title the chief administrative officers of the institution. (Use the table on the following page.)
18. Supply a table of organization for the institution. While the organization of any institution will depend on its purpose, size and scope of operation, institutional organization usually includes four areas. Although every institution may not have a major administrative division for these areas, the following outline may be helpful in charting and describing the overall administrative organization:
- a) Organization of academic affairs, showing a line of responsibility to president for each department, school division, library, admissions office, and other units assigned to this area;
  - b) Organization of student affairs, including health services, student government, intercollegiate activities, and other units assigned to this area;
  - c) Organization of finances and business management, including plant operations and maintenance, non-academic personnel administration, IT, auxiliary enterprises, and other units assigned to this area;
  - d) Organization of institutional advancement, including fund development, public relations, alumni office and other units assigned to this area.
19. Record briefly the central elements in the history of the institution:
- September 14, 1854 – Salem Normal School opens for those students “wishing to prepare themselves for teaching.” Fourth such institution in Massachusetts and tenth in the nation to grow out of the humanitarian movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to improve public education for all children.
  - 1898 – Salem Normal School becomes co-educational.
  - 1900-1920 – The then commercial curriculum became first of its kind in the nation
  - 1921 – Course of study expanded to four years.
  - 1932 – Institution becomes Salem Teachers College and grants Bachelor of Science in Education degrees.
  - 1950’s - Transitional period; Division of Graduate Continuing Education and Graduate programs instituted in 1955.
  - 1960’s – Expansionist period; Salem Teachers College reorganized as Salem State College; Residence Halls open in 1966.
  - 1972 – Acquisition of South Campus.
  - 1977 – O’Keefe Sports Center dedicated.
  - 1997 – Arrange to purchase Central Campus.
  - 2004; 2010 – Atlantic and Marsh Residence Halls dedicated.
  - 2010 – Salem State College becomes Salem State University; Weir Property acquired; Ground-breaking for Library Learning Commons
  - 2013 – Berry Library and Learning Commons and Gasset Fitness Center opens.

- 2015 – Viking Hall and Parking garage open
- 2016 – 10,000 Reasons Campaign raises \$26.5M
- 2020 – Carnegie Community Engaged elective classification awarded.
- 2021 – Bertolon School of Business becomes first of Commonwealth's nine state universities to earn accreditation by AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, International).
- 2021 - SSU receives largest cash gift (\$6 million) in the history of Massachusetts' universities.

## CHIEF INSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

Function or Office	Name	Exact Title	Year of Appointment
Chair Board of Trustees	Rob Lutts	Chair, Board of Trustees	2020
President/CEO	John Keenan, JD	President	2017
Chief Academic Officer	David Silva, PhD	Provost and Academic VP	2015
School of Education	Joseph Cambone, EdD	Dean	2014
College of Arts and Sciences	Gail Gasparich, PhD	Dean	2016
Maguire Meservey College of Health and Human Services	Sami Ansari, PhD	Interim Dean	2020
School of Social Work	Lisa Johnson, MSW, PhD	Interim Dean	2020
School of Continuing and Professional Studies	Barbara Layne, LP D	Dean	2020
School of Graduate Studies	Stephanie Bellar, PhD	Dean	2020
Bertolon School of Business	Raminder Luther, PhD CFP	Interim Dean,	2020
Chief Financial Officer	Karen House, CPA, CGMA	VP Finance and Facilities	2014
Chief Student Services Officer	Carla Panzella, PhD	Assoc. VP, Dean of Students	2016
Planning/Institutional Research	Chunju Chen, PhD	Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Decision Support	2015
Development	Cheryl Crouse	VP, Institutional Advancement	2019
Enrollment Management; Admissions	Bonnie Galinski	Interim VP, Enrollment Management	2020

Function or Office	Name	Exact Title	Year of Appointment
Inclusive Excellence	Sean Bennett, EdD	VP, Diversity and Inclusion	2020

General Counsel	Rita Colucci, JD	VP and General Counsel	2017
Library	Elizabeth McKeigue	Dean, Berry Library	2017
Chief Information Officer	Curt King	Chief Information Officer	2017
Public Relations	Corey Cronin	AVP, Marketing and Creative Services	2016
Grants/Research	Adria Duijvesteijn	Senior Director, External Affairs	2018
Registrar	Megan Miller	Registrar	2012
Financial Aid	Scott Jewell	Director of Financial Aid	2020
Alumni Association	Mandy Ray	AVP, Institutional Advancement	2019
COVID-19 Emergency Response Team Co-Chair	Elisa Castillo, PhD	Associate Dean of Students for Wellness	2016
COVID-19 Emergency Response Team Co-Chair	Gene Labonte	Associate VP, Public Safety and Risk Management	2015



*President's Executive Council  
Organizational Chart  
October 2020*

