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**SUBJECT:** Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee Meeting Report for January 21, 2026

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The Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee of the Board of Trustees met on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 4:00 pm, via Zoom in accordance with MGLA Chapter 30A, as amended by Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, which among other things allows remote participation through June 2027.

Present for the Committee were Trustees, Immerman (chair), Billings (vice chair), Beckett, Lancome; President Keenan (ex-officio); Vice President Galinski; Provost Silva; Associate Vice President Schuetz; Interim Assistant Vice President Loescher, and Executive Assistant Putzig.

Chair Immerman called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. The following items were discussed:

**Spring Enrollment and Fall 2026 Admissions Update** (Attachment A)

Preliminary Spring enrollment data reflects an overall headcount decline of approximately 3% compared to the previous year. Despite this decrease, credit hours among Continuing Education students have increased. The university has also seen notable improvement in the transfer student population, driven largely by enrollments from local community colleges. In addition, Graduate Spring enrollment has shown a significant increase over the past five years.

Looking ahead to Fall 2026, freshman admissions data shows a significant increase in admits over the past three years, with early indicators also reflecting growth in deposits. While transfer numbers currently show a slight gap, it remains early in the transfer admission cycle. Increased enrollment at community colleges has resulted in delays in transcript processing, and the university is actively working to address this issue. Early demand for Fall 2026 Graduate enrollment is strong, with increases in applicants, admits, and deposits reported.

**University's Recruitment, Branding, and Marketing Strategy** (Attachment B)

The university's recruitment and marketing strategy is designed to engage multiple student populations across different generations, each of which evaluates the value of higher education differently and operates on distinct enrollment timelines. For example, prospective undergraduate students typically engage in the college search process for approximately two years, requiring sustained and evolving messaging to maintain engagement throughout that period. The strategy emphasizes understanding how students move through key decision-making milestones and intentionally includes outreach to the family members and support networks that influence enrollment decisions.

Effective recruitment also requires a clear understanding of both who prospective students are and where they are located. While Massachusetts is a core market, the university continues to strengthen

its presence in regional markets by building relationships and increasing familiarity within those communities to meet students where they are.

Salem State leverages several external partners and platforms to support recruitment efforts. College Board is utilized to build brand awareness, support name acquisition, and coordinate high school outreach. Encoura serves as the university's recruitment marketing partner, while ReUp supports reengagement efforts with Salem State stopout students.

Although the university website remains the primary source of information for prospective students, social media platforms are increasingly important engagement tools, particularly YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Marketing efforts focus on presenting Salem State in a distinctive way that differentiates it from peer institutions. Key messages include the university's identity as the Commonwealth's civic engagement university, its affordability, student centered approach, career focused outcomes, and designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Examples of marketing materials were shared with the Board to demonstrate that recruitment strategies are data informed and outcomes driven. Recent demographic targeting initiatives include outreach to Hispanic families through advertisements in both English and Spanish, which has increased progression from inquiry to applicant and from applicant to completed application. Additional targeting efforts focused on first generation students and families in Middlesex County resulted in a 40% year-over-year increase in completed applications

The introduction of discounted tuition for New England students has contributed to increased application volume across all New England states. Analysis of this data has also identified Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York as emerging growth markets, where the university continues to see slow but steady increases in applications.

The university employs geo fencing strategies at Massachusetts and Rhode Island community colleges, with specialized advertising for Northern Essex Community College and North Shore Community College to promote the Transfer Connections Program. Overall, data informed targeting continues to drive measurable progress in recruitment outcomes.

In addition to digital efforts, the university continues to rely on direct mail, particularly large format postcards. Three distinct postcard mailings are distributed throughout the recruitment cycle, with the benefit that messaging reaches broader household audiences.

Brand awareness efforts are further supported through advertising on billboards, MBTA buses and subway platforms, print and digital media, Univision television, and community sponsorships, many of which are delivered in both English and Spanish.

### **Degrees Awarded 2019-2025: Alignment with Institutional Mission and Occupational Outlook Handbook Data** (Attachment C)

This item was presented in response to Trustee interest, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education reporting requirements, and broader national conversations regarding the value of a college education. The discussion was also grounded in Salem State's institutional mission, values, and identities as a comprehensive public university.

Caveats associated with the data were noted, including the recognition that career paths rarely map neatly or predictably onto undergraduate majors. Employment projection data should not be interpreted as prescriptive guidance for determining which academic programs a university should offer, as many high value competencies are developed outside of directly job aligned fields. In addition, labor market projections do not fully capture emerging fields or hybrid career pathways. As a comprehensive institution, the university must continue to offer a broad array of academic disciplines, and workforce data are intended to complement rather than replace academic judgment.

Over the past five academic years, the total number of degrees conferred has declined by approximately 15%. The number of graduate degrees awarded has remained stable during this period, while undergraduate degree conferrals declined overall, but have remained flat over the past two years. The highest number of graduate degrees awarded are in education, social work, and psychology. At the undergraduate level, the highest degree conferrals are in nursing, psychology, business, education, and criminal justice. These programs align with both state and national occupational outlook data, indicating that the university continues to offer degrees in fields with strong workforce relevance, and that student interest in these majors is strong. It was noted that for the five-year period reviewed, approximately one-third of the departments (9 of 30) account for nearly two-thirds of all undergraduate degrees awarded.

A view of data regarding the numbers of undergraduate students enrolled in courses offered by each department in the past five years reveals a different pattern, one that indicates that (1) the distribution of class-level enrollments is more evenly distributed across the 30 departments and (2) some departments with relatively fewer majors (as compared to those in the top nine) provide critical instruction for all students. Examples are English, History, Theatre and Speech Communication, and Mathematics.

### **Committee Q&A**

Trustee Billings inquired about the university's use of alumni in marketing efforts. AVP Schuetz and AVP Loescher explained that alumni continue to play an important role in recruitment and branding and will always have a place in university messaging. However, they noted that communication strategies have evolved to prioritize digital engagement in order to meet prospective students where they are.

Trustee Lancome requested additional information regarding the university's efforts to expand partnerships with community colleges beyond North Shore Community College and Northern Essex Community College, and asked whether current recruitment strategies extend to other institutions.

There being no further business to come before the committee and upon a motion made duly by Trustee Billings and seconded by Trustee Lancome it was unanimously:

**VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 5:26 pm**

**Voting in the affirmative: Immerman, Billings, Beckett, Lancome**

Voting against: None

Prepared by: A. Putzig, Executive Assistant, Student Success

# Attachment A

## I. Spring Enrollment and Fall 2026 Admissions Update

Bonnie Galinski, Vice President of Student Success

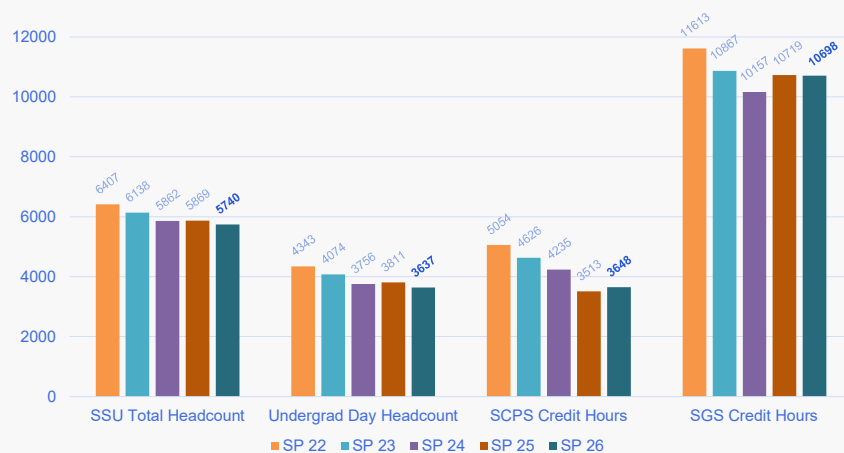
Steve Schuetz, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management



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### Preliminary Data: Spring 2026 Enrollment\*

2021-2025 final, \*2026 as of 1.20; \*Official Census Day = February 15, 2026



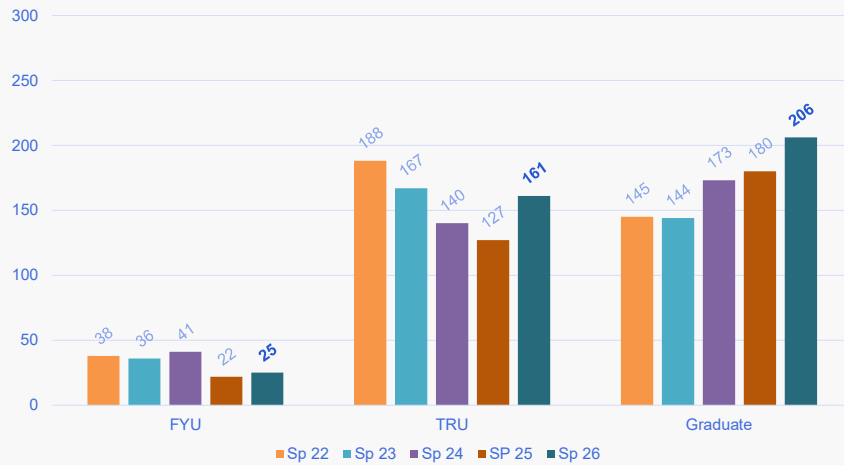
Data from Enrollment Management



2

## New Students: Spring 2026 Enrollment\*

2021-2025 final, \*2026 as of 1.20; \*Official Census Day = February 15, 2026

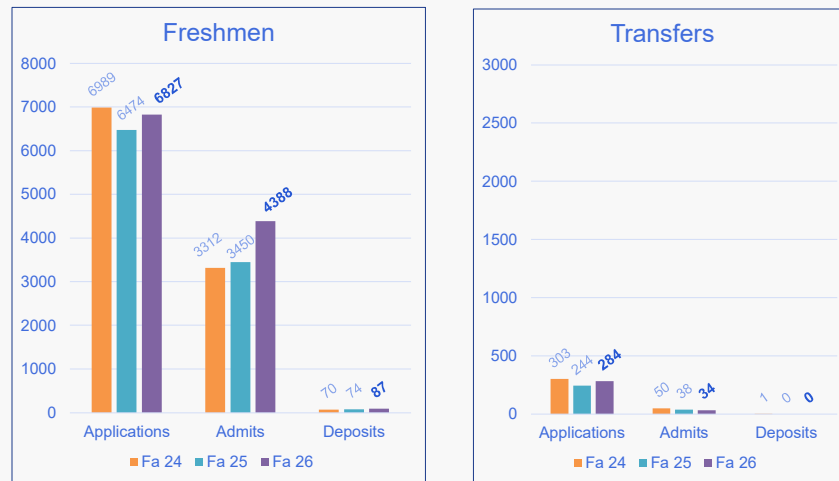


Data from Enrollment Management



3

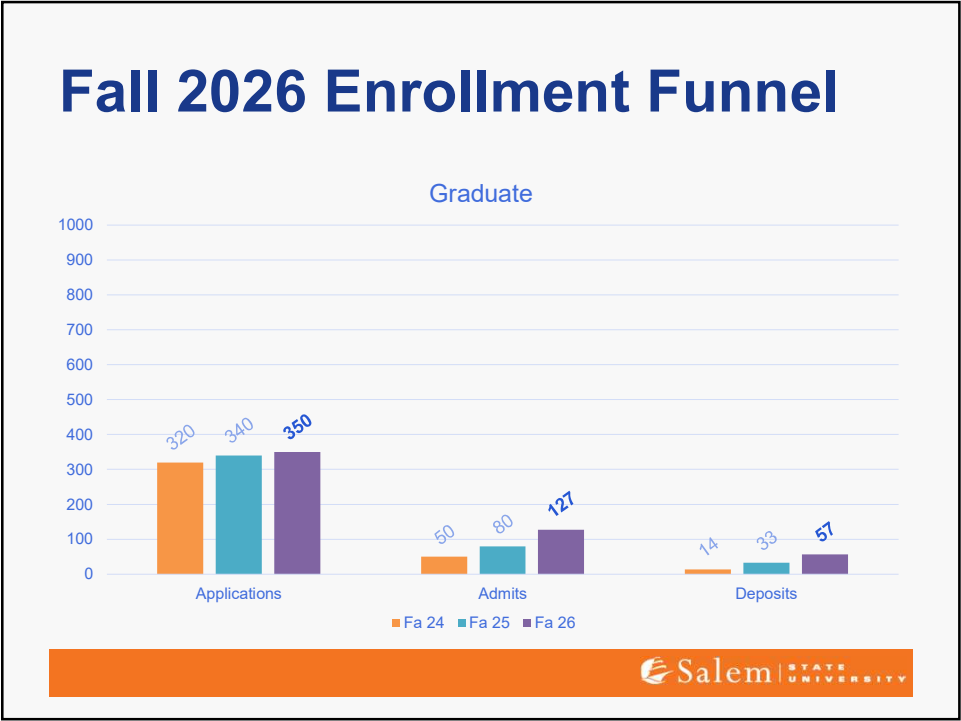
## Fall 2026 Enrollment Funnel



Data from Enrollment Management



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# Attachment B

## II. University's Recruitment, Branding and Marketing Strategy

Bonnie Galinski, Vice President of Student Success

Steve Schuetz, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management

Erin Loescher, Interim Assistant Vice President of Marketing and Communications



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## Understanding our Audiences

Audience	Gen Alpha	Gen Z	Millennials
Birth Years	2010-2024	1995-2009	1980-1994
Education/Career	- Middle School - High School	- High School - College - Early Career	- Early to Mid Career
Recruiting Population	- Undergraduate Day	- Undergraduate Day - Graduate - Continuing Education	- Graduate - Continuing Education
Values	More focused on a sense of purpose and sustainability.	Seeks value and awareness in content.	Expected to reshape the workplace through the integration and evolution of technology.
Post-Secondary Expectations	Personalized and immersive experiences through the advanced integration of technology.	Accessible, affordable, and flexible education aligned with their career aspirations.	A strong emphasis on tangible outcomes, practical skills, and credentials aligned with industry needs.



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## Different Enrollment Behavior

### Undergraduate

- 18-24 months
- Apply to 5-8 schools
- Well defined milestones
- Multiple stakeholders

### Graduate

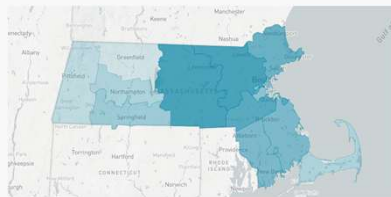
- 6-9 months
- Apply to 1-3 schools
- Program length and format matter
- Work - Life balance

### Continuing Education

- 3-6 months
- Apply to a program
- Expect instant response
- Start and stop often

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## Knowing our Markets

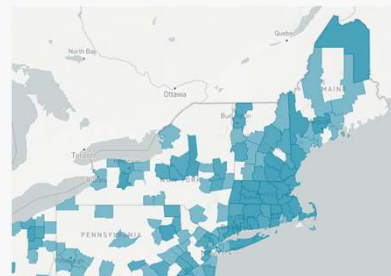


### Massachusetts Market

- 90% of undergraduate enrollment
- Middlesex, Essex, Suffolk
- High Schools: Lynn, Everett, Peabody, Salem
- Community Colleges: North Shore, Bunker Hill, Middlesex

### Regional Markets

- Secondary: CT, NH, NY, ME
- Tertiary: NJ, PA, VT, RI
- Increasing digital footprint
- Leveraging partners to explore other markets



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## Our Partners



- Brand Awareness
- Name acquisition
- High School visits



- Brand Awareness
- Email and Digital Outreach
- Affinity Building



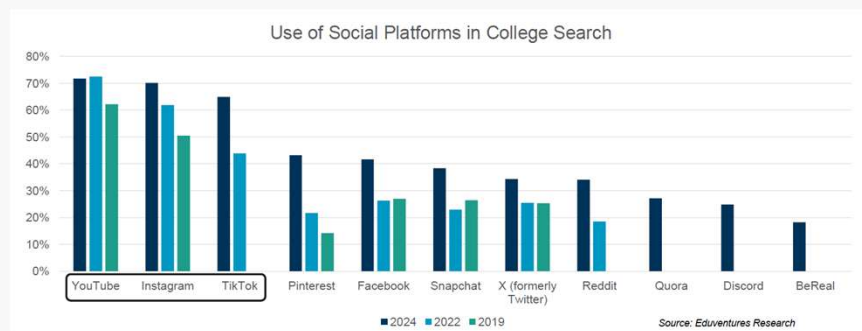
- Reengage SSU stop-outs



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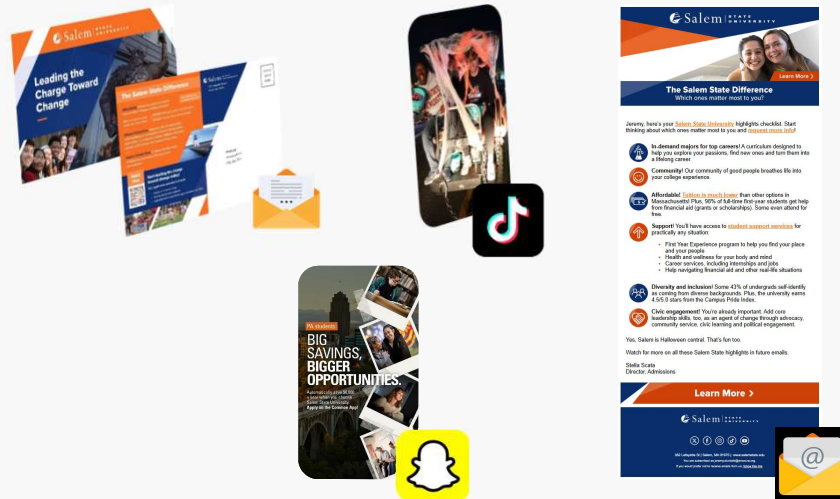
## Where students find information

While the **University's website remains the top source of information**, both pre- and post-application, for all student types, video-based platforms provide the best opportunity to engage prospective students.



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## How we communicate with them



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## Engaging the whole family



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## Key Messages

- The Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University
- Affordable
- Student-Centered
- Career-Focused
- Hands-On Experiences
- Diverse Perspectives, Welcoming
- Vibrant, Seaside Community
- Close to Boston
- HSI



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## A Strategic Snapshot of Recruitment Marketing

This overview highlights a select set of recent initiatives that reflect both the breadth of our marketing efforts and areas where we are seeing strong early indicators of success.

### What This Represents

- Part of a **broader**, multi-channel marketing and recruitment strategy
- Data-informed decision making across audiences and regions
- Early momentum from fall 2025 efforts supporting the fall 2026 first-year cycle



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● IN MARKET

## Application Generation

Prepared by Encoura, geofencing homes of fall 2026 first-year prospects residing in Massachusetts and 100+ Massachusetts high schools

The campaign target audience also received *fall open house* creative.

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● IN MARKET

## New Demographic Targeting

**Hispanic Families** – Hispanic parents with a 16-17-year-old high school student, residing within 30 miles of campus (*ads in English and Spanish*)

- With a 1.5% click-through rate, this campaign outperforms the other new demographic targeting audiences (Middlesex County parents at 1.2% and first-gen parents at 1.3%). That means more users are clicking through per impression, showing strong message relevance for this audience.
- The campaign target audience also receive(s/d) *apply for free* and *fall open house* creative.

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# New Demographic Targeting

**Hispanic Families** – Hispanic parents with a 16-17-year-old high school student, residing within 30 miles of campus (*ads in English and Spanish*)

**Hispanic Applicant Engagement is Strong**

	Fall 2025	Fall 2026	Change
<b>Inquiry to Applicant</b>	81.6%	98.4%	<b>+16.8 points</b>
<b>Applicant to Completed Applicant</b>	43.4%	58.9%	<b>+15.5 points</b>

- More Hispanic students are moving from interest to application
- A significantly higher percentage are completing their applications
- These improvements reflect stronger intent, better outreach, and the importance of family involvement in the marketing funnel

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# New Demographic Targeting

**First-Generation Families** – Parents who earned a high school diploma, earn an income under \$100K, reside within 30 miles of campus, with a 16-17-year-old high school student

**Supported, Seen and Valued**

Discover Salem

**First-Generation Families**

IN MARKET

The campaign target audience also receive(s/d) *apply for free* and *fall open house* creative.

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## New Demographic Targeting

**Middlesex County Families** – Parents *with* a college degree, \$75-100K household income, residing in Middlesex County (MA), with a 16-17-year-old high school student

### Middlesex County Application Growth

Fall 2025: 508 | Fall 2026: 815

- We've seen a **40% increase in completed applications from Middlesex County year over year**, putting us well ahead of our fall 2024 and 2025 numbers
- Segmented outreach, tailored by geography, continues to drive measurable improvements in key markets, validating the importance of segmented communication targeting in our funnel strategy
- Our parent-targeted messaging strategy reinforces that families remain a powerful influence in students' application decisions



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## Fall Open House

Prepared by Encoura, geofencing homes of fall 2026 first-year prospects residing in Massachusetts and 100+ Massachusetts high schools



This creative was also promoted in the following geofencing campaigns: New England Prospective Student (high school and residential), Community Colleges, New Demographic Targeting

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## New England Application Generation

Geofencing homes of fall 2026 first-year prospects residing in New England and 100+ New England high schools



	Fall 2025	Fall 2026	% Increase
Maine	22	50	+127.27%
Rhode Island	27	43	+59.26%
New Hampshire	58	87	+50.00%
Vermont	15	21	+40.00%
Connecticut	69	96	+39.13%



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## New England Application Growth (Excluding MA)

### The Proof is in the Numbers

- Across New England, **all five states showed double-digit growth** in completed applicants for fall 2026.
- The strongest gains came from:
  - Maine (+127%)
  - New Hampshire (+50%)
  - Rhode Island (+59%)
- This reflects the impact of expanded out-of-state outreach and sustained brand awareness in key neighboring markets.

### Contributing Factors

- Stronger affordability message:** Our first year promoting the New England Board of Higher Education's Tuition Break Program (without limiting factors) helped us go further with this powerful message
- Further segmentation,** when it came to residential and high school geofencing, by defining our New England campaigns from our Massachusetts-based campaigns
  - Segmented email campaigns to these students on topics including affordability, location and belonging helped further our brand awareness



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## PA, NJ, NY Application Generation

Geofencing 60+ PA, NJ and NY high schools, in combination with targeted Snapchat data-matching of fall 2026 first-year prospects living in these states



	Fall 2025	Fall 2026	% Increase
Pennsylvania	28	45	+60.71%
New Jersey	31	43	+38.71%
New York	71	76	+7.04%



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● IN MARKET

## Transfer Application Generation

Prepared by Encoura, geofencing all Massachusetts community colleges + Community College of Rhode Island



NECC and NSCC have specialty ads (top two) promoting Transfer Connections, in addition to the bottom two ads.

From 10/14-11/14, our transfer ads overall generated **over 2,000 clicks** to salemstate.edu.



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## PA, NJ, NY Affordability Snapchat Ads

IN MARKET



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## PA, NJ, NY Brand Awareness Snapchat Ads

IN MARKET



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## Why These States?

- Support of admissions counselor travel and National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) Fair participation (Salem State attending)
- Opportunities to double down on enrollment management/admissions' list-buying strategy, which has more than 20,000 prospective students residing within these three states
- Recommendation from Encoura, Salem State's strategic enrollment and marketing services partner, whose data insights show strong student profiles that match ours, residing in communities within these states
- Brand recognition — numerous SAT takers in these states handwrote Salem State as a school of interest on their SAT test, indicating brand recognition in these markets.



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## Why These Examples

- **Why These Campaigns Were Highlighted**
  - They represent a strategic cross-section of our broader recruitment marketing efforts
  - They demonstrate how data-informed targeting is driving measurable progress
  - They reflect early momentum from fall 2025 initiatives supporting the fall 2026 cycle
- **What This Signals**
  - Continued refinement of audience segmentation and messaging
  - Strong alignment between marketing strategy and enrollment priorities
  - A foundation we can build upon as the cycle progresses



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## Direct Mail



**The Salem State Difference** postcard  
from Encoura  
CTA: Apply Now

**4 Reasons to Apply Early Action**  
postcard from Encoura  
CTA: Apply by Nov. 15

**Fall Open House** promotional postcard  
produced in-house by marketing and  
communications  
CTA: Register for a Fall Open House



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## The Salem State Difference Postcard



[SalemState\\_AppGen\\_2026\\_PC1\\_5.5x8.5\\_REV2.pdf](#)



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## 4 Reasons to Apply Early Action Postcard

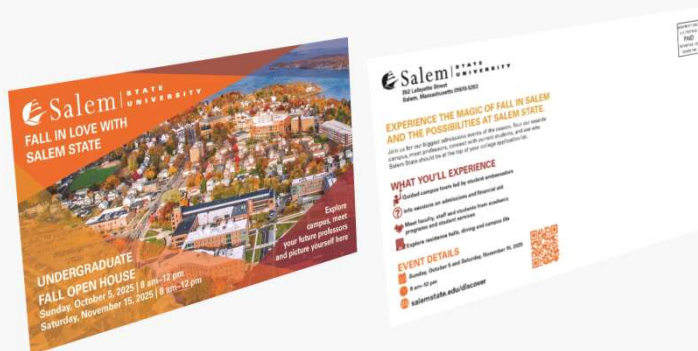


[SalemState\\_AppGen\\_2026\\_PC2\\_5.5x8.5\\_REV4.pdf](#)



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## Fall Open House Postcard



[ADM Fall Open House Postcard Invitation\\_08\\_25\\_PROOF.pdf](#)



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## Generating Brand Awareness

- Additional Tactics
  - Billboards (English and Spanish)
  - MBTA Buses (English and Spanish)
  - Subway (interior cards, English and Spanish)
  - Print Ads (select Spanish newspapers)
  - Print/digital Ads in local Chamber programs
  - Univision TV spots and interview on Spanish Talk Show
  - Sponsorships



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## Questions?



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# Attachment C

## Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee

21 January 2026



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## Occupational Outlooks and Degrees Conferred

- I. Setting the Stage
- II. Job Outlook
  - a. National Data (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
  - b. State and Regional Projections (MA Department of Economic Research)
- III. Degrees Conferred, AY21 – AY25
  - a. Total
  - b. Undergraduate
  - c. Graduate
- IV. Observations
- V. Discussion



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## Setting the Stage

- Conversation Drivers
  - Trustee Interest / Curiosity / Responsibility
  - MA Department of Higher Education Reporting
  - Larger Cultural Conversations around the Value of a College Education
- Institutional Foundations
  - Mission
  - Values
  - Identities

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## Mission

As a comprehensive university, Salem State prepares students of diverse backgrounds and interests to achieve their educational and career goals and to contribute to a global society as ethical and engaged community members. As a public university, Salem State also makes critical contributions to civic life, environmental sustainability, and the cultural, social, and economic vitality of the North Shore region.

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## Mission

- comprehensive university
- diverse backgrounds
- educational and career goals
- global society
- ethical and engaged community members.
- public university
- critical contributions
- civic life, environmental sustainability
- cultural, social, and economic vitality



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## Values

In pursuing our mission, as a campus community we embrace, are inspired by, and seek to embody the following core institutional values:

- Academic Excellence
- Student-Centeredness
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Belonging
- Open Inquiry
- Civic Engagement
- Access and Affordability
- Environmental Sustainability
- Collaborative Leadership



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## Caveats

1. Career paths rarely map neatly—or predictably—onto undergraduate majors
2. Employment-projection lists are not prescriptions for what majors a university “should” offer
3. Many high-value competencies are developed outside “job-aligned” fields
4. Labor-market projections do not capture emerging fields or hybrid careers
5. A comprehensive university must offer a full array of academic disciplines
6. Workforce data complement—but cannot replace—academic judgment

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## National-Level Occupational Outlook Data

10 Occupations projected to have the most openings annually, on average, 2024-2034

	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree
1	General & Operations Managers	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors
2	Registered Nurses	✖ Lawyers
3	Accountants and Auditors	Educational, guidance, and career counselors and advisors
4	Software Developers	Nurse Practitioners
5	Business Operations Specialists, other	✖ Health specialties teachers, postsecondary
6	Managers, all other	Instructional coordinators
7	Management Analysts	Education administrators, K-12
8	Elementary School Teachers (other than special education)	Healthcare social workers
9	Market Research Analysts / Marketing Specialists	Education administrators, postsecondary
10	Human Resource Specialists	✖ Pharmacists

Red = We do not offer

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## State-Level Occupational Outlook Data

10 Occupations projected to have the most openings annually, on average, 2024-2034

	Commonwealth of MA	North Shore
1	Medical and Health Services Managers	<b>Nurse Practitioners</b>
2	<b>Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors</b>	Medical and Health Services Managers
3	Coaches and Scouts	Computer & Information Systems Managers
4	Financial Managers	<b>Software Developers</b>
5	Computer & Information Systems Managers	Financial Managers
6	Construction Managers	<b>Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors</b>
7	Training & Development Specialists	<b>Registered Nurses</b>
8	<b>Software Developers</b>	<i>✖ Industrial Engineers</i>
9	Child, Family, and School Social Workers	Coaches and Scouts
10	<b>Human Resource Specialists</b>	<b>Business Operations Specialists, other</b>

**Bold Purple = Also appears on national list**



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## State-Level Occupational Outlook Data

**Common to both State and Region**

	Commonwealth of MA	North Shore
1	Medical and Health Services Managers	
2	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	Medical and Health Services Managers
3	Coaches and Scouts	Computer & Information Systems Managers
4	Financial Managers	Software Developers
5	Computer & Information Systems Managers	Financial Managers
6		Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors
7		
8	Software Developers	
9		Coaches and Scouts
10		Business Operations Specialists, other



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## State-Level Occupational Outlook Data

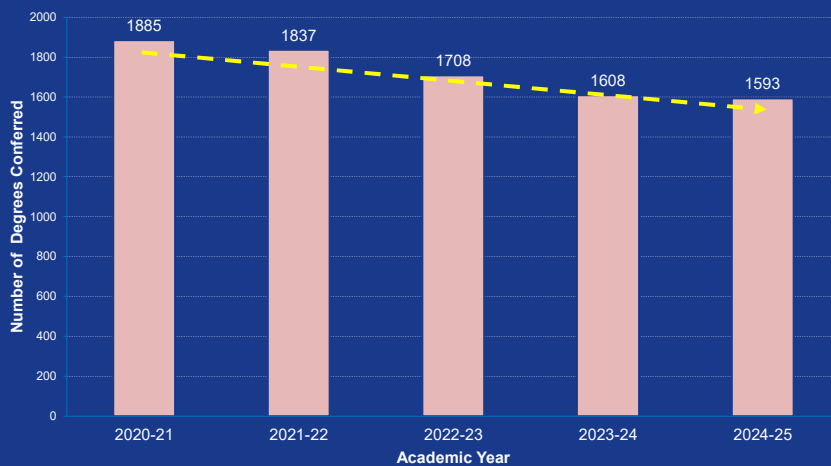
Unique to the North Shore

	Commonwealth of MA	North Shore
1		Nurse Practitioners
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		Registered Nurses
8		
9		
10		Business Operations Specialists, other

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## Number of Degrees Conferred

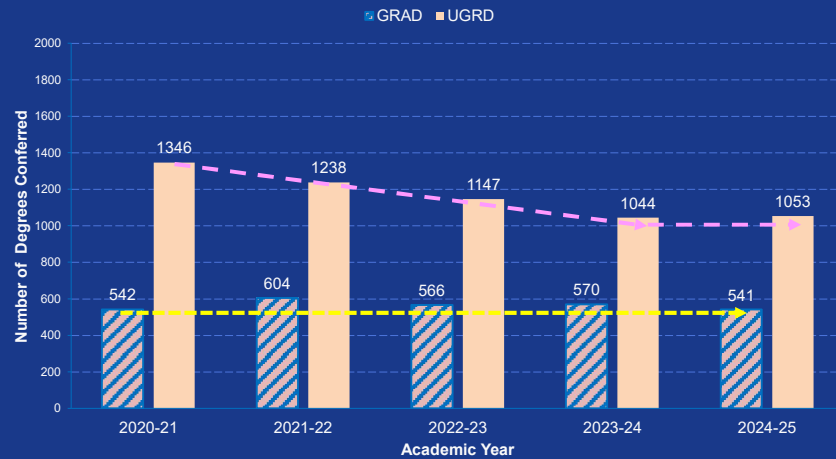
AY21 – AY25, combined undergraduate and graduate



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## Number of Degrees Conferred

AY21 – AY25, disaggregated undergraduate vs. graduate

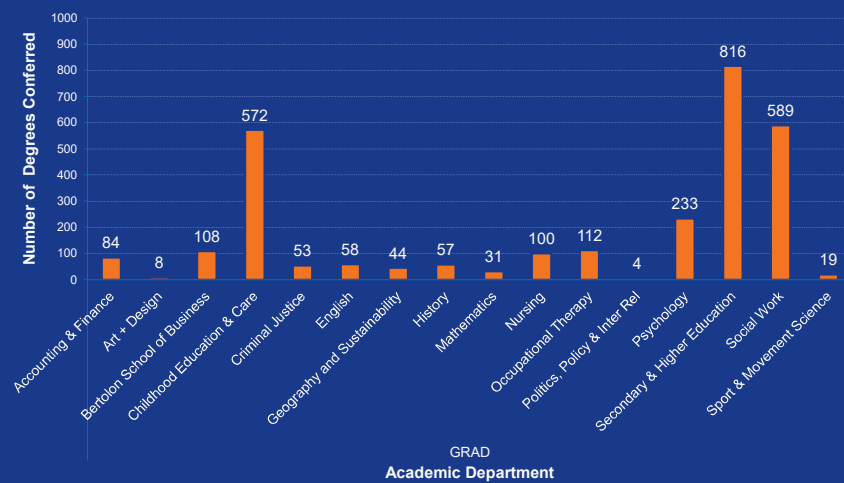


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## Graduate Degrees Conferred

Aggregated over AY21 – AY25

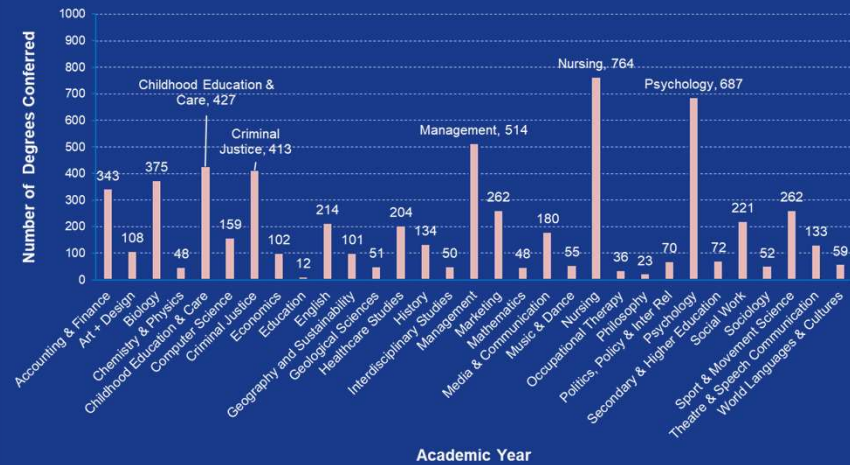


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## Undergraduate Degrees Conferred

Aggregated over AY21 – AY25

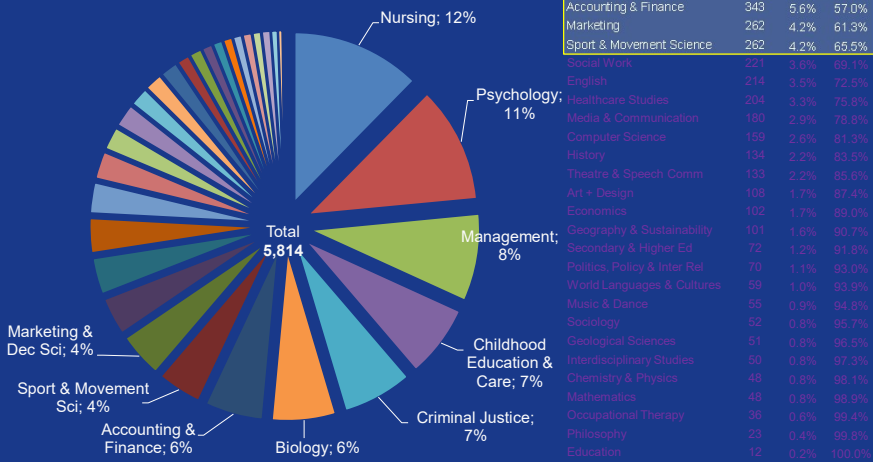


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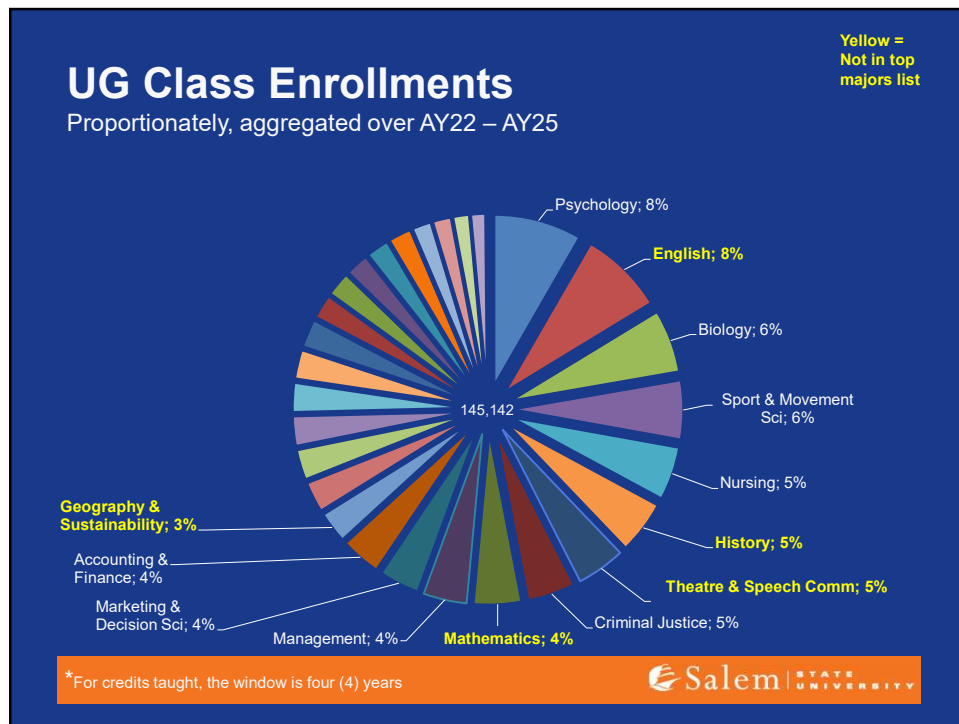
## Undergraduate Degrees

Proportionately, aggregated over AY21 – AY25



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## Discussion



### The Caveats Revisited

1. Career paths rarely map neatly—or predictably—onto undergraduate majors
2. Employment-projection lists are not prescriptions for what majors a university “should” offer
3. Many high-value competencies are developed outside “job-aligned” fields
4. Labor-market projections do not capture emerging fields or hybrid careers
5. A comprehensive university must offer a full array of academic disciplines
6. Workforce data complement—but cannot replace—academic judgment

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