

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
February 4, 2026

PRESENT: Trustees Beckett, Davis, DiPalma, Immerman, Kezer, Lampassi, Lancome and Morales (chair)

Also participating at the meeting were President Keenan and Board Secretary Montague

ABSENT: Billings, Cabral

The Board of Trustees met in accordance with the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 30A, Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 An Act Extending Certain Covid-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency which, among other things, extends the expiration of the provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to 2027. All votes were taken by roll call.

* * *

I. CALL TO ORDER - Chair Morales having a quorum of the members present called the meeting to order.

Call to Order

* * *

II. COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

*Committee
Actions:*

Finance & Facilities - Trustee Kezer presented the committee's recommended motion concerning the sale of 66 Loring Avenue - 122 Broadway.

*Finance &
Facilities*

By way of background, the Salem State University Assistance Corporation ("Assistance Corporation") acquired 66 Loring Avenue – 122 Broadway and 68 Loring Avenue, Salem, MA, in 2017 for \$847,500 pursuant to the Salem State University's ("University") master vision plan. The university no longer has a need for the property located at the Loring/Broadway site as construction of a parking garage in that area is no longer of interest. The university seeks to ask the Assistance Corporation to sell 66 Loring Avenue – 122 Broadway and to use the proceeds to defease the remaining debt, including the portion of the debt attributed to 68 Loring Avenue which will not be sold. defeasing the remaining debt would mean using the sale proceeds to pay off outstanding loans associated with both properties, thereby eliminating the university's financial obligations related to these sites.

*Sale of
66 Loring Ave –
122 Broadway*

Hearing no further discussion, Trustee Lancome moved the motion and Trustee Davis seconded the motion. Upon a roll call it was,

VOTED: The Board of Trustees approves the following actions regarding the property located at 66 Loring -122 Broadway: 1.

Modification of the lease between the Assistance Corporation and the University if needed to facilitate a sale; 2. Directive to the Assistance Corporation to sell the property if said sale price is fiscally prudent based on a realtor's assessment of market value, subject to approval by the University of the offering and final sale price; 3. Directive to the Assistance Corporation that proceeds from the sale be used to offset any costs related to the sale, and upon completion of the sale the outstanding debt, along with any associated fees, will be defeased with the remainder to be deposited to the University's fund. The University's president and interim vice president for finance and facilities are authorized to do all things and take all actions deemed necessary or desirable to carry into effect the matters hereby authorized. (See attachment)

Voting in the affirmative:	Beckett, Davis, Immerman, Kezer, Lampassi, Lancome and Morales (chair)
Voting in the negative:	None
Absent:	Billings, Cabral, DiPalma

* * *

Executive – Chair Morales then presented the Executive Committee's proposed revisions to its charter. The charter amendments included edits to ensure the charter follows the board protocols, policy updates and university style guidelines.

*Executive
Committee:
Approval of
Charter
Revisions*

Hearing no further discussion, Trustee Lancome moved the motion and Trustee Lampassi seconded the motion. Upon a roll call it was,

VOTED: The Board of Trustees of Salem State University hereby approves the proposed revisions to the Executive Committee Charter as presented (see attached).

Voting in the affirmative:	Beckett, Davis, DiPalma, Immerman, Kezer, Lampassi, Lancome and Morales (chair)
Voting in the negative:	None
Absent:	Billings, Cabral

* * *

III. NEW BUSINESS:

Presidential Review – Vice Chair Lampassi shared that the Presidential Review Committee (PRC) met on January 30th to approve the committee’s Executive Summary which was included in the packet for the board’s review. He explained that the PRC’s work began once President Keenan submitted his annual review to the board. In accordance with the Department of Higher Education Guidelines, the committee is required to submit an Executive Summary of the president’s annual review for acceptance to the board, and if appropriate, a compensation recommendation. Once the board acts on the matter, the motion, Executive Summary and president’s self-review are forwarded to the Department of Higher Education.

Hearing no further discussion, Trustee Lancome moved the motion and Trustee Davis seconded the motion. Upon a roll call it was,

VOTED: The Board of Trustees hereby accepts and submits, as presented the AY 2024-2025 annual report of President John D. Keenan as approved at its February 4, 2026, meeting. Included in the Board’s approval of the review is a recommendation, based on President Keenan’s evaluation that he be given the maximum merit-based compensation adjustment consistent with the Department of Higher Education (DHE) Guidelines. (See attached)

Voting in the affirmative:	Beckett, Davis, DiPalma, Immerman, Kezer, Lampassi, Lancome and Morales (chair)
Voting in the negative:	None
Absent:	Billings, Cabral

* * *

IV. FACULTY FOCUS

Chair Morales introduced the Faculty Focus segment and extended a warm welcome to Professor Vanessa Ruget from the Politics, Policy and International Relations Department. Chair Morales congratulated Professor Ruget on her prestigious Fulbright award and invited her to address the board.

Professor Ruget expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to present her recent research conducted in Estonia at the University of Tartu’s Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies. Her work centered on digital democracy, with particular emphasis on Estonia’s pioneering efforts in electronic governance and the complex political landscape shaped by its proximity to Russia. Professor Ruget highlighted that these experiences will directly

*New
Business:
Presidential
Review
Committee –
AY2024-
2025 Annual
Review of
President
John Keenan*

*Faculty
Focus –
Professor
Vanessa
Ruget
Politics,
Policy and
International
Relations –
Fulbright
Program*

inform and enrich her teaching at Salem State, allowing her to bring global perspectives and innovative practices into the classroom. (See attached presentation)

Estonia stands at the forefront of digital governance, being the first nation to implement a comprehensive digital ID system. This system provides every citizen with a secure electronic identity, enabling seamless access to a wide range of government and private sector services, such as voting online, managing healthcare records, banking, and signing legal documents remotely. The convenience and efficiency of Estonia's digital ID have transformed daily life, reduced bureaucratic barriers and enhanced transparency and civic participation. Estonia's success in e-government and digital citizenship serves as a model for nations seeking to modernize public administration and foster democratic engagement.

Professor Ruget discussed the evolving nature of Russia's citizenship regime, noting that the Russian government has increasingly used passports and citizenship as instruments of hybrid warfare. For decades, Russia has leveraged citizenship policies to exert influence over populations in neighboring countries, often granting passports to residents in contested regions to create political leverage. Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia's approach has intensified, with new legislation in 2023 reinforcing these practices and resulting in significant consequences for individuals both within Russia and in border states. This strategy raises profound security concerns for Estonia, which regards Russia as its primary external threat. Given Estonia's history and geographic proximity, the weaponization of citizenship by Russia represents a destabilizing factor, prompting Estonia to strengthen its democratic institutions and national resilience.

Drawing from her firsthand experiences in Estonia, Professor Ruget emphasized her commitment to integrating lessons on digital democracy and regional security into her courses at Salem State. By examining Estonia's innovative digital ID system and its broader implications for governance, students will gain valuable insights into the intersection of technology, policy, and democracy. Additionally, understanding Russia's use of citizenship as a tool of hybrid warfare will enable students to critically assess contemporary challenges in international relations. Professor Ruget's engagement with leading scholars and practitioners abroad will provide Salem State students with unique perspectives and practical knowledge, preparing them to navigate and contribute to an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

The trustees enjoyed a lengthy dialogue with Professor Ruget and thanked her spending her time and talents with the membership.

* * *

V. STAFF FOCUS – Chair Morales then welcomed Megan Miller, university registrar; Mathew Chetnik, assistant dean of Student Success and First-Year Experience; and Dyanna Moreira, director of Orientation and Student Life. They were invited to share insights on the support and resources dedicated to establishing Salem State as a transfer-affirming institution (See attached presentation)

*Staff Focus-
Building a
Transfer-
Affirming
Institution*

Registrar Megan Miller opened the presentation by highlighting Salem State University's ongoing efforts to become a transfer-affirming institution. These efforts involve collaboration between Enrollment Management, Student Success, Student Life, Orientation, and Academic Affairs. The goal is to enhance recruitment pathways, remove enrollment obstacles, foster student belonging, and aid degree completion for transfer students.

The university has strengthened its transfer infrastructure by increasing the number of transfer counselors from one to three, which enhances prospective student advising and case management. SSU has also introduced a graduate assistant role focused on applicant outreach to improve communication and support. Operational changes have sped up the processing of applications, evaluations, and admissions decisions. This increased efficiency supports enrollment growth and enhances the experience for transfer applicants.

Clear, seamless transfer pathways are being developed to boost yield, enhance student preparedness, and shorten time to degree. Major-specific transfer advising maps for partner community colleges help align curricula and minimize credit loss.

New around-the-clock transfer evaluations and degree audits offer greater transparency for students.

Enhanced workflows for transcript data extraction and course equivalency bring modernization to back-end operations.

Looking ahead, SSU plans to expand on-site advising and coaching at community colleges and broaden transfer scholarship opportunities beyond current partners. Strengthening these pathways will further increase yield, enhance student readiness, and decrease time to graduation.

Director Dyanna Moreira described transfer-focused orientation and belonging initiatives. The newly redesigned orientation for transfer students centers on belonging, resource navigation, and community building. Year-round programming acknowledges transfer identity, addresses transition needs, and fosters visible affirmation. Increased belonging and engagement have been linked to higher retention and completion rates.

Assistant Dean Mathew Chetnik explained that Student Success funds support two new Transfer Success Coaches, providing academic transition support, case management, and proactive intervention. This targeted coaching strengthens persistence among a high-impact transfer student population.

Salem State recognizes high-achieving transfer students, enriching academic culture and reinforcing its transfer-affirming identity. The university recently established a Tau Sigma chapter, the national transfer honor society, inducting 90 students into its first class. Members enjoy scholarship and leadership opportunities.

Through coordinated, strategic investments in transfer support, Salem State is creating a more efficient admissions pipeline, lowering barriers to entry, strengthening academic advising, and nurturing a sense of belonging. These initiatives position the university for stable enrollment, improved student outcomes, and a reputation as a transfer-friendly destination in the region.

* * *

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT- Chair Morales deferred her time to President and shared her excitement and enthusiasm for the university's gift announcement.

Chair's
Report

* * *

VII. PRESIDENT'S REPORT –

President's
Report

Gift Announcement - President Keenan began his report by expressing tremendous gratitude to Kim & Philip Schiller for their second transformational gift of this campaign – making them our leading donor for Meet the Moment. The additional bilingual services in our Nav Center will greatly enhance our accessibility and servingness to the diverse communities we serve. President Keenan said that he was not aware of any other such HSI gift in the Commonwealth.

This gift brings us to 90% of our \$75 million goal. We are indeed Meeting the Moment.

BOLD:

The president said that progress continues on BOLD – even in two feet of snow and freezing weather. Almost entire foundation and stairwells are complete, and the steel is coming soon. He then invited all to join in for the Beam Signing event on Wednesday, February 11th. It is a wonderful tradition of steelworker for the final beam to be placed.

The president provided that Horace Mann construction is also moving along and that tours will be available next week. If trustees can't make it to campus next week, then we can surely find another time.

Campus Events:

President Keenan shared that the Tri Alpha event was held last Friday for first-gen students who achieve honors. This event definitely fills your cup. Students get to announce themselves and thank their supporters. As a first gen himself, President Keenan like most of our students and our senior team in fact, this event carries special significance. President Keenan gave a big thank you to Matthew Chetnick and his team for starting this wonderful tradition.

MLK Convocation:

The president said that because of the snowstorm, the MLK Convocation was pushed out a week and that the date worked even better to coincide with the beginning of Black History Month.

It was a wonderful day with an opening breakfast, candlelight march and convocation in the Sophia where the Rev Dr. Andre Bennet mesmerized the audience with his remarks on the meaning of MLK in today's world. It was wrapped up with a luncheon and awards to students for an MLK essay contest, community and campus leaders.

Those recognized:

Our very own former BOT member Angel Garcia

Undergrad: Araby-ha Rankin '26

Grad student: Darianna Guerrero

Professor Sophie Evitt
Administrator: Dr. Kevin Linton

President Keenan recognized the BEES and Brotherhood who sponsored and served as the MC of the events as well as Dean Newton and Carlie Pierre from the Office of Inclusive Excellence.

MLK Celebration Planning Comm
Academic Affairs & the Provosts Office
Alumni Assoc & Foundation
Center for Justice & Liberation
Salem Human Rights Coalition

It was a very uplifting day.

FY27 Budget Process Underway:

President Keenan noted that Governor Healey released her proposed budget last week for the next fiscal year. While the health care cuts from D.C. have us concerned, the budget is starting in a good place and seems most, if not all, of our increased labor costs have been included – as well as continued Student Success funds. The budget heads now to the House in April and the Senate in May. Vice President Lopez and her team are busy building our budget as well.

Presidential Evaluation:

President Keenan thanked the board for their confidence. He said that his is a team sport and that he couldn't do it without the support of the board and the terrific campus team.

President Keenan closed his remarks by noting that St Patricks' Day – Naples may be the last hurrah. Join us if you can. Mandy and Mike have all the details.

And closed with support for the Patriot's at the Super Bowl and hope to bring home our 7th Super Bowl trophy.

The day was filled with positivity and inspiration.

* * *

VIII. SSU COMMUNITY FORUM & CAMPUS EVENTS - Vice Chair Lampassi announced there were no questions submitted for the meeting and encouraged community input at future meetings. He then announced that in response to trustee interest in community engagement, the board would share a number of upcoming events that may be of interest to both trustees and forum participants:

- February is Black History Month (events listed on website)
- The week of February 9th is the Darwin Festival – a week of events celebrating the work of Charles Darwin. (events listed on website)

*SSU
Community
Forum &
Campus
Events*

- Alumni Cartoonist and Social Activist Keith Knight will host a Q&A and Episode Screening: February 11
- Bruins Alumni Game: February 22
- Bringing BOLD to You: March TBD (All virtual)
- Florida 2026: March 11-15
- Reunion for Alumni and Friends in Public Service: March 19 (MA State House)

Please contact Lynne Montague in the President's Office if you have questions about any events.

* * *

IX. CONSENT AGENDA – Chair Morales read the items contained on the Consent Agenda and asked for any objections or modifications.

Chair Morales asked if there were any additional edits and hearing none, called for a motion to accept the minutes.

Trustee Kezer moved the motion and Trustee Lancome seconded. Upon a roll call vote it was,

VOTED: To approve the Consent Agenda of February 4, 2026 (See attached list).

Voting in the affirmative:	Billings, Davis, DiPalma, Immerman, Kezer, Lampassi, Lancome and Morales (chair)
Voting in the negative:	None
Absent:	Cabral

* * *

X. ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business to come before the Board and on a motion made by Trustee Lancome and seconded by Trustee DiPalma, it was unanimously,

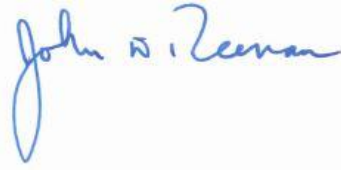
VOTED: To adjourn the meeting

Voting in the affirmative:	Billings, Davis, DiPalma, Immerman, Kezer, Lampassi, Lancome and Morales (chair)
Voting in the negative:	None
Absent:	Billings, Cabral

Respectfully submitted,

*Consent
Agenda*

Adjournment



John Keenan
President



Lynne Montague
Secretary to the Board of Trustees

February 4, 2026

Consent Agenda Items

Minutes and reports for approval:

Board of Trustees – October 15, 2025

Executive – October 22, 2025

Board of Trustees Off-site – December 12, 2025

Advancement – January 21, 2026

Executive - January 21, 2026

Finance & Facilities – January 21, 2026

Risk Management & Audit – January 21, 2026

Academic Affairs & Student Life – January 21, 2026

REQUEST FOR TRUSTEE ACTION

Date:	January 14, 2026
To:	Board of Trustees
From:	Sallyann Lopez, Interim VP for Finance and Facilities
Subject:	Sale of 66 Loring Avenue – 122 Broadway, Salem, MA
Requested Action:	Approval

The Salem State University Assistance Corporation ("Assistance Corporation") acquired 66 Loring Avenue – 122 Broadway and 68 Loring Avenue, Salem, MA, in 2017 for \$847,500 pursuant to the Salem State University's ("University") master vision plan. The University no longer has a need for the property located at 66 Loring Avenue – 122 Broadway as construction of a parking garage in that area is no longer of interest. The University seeks to ask the Assistance Corporation to sell 66 Loring Avenue – 122 Broadway and to use the proceeds to defease the remaining debt, including the portion of the debt attributed to 68 Loring Avenue which will not be sold. See attachment for more information.

MOTION

The Finance and Facilities Committee hereby recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the following motion pertaining to the sale of 66 Loring Avenue - 122 Broadway.

Recommended Motion

The Board of Trustees approves the following actions regarding the property located at 66 Loring -122 Broadway: 1. Modification of the lease between the Assistance Corporation and the University if needed to facilitate a sale; 2. Directive to the Assistance Corporation to sell the property if said sale price is fiscally prudent based on a realtor's assessment of market value, subject to approval by the University of the offering and final sale price; 3. Directive to the Assistance Corporation that proceeds from the sale be used to offset any costs related to the sale, and upon completion of the sale the outstanding debt, along with any associated fees, will be defeased with the remainder to be deposited to the University's fund. The University's president and interim vice president for finance and facilities are authorized to do all things and take all actions deemed necessary or desirable to carry into effect the matters hereby authorized.

Committee Assigned: Finance & Facilities

Committee Action: Approved

Date of Action: January 21, 2026

Trustee Action: Approved

Trustee Approval Date: February 4, 2026

Effective Date: February 4, 2026

Signed: 
[Lynne Montague \(Feb 4, 2026 18:17:37 EST\)](#)

Title: Secretary, Board of Trustees

Date: 2/4/2026

66 Loring – 122 Broadway

January 2026

PROJECT GOALS

Sale of 66 Loring-122 Broadway

Background

- The Salem State Assistance Corporation (SSUAC) purchased 66 Loring – 122 Broadway on June 29, 2017 for \$847,500.
- SSAUC owns the property and would technically be the seller.
- Salem State University (SSU) has a ten-year lease beginning 6/28/2017 for \$1 per year.

Property information

- Office style building, built in 1932 with 2,734 sq. ft, 3 rooms and 2 half-baths

Justification for sale

- The property is no longer considered strategic, as earlier plans for a potential parking garage in that area are no longer viable or necessary.
- Proceeds from the sale would allow the university to redirect funds toward pressing capital priorities, including Project BOLD and deferred maintenance needs.

Steps required to sell the property

1. Appraisal
2. Modification of lease for sale
3. SSU Board of Trustee approval
4. SSUAC Board approval
5. MA Board of Higher Education notification
6. Selection of realtor
7. Marketing and closing on the property

REQUEST FOR TRUSTEE ACTION

Date: January 21, 2026
To: Board of Trustees
From: President Keenan
Subject: Charter Revisions
Requested Action: Approval

The Executive Committee hereby recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the following motion.

MOTION

The Board of Trustees of Salem State University hereby approves the proposed revisions to the Executive Committee Charter as presented (see attached).

Committee Assigned: Executive
Committee Action: approved
Date of Action: 1/21/2026

Trustee Action: Approved
Trustee Approval Date: February 4, 2026
Effective Date: N/S

Signed: Lynne Montague
Title: Secretary of the Board of Trustees
Date: February 5, 2026



Board of Trustees Executive Committee Charter

Purpose:

The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees shall be a permanent committee which will take actions as needed between scheduled meetings of the full Board, including time sensitive matters. In addition, the Executive Committee will address all matters not assigned to other permanent committees including, but not limited to, those listed under responsibilities below:

Responsibilities:

(a) To act upon matters for the Board of Trustees, when immediate action is necessary.

(b) To consider and act upon proposals by the President for action which the Board may have generally or specifically authorized the President to take with the concurrence of the Executive Committee.

(c) To conduct upon referral from the Board formal hearings as required by law for the Board of Trustees or any Committee of Trustees and to make recommendations to the Board concerning any matter heard, provided that hearings required by law to be conducted as adjudicatory proceedings shall be governed by General Laws, Chapter 30A.

(c) To review recommendations of the President and to recommend all actions required to be taken by the Board of Trustees on personnel (excluding faculty and librarians) from appointment to termination in accordance with collective bargaining agreements, Board of Higher Education and Board policies.

(e) To review, update, and implement current affirmative action policies of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Higher Education, and to ensure compliance with State and Federal Laws.

(f) To consider legislative and public relations policy interests of the Board of Trustees and of the university and to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees with respect thereto.

~~(g) To consider, propose and recommend to the Board of Trustees the adoption, amendment or revision of the Bylaws.~~

~~(h) To review recommendations of the President and recommend to the Board of Trustees the naming of buildings, streets, ways, and other properties relating to the~~

Commented [LM1]: Bylaws are reviewed by the BOT secretary and general counsel for necessary updates and style changes. Proposed changes are presented to the BOT.

campus as guided by the Naming Policy of the university. Final approval regarding the adoption of said names rests with the Board of Trustees.

Commented [LM2]: Conflicts with Naming Opportunities and Gift Recognition Policy as of 10/15/25. See attached policy.

(i) To recommend to the Board of Trustees for appointment four members of the Salem State University Assistance Corporation Board of Directors and the SSUAC Board Chair.

Commented [LM3]:
SSUAC appointments/reappointments have been moved to the BOT due to the high number of vacancies on the SSUAC board.

Membership:

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees, the President of the university, and three additional Board members as nominated by the Governance Committee and elected to this committee by the Board of Trustees ~~at the annual meeting~~.

Quorum:

A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

Staff Designee:

The president of the university is committee liaison.

Meetings:

The committee ~~is expected to meet at least four times each fiscal year~~ shall meet as needed. The Chair of the Board of Trustees or the President of the university may call a meeting of the Executive Committee by declaring that an emergency condition exists. An emergency condition shall be defined as a sudden set of circumstances arising which require the need for immediate action. The Chair of the Board of Trustees or the President of the university shall fix the time and place of such emergency meeting. Meetings shall be conducted and the Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall send notice in conformity with the state's Open Meeting Law. Executive sessions may be conducted periodically and shall be limited to those matters permitted by the state's Open Meeting Law.

Agenda, Minutes and Reports:

The chair of the committee, in collaboration with the staff designee, shall be responsible for establishing the agenda for meetings. An agenda, together with relevant materials shall be made available to committee members ~~at least five days~~ in advance of meetings. Minutes for all meetings shall be drafted by the staff designee, reviewed by the committee chair, and approved by the committee members at the following meeting.

Commented [LM4]: Emergency meetings may not allow for 5 days advance notice. All meetings notices will be in compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

*1/21/26 Changes proposed
10/16/19 As amended and Approved by the Salem State University Board of Trustees
12/2/2015 Approved by the Salem State University Board of Trustees*

PAGE HOLDER

PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE VOTE

MOVED TO END OF MINUTES WITH AY 2024-2025

PRESIDENT JOHN D. KEENAN'S EVALUATION

My Fullbright in Estonia February –July 2025

Vanessa Ruget

Professor, Politics, Policy and International
Relations

Faculty Director, Center for Research and
Creative Activities



Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu



Vanessa Julie Ruget

Visiting Professor

PhD (Political Science)

vanessa.julie.ruget@ut.ee



University
founded in
1632!



Google Map



European
Union



Among few post-Soviet countries
to be fully democratic

Part of the EU since 2004

First country to do e-voting,
leader in digital citizenship & e-
democracy

[Source](#)

NATO ON THE MAP



Part of NATO
since 2004

Russia's threat



Estonian Foreign
Intelligence Service

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND ESTONIA 2025

FOREWORD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE
- 2 RUSSIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS AND ECONOMY
- 3 RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY
- 4 RUSSIAN INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES
- 5 RUSSIAN SPECIAL SERVICES
- 6 CHINA
- 7 PROTECTION OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

PREVIOUS REPORTS



Personal pictures

My work in Estonia

* MA level Course on Comparative Politics (Democratic Erosion)

* Life of the university

- Staff meetings
- Writing seminar
- Research colloquium
- MA theses review
- PhD prospectus reviewer
- Russian class
- Annual conference
- Graduation choir 😊

* Research

Russia's weaponization of passports

- 2023 citizenship law
- Renouncing a Russian passport





RUSSIA'S WEAPONIZATION OF PASSPORTS: A FOCUS ON RECENT LEGISLATION

A Research Conversation with Professor Vanessa Ruget



Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 12:30 pm EST

**Forten 123, Charlotte Forten Hall,
Harrington Campus, Salem State University**
(Remote option available)

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC





Personal pictures

Building a Transfer Affirming Institution Through Cross-Division Collaboration



Mathew Chetnik, Student Success and First Year Experience, CAE
Dyanna Moreira, Orientation, Student Life
Megan Miller, University Registrar, Enrollment Management

Strengthening Foundations

Expanded Capacity

- Increased Transfer Counselors from 1-3
- Added Graduate Assistant for Applicant Outreach
- Reduced time to application completion and decision

Transfer Journeys

- Redesign of transfer admissions communications
- Transfer-targeted outreach
- Enhanced cross-office collaborations

Seamless Pathways Through Innovation

Transfer Advising Maps

- Major-specific advising maps for partner community colleges

Transfer Technology

- 24-7 On demand transfer evaluations
- 24-7 Degree Audits
- Back end transcript data extraction
- Streamlined transfer equivalency workflow

Future Expansion

- On-site CC pre-admissions transfer coaching/advising
- Expansion of transfer fellow scholarships to additional partner CCs (currently limited to NSCC/NECC)

Orientation Designed for Transfer Success



Impact: Orientation is not just an event, it is the first step in transfer student belonging, persistence, and success at Salem State University.

Beyond Orientation: Sustaining Transfer Sense of Belonging Year- Round



Transfer Specific Programming

- Orientation Office leads National Transfer Student Week initiatives
- Celebrate transfer pride and highlight transfer student voices
- Creates visible moments of recognition across campus



Community Building & Visibility

- Events designed for transfer students to connect with one another
- Reinforces that transfer students are valued and a vital part of the Salem State community



Cross- Division Collaboration in Action

- Partnering with campus partners across divisions to create meaningful action and awareness
- Shared responsibility for creating a **transfer-affirming campus culture**

Impact: Transfer student experience Salem State as place that recognizes their journey, values their experience, and supports their success beyond their first day.

Transfer Success Coaching



- Adding 2 transfer success coaches to provide academic and transition support (Student Success Funds)

Honoring Transfer Achievements



- Established of a chapter of Tau Sigma, national transfer honor society
- Initiated 90 students into the inaugural class
- Access to networking and scholarships



REQUEST FOR TRUSTEE ACTION

Date: January 30, 2026
To: Board of Trustees
Subject: Presidential Review and Compensation
Requested Action: Approval

An accomplished leader, President Keenan exemplifies an unwavering dedication to academic excellence, student achievement, and meaningful civic engagement. His dynamic leadership sets a powerful tone for the entire administration, inspiring those around him to strive for the highest standards and create lasting positive impacts within the university and the broader community. He has put in place the organization and processes necessary to move the university forward to meet the needs of Salem State today and in the future. President Keenan has a strong vision for the university that is community and regionally focused – and with the support of his board and campus, he will achieve it.

Per the Department of Higher Education's Presidential Evaluation Guidelines, the presidential review committee ("PRC") of the board of trustees has completed its report of President John Keenan's performance for the academic year 2024-2025 and has deemed his performance to be exemplary.

Board of Trustees approval is requested for the following motion:

Recommended motion

MOTION: The Board of Trustees hereby accepts and submits, as presented the AY 2024-2025 annual report of President John D. Keenan as approved at its February 4, 2026, meeting. Included in the Board's approval of the review is a recommendation, based on President Keenan's evaluation that he be given the maximum merit-based compensation adjustment consistent with the Department of Higher Education (DHE) Guidelines.

Committee: Presidential Review Committee
Committee Action: Approved
Date of Action: January 30, 2026

Trustee Action: Approved
Trustee Approval Date: February 4, 2026
Effective Date: N/A

Signed: Lynne Montague
Title: Secretary of Board of Trustees
Date: _February 4, 2026

2024-2025 Executive Summary

Presidential Review: Salem State University, President John D. Keenan

Presidential Review Committee

Jim Lampassi, Chair

Elizabeth Cabral

Alyce Davis

Samanda Morales, Ex Officio

I. The Review Process

The 2024-2025 Presidential Review Committee (PRC) was established earlier this year, and the annual review process was initiated with a charge from the Board Chair to the PRC to produce a report to be considered for a vote by the Board of Trustees on February 4, 2026. The PRC established the criteria for review, clarified the protocol for completion of the review, and determined the timeline of meetings required to submit a report to the Board of Higher Education.

As part of the annual evaluation process, the president prepares a self-evaluation (See Appendix 1).

The president's self-evaluation (PSE) is organized using statewide objectives, the University's Strategic Plan, and mutually established goals as a framework. The report is comprehensive and describes initiatives, planning, achievements, and challenges during the last academic year.

The Committee considered the president's performance in two broad areas: performance of Salem State in the context of statewide objectives, specific goals set forth by Salem State University, and advances made by focusing on the essential elements of student success and life readiness as set forth by the universities strategic plan.

II. The Performance Data to Support Conclusions and Recommendations

Performance data are embedded within each section of this document.

III. Summary Statement

President Keenan's commitment to the mission of Salem State University and its students remains evident in his leadership and the strategic direction he has set for the university. From fostering academic excellence, to a laser focus on student success and social mobility and the advancement of Salem State as a leader in the region, his unwavering optimism and proactive approach allow him to tackle any challenge that might hinder the university's progress. Achieving milestones like reaching the eligibility requirements to become a federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, receiving national recognition for social mobility, launching innovative academic and workforce development programs, and breaking ground on a transformational

capital project underscore a dedication to advancing the university's mission and supporting its diverse community.

FY25 marked a pivotal year for Salem State University. The institution co-hosted the inaugural New England Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution Conference, welcoming over 400 participants and national leaders. SSU achieved a significant milestone by surpassing the 25% Hispanic student enrollment threshold, positioning itself to become Massachusetts' first four-year public HSI. Additionally, the university earned national recognition as the highest-ranking Massachusetts public university for social mobility by U.S. News & World Report and was named a top producer of Fulbright Scholars for the fourth time.

The opening of a state-of-the-art Cybersecurity Range enhanced hands-on learning and workforce development opportunities. Faculty and students received numerous awards and grants, including support for open educational resources and behavioral health internships. SSU was also recognized for excellence in student voter registration and turnout during the 2022 midterm elections and hosted Earth Days 2025, focusing on climate change impacts and biodiversity.

In 2024-2025, President Keenan maintained a strong focus on capital improvements and sustainability. In April 2025, SSU broke ground on two major capital projects—SSU BOLD, and North Campus Decarbonization. BOLD is the university's campus unification and modernization initiative, which includes significant renovations to the Horace Mann and an addition to Meier Hall. Decarbonization efforts will provide geothermal heating/cooling for the entire North Campus (eventually) alongside energy-efficient building upgrades (over \$150 million). The North Campus decarbonization project stands out as one of only two in the state university system and is intended to serve as a model for other campuses in the Commonwealth.

President Keenan has consistently prioritized equity, access, and support for underserved students. SSU expanded need-based and targeted financial support, increased the enrollment and retention of diverse and Pell-eligible students, implemented multilingual outreach, and developed comprehensive wraparound support services. These initiatives include persistence grants and programs tailored for first-generation and transfer students, designed to close opportunity gaps and promote student success.

To further enhance student success and life readiness, President Keenan and the academic affairs team revamped the General Education program, introduced workforce-aligned initiatives such as the Cyber Range and a cybersecurity minor, and expanded internship policies and opportunities. SSU also increased access to credentials, including Academic Seals in areas like sustainability and global awareness. The university is proactively preparing students to be ethical and active users of AI technology in the workplace by fostering critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills, ensuring that graduates are equipped to adapt and thrive in a rapidly evolving professional environment.

President Keenan and his advancement team have advanced the university toward 72% of its \$75 million campaign goal. The student financial assistance target of \$20 million was surpassed with

\$29.5 million raised, benefiting 1,790 students through various awards and grants, including 252 Viking Completion Grants and 902 awards from the Student Emergency Fund, which supports food and housing-insecure students. In FY25, two new scholarships were established, and SSU joined the Fidelity Foundation's Invest in My Education program, securing \$1 million in grants over three years (PSE 37).

President Keenan's leadership prioritizes both institutional advancement and the well-being of the campus community, as evidenced by investments in academic distinction, support for underserved populations, and engagement with civic and social justice initiatives. Civic and community engagement are central to Salem State University's identity. The university has pursued reclassification for the Carnegie Community Engagement designation, forged substantial partnerships with local organizations, integrated experiential learning and service events, and supported regional workforce development needs.

Thanks to President Keenan's leadership and the work of his financial team, the university restructured its debt to maintain student affordability by limiting tuition and fee increases and boosting financial aid. Over five years, financial aid grants as a proportion of tuition and fees rose from 39.1% to 61.9%, mainly due to increased state funding. Tuition and fees revenue decreased from \$80.4M (FY2021) to \$73.2M (FY25), while financial aid grew from \$31.5M to \$45.2M. The university ended FY25 with a positive net income of about \$9.8M.

President Keenan is an innovative, equity-minded leader who is responsive to both student and community needs. He is adept at securing resources and building partnerships to advance the university's mission, and champions bold strategic growth. President Keenan has positioned Salem State as a forward-thinking institution responsive to the evolving needs of its students and society. In summary, the Board of Trustees is confident that President Keenan is the leader that the Salem State wants right now.

A. Institutional Goals

AY2024-2025 Goals and Priorities by Division

Academic Affairs

- Academic Excellence and Active Learning
 - Assess and revise SSU's General Education (Gen Ed) curriculum, focusing on First Year Seminars.
 - Strengthen the "Culture of Assessment" by ensuring student learning outcomes for degree programs and establishing a plan for institutional outcomes assessment.
- Experiential Learning and Engagement
 - Create a consolidated inventory of courses with experiential learning elements.
 - Apply for recertification as a Civically Engaged Campus by the Carnegie Foundation.
- Student Engagement and Success
 - Increase faculty use of Navigate for advising.
 - Build capacity for Global Engagement in preparation for incoming cohorts from China, India, and the Philippines.

- Faculty Support and Growth
 - Implement an early-career faculty mentoring program (September 2025), focusing on universal design for faculty of color.
 - Revise the university's approach to supporting faculty in continuing scholarship.

Advancement

- Raise \$10 million towards Meet the Moment campaign.
- Create and implement an engagement strategy to strengthen connections with high-potential prospects and alumni, building a pipeline for future leadership donors

Finance And Facilities

- SSU BOLD
 - Develop strategies to mitigate parking challenges resulting from both the BOLD and Decarbonization initiatives.
 - Secure funding, progress through design phase, and initiate construction.
- Strategic Budget/Financial Management
 - Achieve a balanced budget within three years while managing reserves during deficits.
 - Train departments on fund utilization and improve Financial Aid reporting.
 - Revise templates and collaborate on 5-year proformas for strategic plan proposals.
- Dining Improvements
 - Enhance dining through program and financial improvements, including re-establishing food options.
 - Implement strategies to reduce the campus dining subsidy, ensuring sustainability.

General Counsel & Human Resources

Human Resources

- Implement new Human Capital Management (HCM) system PageUp across university.
- Ensure policies and practices promote collaboration among employees to support engagement and effective across on-campus, hybrid, and remote work models.
- Ongoing recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce in partnership with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion

ITS

- Refresh employee computers, many of which are outdated and unable to support new Microsoft applications
- Implement "Take-A-Class" to help both matriculated and non-matriculated students easily find available courses

Inclusive Excellence

- Steward SSU's transition to HSI-MSI status
- Reconstitute DEI Council as Inclusive Excellence Council (formerly PAC/D) to foster institutional transformation
- Strengthen Employee Resource and Affinity Groups (ERGs)
- Continue collaboration with SRS to prepare for equity audit in fall 2025

Student Success

- Admissions
 - Streamline and expand Direct Admissions to the Lynn school district and onboard the Common Application tool. Increase partnerships with PI< 12 districts and community organizations, promoting affordable, barrier-free transfer pathways.
 - Collaborate with faculty, administrators, and students to share Salem State stories, raise public awareness, and define SSU's identity and value in the marketplace.
- Supports and Wraparound Services
 - Highlight the importance of advising in student success by utilizing technology, especially the Academic Planner/Navigator, to ensure accessible, equitable, and integrated advising.
 - Build strategic partnerships to increase student engagement with career services.
 - Guarantee the successful launch of the Center for Accessible Academic Resources (CAAR).
 - Build comprehensive training and support structures to equip staff with the knowledge needed to guide and coach students effectively.
 - Continue developing assessments to meet student needs (e.g., LOA reasons, post-appointment surveys).
 - Create programs that foster social and community connections.
- Enrollment Management
 - Complete campus-wide rollout of the Academic Planner to support advisors, administration, and students in course planning, boosting retention and degree completion.
 - Align Enrollment Management with the current and future needs of the student population.
 - Clearly communicate student rights and responsibilities, setting expectations for both staff and students during "business of being a student" activities with Enrollment Management and the Student Navigation Center.
 - Expand outreach and partnerships with local high schools.
 - Increase undergraduate Direct Admissions through the Common App program, targeting first-generation and marginalized students to eliminate barriers.
 - Streamline transfer credit processing with data automation to enhance efficiency and strengthen community college pathways.
 - Revise financial aid policies to remove barriers by maximizing Federal and State grants and institutional-based grants to reduce student debt.
 - Update campus tours to feature Salem State's sustainability efforts.
 - Emphasize student rights and responsibilities to foster engagement, empowerment, and progress toward goals.
 - Provide training opportunities for staff on addressing the evolving needs of students, including topics like crisis management, student trauma, and de-escalation techniques.
 - Partner with Decision Support, IT, and campus data stewards to identify data gaps and update Power BI reports.

- Marketing and Communications
 - Align student social media content with trends in student needs, including mental health, diversity, sustainability, and student life.
 - Continue to advocate for intuitive, straightforward communications in key areas, like student accounts, financial aid, housing, and registration, to help students and their families better understand this information.
 - Work to make campus-wide content more accessible to first generation students and their families, with a particular focus on the Hispanic and minority populations.
 - Enhance paid social media strategy—to help us reach a broader, more diverse audience and drive higher engagement rates.
 - Redevelop brand presence on third-party sites—identify new ways to assess, score and redevelop our brand presence on third-party sites, such as Google and college search results. This will involve optimizing our online presence to ensure accurate and positive representations of Salem State University to our wider marketplace.
- Student Life
 - Collaborate and implement programs to foster student involvement and community building.
 - Launch initiatives to enhance Student Life facilities including the Ellison Campus Center 5 Residence Halls, fitness center, athletic center, and fields.
 - Improve housing selection with new software and enhance resident student programming to increase housing retention.
 - Hire full-time directors for Orientation, Student Wellness, and the Center for Justice & Liberation.
 - Update policies and procedures to comply with the latest Title IX regulations.

The PRC has reviewed the metrics set last fall and found that the president had successfully exhibited outstanding leadership and management during the 2024-2025 academic year. The AY2025-2026 goals and priorities are set forth below, and we believe these goals are in keeping with the system-wide priority objectives set forth by the Board of Higher Education.

Academic Affairs

- Achieve full approval status from the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing by ensuring timely compliance with all directives, revised policies, evaluation plans, and documentation standards.
- Revise the First Year Seminar (FYS) program—set clear learning outcomes, standardized templates, faculty training, and clarify leadership roles with a memorandum.
- Ensure all academic units define student learning outcomes and implement assessment plans using technology.
- Assess online programs to identify and address gaps and create a flexible three-year expansion plan targeting adult learners.

- Complete the second phase of the experiential learning study to improve integration, sense of belonging, and student retention.
- Develop a collaborative three-year strategy for international student recruitment, admission, and enrollment, engaging multiple university units.
- In collaboration with HSI-MSI leadership, launch a pilot faculty mentoring program for early-career faculty, modeled after the North Star Collective.
- Create and pilot a process for reviewing general education categories (excluding FYS), with a suggested review schedule.
- Enhance and market curricular offerings to differentiate SSU, including establishing clear academic pathways.
- Increase faculty engagement with the Navigate platform by 10% by June 2026, expand to more departments, and raise the number of submitted cases, progress grades, and advising campaigns.
- Educate about AI's impact, update policies for ethics and equity, mandate AI guidelines in syllabi, and encourage ongoing discussion of AI's role in academic programs.

Advancement

- Engagement & Community: Launch strategic outreach across New England and the eastern seaboard to achieve at least 40% new attendees at in-person events. Grow digital engagement by increasing social media followers by 10%. Foster an inclusive, collaborative team culture.
- Donor Relations: Enhance communications and stewardship with impact stories, annual reports, and data-driven strategies to improve donor effectiveness.
- Operational Excellence: Successfully transition to Raiser's Edge NXT and automate data imports. Ensure a timely, error-free FY25 audit. Manage board leadership transitions and recruit new committee members.
- Financial Sustainability: Raise \$10M toward the \$75M Meet the Moment® Campaign and \$375,000 in unrestricted support. Launch an integrated fundraising plan focused on science and healthcare, build partnerships, and enhance donor retention from 44% to 50%.

Finance & Facilities

- Advance BOLD, Decarbonization, and other major capital projects, including construction, space planning, budgeting, debt issuance, and facility upgrades.
- Utilize Commonwealth SUCCESS grant funding to support strategic goals through coordinated budget management.
- Enhance business processes for students, faculty, and staff by improving bookstore, dining, Clipper Card system, package lockers, and housing systems.
- Modernize financial operations by upgrading budget and accounts payable systems, automating workflows, increasing electronic payments, and streamlining purchasing and space planning processes.
- Address staffing needs by supporting transitions, planning for retirements, and hiring new facilities staff.

Human Resources & General Counsel

- Implement the new HCM system with PageUp, launching the talent management module and providing campus-wide training.
- Promote proactive, positive labor relations with unions for mutual benefit.
- Ongoing analysis of labor costs and hiring trends, including MEPA review, to optimize staffing levels.
- Ensure strong policies and practices to support employee engagement and morale across on-campus, hybrid, and remote work models.
- Conduct an HR satisfaction survey (separate from the campus climate survey) and consider an external review for recommendations.

Inclusive Excellence

- Office Reorganization: Update structures for Inclusive Excellence and Equal Opportunity Compliance, aligning with Student Success and streamlining workflows, roles, and communications.
- Inclusive Excellence Council (IEC): Activate subcommittees, set an annual work plan, and establish regular meetings for campus-wide progress.
- Unified Training Model: Integrate bias response education, EO compliance, and state-mandated training for consistency and transparency.
- Campus Climate Survey: Collaborate with Institutional Research and IEC to conduct and analyze a climate survey in Spring 2026, guiding improvements for AY26–27.
- Communications Strategy: Launch coordinated communications to increase visibility and engagement with Inclusive Excellence initiatives across campus platforms and events.
- Education & Training: Expand faculty/staff development in equity, inclusion, and pedagogy, with recurring, mission-aligned training series and CTI collaboration.
- Bias Response: Refine reporting protocols, promote restorative practices, and increase transparency through quarterly campus summaries.
- HSI–MSI Initiatives: Deepen collaboration to align equity goals, support culturally responsive programming, and benchmark institutional data.
- Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): Grow and support ERGs to enhance community-building and inclusion for faculty and staff.
- Equity-Focused Audits: IEC subcommittees will audit key campus systems and deliver recommendations to advance equity by May 2026.

ITS

User Services:

Prepare for Windows 10 support ending by replacing over 200 systems and 90 podiums with thin clients. Upgrade staff to laptops, with over 100 outdated Macs addressed. Nearly 50 campus display systems will be installed for university information and events. The Viking Connect

project will replace Polaris Launchpad and Posts, including migration and training. The Jira Change Management System will be implemented to formalize approvals and reduce downtime. Six Meier Hall classrooms will receive new AV equipment, with possible expansion. Around 50 conferencing systems will be upgraded to Logitech hardware for improved performance.

Core Services:

Evaluate single sign-on and MFA for PeopleSoft to reduce costs and support needs. New wireless access points will update campus connectivity. Replace Stanley building datacenter cooling units and fire suppression will be reviewed for better equipment protection. Disaster recovery planning includes migrating critical systems to Azure cloud. A dedicated hire will lead the digitization of paper forms through workflow automation.

Information Security:

Launch a multi-year Data Loss Prevention project starting with tool selection. Automate Identity Access Management to replace unreliable scripts. Enhance email security with AI-based protection and mandatory employee training resuming in October for compliance.

Student Success

- Develop and implement a Strategic Retention and Enrollment Management Plan with clear KPIs, focusing on retention strategies (assessment of FYS, advising improvements, N360 interventions, faculty-in-residence expansion, coaching/mentoring review) and expanding enrollment markets for all student types, including increased campus housing.
- Annually increase enrollment by a minimum of 25 undergraduate and 25 graduate students over the FY25 total, for each of the next five years.
- Pursue the Seal of Excelencia and Federal HSI designation; lead the MA State Consortium for HSI's and MSI's.
- Achieve federal accessibility compliance (WCAG 2.1 AA) for all digital platforms by 04/24/2026, including stakeholder training and ongoing review.
- Effectively manage the State SUCCESS funding program.
- Conduct a campus climate survey.
- Increase awareness of student services and resources within the campus community.
- Track and assess experiential learning, enhancing student development through career services, internships, and leadership opportunities.
- Grow conference and event services to boost programming and revenue.
- Expand AI education and integration across campus.
- Launch an ad campaign showcasing new lab and nursing patient spaces once available.

B. System-Level Goals

Salem State University continues to be guided by the system-wide goals set forth by the Board of Higher Education. Under President Keenan's leadership, the university implemented the following campus-level efforts to further the BHE's Equity Agenda and improve success rates for

all students with an emphasis on affordability and implementation of new financial aid.

Affordability and New Financial Aid Implementation

SSU prioritizes financial aid to ensure higher education is accessible for all students. Among state universities in Massachusetts, SSU stands out as having the second most diverse and third largest undergraduate population, with students hailing from 11 of the 26 Gateway Cities. The incoming class of 2024 was among the most racially and ethnically varied in SSU's history: 49.7% of first-year students and 45% of transfer students identified as non-white, up from 43.1% and 36.2% the previous year. Enrollment for Pell-eligible students climbed to 46% for the 2024-2025 academic year (a 7% increase) primarily due to expanded need-based financial aid and adjustments to the aid formula (PSE 15).

SSU advanced statewide affordability priorities through a comprehensive set of initiatives designed to reduce financial barriers and support student persistence. The university expanded financial counseling, literacy programming, and personalized aid outreach, contributing to increased enrollment of Pell-eligible students and historically underserved students. Targeted financial support, including completion grants for at risk seniors, persistence grants that boosted retention by more than 6 percentage points, and substantial external awards such as the Frieze Family Fund's Grad Last Mile grant further strengthened affordability.

SSU continued funding for undocumented DACA students through The Dream US and MassGrant Plus Expansion, while maintaining tuition burden lower than the national average (Table 17, PSE). These efforts demonstrate SSU's strong commitment to making higher education accessible and financially attainable for all students.

Wraparound Support Services:

Salem State University provides robust wraparound support services to ensure student success and well-being. The Student Navigation Center (SNC) centralizes key services like financial aid, billing, and registration, and leverages coaching and digital platforms to offer coordinated academic, financial, wellness, and co-curricular support. Academic Affairs collaborates with the Division of Student Success to proactively assist academically at-risk students through initiatives such as College Completion Coaches, Persistence Grants, and early intervention strategies. Career Services, the Gassett Fitness Center, and Campus Life further enrich the student experience by fostering career readiness, community engagement, and holistic wellness.

Additional support includes the Center for Accessible Academic Resources (CAAR), which brings together Disability Services, Peer Tutoring, and Supplemental Instruction, and works with other centers to strengthen foundational skills. Counseling and Health Services provides comprehensive mental health and wellness resources, including expanded counseling staff, a 24/7 support line, and accessible wellness products. Residence Life promotes accessibility and inclusion through accommodation requests, targeted initiatives for international and commuter students, and revised policies to improve access for those with assistance animals. These

wraparound services reflect SSU's commitment to equity, engagement, and achievement for all students.

IV. Recommendation for Compensation Adjustment

See Motion attached.

V. Supporting materials: charts, graphs, and/or data

1. John D. Keenan's Presidential Self Evaluation 2024-2025

JOHN D. KEENAN, JD

PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW SELF EVALUATION
AY2024-2025



JANUARY 2026

 Salem | STATE
UNIVERSITY

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SUCSESSES

The 2024-2025 academic year at Salem State University has been a testament to our academic vitality, innovation, and commitment to student and faculty success. Our campus has been the site of transformative scholarly events, including the inaugural New England Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution Conference, which fostered collaboration and learning among national leaders and educators. Salem State's progress toward becoming the Commonwealth's first four-year public Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) reflects our dedication to inclusive excellence and educational opportunity.

Academic distinction was further demonstrated through national recognition: SSU was named the highest-ranking Massachusetts public university for social mobility by U.S. News & World Report, and our School of Graduate Studies received multiple honors for its outstanding programs. The opening of the state-of-the-art Cybersecurity Range has expanded experiential learning and workforce development in a critical field, while the Bertolon School of Business continued to inspire entrepreneurial thinking through its annual Business Pitch Competition and experiential learning opportunities at Nasdaq.

Faculty achievements have been equally impressive, with Salem State named a top producer of Fulbright Scholars for the fourth time, and professors receiving prestigious awards for research and international collaboration. Our commitment to academic equity was strengthened by grants supporting open educational resources (OER) and behavioral health internships, ensuring that students and faculty have access to the tools and experiences needed for success.

Through innovative programs, impactful research, and a vibrant intellectual community, Salem State University has made significant strides in advancing academic excellence and preparing our students to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Salem State University experienced a productive, exciting, and successful year, highlighted by the following campus accomplishments.

University Programs, Celebrations, or Recognitions

Inaugural New England Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution Conference

In July 2024, we welcomed over 400 people to campus for the inaugural New England Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution Conference. It was an incredible two days of learning and collaboration with notable keynote addresses by national leaders, including Deborah Santiago, an expert in HSIs and co-founder of Excelencia in Education, and Dr. Gina Ann Garcia, author, and professor in the School of Education at UC Berkeley. The conference was funded by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, through a Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) Grant Program, along with community sponsors.

SSU Surpassed the Hispanic Serving Institution Threshold

In October 2024, SSU surpassed the 25% eligibility requirement to become a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). With 25.4% of our students self-identifying as Hispanic, we launched an estimated year-long effort that could result in securing formal HSI designation for spring 2026, at which point we would become the state's first public four-year institution to do so. SSU has been on the road to becoming an HSI and Minority Serving Institution (MSI), requiring at least 25% of students to self-identify as Hispanic, since fiscal year 2018.

Hispanic Serving Institutions are two- and four-year colleges and universities who enroll a diverse student population including more than 25% Hispanic students. Over the past decade, our Hispanic student population has continued to grow, and we are excited to announce that we have reached a percentage of 25.4% to begin the new academic year.

SSU was named the Highest-ranking Massachusetts Public University for Social Mobility U.S. News and World Report ranked Salem State #23 in the nation for social mobility, up from #35 last year. Other accolades received included CollegeNet ranking us #1 among universities in Massachusetts on their Social Mobility Index. The Campus Pride Index gave us 4.5 out of 5 stars for our chosen name, LGBTQ+ and other policies, including gender-inclusive housing. Additionally, the Abound program of Colleges of Distinction honored Salem State's School of Graduate Studies with three awards for 2024.

Cybersecurity Range Opening

In November 2024, SSU's new state-of-the-art cybersecurity training lab opened. The SSU Cyber Range is a robust lab space in the classroom building on Harrington Campus. It offers users of all types – ranging from students taking a course to 54 business boosting its employees' skills – access training programs and cyberattack-like exercises such as simulations of system-wide ransomware attacks. The SSU Cyber Range is supported with \$624,437 in funding from the MassCyberCenter at the

Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech). The funds are part of the MassCyberCenter's Security Operations Center (SOC) and Cyber Range Initiative, which supports the creation of Security Operations Centers and training programs at universities and colleges across the state. The program aims to help build a diverse generation of cybersecurity professionals through education, training, and workforce development.



Annual Day of Service

At the start of the Fall semester, over 160 students participated in our annual Day of Service at 19 organizations across the North Shore, including Beverly, Danvers, Lynn, Peabody, and Salem. Students spent the day engaging in service projects that gave back to these communities and organizations. This included volunteering at The Salem Pantry, which provided students with an opportunity to gain insight into the operations of the pantry and allowed them to make a meaningful impact in the local community, while supporting the pantry's efforts to address food insecurity in Massachusetts. As well as volunteering at the Newhills Fields Community Farm in Peabody, where students helped them to grow delicious, nutritious produce for their neighbors in Peabody.

SSU Recognized for Excellence in Student Voting Registration and Turnout During the 2022 Midterm Elections

In September 2024, Salem State University (SSU) was awarded the Silver Seal by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in recognition of its nonpartisan efforts to promote student voter registration and participation during the 2022 midterm elections. This distinction is granted to institutions where 30–39% of the campus community participated in voting. SSU achieved the highest level of voter engagement among public higher education institutions in Massachusetts and was the sole public

college or university to receive the Silver Seal. The institution's commitment to civic responsibility was further acknowledged when it received the "Highly Established Action Plan" seal from ALL IN for its initiatives supporting student voting in the 2024 elections. Additionally, the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) at Tufts University highlighted SSU's student engagement practices in its recent report, featuring two SSU volunteers on the cover and including a dedicated article celebrating the university's efforts.

Earth Days at Salem State University

Earth Days 2025 at SSU explored the threat climate change poses to the ecosystems on Earth, as well as the biodiversity that those fragile ecosystems protect. The month-long programming kicked off with a reuse-themed art exhibit in the Winfisky Gallery. This cohesive theme spotlighted the ways climate change reshapes ecosystems, alters species abundance and diversity, and disrupts the critical functions that organisms provide. It included a week of free public events including lectures, celebrations and awards tied to Earth Day and its observances. Other events: Climate Change and Seaweeds, a session exploring how humans affect marine ecosystems, led by Professor Lindsay Green-Gavrielidis of Salem State's Marine Ecology Lab; A Just Energy Transition in Salem and Salem's Coalition Success Story, two talks bringing together several local influencers in the realm of environmental justice; Frontiers of Climate Resiliency, a talk exploring research projects on the forefront of climate resilience efforts; and Salem State's annual Arbor Day Celebration and Earth Days Award Ceremony. Embedded within the award ceremony were three contests for students, which included a judged research poster competition, an art exhibition and competition, and a writing contest where students were tasked with writing a 500-word reflection essay directed toward a student starting college 50 years from now, in 2075.

Annual Bertolon School of Business – Viking Business Pitch Competition

In its fifth year, this event, proudly organized by the Center for Entrepreneurship at the AACSB-accredited Bertolon School of Business and the Dean's Office, challenges students from across-campus to think 'outside the box.' It inspires them to generate unique ideas with the potential to blossom into successful businesses, benefiting our entire community. From 38 teams competing in the first round to eight final teams, the winners received prizes of \$5,000, \$2,500, \$1,500, and \$250 made possible by the generous support of community members.

Salem State University's Bertolon School of Business visited Nasdaq

State University was represented on a national financial stage in March as the Bertolon School of Business brought a group of students to the Nasdaq Stock Market in Times Square. SSU students and faculty had an opportunity to view the closing bell (Microsoft had the honors – not bad company) and stand atop the famed Nasdaq tower at the close of business. The trip was coordinated through New

York City-based investment management firm Global X ETFs and the company's head of product research and development, Pedro Palandrani '18G. More than just an opportunity to visit Nasdaq, Global X ETFs hosted and took the students through the world of exchange-traded funds, or ETFs. The trip fully explored the differences between ETFs and other investment vehicles, giving those on the trip a taste of what a career as an ETF issuer could be like. The trip, an experiential learning opportunity aligned with SSU's Meet the Moment® campaign, was made possible by the Salem State University Alumni Association and Foundation, Inc. (AAF), allowing students to attend without the burden of cost.

Marylou Sudders, Jimmy Hill Named Fellows for the Frederick E. Berry Institute of Politics

Marylou Sudders, a social worker, whose 25-year career includes serving as the Commonwealth's secretary of Health and Human Services; and James "Jimmy Hills", a prominent talk show host and critical voice in the Boston media landscape served as fellows for the Frederick E. Berry Institute of Politics at Salem State University (Berry IOP) during the spring 2025 semester. Established in 2019, Salem State University, which is the Commonwealth's civic engagement university, is the only Massachusetts state university to have an institute of politics on its campus. Past fellows have included: Alison King, an award-winning political journalist; Tomas Gonzalez, a social justice advocate, political strategist and entrepreneur; Eugenia Gibbons, a clean energy and climate policy expert; former Massachusetts Governor Jane Swift; former Boston Mayor Kim Janey; and Jennifer Levi, a lawyer, professor, and nationally recognized expert on transgender issues. As this year's Berry IOP fellows, Sudders and Hills visited campus multiple times and participated in moderated discussions (open to the public), lead class lectures, coordinated skill building workshops and brought additional guest speakers to campus.

Holocaust Survivor Werner Salinger Inspired Our Campus

The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Salem State University held a community talk by Holocaust survivor, Werner Salinger. In 1938, when Werner was only six years old, he witnessed the violence of Kristallnacht, in Berlin, a pivotal moment in history. His journey, from he and his family escaping to America in 1939, to serving his adopted country in the U.S. Air Force and returning to Germany to work in intelligence from 1951-1955, is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and the ways in which history shapes us. Meeting his wife of 70 years, Martha, the daughter of a German soldier, added another layer to their complex story. Losing his mother to tuberculosis, which she contracted on the ship to America, when he was just seven years old, Werner lived with relatives in Princeton, New Jersey, just a few blocks from Albert Einstein. While in the Air Force, he met his wife Martha, and their story began. His experiences reminded everyone of the importance of preserving memory, confronting history, and fostering dialogue that helps to pave the way toward healing and unity.

46th Annual Darwin Festival celebrated Innovative Research and Ideas

Quick color changing octopuses and societies that adapt alongside their clients were among the scientific topics discussed at 10 events during Salem State University's 46th annual Darwin Festival. Organized by the university's biology, geological sciences, geography and sustainability, chemistry, and physics departments, and sponsored by groups such as the Charles Albert Read Trust and Thermo Fisher Scientific of Waltham, this weeklong celebration honored British biologist and naturalist Charles Darwin. Leading researchers presented sessions on animal species that defy expectations by developing new abilities over time, as well as evolutionary ideas that extend beyond animals to transformations within human society itself.

SSU BOLD and North Campus Decarbonization Groundbreaking

On April 23, 2025, Salem State University held a groundbreaking ceremony for two transformational capital projects-SSU BOLD, our campus unification and modernization project and the North Campus Decarbonization project. President Keenan, Lieutenant Governor and SSU Alumna Kim Driscoll '89, Commissioner Adam Baacke, Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance, Peter Vieira, Principal, Payette, Justin MacEachern, Vice President, Gilbane, Vice President, Christopher Macdonald-Dennis, and Provost David Silva provided remarks.

The main components of these projects are:

Horace Mann Renovation

The Horace Mann renovation will transform this building into a state-of-the-art facility for the majority of the Maguire Meservey College of Health and Human Services. It will include a new accessible campus-facing entrance, enhanced landscaping, and a new elevator. This comprehensive four-floor renovation will include classrooms, faculty and department administrative offices, student study spaces, and more specialized instructional spaces for the departments of nursing and occupational therapy.

Meier Hall Addition

The Meier Hall addition will bring seven new, high-intensity labs and support spaces for our biology, chemistry, and geological sciences programming. The addition plugs right into the existing building's corridor network, eliminating the two "dead ends" of the existing structure. Through this project, a new entrance will be added along with a new elevator, and a new ramped connection that provides full ADA access into the courtyard, and an exciting green design feature that includes a cascading rain garden, which will help retain stormwater and reduce flooding.

North Campus Decarbonization Project

The North Campus decarbonization project is one of two in the state university system and will serve as a model for other campuses in the Commonwealth. This project includes a geo-thermal well field, new equipment to be located at the existing central utility plant, underground thermal distribution loops, and building tie-ins to three buildings on North Campus, Horace Mann, the Meier Hall addition, and the Berry Library. The geothermal wellfield installation of about 100 wells will occur under the faculty parking lot on College Drive. The work will also include the expansion of the parking lot to the university's property line, a new underground storm drainage system, a solar panel canopy, and new paving and landscaping. The reconstruction is planned to be done in two phases to minimize parking impacts.



Grants / Awards to Students

SSU Commencement

SSU conferred approximately 1,200 degrees to graduating students.

\$10 Million Gift to Salem State University

A \$10 million gift to SSU from an anonymous donor was made to support scholarships that address the unmet need for students in the Maguire Meservey College of Health and Human Services and the McKeown School of Education. The gift established Clipper Scholarships and support to students who are just over the cusp of Pell-eligibility and often left out of federal and state aid programs. In 2025, 63 students benefited from these scholarships in the fall semester. The scholarships seek to meet students where they are and help fund the cost of attendance, including tuition, room and board, books, meal plans, etc. With this gift, we are currently 77 percent of the way to our \$75 million

comprehensive campaign, Meet the Moment, fundraising goal with over \$58 million raised to date. Overall, close to \$900,000 in Viking Scholarships were distributed to students last year.

The Humanities Brigade

In Fall 2025, SSU will launch “The Humanities Brigade,” a three-year project drawing upon humanities programs at Salem State to prepare students to address social justice issues around the North Shore. Over the course of this project, cohorts of 20 first-year students per year will complete a set of dynamic humanities courses together and collectively focus on tools to combat and resolve social justice issues of the day in their backyards. They will then complete a paid civic humanities-related internship with a North Shore-based non-profit organization where they will apply their “humanities toolbox” to help the organization achieve its goals. Powered by a \$480,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Humanities Brigade is a project with a sizable list of impacts forecasted for students and the community, according to project creator and director Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello, chairperson of the interdisciplinary studies department and professor of American and Ethnic studies.

SSU received \$930,000 to Support Behavioral Health Internships

The State Department of Higher Education awarded SSU \$930,000 for stipends to support students in behavioral health internships. The award joins \$12.4 million committed to 37 colleges and universities in December to support and grow the behavioral health workforce. The money will support an untold number of behavioral health-adjacent students at SSU who are engaged in unpaid internships and practicum work. That includes the School of Social Work, where students completing practicums often find great difficulty balancing the demands of their degree with those of the real world. With 400 to 600 hours of work to complete at their internship employment site per year, students in the School of Social Work often find great difficulty achieving balance. Many behavioral health degrees and certificate programs require workplace-based internships, apprenticeships, or practicum credit hours as a condition for program completion. Required practicum placements play a vital role in helping students prepare to serve as behavioral health practitioners, but these experiences are often unpaid and often require students to sacrifice paid work. To support students pursuing these careers, the funding was awarded to colleges with behavioral health degrees that require field placements, with a focus on institutions in geographic areas that are priorities for advancing health equity. The \$930,000 received by SSU was the third highest dollar amount announced by the state, with Simmons University awarded \$1.54 million and \$1.05 million awarded to Springfield College.

Grants / Recognition of Faculty

For the Fourth Time, Salem State University was Named a Top Producer of Fulbright Scholars

Salem State University was named for the fourth time as a top producer of Fulbright Scholars for the 2024-2025 academic year. The distinction is given to institutions in higher education that have produced the highest numbers of applicants selected for the Fulbright U.S. Student and Scholar Programs. Fulbright awards, from the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, allow faculty to teach abroad while engaging in research, building partnerships, and gaining experiences that can be brought back to Salem State's classrooms. The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs recognized Salem State for being one of the colleges and universities with the highest number of faculty and administrators selected for the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program in 2024-2025.

Three Salem State University professors received Fulbright awards for the 2024-2025 academic year, as well as three students who were finalists in the competition for Fulbright scholarships in Bulgaria, Mexico, and Spain:

- English professor, Alexandria Peary, explored Pforzheim, Germany's history before, during and after World War II.
- Politics, Policy and International Policy professor, Vanessa Ruget, was in Estonia researching the impact of Russia's instrumentalization of passports to further geopolitical aims.
- Accounting and Finance professor, Norbert Tschakert, was in the Dominican Republic in partnership with the Instituto Tecnologico de Santo Domingo researching corruption.

More Than a Dozen OER Projects Move Through Salem State University

Berry Library and Learning Commons awarded 15 grants to support faculty projects through the end of 2024. SSU was the only North Shore institution among six state colleges and universities participating in the Department of Higher Education's ROTEL project, which promotes free Open Educational Resources (OER) textbooks. OER aims to reduce textbook costs—now four times higher than inflation—and provide editable, updatable educational materials.

In Fall 2025, SSU distributed two types of grants: adoption grants for faculty using low-cost or free course materials, and creation grants for writing new textbooks. The 15 grants totaled \$10,000, furthering affordable and equitable access for students. Since launching the Viking OER & Textbook Affordability Initiative in 2018, SSU has lowered costs for books and supplies. Funded by a three-year state grant, ROTEL includes SSU, Fitchburg and Framingham State Universities, Holyoke and Northern Essex Community Colleges, and Springfield Technical Community College. The program relies on collaborative funding from the state, library, and faculty, all working to make learning resources more accessible.

Governance

New Members and Leadership of the Salem State University Board of Trustees

Effective July 1, five new members were appointed to the SSU Board of Trustees and current members stepped into new leadership roles. The board's two new leaders were both appointed by then Governor Charlie Baker in 2022.

Samanda Morales '98, is the board's chairperson after a successful tenure as vice-chair. Morales is the founder and owner of WellFin360 LLC, a financial planning and wealth management advisory firm offering personalized services to early and mid-career professionals, as well as first-generation wealth builders. She is also the co-founder of Ahora Inc., a social enterprise non-profit organization that empowers low-to-moderate income individuals through financial education and coaching. Morales received her bachelor's in science degree in business administration from Salem State in 1998.

James Lampassi '81 is the board's vice chairperson. He serves as senior vice president of real estate and construction at Academy Sports + Outdoors, one of the leading full-line sporting goods and outdoor recreation retailers in the US. Lampassi previously held the roles of vice president of real estate and construction for Ross Stores, Inc., Barnes & Noble, Inc. and for Petco Animal Supplies Stores, Inc.

Governor Maura Healey appointed the following four members to the board.

A. Thomas Billings '72, '75G, EdD, is a retired faculty member with 22 years as a Salem State University professor. Dr. Billings also taught for 22 years at Salem High School and St. John's Prep. During his time as a professor in Salem State's Education Department, Billings also served on the Executive Board of the Professors' Union, chaired the Graduate Education Council and Promotions Committee, and chaired Salem State's Council on Teaching and Learning. He continues a legacy of service to the Salem State community, which runs generations deep in his family. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in history in 1972, he received a master's degree in American studies in 1975, both from Salem State. He served many years on the alumni association and received the Outstanding Educator Award in 1999 and the Elisabeth Williams Wade Award from the Salem State Alumni Association in 2004.

Elizabeth Cabral '17, began her professional career as an intellectual property assistant with Boston-based law firm Foley & Lardner, before becoming their national human resources specialist. In 2022, she joined Exponent where she continues to work as a human resources generalist. This is Cabral's second appointment with the board, her first one serving as the student trustee appointed by the

student government association. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in political science and criminal justice from Salem State in 2017. Cabral received her master's in human resources management at Northeastern University in 2021.

Alyce Davis '75, EdD returned to our board of trustees as she was the alumnae trustee from 2012-17. Davis is a retired assistant superintendent in the Salem Public Schools, who has worked in the education field for nearly 50 years. Upon graduation from Salem State, Davis started her career teaching social studies in Hanover, then she worked with Danvers Public Schools for 18 years prior to becoming the principal at Witchcraft Heights Elementary School. Davis then served as assistant superintendent of the district until her retirement. Since then, Davis has held various consulting positions and served as an adjunct professor at both Salem State and Endicott College. She is also noted for the number of other Salem boards she has served on including as vice president on the Salem State University Alumni Association and Foundation, Inc., a trustee at Salem Academy Charter School and the Salem Community Charter School as well as several others. Davis received a Bachelor of Science degree in middle school education from Salem State University in 1975. She received a Master of Education degree from Suffolk University in 1979 and a doctorate in educational leadership degree from NOVA Southeastern University in 2009.

Dino Di Palma is a managing partner with TrueNorth Advisory and is a member of G-20 Ventures, which provides early traction capital for East Coast startups and provides expertise from 20 of the Northeast's most accomplished entrepreneurs. Throughout his career Di Palma has held varying management and executive positions in the global business world. He is recognized for his ability to grow businesses in several fields. This includes taking a team within a Caribbean subsidiary from generating little revenue to bringing in \$30 million within two years. Di Palma has held a variety of executive positions, from serving as a chief operating officer and founding team member for Acme Packet and helping to drive its acquisition by Oracle for more than \$2 billion. He also served as global wireless infrastructure builder Benu Networks' chief executive officer. Di Palma graduated from McGill University, Montreal in 1990 with a bachelor of arts degree in economics and political science. He earned a master's in public policy and administration in 1995 and completed Harvard University's international negotiations program in 1999. He also currently serves as chair of Salem State's Bertolon School of Business Advisory Board and is a member of the Meet the Moment campaign steering committee along with his wife, Annalisa C. Di Palma, who is also the chair of the Salem State University Alumni Association and Foundation, Inc.

The Student Government Association appointed the fifth new member, Angel A. Garcia '25. Garcia is a third-year history major at Salem State University, who first enrolled at North Shore Community College in 2021 upon the encouragement of his wife. His daughter graduated from the Bertolon School of Business in 2022 with a bachelor's degree in business, and in 2024 with a master's degree in accounting. He is currently a part-time taxi dispatcher and prior Lynn youth football coach. Garcia

is also a volunteer with The REAL Program, a Lynn-based literature advocacy nonprofit. Garcia previously served as the student representative on the North Shore Community College's Board of Trustees while enrolled there in academic year 2022-23. A member of Salem State University's 2025 class, Garcia is a 1995 graduate of Lynn English High School. Garcia's appointment as a student representative of the board comes from the university's student government association.

ADVANCING THE EQUITY AGENDA AT SSU

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, adopted by the Board of Higher Education in 2018 as part of the Equity Agenda, serves as the guiding framework for eliminating racial disparities among students of color. Salem State University has embraced this initiative by systematically reviewing its policies and practices, focusing on five key pillars for student success: Affordability, Campus Climate, Student Support, Policy Innovations, and Evidence-Based Practices. The university has also expanded Early College programs and implemented developmental education reforms to create a more student-centered, equity-focused environment.

STATEWIDE PRIORITIES

SSU takes pride in its identity as a regional public university situated in a diverse gateway city with a rich history. The majority of SSU's 76,000 alumni living in Massachusetts remain local, highlighting the university's enduring impact on the region. Since its founding as a normal school inspired by Horace Mann, SSU has continually evolved. Currently, Salem State serves 6,009 students—4,676 undergraduates and 1,333 graduate students—including traditional first-year students, transfer students, adult learners, and international students. Of these, 4,188 (69.7%) are full-time and 1,821 (30.3%) are part-time; 5,473 (91.1%) are degree-seeking, while 536 (8.9%) are non-degree-seeking.

Affordability

Salem State University is committed to making higher education accessible and affordable for all students, regardless of financial background. SSU's undergraduate population is the second most diverse and third largest among state universities in Massachusetts, drawing students from 11 of the 26 Gateway Cities. This reflects the university's broad reach and inclusive mission.

This commitment was demonstrated through targeted initiatives such as student-focused financial counseling and aid outreach. The incoming class of 2024 was one of the most racially and ethnically diverse in SSU's history: 49.7% of first-year students and 45% of transfer students identify as non-white, up from 43.1% and 36.2% the previous year. Enrollment of Pell-eligible students reached 46% for the 2024-2025 academic year, a 7% increase, largely due to expanded need-based aid and changes to the aid formula.

Enrollment Management expanded financial education for new and current students through financial wellness and money management programs. These included two financial literacy events with external guest speakers. In partnership with the Massachusetts Association of Student Financial Aid Administration (MASFAA), SSU offered personalized counseling for students completing the MASFAA application, with participation rising from 30 students in Fall 2024 to 50 in Fall 2025

By maximizing available resources, the university maintained consistent levels of unmet need among entering students while increasing average net tuition revenue per student. The Office of Veteran's Affairs continued to administer support for approximately 275 VA Educational Benefits recipients and over 100 prospective military-affiliated applicants, providing timely documentation and clear guidance despite evolving VA regulations and staff transitions.

Salem State awarded 171 Viking Completion Grants—targeted microgrants designed to assist seniors at risk of withdrawing due to financial hardship. Each recipient received ongoing coaching and support to facilitate timely graduation. Persistence grants totaling \$344,847 were awarded to 230 students, who subsequently demonstrated a 6.4% higher retention rate compared to those who did not receive the grants.

The advancement team pursued strategic partnerships to further support students. Notably, the GRAD Last Mile grant, funded by the Frieze Family Fund at the Boston Foundation, was established to address immediate and critical needs for students nearing graduation. The Frieze Family Fund provided a \$50,000 contribution to benefit these students. Additionally, the Fidelity Foundation: Invest in My Education Retention Grant secured \$800,000 over three years for completion grants, with the third year enhanced by a \$200,000 matching donation from private benefactors.

AY 2024-2025 was SSU's second year of providing funding for undocumented students, implemented in collaboration with the DREAM US scholarship program and the Mass Grant Plus Expansion program. The Dream.US scholarships support DACA and undocumented students, with an emphasis on degree completion, emergency funding, and housing for food-insecure students.

Nationally, the average tuition at public four-year institutions accounts for 15% of household income, according to the College Board. At Salem State, this figure was lower, at 12%. Student loan debt reached its highest point in 2020 at \$24,727, but through increased institutional financial aid and financial literacy education, the average student debt was reduced to \$20,587.

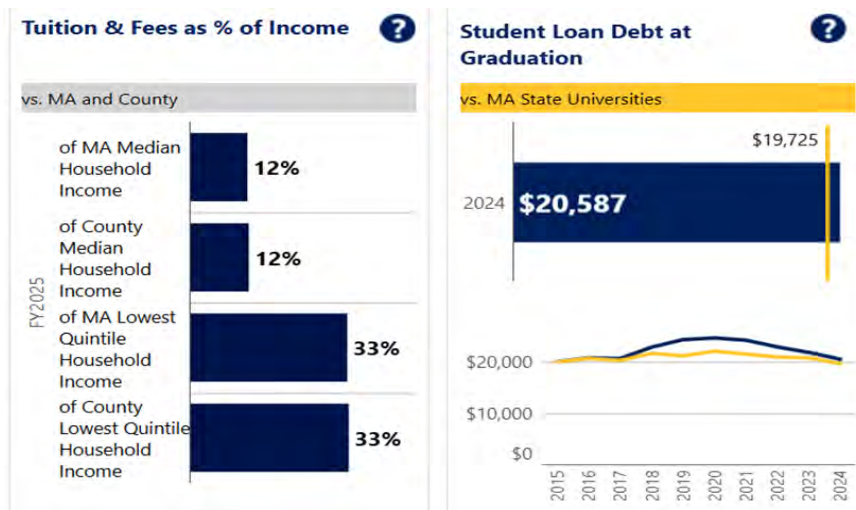


Table 1 - Affordability and Student Debt (PMRS data center)

Access

SSU continues to demonstrate resilience and adaptability in its efforts to enhance enrollment and retention. While the university has experienced a 15.7% decrease in total headcount (1,122 students) since fall 2021—including a 15.8% reduction in undergraduates (879 students) and a 15.4% decline in graduate enrollment (243 students)—these trends mirror regional shifts such as a smaller pool of high school graduates, changing college participation patterns, and increasing competition. Notably, the pace of enrollment decline has slowed over the past two years, with more promising enrollment and retention rates emerging. Between fall 2023 and fall 2025, total credit hours decreased by just 20, undergraduate headcount was down by only 3.7% (177 students), and graduate numbers declined by a modest 3.8% (53 students). SSU is proactively addressing enrollment challenges through robust access initiatives, strengthened pipeline programs, and comprehensive retention strategies, positioning the university for future growth and student success.

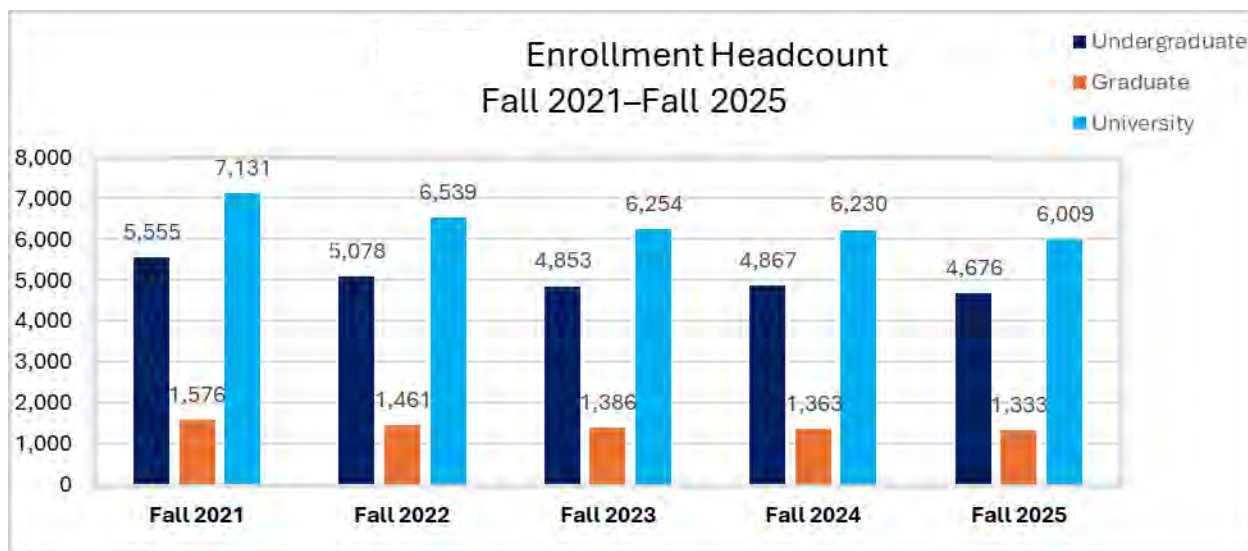


Table 2 - Enrollment Headcount Fall 2021 – Fall 2025

SSU’s enrollment strategy focuses on Massachusetts, New England, and beyond, engaging the educational consultant firm, [Encoura](#), to support recruitment (e.g., prospect list buys and marketing support). Salem State began developing a new recruitment marketing development plan with Encoura in summer 2024 to help SSU identify and cultivate new markets to expand its enrollment footprint. Competing for first-year, transfer, and graduate enrollments of 1,500-1,600 or more new students are critical goals for the university. In fall 2024, new student enrollment grew by 5.5% (+84), but in fall 2025, new student totals were 1.6% less (-25) than in fall 2023. Nearly half of Salem State’s undergraduates come from 10 nearby communities—many of them gateway cities with high percentages of Hispanic K–12 students. Based on 2024–25 enrollment data, key feeder cities with high percentages of Hispanic K-12 students include Lynn (73%), Salem (48%), Boston (44%), Revere (65%), and Everett (68%). Hispanic and multiracial student populations continue to grow across the region. As the first four-year HSI in Massachusetts, SSU is well-positioned to attract these students, yet SSU strives to become an HSI that is not only Hispanic-enrolling but Hispanic-serving.

Salem State University achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first four-year public comprehensive university in Massachusetts to surpass the 25% HSI enrollment threshold. This accomplishment expands educational opportunities for all students, particularly those who are low-income or first-generation, and increases the university’s ability to serve an increasingly diverse population.

The university is deepening its commitment to access. As of fall 2025, in-state students with a family household income of \$75,000 or less qualify for free tuition and fees—a policy known as the Remarkable Salem State Difference. This initiative is funded through existing programs and increased aid from fundraising, ensuring that every qualified student receives financial support. This approach distinguishes Salem State among its peers by making higher education more accessible and affordable.

To further promote accessibility, Salem State has implemented translation protocols to ensure admissions and financial aid materials are available in both Spanish and Portuguese. The university has also developed a bilingual glossary and directory to support students and families throughout the enrollment process.

Salem State reinforced its commitment to access through partnerships with organizations such as the Center for Civic Engagement, Holyoke Community College, Bunker Hill Community College, and MassBay. These collaborations resulted in the inaugural New England HSI-MSI Conference in July 2024 and a Student Leadership Summit in September 2024, establishing Salem State as a leader among HSIs in New England and deepening its support for its evolving student body.

In recognition of the demographics of surrounding communities, Salem State launched a comprehensive, multilingual recruitment strategy focusing on high-impact regions within Essex, Middlesex, and Suffolk counties. The campaign utilized MBTA buses, digital platforms, and highway billboards, with outreach messages delivered in English and Spanish. Upon arrival, new students were welcomed with banners, reinforcing a sense of belonging and inclusiveness.

To support transfer students, Salem State established a coordinated, comprehensive assistance network across Massachusetts. The university streamlined transfer processes and introduced targeted scholarships for students transferring from North Shore Community College (NSCC) and Northern Essex Community College (NECC). Free community college in the commonwealth is expected to expand the higher education pipeline, resulting in a growing transfer pool for the future.

Transfer Enrollment and Support Programs

Both NECC and NSCC are HSIs within the region, enrolling large numbers of Spanish-speaking students. Salem State developed a transfer connections program featuring a full-time, bilingual transfer coach who coordinates with admissions, advising, and financial aid, supporting students through to bachelor's degree completion. Since implementing this strategy in 2022, SSU has seen a 109% increase in enrollment from NECC and a 21.6% increase from NSCC. Additionally, the partnership with NSCC allows over 20 community college students to reside in SSU's residence halls, increasing housing occupancy and providing these students with greater familiarity with the campus, potentially leading to more transfers.

TRANSFER ENROLLED BY TOP FEEDER COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
North Shore Community College	121	102	99	124	138
Bunker Hill Community College	34	24	23	25	29
Middlesex Community College	31	24	15	24	21
Northern Essex Community College	22	11	8	23	19
Mass Bay Community College	5	2	5	4	11
Massasoit Community College	3	6	6	5	6
New Hampshire College	3	3	6	4	6

Table 3 - Transfer Enrollment by Top Feeder Colleges and Universities

Developing and Supporting New Access and Enrollment Pathways

Salem State University is committed to enhancing educational access for underserved and minoritized students. The university's primary feeder high schools are located in Lynn, Peabody, Everett, Malden, Salem, and Chelsea—Gateway cities whose students are motivated to pursue higher education and seek opportunities for exposure, access, and integration. Despite challenges related to overall enrollment, facilitating seamless transitions from early education through college and into careers remains essential for cultivating a strong and diverse workforce critical to the Commonwealth's future.

From 2021 to 2025, SSU navigated a period of transition in new student enrollment, reflecting broader trends in higher education. While first-year enrollments saw a gradual decrease through 2023, the university celebrated a notable increase of 48 students in 2024. Although there was a slight dip of 81 students in 2025, this fluctuation demonstrates SSU's resilience and ongoing efforts to attract new students. Transfer student enrollment rebounded with a positive gain of 46 students in 2024, a trend that continued into 2025. Graduate enrollment, after declining until 2021-22, experienced renewed growth with an increase of 19 students in 2023. The earlier declines from 2020 to 2022 were consistent with national patterns following the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, SSU's strategic decision to implement the Common Application in 2023 resulted in a 29% surge in 2024 applications compared to the five-year average and an impressive 64% increase over the previous year, underscoring the university's strong appeal to prospective students.

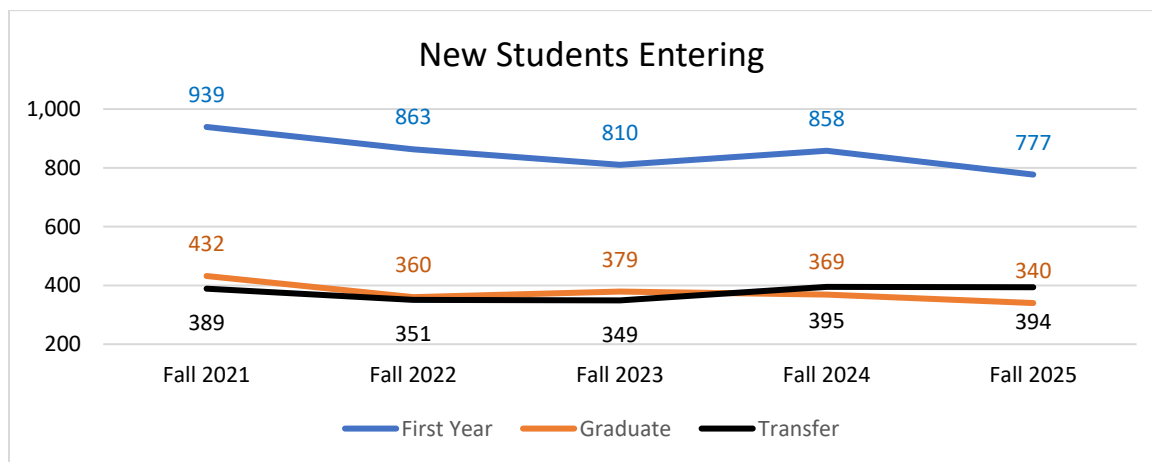


Table 4 – New Students Entering

Building on these enrollment trends, SSU continues to draw many of its first-year students from nearby racially and ethnically diverse communities. The top five feeder high schools are all within a 13-mile radius of campus, with four located in gateway cities. This local connection reflects SSU’s broader commitment to access and equity. Ongoing admission strategies include expanding recruitment from gateway cities using geofencing technology to engage prospective students, offering multilingual outreach, promoting affordability and financial support options, and increasing support for inclusive events and programming. The Summer Bridge Academy, alternative admissions program helping high school graduates build essential college skills, received State Success funds which allowed significant upgrades to technology and programming for students, which includes increases in academic support and financial relief.

SSU is pursuing pipeline improvements with strong, established partners, such as community-based organizations (CBOs) and community colleges. Salem State maintains active partnerships with local regional CBOs Bottom Line, La Vida Scholars, One Goal, Raw Art Works, and Girls, Inc. while also expanding Early college, Promise Year and credit recovery efforts to meet students where they are.

Expanding higher education opportunities for high school students prior to full-time enrollment is evident in Salem State, which consistently pursues innovative strategies to attract prospective applicants. Recent modifications to the application process and reduced GPA requirements for entry into the Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP) resulted in 121 applications and a 47% increase in first-year Honors enrollment, including 9 Promise Year students and 5 Early College participants. The Board of Higher Education Renewal of Membership in the Commonwealth Honors Program for Salem State University vote dated June 17, 2025, and Site Visit Report are attached at Appendix A.

The university’s Early College initiatives (Dual Enrollment, Early College, and Early College Promise Year) served 300 students from Salem, Lynn English, and Lynn Classical High Schools, with plans to expand into Chelsea in the 2026–2027 academic year. The Dual Enrollment Program also reached 150

students annually across 15 school districts, offering contract courses in Chelsea, Peabody, Revere, and Salem Academy Charter School.

The Promise Year Program, part of the Early College initiative, supported 25 students from Salem and Lynn, with 85% matriculating to SSU in Fall 2025. Backed by the SUCCESS initiative, the program removes financial barriers by ensuring students can enroll full-time (15 credits per semester) at no cost. Historically, Promise Year participants surpass their peers in both on-time credit accumulation and first-year retention rates.

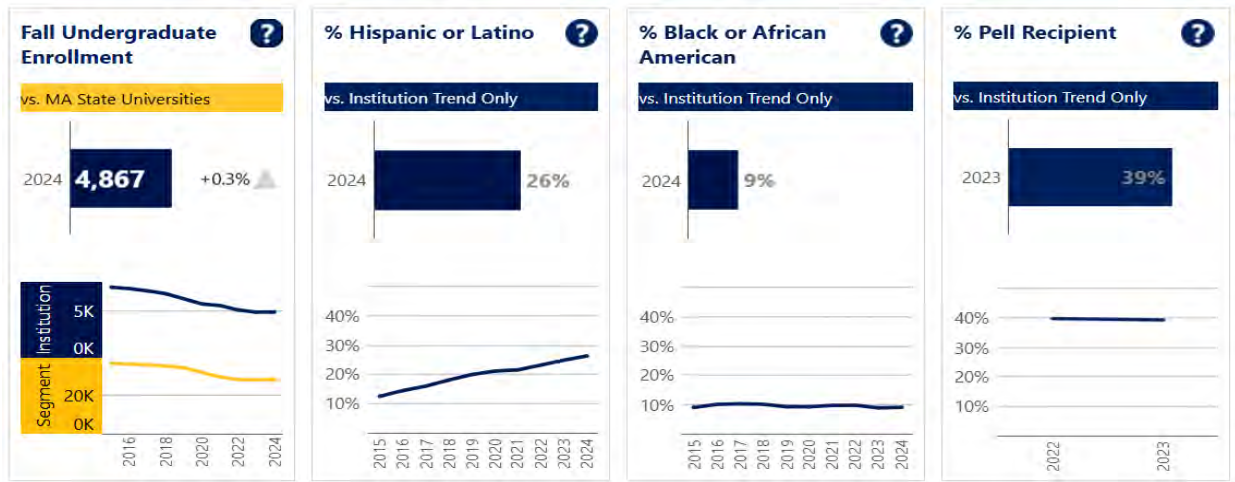


Table 5 - Fall 2024 Enrollment & Equitable Access (PMRS data center)
Is Salem State University enrollment maintaining expected levels, and are traditionally underserved populations well represented?

The School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCSP) enhanced access for non-matriculated learners by launching the “Take a Class” website, which resulted in a 5.79% rise in summer enrollment. Out of 228 inquiries, 74 students ultimately registered for courses through this streamlined process.

Initiatives in the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) and the School of Graduate Studies strengthen both pipeline and retention efforts. SCPS’s ReUp program offers coaching to students who have earned credits but not a degree, funded through a portion of the fees generated when those students return. From fall 2021 to spring 2025, ReUp served 136 SSU students and graduated 31. The retention rate averages 76%, reaching a high of 89% in spring 2025. SSU renewed the partnership through 2030, expanding to graduate students next for targeted outreach. To identify more potential candidates, the Graduate School monitors enrollment at regional colleges that do not offer a related graduate program, but whose degrees align with SSU’s graduate programs. Finally, in alignment with the university’s ongoing efforts to remove barriers and strengthen support systems, the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) instituted a new minimum GPA requirement for

graduate admissions effective January 2026. This policy revision is designed to expand opportunities for prospective students while maintaining strong academic standards.

Wraparound Support Services

Salem State University is dedicated to providing comprehensive support that drives academic, social, and professional achievement for all students. By fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment, SSU creates pathways for historically underrepresented groups, racially marginalized communities, and individuals with disabilities or learning differences. The university’s commitment to equitable access and research-based strategies continues to narrow opportunity gaps and cultivate a campus culture rooted in diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

The Student Navigation Center (SNC) consolidates essential services such as financial aid, billing, and registration. Its coaching model and the Navigate 360 platform streamline academic, financial, wellness, and co-curricular support, enabling coordinated case management, early alerts, progress reports, and appointment campaigns. This unified system strengthens retention services through proactive outreach and impact assessment, forming a robust network for equity, engagement, and achievement.

Academic Affairs partners with the Division of Student Success to advance the Department of Higher Education’s Racial Equity Goals, focusing on early intervention for academically at-risk students. In FY25, College Completion Coaches conducted nearly 12,000 outreach contacts with 2,317 students. Persistence Grants have played a key role in helping recipients maintain their trajectory toward graduation, consistently outperforming their peers.

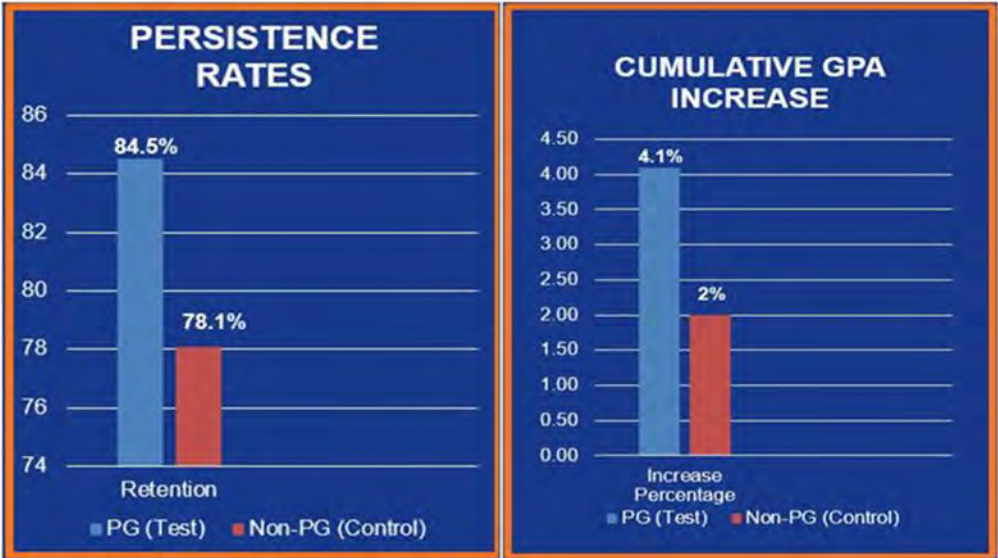


Table 6 – Persistence Rates

Table 7 – Cumulative GPA Increase

Career Services expanded student opportunities by collaborating with academic departments and alumni in AY2024-2025. The office engaged over 80 faculty and coordinated with 117 employers at the annual Job & Internship Fair. Programs such as Clifton Strengths workshops and the First Destination Survey focus on career readiness for first-generation and transfer students, while providing valuable data on post-graduate outcomes.

The Gassett Fitness Center and Campus Life programs engaged 77,234 participants in FY25—a 20% increase from the prior year. Signature events, fitness challenges, esports tournaments, and employee wellness initiatives foster community connection and well-being. The Center for Justice & Liberation (CJL) delivered 137 programs to more than 2,100 attendees, supporting identity development and culturally responsive programming for marginalized students.

In 2024, SSU launched the Center for Accessible Academic Resources (CAAR), integrating Disability Services, Peer Tutoring, and Supplemental Instruction. CAAR collaborates with the Mary G. Walsh Writing Center and the Math Learning Center to enhance foundational skills. Peer Tutoring conducted over 1,100 appointments, while disability services appointments rose by 5% in 2024–25 and 90% since 2021.

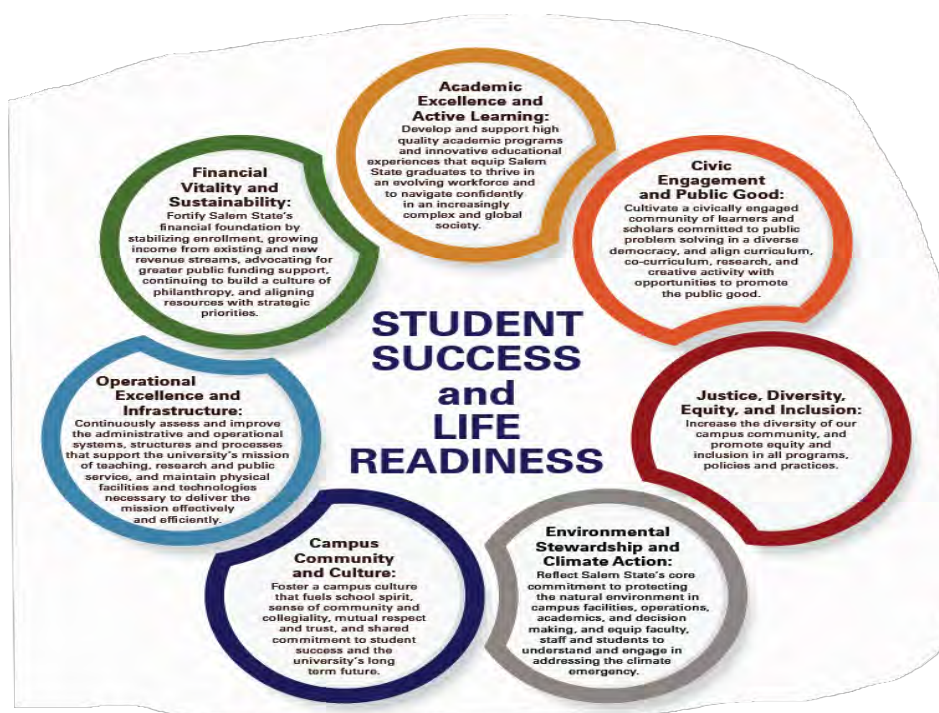
Counseling and Health Services (CHS) supported a quarter of all students in 2024–25, well above the national average. Nearly half of counseling users identified BIPOC, marking a 10% increase over the previous year and aligning with the State’s Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. CHS expanded staff, eliminated waitlists, and grew partnerships, including a 24/7 Mental Health Support Line that saw a 151% rise in usage. Additional supports such as wellness vending machines (usage up 400%), free menstrual products, naloxone kits, and transportation assistance further highlight SSU’s commitment to holistic well-being.

Residence Life addressed over 250 accommodation requests, emphasizing accessibility, gender inclusivity, and improved communication in housing selection. New initiatives included an international student floor, enhanced accommodation policies, and faculty-in-residence programs to support belonging and retention for commuter, international, and graduate students. Community Standards & Restorative Practices worked with Residence Life and CAAR to revise the Assistance Animal Policy, balancing improved documentation and enforcement with greater access.

INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES



In year Two of Salem State University's Strategic Plan, Meeting the Moment, the institution sustained strong momentum across all seven goals—advancing academic excellence, equity, civic engagement, sustainability, modernization, and financial vitality. Targeted investments in funded small and large projects have amplified impact, aligning operational improvements with student success and community outcomes. See Appendix B, Meeting the Moment, Salem State University: Strategic Plan 2023-2028; Annual Report on Strategic Plan, Year Two, FY25, for full details.



The Overarching Imperative Student Success and Life Readiness

Student success and life readiness serve as foundational values at Salem State University, shaping institutional policies, programs, and strategic investments. In Academic Year 2024–25, four key initiatives—revamping the General Education program, launching the Cyber Range and cybersecurity minor, expanding Academic Seal options, and revising the internship policy—demonstrate the university's commitment to preparing students for meaningful, impactful lives. Collectively, these

efforts respond to evolving educational and workforce demands and align with Massachusetts's priorities for retention, equity, and academic excellence.

The establishment of the Cyber Range and Training Center, together with a new cybersecurity minor, marks a significant investment in workforce readiness and interdisciplinary learning. The Cyber Range provides an advanced, hands-on environment where students practice real-world digital security scenarios. This initiative draws on faculty expertise from computer science, business, criminal justice, and other disciplines to create a comprehensive curriculum. The appointment of a dedicated Cyber Range Manager Praveen Sharma ensures ongoing program quality and alignment with industry standards. These efforts equip students with critical, adaptable skills essential for success in the digital era.

In 2024–25, Salem State broadened its Academic Seal offerings, including the introduction of a Sustainability Seal. These transcript credentials formally acknowledge student engagement and achievement in areas such as sustainability, global awareness, and leadership. The Sustainability Seal signals a graduate's commitment to environmental responsibility and social impact. By expanding access to Academic Seals, Salem State affirms its dedication to holistic education and the recognition of diverse student accomplishments.

With the recognition that experiential learning is transformative, the university updated its internship policy to foster consistency across departments, expand student access, and reduce operational risks. The revised policy sets clear standards for internship design, supervision, and assessment, ensuring equitable opportunities for students to gain relevant real-world experience. By streamlining administrative processes and improving oversight, more students can participate in quality internships, strengthening career readiness and connecting academic studies to professional practice.

To support these goals, Salem State funded nine large and nine small projects selected through a competitive process. Initiatives included Bias Response Training, support for a Transfer Connections Graduate Assistant, and a Recruitment and Conversion Text Messaging Program that enhances communication with prospective students. Full project descriptions appear in the year two report. Below are key highlights from each strategic planning goal, illustrating the university's unwavering focus on student success and life readiness.

Goal One: Academic Excellence and Active Learning

During 2024–25, Salem State advanced academic excellence through several major initiatives designed to prepare students for an evolving workforce and global environment. The Year of Advising Initiative introduced an enhanced, technology-driven advising model for undergraduate and graduate students, emphasizing integration, equity, and accessibility. In fall 2024, Peer Advisors reached out to 2,655

students, scheduling 160 appointments from October 7 to November 1. In spring 2025, outreach extended to 2,089 students, resulting in 200 appointments between March 3 and April 4. The Academic Planner tool was launched, accompanied by training materials, information sessions, a marketing plan, and a post-assessment survey for students and faculty.

The Program for the Advancement of General Education (PAGE) continued a comprehensive review of the General Education curriculum, ensuring it remains challenging and relevant. Faculty development remained central, with instructors receiving training in evidence-based teaching methods and collaboration. Student communication was anchored in the QUEST framework, emphasizing inquiry, ethical reasoning, and integrative learning to demonstrate the real-world value of general education. A major component of this work is the redesigned First Year Seminar, providing new students with foundational experiences in critical thinking, community building, and self-discovery. These reforms elevate academic standards, advance inclusivity, and establish general education as a launchpad for lifelong learning.

To address the evolving role of generative AI in higher education, the Center for Teaching Innovation (CTI) created an AI Advisory Group in June 2024. Comprising faculty and staff from across the university, the group met monthly to identify needs, gather feedback, and develop resources. Key activities included:

The December 2024 Faculty Innovation Showcase, featuring AI-focused presentations from faculty and attracting approximately 60 attendees.

The second cohort of the “Teaching in the Age of AI” Faculty Professional Learning Community, which met twice monthly to support AI literacy among instructors. An AI Advisory Group session at the annual Teaching and Learning Symposium in May. A summer faculty program led by instructional designer Jim McGrath, which introduced the AI Course Design Checklist and involved 16 participants.

The Office of Assessment, Sponsored Projects, and Institutional Research worked with deans and department chairs to strengthen assessment plans, now integrated into eLumen Insights for ongoing monitoring and analysis.

PAGE aligned its intellectual experience outcomes with the proposed Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), focusing on the first-year seminar and personal growth categories, piloting assessments, and implementing the QUEST framework.

The university also launched a Data Dashboard, aggregating institutional and national data to help identify at-risk students for proactive intervention.

Salem State increased the affordability of experiential learning by providing stipends for unpaid internships and clinical placements, supported by donor generosity. The Bertolon School of Business awarded stipends to 18 students in unpaid internships. The Maguire Meservey College of Health and Human Services ensured placements and stipends for clinical rotations, while the McKeown School of Education enabled teachers to access free graduate courses through the HEROES grant.

Since July 2012, 1,087 students from 33 majors have received donor-funded internship scholarships. In FY25, \$2,153,610 was raised for student financial assistance, including \$286,970 specifically for internship scholarships, benefitting 40 students this year.

Goal Two: Civic Engagement and the Public Good

Salem State continues to advance the region's cultural, social, and economic development, positioning itself as a leader in education, science, health care, business, arts and humanities, and the social sciences. The university's commitment to civic engagement is demonstrated through community-based research, partnerships with local organizations, and efforts to address local and global issues. For the fourth consecutive year, Salem State has been recognized as a top producer of Fulbright Scholars and remains committed to involving students in global conversations. The university's focus on place, educational access, diversity, inclusion, and academic excellence shapes its identity and educational approach.

In AY2025, the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) launched a study on how civic learning and experiential pedagogy are integrated into undergraduate programs. A review of all 121 undergraduate plans revealed that 120 require at least one experiential learning course, with 101 including a capstone, internship, or both. Additionally, 103 programs require an experiential course beyond the capstone or internship, and 82 require both a culminating experience and an additional experiential course—ensuring students engage in high-impact practices throughout their academic journey.

The CCE continued to offer opportunities for students to develop political awareness, advocacy, and community service skills. Notably, the CCE finalized and submitted Salem State's application for continued Carnegie Community Engagement classification.

Over 160 students participated in the annual Day of Service at 19 North Shore organizations, contributing to food programs and community agriculture in partnership with organizations such as The Salem Pantry and Newhills Fields Community Farm.

The Advancement office collaborated with Inclusive Excellence and Student Life on programming throughout the year, launching a student workshop series with Career Services and partnering with the Center for Civic Engagement to raise funds for the Berry Institute of Politics (IOP).

Goal Three: Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Salem State University is deeply committed to the principle of “servingness”—a comprehensive approach that goes beyond enrollment to ensure all students receive the resources, support, and opportunities necessary for academic and personal success. This commitment is central to the university’s mission as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and is reflected in intentional strategies designed to foster equity and inclusion across campus.

The university’s student support infrastructure is robust and responsive, beginning with comprehensive orientation programs offered each summer and winter. These sessions connect new students with key campus resources—including Residence Life, the Center for Justice and Liberation, the Center for Academic Excellence, Counseling and Health Services and Career Services—establishing a strong foundation for engagement and retention from the outset. The Student Involvement and Operations team streamlines processes for student-led initiatives, ensuring efficient access to forms, training, and event support, while specialized programs address the diverse needs of the student body.

Student wellness is prioritized through coordinated efforts by the CARE and PEAR offices, which collectively managed over 785 referrals in the past year to address behavioral, academic, and emotional challenges. Initiatives such as the Salem Pantry Mobile Market directly combat food insecurity and connect students to essential wellness resources, reinforcing the university’s holistic approach to student success.

Salem State employs data-driven practices to advance equity and close opportunity gaps. Disaggregated data is systematically analyzed to identify disparities in retention and graduation rates, informing targeted interventions. Participation in initiatives like the Excelencia in Education Data Institute and the Seal Serving Institutional Transformation Assessment has strengthened the university’s capacity for evidence-based decision-making. There are several coaching efforts designed to support individual first-year and first generation students. In addition, the “Strive to Thrive” initiative, launched in 2025 exemplifies these efforts by providing success coaching to sophomores, building campus-wide support for students most affected by the pandemic.

The university’s focus on retention and graduation is evident in its outcomes. First-time, full-time undergraduate retention increased from 73.5% in 2019 to 75.7% in fall 2025, with stable trends in the low- to mid-70% range. Four-year graduation rates for the 2021 cohort reached 40.4%, with five- and six-year rates ranging from 46% to 57% over recent cohorts. Transfer students consistently graduate at rates approximately 10% higher than their first-time, full-time peers, while graduate student completion rates remain strong, with the majority finishing within three years. Notably, the university’s data reveals that while overall completion rates have seen minor declines, various student sub-groups have at times surpassed cohort averages, highlighting the need for sustained and tailored support.

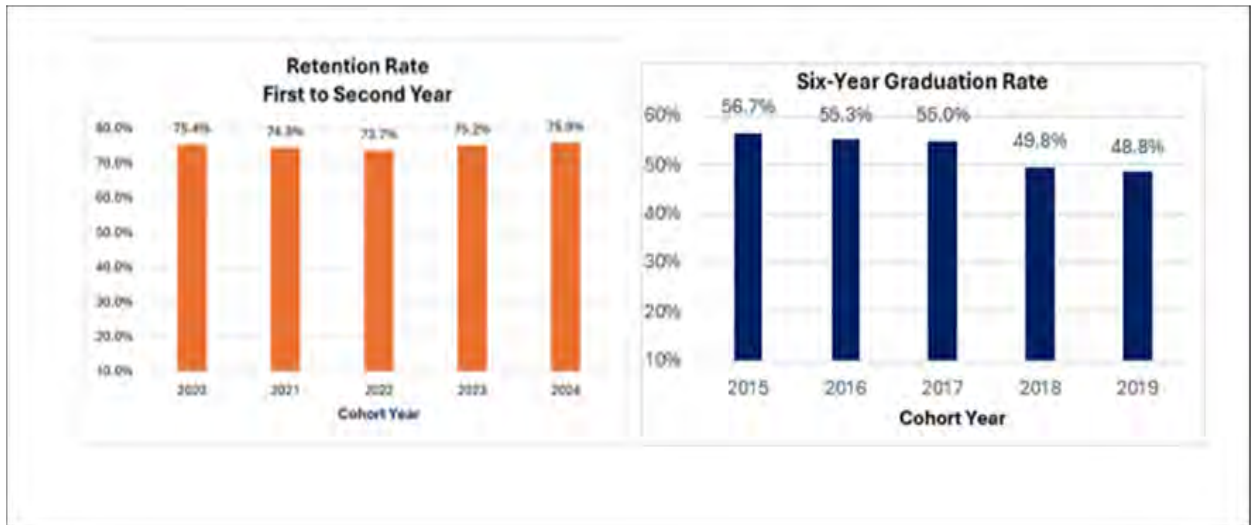


Table 8
First To Second Year Retention Rate:
First-Time Full-Time Cohort

Table 9
Six-Year Graduation Rate

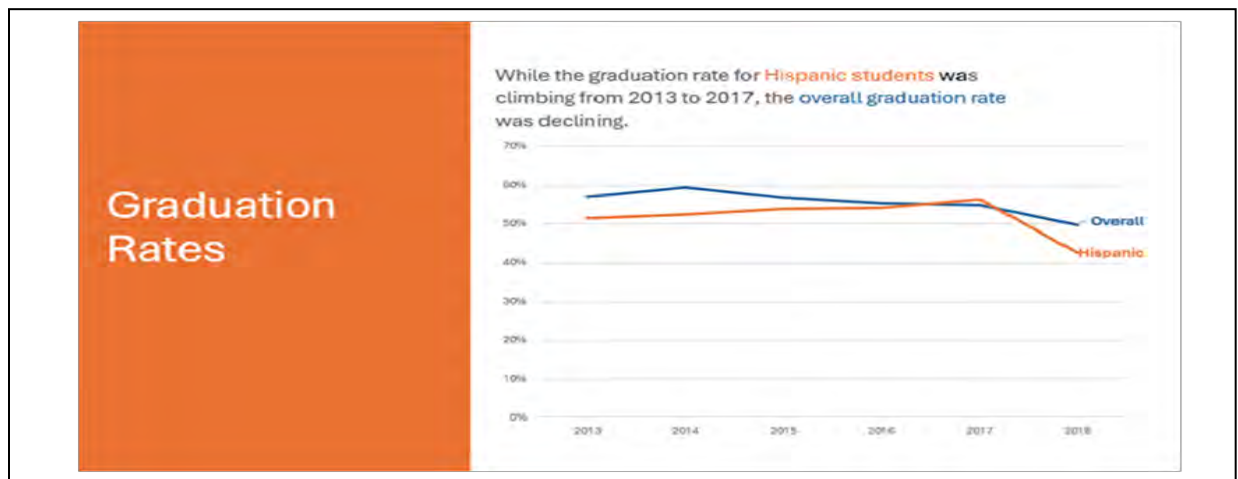


Table 10 - Salem State University Hispanic Student Graduation Rate Vs. Overall Graduation Rate 2013- 2018

The precipitous decline in the Hispanic student graduation rate in 2018 is a result of an increase in Hispanic student enrollment and in particular males, who did not succeed at the same rate as all students. We are however, seeing improvements in recent cohort first year retention rates and hope that this will improve degree attainment, especially with recent increases in coaching and mentoring efforts as well a focus on Hispanic student success.

Retention Rates - Percent to Second Year						Graduation Rates – Percent to 6 Yr.				
Cohort	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
FTFT	75.4	74.5	73.7	75.2	75.7	56.7	55.3	55.0	49.8	48.8
Female	1.5	2.4	0.7	-0.2	3.4	4.7	1.7	3.9	3.6	5.9
Male	-3.2	-3.2	-1.4	0.2	-5.7	-7.9	-3.1	-7.2	-6.8	-10.7
Black	1.6	1.1	-1.3	-10.6	7.2	1.9	-4.8	-13.4	-1.5	-8.1
API	4.0	25.5	1.3	-0.2	0.3	0	-25.3	-7.9	9.3	-4.8
Hispanic	-8.4	-3.0	-1.6	2.4	-1.5	-3.0	1.3	1.4	-7.3	-8.3
White	3.4	0.1	1.0	-1.3	-1.3	0.8	2.3	3.7	3.1	5.6

Table 11- Retention Rate Demographics

Table 12- Graduation Rate Demographics

Salem State University has maintained stable overall completion rates for full-time, first-time students over the past five years, while targeted programs have driven remarkable retention and graduation outcomes among key student groups. Notably, the La Vida Scholars program achieved a 95% retention rate overall and 96% for Hispanic/Latinx students. The Tri-Alpha honor society for first-generation students reached an exceptional 99.5% retention rate. The STEP Program, serving primarily first-year students of color, attained an 89% retention rate with 93% for Hispanic/Latinx students. The RISE Initiative and TRIO Student Support Services also reported retention rates above 89%, with TRIO noting 90% year-over-year persistence and 93% of participants in good academic standing. These results illustrate the university's success in fostering student achievement, especially among underrepresented groups, through strategic and intentional support initiatives.

Through these integrated efforts defining and embodying servingness, building responsive student support systems, prioritizing wellness, leveraging data for equity, and maintaining a focus on retention and graduation SSU affirms its dedication to fostering a just, diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus environment.

Goal Four: Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action

Salem State has taken significant steps forward in its sustainability and climate action efforts. The university advanced campus decarbonization by drilling test wells for a geothermal system on North Campus and launching projects targeting fossil fuel-free heating and cooling for key buildings by 2027. The warehouse at 68 Loring Avenue received complete upgrades, including electric heat pumps, better insulation, and improved lighting, helping to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 49% since 2004. Plans

for decarbonizing additional buildings are underway, along with multiple energy efficiency improvements campus-wide.

Solar energy capacity grew as well, with a new 96 kW solar array installed on the Administration/Theater building and upcoming plans to add a 76 kW array on the Ellison Building. In AY2024-2025, The Arbor Day Foundation recognized Salem State as a Tree Campus for the first time. That year, the university planted 54 trees through various grants and partnerships, adding to more than 100 trees planted since 2022. Tree planting and landscaping restoration projects were integrated into academic programs, connecting learning with environmental stewardship.

Earth Days 2025 at SSU highlighted the risks climate change poses to Earth's ecosystems and the biodiversity they support. Over 850 participants attended 20 events throughout the month, which began with a reuse-themed art exhibit at the Winfisky Gallery. Programming focused on how climate change affects ecosystems, species diversity, and ecological functions, and featured a week of free public lectures, celebrations, and awards aligned with Earth Day activities. Sustainability is becoming further embedded in the curriculum, as the university approved new sustainability course tags and a Sustainability Seal set to launch in Spring 2026. These tools will make it easier for students to find courses that align with Salem State's commitment to the environment.

Goal Five: Campus Community and Culture

Salem State is committed to maintaining a sense of belonging among students and to creating a campus environment that is both supportive and inclusive. The university strives to ensure that all students feel valued and connected throughout their academic journey.

Investments in campus dining have been made as part of a broader effort to strengthen the campus community. Programmatic and sustainability changes have been implemented to better meet the diverse needs of students, faculty, and staff.

To further engage students and deepen their connection to the community, Salem State has expanded culturally responsive programming. The university welcomed several prominent national speakers to campus, including author Alejandra Campoverdi, Holocaust Survivor Werner Salinger, San Juan, PR Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz, and Dr. Antonia Novello, the 14th Surgeon General of the United States.

Recognizing and honoring student success is a cornerstone of Salem State's campus culture. Over 100 students participated in the annual Bertolon Business Pitch, forming 38 teams that competed in an initial round, with eight teams advancing to the finals. Winners received prizes of \$5,000, \$2,500, \$1,500, and \$250, made possible by generous donor support.

To strengthen connections with students and personalize service, Salem State has implemented scalable, data-driven communication strategies. These efforts unify campus support, delivering timely and personalized information that promotes equity through technology, ensuring every student receives tailored guidance and resources.

In the 2024-2025 academic year, the Center for International Education reported offering ten short-term faculty-led study-travel opportunities, with over 166 students participating—an increase from the previous year. Study destinations included Belgium, China, Costa Rica, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Morocco, the Netherlands, Rwanda, South Korea, Spain, and the Southwest United States. Students consistently shared that these experiences were transformative, providing firsthand exposure to new cultures and regions.

Salem State continues to broaden its global reach by establishing new institutional relationships, particularly with university partners in China—the university's top sending country. As part of a 25-year collaboration between the China Center for International Educational Exchange (CCIEE) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), Salem State currently engages in six 1+2+1 partnerships:

- Nanjing Normal University: English (Cohort 8 arriving September 2025)
- Nanfang College: Accounting (Cohort 3 arriving September 2025)
- Taizhou University: Computer Science (Cohort 1 arriving September 2025)
- Huaiyin Normal University: Early Childhood Education (Cohort 1 arriving September 2025)
- Jiangxi Science and Technology: International Business (Cohort 1 arriving September 2025)
- Changzhou University: Accounting (Cohort 1 arriving September 2026)

Beyond Chinese partnerships, new memoranda of understanding (MOUs) were signed in 2024-2025 with several universities, often because of faculty Fulbright grants or research interests. Thames International has the potential to send students to Salem State. These new partners include:

- Charles University, Czech Republic
- EPOKA University, Albania
- Northcap University, India (potential future student exchanges)
- New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria
- Thames International School, Philippines (potential future student exchanges)
- University of Mitrovica, Republic of Kosovo

In fall 2024, Salem State hosted 224 international students (F and J visas), up from 201 in fall 2023, representing over 30 countries. These students enrich the campus experience, fostering intercultural friendships and mutual respect. An additional 24 students participated in community or hospital

programs managed by the American Language and Culture Institute (ALCI). Over the past five years, the university's top sending countries have been China, Albania, Brazil, Morocco, and Nepal, exemplifying Salem State's commitment to a globally connected campus community.

In FY25, the advancement team significantly expanded alumni and donor engagement through a variety of regional and on-campus events, communications and publications. Together the team executed 68 virtual and in-person events this year including six regional FEC/engagement events and Alumni Association and Foundation (AAF) sponsored 12 events. Regional engagement events were hosted in Worcester; Washington, D.C.; Naples, Fla.; San Diego; Los Angeles; and San Francisco, allowing the university to connect with alumni and supporters across the country.

On campus, the Athletic Hall of Fame held in April drew a capacity crowd of nearly 200, while other signature spring events included the Educator Pinning Ceremony, Veterans Stole Ceremony, Viking Warrior Day, and Alumni Weekend—each contributing to a vibrant and connected campus community. The advancement team issued 14 press releases and produced 13 episodes of the It Takes a Viking podcast, showcasing voices and stories from across the SSU community.

Additionally, three major publications were produced and distributed over the year: the Annual Giving Impact Report in September, Your Impact in Action in December, and the Salem Statement in June. These materials helped keep stakeholders informed, engaged and connected to the university's mission and impact.

Goal Six: Operational Excellence and Infrastructure

Salem State University pursues operational excellence by modernizing administrative functions and focusing on continuous improvement. These efforts are key to delivering quality services and supporting the university's mission in a competitive higher education environment. Prioritizing efficiency and effectiveness enables Salem State to provide strong student support, uphold its values, and advance its strategic goals.

One of the university's significant modernization initiatives is the deployment of the PageUp Human Capital Management (HCM) System. This platform has streamlined human resources processes by managing personnel action forms related to hiring and other HR activities. To maximize the benefits of this system, ongoing training for HR staff and managers is provided, enhancing both efficiency and tracking capabilities throughout the university.

Operational improvements also extend to student transportation. In the most recent academic year, the university optimized its student shuttle service, providing a total of 5,800 rides to 12,000 students. This marks an impressive increase of 380% compared to the 2023-2024 academic year, underscoring

the effectiveness of Salem State's commitment to continuous improvement in student support services.

In May 2025, the SSU Board of Trustees approved a \$27.3 million bond to support the BOLD Project. The university intends to use investment earnings to cover the debt payments, ensuring that there will be no increase in student fees. By June 2025, the university's combined investments and reserves reached \$56.2 million, surpassing the target of \$55 million.

The Berry Library continues to advance its Collection Analysis Project, focusing on the systematic evaluation of the library's lesser-used print collection, which includes reference materials, print periodicals, and the general collection. The library generated lists of books and journals for review, which librarians and faculty analyzed to identify items for potential withdrawal. Coordination was overseen by the Collection Management Librarian, with support from Reference and Instruction Librarians, Salem State University faculty, Access Services staff, and Library Administration. Items selected for withdrawal were donated to More Than Words, a local non-profit organization. By May 2025, the project had resulted in the withdrawal of 19,792 items from the library's collection.

Goal Seven: Financial Vitality and Sustainability

Freshman admissions data for 2024 highlights Salem State's continued appeal, with the acceptance rate remaining impressively high at 96%. While the yield rate shifted from 17% in 2023 to 11% in 2024, this reflects a dynamic and competitive higher education environment where students have many options. In response, the university is proactively enhancing its recruitment strategies, campus engagement, and financial offerings to ensure that admitted students choose Salem State as their destination.

Salem State's Admissions team introduced an innovative, award-winning first-year recruitment campaign, seamlessly integrating direct mail, email, and social media outreach. This campaign received national accolades for its strategic approach. Building on this success, a focused affordability initiative leveraged geofencing technology and credit data to connect with 16,000 local Pell-eligible and middle-income families, inviting them to discover the high-impact, high-value opportunities available at Salem State. These efforts demonstrate the university's commitment to making a Salem State education accessible and attractive to a diverse range of students.

FRESHMAN ADMISSIONS		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Applied		6,287	5,093	4,852	7,953	7,496
Accepted		5,659	4,719	4,637	7,625	7,188
Enrolled		939	863	810	858	777
Accept Rate		90%	93%	96%	96%	96%
Yield		17%	18%	17%	11%	11%

Table 13 – Freshman Admissions Fall 2021 - 2025

New student enrollment saw a positive incline for the fall 2024 start term as compared to fall 2023 with a 5.9% first year increase and 13.1% transfer increase. These stronger new student cohorts contributed to the first enrollment increase at the university in 8 years.

NEW STUDENTS ENTERING		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Freshman		996	939	863	810	858
Transfer		394	389	351	349	395
Graduate		460	432	360	379	369

Table 14 – New Students Entering Fall 2020 - 2024

Graduate Division credit hours and headcount have declined, mainly due to increased competition from online and hybrid programs. The School of Graduate Studies recommends clarifying marketing for its online programs. Salem State University's School of Social Work ranks among the top 100 social work programs nationally per US News and World Report and is Massachusetts' highest-ranked public program. SSU's MSW program is now available online. Undergraduate and graduate enrollment numbers are shown in the table below.

ALL UNIVERSITY HEAD COUNT	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
University Total	7,131	6,539	6,239	6,230	6,009
Undergraduate Total	5,555	5,078	4,853	4,867	4,676
Graduate Total	1,576	1,461	1,386	1,363	1,333

Table 14 – All University Head Count Fall 2021-2025

The School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) leadership continues to present budget savings on the employment of part-time faculty, having come in \$27,734 under budget for FY25. This has been accomplished through strategic scheduling of sections and monitoring of enrollment trends. As previously mentioned, after a decade of planning, SCPS successfully launched the Take a Class initiative new user-friendly interface launched to support non-matriculated student enrollment. Since Spring 2025, it has driven a 5.79% increase in summer credit hours. Of 228 inquiries, 74 enrolled, 59 created accounts, and 95 did not respond. Results continue to be tracked and refined.

From a fundraising perspective, we are in the sixth year of the Meet the Moment® (MTM) campaign continued its momentum, adding \$5,144,778 in fiscal year 2025 to reach a total of \$59,490,322 raised, representing 79 percent of the \$75 million goal. To date, 7,751 dedicated alumni and friends have made 17,653 donations to provide essential support for Salem State's core priorities. Notably, the \$20 million goal earmarked for student financial assistance has been surpassed, with \$29.5 million raised; likewise, the \$30 million endowment fundraising goal for the campaign is nearly met, with \$29.9 million raised to date—bringing the university's total endowment market value to \$77.8 million. Furthermore, SSU was selected to participate in the Fidelity Foundation's Invest in My Education program, which will provide \$1 million in persistence and retention grants over the next three years.

Since the commencement of our campaign, 1,790 students have experienced increasing benefits from donor-supported financial assistance, notably through Viking Completion Grants (252) and the Student Emergency Fund (902), which provides critical support to our food and housing insecure students. Additionally, two new scholarships were established in FY25. This year, \$4,695,265 was transferred to the university.

Salem State's community of supporters expanded once again, with 784 new donors added this year. Our work of engaging and retaining donors continues to reap rewards, with 44 percent of donors retained in fiscal year 2025, a five percent increase in retention from fiscal year 2024. For the third year, 77 percent of our three-plus year consecutive donors were retained and reactivated (lapsed) donors rose from 26 percent in fiscal year 2024 to 32 percent in fiscal year 2025.

Since 2019, we have raised \$2,915,809 for SSU BOLD. This campaign category has been our biggest challenge. This year, we celebrated a \$1 million lead gift for SSU BOLD from alumna Midge DeSimone '76 and Tom DeSimone. Advancement continues to build partnerships with supporters in the science, healthcare and biotech industries to secure gifts toward this fundraising priority. Capitalizing on the SSU BOLD groundbreaking in April 2025, the advancement team is actively advancing its SSU BOLD campaign with several key efforts underway. The team is finalizing the case for support and accompanying marketing materials, as well as confirming naming opportunities to attract major donors. On the annual fund front, strategies include initiatives like "Sign a Beam," preparations for Viking Warrior Day 2026 and coordinated outreach through direct mail, email and text messaging. Additionally, the advancement team has identified over 250 prospective corporate and foundation partners to support these efforts.

Conclusion

As it moves forward, Salem State University remains laser focused on student success. The university aims to strengthen data governance for greater transparency and accountability, advance inclusive excellence, and integrate AI responsibly ensuring that technology enhances, not replaces, human judgment. SSU will also plan to modernize facilities like the Sullivan Building, prioritize shared governance and professional culture, and deepen its social and civic impact.

Key goals include establishing a robust data governance system, fostering responsible AI adoption, and renovating academic spaces to support modern needs and sustainability. SSU will continue to reinforce a collaborative, respectful campus culture, using regular assessment to ensure all voices are heard and valued. Efforts to improve social mobility will focus on analyzing what drives student success and expanding access to high-impact experiences like internships and civic engagement.

To ensure effectiveness and transparency, SSU plans to centralize decision-making, coordinate resources, and align academics, student support, and equity initiatives, with the HSI/MSI Roadmap as a guiding framework. The university is committed to closing achievement gaps and embedding culturally sustaining practices, aiming for documented improvements in student outcomes and becoming a leader in serving Hispanic and other underrepresented students.

We are proudly the Commonwealth Civic Engagement University, and this work remains a core priority, with SSU working to build strong community partnerships and formalize its engagement infrastructure. This includes clear evaluation measures and feedback loops to continuously improve impact and institutional distinction.

Sustaining enrollment growth and community responsiveness will be achieved through mission-aligned academic offerings, ongoing market analysis, and data-driven enrollment strategies. SSU also prioritizes building a unified assessment system, with clear learning outcomes at all levels to drive continuous improvement and demonstrate the value of its student-first mission.

Salem State University stands as a vital institution in the North Shore region, driving educational, economic, and social advancement. In 2020, the Carnegie Foundation recognized SSU for its commitment to community engagement, affirming the university's dedication to fostering impactful partnerships and facilitating the reciprocal exchange of knowledge and resources with the broader community.

Drawing on the insights and data from SSU's initial 2019 Carnegie Community Engagement application, university leaders and offices have worked collaboratively to establish both the rhetoric and infrastructure that define Salem State's institutional identity as "The Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University." With strong support from university leadership and unanimous endorsement through the strategic planning process, SSU has now applied for reclassification from the Carnegie Foundation as "The Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University."

This declaration has brought civic and community engagement to the forefront of university marketing and continues to be embedded throughout Salem State's mission, vision, strategic planning, and recruitment efforts. Supported by executive leadership and the Board of Trustees, SSU remains a vital resource for advancing the region's cultural, social, and economic development and has established itself as a thought leader in sectors such as education, science, health care, business, arts and humanities, and the social sciences.

Whether collaborating on community-based research with local food pantries, partnering with municipalities to analyze water samples, translating research for non-academic audiences, or supporting suicide prevention initiatives, SSU brings its intellectual and human capital to bear on local challenges with wide-reaching implications. The university's recent achievements include being a top producer of Fulbright Scholars over the past four years and engaging students in global conversations, inspiring them to "think globally" and "act locally." Central to these efforts are enduring commitments to place, educational access, diversity and inclusion, academic excellence, and student success. At Salem State, community engagement is woven into the very fabric, culture, and history of the university. Defining its identity and guiding its educational approach.

Salem State continually seeks to strengthen its ties with local organizations and stakeholders. By actively listening to and understanding the needs of its partners, the university creates new opportunities for students that align with workforce demands and support the economic vitality of the region.

As the only four-year public institution of higher learning in the North Shore, Salem State values the advantages that external partnerships provide to its student body. In turn, the university supports the

community through internships, experiential learning collaborations, civic engagement initiatives, and by preparing future professionals.

Additionally, many of our faculty and staff serve on boards and committees throughout the region, providing expertise to the business and nonprofit worlds. In my role as president, I share this responsibility by dividing my time over the segments listed below:

Higher Education

- Council of State University Presidents, Member
- Presidents' Alliance for Higher Education and Immigration - Member
- Northeast Consortium of Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts (NECCUM), President

Business Community

- Life Science Consortium of the North Shore, President
- MassHire North Shore Career Center Board, Board of Directors, Member
- New England Council, Board of Directors, Member
- North Shore Alliance for Economic Development, Member
- North Shore Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors, Member
- Salem Partnership, President
- Salem State University Assistance Corporation, Board of Directors, Member

Greater Community

- Voices Against Injustice, Advisory Board, Honorary Co-Chair with Mayor Pangallo

AY 2025-2026 GOALS BY DIVISION



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

1. BORN full approval status and removal from warning. It is imperative that the School of Nursing fully complies with all directives and requirements set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Board of Registration in Nursing. Timely implementation of revised policies, systematic evaluation plans, and documentation standards is essential to achieving full program approval.
2. Prioritize evaluating the effectiveness of (FYS) offerings, create recommendations for revision of the program, to include FYS-wide student learning outcomes, an FYS-specific template, FYS-specific faculty development programming. This work must also include a written memorandum of understanding between the leadership of PAGE (Academic Affairs) and FYE (CAE, Student Success) that clarifies respective roles and responsibilities.
3. Strengthen the University's culture of assessment by ensuring that every academic unit has clearly articulated student learning outcomes at the course and program level, along with a defined plan for assessing those outcomes through the use of technological tools designed specifically for supporting assessment efforts.
4. Analyze existing online course and program offerings to identify programmatic gaps by better understanding unmet student demand and market opportunity; create a three-year roadmap for expanding online course development and online instruction that are maximally flexible and accessible for adult learners (above all others).
5. Complete phase two of the study on curricular experiential learning opportunities for students with the goal of integrating experiential opportunities more fully while building capacity, belonging, and retention.
6. Create a collaborative three-year roadmap for international student marketing, recruitment, admission, and matriculation, with participation by leadership in the Center for International Education, Enrollment Management (admissions), academic units (especially dean and chairs).
7. Working in collaboration with HSI-MSI leadership, plan and launch a pilot program for early-career faculty mentoring, taking heed of the model originally developed for the now defunct North Star Collective (operated through the New England Board of Higher Education [NEBHE]).

8. Draft a procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of general education categories (not including FYS – see item 2) and pilot the proposed procedure by assessing at least two (but no more than three) general education categories. The draft should include a recommended timeline for reviewing the remaining categories.
9. Review curricular and program offerings and work with departments and marketing to distinguish SSU for prospective students, looking to set SSU apart from competitors in terms of available programs and associated experiential opportunities. Doing so may include creating clear academic pathways from high school or community college to SSU and/or from SSU to the workforce or graduate school.
10. Review and update practices intended to encourage greater faculty use of Navigate. By June 2026, increase by at least 10 percent (measured against AY24-25 data) the number of faculty who use Navigate to submit cases of students in need of support, enter progress grades, create advising campaigns. Similarly, increase the number of Navigate cases, progress grades, and campaigns entered into the Navigate system during AY25-26, and add at least two more academic departments to the list of those using the academic planner.
11. Provide education to students, faculty, and staff on AI's impact, informed by commitments to ethics and equity. Update institutional academic and administrative policies to consider AI in the context of SSU's mission, values, and strategic plan. Require clear AI-related guidelines in all course syllabi and encourage programs to discuss and refine AI's implications for program-wide expectations.

ADVANCEMENT

Goal 5: Campus Community and Culture

Expand Engagement Outreach

Execute a strategic regional and SSU BOLD engagement plan throughout New England and the eastern seaboard, targeting at least 40 percent of new attendees at in-person events.

Enhance Donor Communications and Stewardship

Develop compelling communications and stewardship strategies across the donor lifecycle, including:

- Impact storytelling
- Annual reports and personalized touchpoints
- Data-informed decision-making to increase effectiveness

Grow Digital Engagement

Increase social media following by 10 percent, driven by consistent, high-quality content that fosters meaningful connections with alumni and friends.

Foster Team Culture and Belonging

Create an inclusive and collaborative work environment where all team members feel valued and aligned with their strengths and contributions.

Goal 6: Operational Excellence and Infrastructure

Prepare for Raiser's Edge NXT Transition

Complete infrastructure readiness and fully transition from RE Database View during FY26.

- Implement RE NXT functionality for end-users
- Fully integrate Omatic Cloud to automate and streamline data imports

Ensure Successful Completion of FY25 Audit

AAF to deliver an on-time audit with zero findings.

Leadership Transitions and Talent Development

- Prepare for an AAF board leadership transition, as the current chair will be stepping down at the end of this fiscal year and the vice chair is slated to be installed as the new board chair
- Recruit and onboard the next AAF vice chair and new committee chairs to ensure sustained board leadership
- Recruit and onboard AAF fiduciary committee members

Goal 7: Financial Vitality and Sustainability

Raise \$10 Million for the \$75 million Meet the Moment® Campaign

Drive targeted fundraising efforts across all units to meet or exceed campaign goals.

Raise \$375,000 in Unrestricted Support

Secure new and renewed unrestricted gifts to provide flexible resources for institutional priorities.

Implement the SSU BOLD Fundraising Plan

Launch and execute a comprehensive, integrated fundraising strategy to advance the goals of the SSU BOLD priority, with a focus on science and healthcare populations. Key initiatives to raise the additional \$8 million needed include:

- Increase donor support through coordinated annual fund efforts, personal donor outreach, corporate and foundation philanthropy.
- Engage alumni and community partners with ties to healthcare and biotech to build awareness, partnerships and philanthropic support.
- Cultivate major gifts from individuals, corporations and foundations with an affinity for science and healthcare, emphasizing transformational giving opportunities.
- Sustain campaign alignment and momentum across all advancement units, ensuring cohesive messaging and strategy execution.
- Finalize key naming opportunities associated with SSU BOLD, enhancing visibility and donor recognition.
- Develop compelling communications tools, including a case for support, campaign brochures and impact-driven storytelling to inspire donor investment.

Increase Donor Retention from 44 percent to 50 percent

Deploy a comprehensive retention strategy to deepen donor loyalty, increase lifetime value and enhance recurring giving behaviors.

FINANCE AND FACILITIES

1. Continue progress on BOLD, Decarbonization, and other capital projects (Goals 4, 6)
 - Construction BOLD and Decarbonization, year 1 (6.4 and 4.5)
 - Complete BOLD swing space strategy (Berry Library) (6.4)
 - Planning /budgeting for BOLD FF&E and moving (6.4)
 - Debt issuance (MSCBA) (6.4)
 - Finalize cash flow plan related to fundraising (possible bridge loan) (6.4)
 - Complete Appendix III-A budgeted facility projects (6.6)
2. Leverage Commonwealth SUCCESS grant funding to move SSU's strategic plan forward (Goals 1, 3)
 - Coordinate budget development and management (1.2, 1.7, and 1.8)
3. Improve business processes that serve students (as well as faculty and staff) (Goals 1, 5, 6, and 7)
 - Successfully transition to new bookstore model / vendor partnership (6.3)
 - Dining: Continue to improve financial performance and to increase targeted services for students (dinner on North campus, new Allergen-free zone in Marsh) (5.5)
 - Investigate and evaluate upgrades to Clipper Card system (6.3)
 - Explore the possibility of implementing package lockers (6.3)
 - Participate in implementation of new housing system as appropriate (6.8)
4. Maximize, integrate and leverage technologies to improve the spend cycle from budget through payment and standardize space planning (Goals 6, 7)
 - Improve Budget System Functionality
 - Evaluate current budget software for gaps and user needs (6.8)
 - Provide training to improve end-user experience and data accuracy (5.2)
 - Modernize Accounts Payable Processes
 - Automate invoice intake and approval workflows to reduce processing time (6.8)
 - Investigate and evaluate means of integrating AP systems with procurement and finance platforms for seamless data flow (6.8)
 - Increase use of electronic payments and reduce reliance on paper checks (6.8)
 - Improve purchasing processes
 - Reduce risk by right sizing pro card authorization levels (6.7, 7.6)
 - Increase insight into spend by mandating POs for service contracts > \$5,000 (7.6)
 - Streamline "how to" documentation for campus (7.6)
 - Advance Space Planning Capabilities

- Implement new software to improve administration of work orders and reporting thereon (6.6)
 - Create new process for units to request space needs and to clarify how they are prioritized (6.6, 6.8)
5. Staffing Matters (Goals 6, 7)
- Transition to and support new VP/CFO (7.6)
 - Plan for upcoming retirements in finance (7.6)
 - Successfully hire and orient new staff in facilities (6.6, 6.8)

GENERAL COUNSEL, HUMAN RESOURCES

1. Successful completion of the implementation of the new HCM system with PageUp consisting of getting talent management module launched while training others across the University on the system.
2. Making efforts to foster proactive and positive labor relations with our unions that will not only benefit their members but the University as a whole.
3. Continuing analysis of our labor costs/hiring trends to right size the University including MEPA analysis.
4. Ensuring that adequate practice and policies are in place to address employee engagement, morale, connectiveness and support while working in an on-campus, hybrid and remote model.
5. HR satisfaction survey that is outside of the campus climate survey. Consider hiring external consultant to do an external review with recommendations.

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

1. Reorganize the Office of Inclusive Excellence
Implement the updated structure aligning Inclusive Excellence within Student Success, streamline internal workflows, clarify roles, and complete all organizational chart and web content updates.
2. Activate and Energize the Inclusive Excellence Council (IEC)
Re-engage subcommittees, establish a clear annual work plan, and implement a consistent meeting rhythm to ensure campus-wide alignment and progress.
3. Reorganize the Office of Equal Opportunity Compliance/Consolidate and Strengthen EO and Bias Education Training
Implement the updated structure shifting from Human Resources, streamline internal workflows, clarify roles, and complete all organizational chart and web content updates.

Develop a unified training model that integrates bias response education, EO compliance training, and state-mandated content to ensure consistency, transparency, and shared understanding across divisions.

4. Complete the Campus Climate Survey (Spring 2026)
Partner with Institutional Research and the IEC to design, administer, and analyze the survey, ensuring broad participation and actionable recommendations for AY26–27.
5. Build and Launch an Inclusive Excellence Communications Strategy
Create a coordinated communication plan, featuring regular updates, shared event promotion, and improved visibility of IE programs across digital platforms, newsletters, and campus events.
6. Strengthen Education & Training Infrastructure
Expand faculty/staff development in equity, inclusion, and inclusive pedagogy; increase collaboration with CTI; and build recurring, mission-aligned training series across divisions.
7. Enhance Bias Response Processes & Transparency
Refine bias incident reporting protocols, improve response consistency, increase education around restorative practices, and share campuswide quarterly summaries to promote understanding and accountability.
8. Advance HSI–MSI Servingness Initiatives
Deepen collaboration with HSI-MSI Initiatives to align equity goals across student success efforts, including professional development, culturally responsive programming, and institutional data benchmarking.
9. Support and Grow Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)
Provide infrastructure, visibility, and institutional support to expand engagement in ERGs and strengthen affinity-based community-building opportunities for faculty and staff.
10. Design and Implement Equity-Focused Audits
Coordinate IEC subcommittees to conduct audits of key campus systems (e.g., LGBTQIA+ support, UDL, faculty/staff racial diversity, bias response, policy review) and deliver actionable recommendations by May 2026.
11. Increase Campus-Wide Programming and Cultural Engagement
Expand signature programs, including heritage month celebrations, dialogues, and cultural showcases to foster belonging, improve student engagement, and strengthen cross-campus partnerships.

12. Improve Systems, Tools, and Internal Processes for IE Operations
Advance budget management, hiring processes (including administrative support), documentation standards, and data access systems to ensure operational stability and long-term institutional integration of IE work.

ITS

User Services

- Windows 10 System Replacement: Over 200 systems and 90 podiums will be replaced with thin clients prior to Windows 10 support ending on 10/14/2025.
- Staff Computer Refresh: Many staff, including those using 100+ outdated Macs, are being migrated to laptops to streamline support.
- Campus Display Systems: Nearly 50 new display systems will be installed to share university information and support events.
- Viking Connect Project: Project underway to replace Polaris Launchpad and Posts, including migration and user training.
- Jira Change Management: New system will standardize change approvals and documentation, reducing downtime.
- Classroom Technology Upgrades: Six Meier Hall classrooms will receive new projectors, screens, and podiums, with possible expansion based on results.
- Conferencing System Enhancements: About 50 rooms will be upgraded to Logitech equipment for better compatibility and features.

Core Services

- PeopleSoft Access: Evaluating single sign-on and multi-factor authentication via load balancers to reduce costs and support needs.
- Wireless Network Upgrades: New access points will be deployed across multiple buildings to improve connectivity for students.
- Datacenter Cooling: Replacing Stanley datacenter's APC units with more efficient, cloud-suitable cooling solutions.
- Fire Suppression Review: Assessing a switch from dry-pipe sprinkler to gas-based fire suppression for better equipment protection.
- Disaster Recovery: Planning migration of critical systems to Azure cloud for emergency restoration capabilities.
- Digital Transformation: A dedicated hire will lead efforts to digitize most paper forms and automate workflows.

Information Security

- Data Loss Prevention: Launching a multi-year initiative to classify and secure data, beginning with tool selection.
- Identity Access Management: Implementing automated, self-healing provisioning to replace unreliable scripts.
- Email Security Enhancements: Sublime Email Security's AI will be deployed to protect against phishing and malware.
- Mandatory Security Training: All employees will resume required email security training in October to ensure compliance and protect sensitive information.

STUDENT SUCCESS

1. Create a comprehensive Strategic Retention and Enrollment Management Plan with KPI's. (SP Goal 7)
 - a. Retention - Continue with retention/progression efforts, including assessment of outcomes and successful launch of the National Institute of Student Success program (NISS).
 - i. FYS Prioritize evaluating the effectiveness of First Year Seminar offerings, create recommendations for revision of the program
 - ii. Year-of-Advising 2.0
 - iii. Expand and Enhance N360 Interventions
 - iv. Expand the Faculty-in Residence program
 - v. Assess coaching and mentoring across campus
 - b. Enrollment - Inclusive of new freshmen and transfer, adult/continuing and graduate education. Expand potential markets to increase engagement of changing student populations and increase the number of students living in campus housing.
2. Consider applying for the Seal of Excelencia and Federal HSI Designation; Lead MA State Consortium of HIS's and MSI's. (SP Goal 3)
3. Federal Mandate for Accessibility Compliance (SP Goal 6)
 - a. By April 24, 2026, align all websites, mobile apps, PDFs, and social media with WCAG Level AA standards.
 - b. With IT, develop a campus-wide process to review platforms and content, train campus stakeholders to maintain compliance. Additional university resources and time allotment may be necessary to complete this project. (There will be limited Federal exemptions for some grandfathered content).
- 2.1
4. Successful management of the State SUCCESS funding program (SP Goal 7)
5. Complete a campus climate survey. (SP Goal 5)
6. Build awareness around the services and resources for our students to our campus community. (SP Goal 5)
7. Experiential Learning – Tracking and Assessment. (SP Goal 7)
 - a. Enrich student development beyond the classroom (i.e. career service offerings/employer relations, leadership opportunities, internships, community engagement, employment).

8. Enhance conference and event services to increase programming and revenue. (SP Goal 7)
9. Expand AI education and usage. (SP Goal 1)

COMMONWEALTH HONORS PROGRAM BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION REAPPROVAL FY25
6.27.25 AND SITE VISIT REPORT

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 25-50

BOARD DATE: June 17, 2025

**RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMONWEALTH HONORS PROGRAM FOR
SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education accepts the report of the Commonwealth Honors Council Executive Committee and renews the membership of **Salem State University** in the **Commonwealth Honors Program** for seven years, effective June 17, 2025.

VOTED: Motion adopted by the BHE on 6/17/2025.

Authority: Commonwealth Honors Program Approval Process Guidelines as Revised by the Board of Higher Education in March 2022; G.L. c. 15A, § 9.

Contact: Richard Riccardi, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

Keith M. Connors, Program Director for Academic Affairs and Student Success

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

June 2025

Salem State University Renewal of Membership in Commonwealth Honors Program

BACKGROUND

This motion concerns the continuation of Salem State University 's membership in the Commonwealth Honors Program in accordance with the Commonwealth Honors Program Guidelines. Once Commonwealth Honors Program approval has been obtained by an institution, the Commonwealth Honors Council Executive Committee will review the program every seven years. The report of the Committee shall be forwarded to the Board of Higher Education for approval.

REVIEW PROCESS

Salem State University prepared a self-study document presenting its Honors Program structure and operation in terms of the Commonwealth Honors Program requirements. The report provided evidence documenting the fulfillment of the following criteria:

1. Alignment of the mission and goals
2. Organization and administration
3. Admissions criteria
4. Transfer criteria
5. Program curriculum
6. Graduation criteria
7. Program resources
8. Curriculum Review Process

VISITING COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On February 20, 2025, the Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP) Visiting Committee (Visiting Committee) conducted a day-long, in-person assessment of the Salem State University 's (SSU) Honors Program. The Visiting Committee consisted of Jenny Shanahan, Assistant Provost and Coordinator of the Honors Program at Bridgewater State University, and Chair of the Visiting Committee; Ginger Hurajt, Coordinator of the Honors Program at Northern Essex Community College; and Amy Shapiro, Chair of the Honors College at UMass Dartmouth. Prior to the visit, the Visiting Committee received and studied SSU's application for reaccreditation of CHP status. The site visit was hosted and organized by Kimberly Poitevin, Honors Program Director at SSU. During the visit, the team met with faculty, librarians, and students active in the Honors Program, Honors Director Kimberly Poitevin, Honors Faculty Fellow Anthony D'Amico, Provost David Silva, and President John Keenan.

The Visiting Committee, in their report, commended SSU's Honors Program in several areas. These commendations included commitment to student community and belonging, support for Honors thesis scholarship, commitment to equity and inclusion, enhancement of workload credit hours of faculty mentors for Honors theses, dedication and effectiveness of the Honors Director, and a robust Honors curriculum.

The Visiting Committee was impressed by the Honors Program at SSU and recommends, without reservation, that SSU's Honors Program be granted re-approval.

Recommendations from the Visiting Committee, with detailed explanations, included the following:

1. *Enhanced Staffing and Administrative Support* - the Honors Director currently carries responsibilities for recruitment, admissions, advising, event-planning, budget management, fundraising, curriculum oversight, and thesis coordination—alongside teaching and administrative duties. Although a part-time administrative assistant (15 hours/week) and a Faculty Fellow (3 credits APR per semester) provide support, the scope of the Director's responsibilities suggests that additional staffing would allow for improved data tracking (e.g., graduation rates), more systematic advising for 4+1 and transfer students, and expansion of fundraising efforts. We recommend that the university explore expanding administrative staff support for Honors and coordinate collaboration and support from admissions, advancement, institutional research, and assessment. In addition to support from staff in other divisions, a Graduate Assistant with experience in data analysis and/or peer advising could be an important asset to the program
2. *Clarify Honors Curriculum Requirements and Develop Honors Learning Outcomes* - Multiple conversations highlighted a complex and occasionally unclear set of honors credit requirements—often referred to as 21–26 credits, but also 18 and 24, with routine waivers, especially for transfer students and those in 4+1 and heavy-credit programs. The Honors Director has indicated a desire to restructure the curriculum to clarify the requirements, revise the categories of honors electives to better suit students' needs, and to develop and assess honors curriculum learning outcomes. Those are important and time-intensive goals that likely cannot be accomplished on a 6-credit/semester APR during the academic year. We encourage the university to support a formal curriculum review (potentially over a compensated summer or with an additional APR) to clarify and streamline requirements, reduce the reliance on waivers, integrate upper-level honors course opportunities in the majors, and identify and assess a set of learning outcomes. We wonder whether the workload associated with up to 26 honors credits is onerous for some students, especially those in 4+1 programs, double-majors, and/or students with significant transfer credits. Since the CHP minimum is 18 credits, it may make sense to create an 18-credit honors curriculum map with flexibility built in, which could minimize the number of waivers and substitutions and offer clarity for students.

3. *Formalize the Honors Thesis Distinction in Non-Honors Capstone Courses* – Honors students completing their honors theses in non-honors departmental capstone courses are not required to demonstrate a distinction between what they are completing as an honors thesis and what the other students in the class are completing as a capstone for the major. While there is a stated expectation that the honors thesis work should be at a higher level than a standard requirement in the major, there is not a verification of that distinction, other than the requirement for honors thesis students to present their thesis/capstone at SSU Research Day and/or MassURC. Learning outcomes specific to the honors thesis could form the basis of such a distinction. Other CHP institutions' models may be helpful too, such as the practice requiring review and approval of honors theses by a committee of three faculty members in the department and/or allied disciplines
4. *Explore Additional Advanced Honors Coursework* - Lower-division courses comprise most of the Honors curriculum at SSU. The student meeting revealed an interest in adding upper-level or major-specific honors courses. Transfer students especially noted that because most honors courses are at the 100- or 200-level and fulfill general education requirements, and because transfer students have often completed general education equivalents before transferring, they end up needing to take lower-division honors courses as electives in their junior and senior years. Creating more upper-level honors courses and/or establishing honors contracts in upper-division courses could help retain advanced students and facilitate honors completion, particularly for students who transfer to SSU or enter as first-year students with AP, dual-enrollment, or early-college credit.
5. *Develop Sustainable Financial Strategies* - Budget constraints have impacted Honors scholarships, conference travel, and co-curricular learning at SSU. The program has been encouraged to use gift funds to replace parts of an operating budget that was sharply reduced in FY25. Without new endowed funds to provide long-term support, Honors opportunities could fade away. Given the positive impact of signature activities (e.g., the annual new-student retreat and Presidents' Day weekend trip), we encourage renewed collaboration with Advancement to cultivate new donors, explore philanthropic opportunities, and articulate the case for ongoing support. This would help sustain high-quality experiential learning and scholarship funding. If the program can demonstrate with institutional research (IR) data that participation in Honors is significantly correlated with student persistence at the university (which we suspect is the case), there may be an opportunity to advocate for a larger share of the Academic Affairs budget, as well. Each student retained represents revenue that allows the institution to thrive. A robust Honors Program is critical to that overall retention effort
6. *Strengthen Data Tracking on Retention and Completion* – While the Honors Program collects data on total enrollment and racial and ethnic demographics of students, it does not have the capacity to maintain systematic longitudinal records (e.g., tracking which cohorts persist to final thesis completion, or how many transfer students earn the Commonwealth Honors Scholar designation). More comprehensive data collection could

illuminate patterns in retention and inform strategies for supporting students, especially those balancing demanding professional majors and/or 4+1 programs. Tracking this data would also be helpful to highlight student success stories and outcomes for prospective donors and prospective students

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

SSU offered the following responses to the recommendations made by the Visiting Committee:

1. Enhanced Staffing and Administrative Support: program. The program area chair has already initiated conversations with multiple offices on campus to seek additional support with respect to honors recruitment and admissions, advising, and fundraising.
 - Recruitment and Admissions: Beginning in fall 2025, we hope to have the Admissions office take over some of the outreach and mailings currently carried out by the honors program area chair and administrative assistant.
 - Fundraising: The program area chair has had multiple conversations this year with representatives from the Institutional Advancement office. Working with representatives from IA, we have sought out testimonials from current honors students, honors alumni, and honors faculty that can be used to articulate the value of our program to potential new donors. The impact report generated by IA will support us both in our fundraising and recruitment efforts.
 - Advising: We will explore the possibility of securing a graduate assistant who could provide additional advising support in Honors. In addition, we will establish faculty honors program liaisons within each academic department. These liaisons would allow us to provide better and more systematic advising for our honors students, to build stronger relationships with academic departments across the university, and to better identify the needs of honors students within specific majors and our 4+1 programs.
 - Other Partnerships: In coming months, we hope to build on these collaborations and develop more robust partnerships with Institutional Research, the Center for Civic Engagement, and the Center for Research and Creative Activities.

While Salem State is currently unable to offer additional administrative staff designate specifically for honors, an additional 3 credits APR for the program area chair in Fall 2025 will allow more time to secure support from staff in other divisions on campus while tending to the site team's additional recommendations.

2. Clarify Honors Curriculum Requirements and Develop Honors Learning Outcomes: The Honors Program Advisory Committee (HPAC) has already begun work on developing honors program outcomes, which will be finalized this academic year. In its remaining meetings for this year, the committee will discuss the site visit team's recommendations with respect to curricular revisions. With input from HPAC, the program area chair will develop a revised flowsheet/ honors degree map, honors course certification criteria, and curriculum committee proposals needed to implement these changes. These changes would include (1) reduce the number of required courses needed to complete the honors curriculum at Salem State; (2) establish clear criteria for certifying new honors

courses at Salem State; and (3) develop at least one additional upper-level course that could serve the needs of our transfer students and 4+1 students. With the support of an additional APR/ course release in Fall 2025, and in collaboration with other honors program faculty, the program area chair will craft and submit these materials to university governance with the goal of implementing these changes by fall 2026.

3. Formalize the Honors Thesis Distinction in Non-Honors Capstone Courses: The site visit team suggests that our program can do more to formalize and to communicate the requirements for honors thesis work. Rubrics used in previous years to assess honors student thesis work can be revised and more widely shared with all faculty members advising honors thesis projects, be they via directed studies, honors designated courses, or non-honors designated courses within a student's major. SSU appreciates the suggestion of exploring the possibility of requiring review and approval of honors theses by a panel of 2-3 faculty members within a student's home department and/or allied disciplines. While it may be unfeasible to require this of all honors students, it does seem to be a reasonable way of distinguishing thesis work completed in a non-honors course capstone from other capstone experiences. SSU anticipates being able to implement these new guidelines for students completing honors theses in major capstone courses in AY 2025-26
4. Explore Additional Advanced Honors Coursework: The site team report rightly notes that most honors course offerings at Salem State are 100- and 200-level courses that fulfill general education requirements. The lack of upper-level courses in honors poses barriers both to transfer students as well as to first-year students who enter Salem State with college credits earned through AP/ IB exams and to Salem State students who enter our program after their freshman year (and thus have already completed most Gen Ed requirements). Currently, NUR 601H (Nursing Research I), and our junior and senior seminars (IDS 600H and 601H) are the only upper-level honors courses available, though students are permitted to use one graduate-level course as well as a travel course/ semester abroad course (which may or may not be offered at an upper level) to satisfy an honors course requirement.

Allowing students to use more than one graduate course to satisfy an honors course requirement is an easy first step to expanding upper-level course offerings for honors students and for easing the burden on our 4+1 students. Getting other upper-level honors courses on the books will be more of a challenge, as it will require the cooperation of faculty members and chairs in other departments. The governance process for approving new courses at Salem State is lengthy, and it is unlikely we would be able to officially implement any new upper-level honors courses until fall 2026.

We have begun conversations with the Politics, Policy, and International Relations department about developing an upper-level honors course focusing on civic engagement, one of our university's core values. In fall 2025, we will pilot a version of this course within the existing course POL 307 (Applied Policy Research). This course, offered within our North Shore Policy Lab, hones students' skills in data collection,

analysis, and presentation, and introduces them to community partners and team-based community-based research. While this course is open to all students, those seeking honors course credit will complete an additional assignment (a literature review) within the course that helps further the course goals. We believe that honors students who elect to take this course will be well-prepared to conduct community-based thesis projects the following semester or year if they choose to do so. The honors program area chair will work with the Politics, Policy, and International Relations department to put a formal proposal for an honors version of this course into governance by next fall.

Nursing, Biology, Psychology, and Business have been the most popular majors among honors students for several years. The Honors Program area chair will approach each of these departments and seek their support in creating new upper-level honors courses that might serve majors within their departments.

5. Develop Sustainable Financial Strategies: A recent \$20,000 gift from an honors program alum will help us support honors student scholarship and travel experiences for the next two years. In addition, President Keenan has agreed to allocate an additional \$15,000 to operating budget in the 2025-2026 academic year. The honors program will continue to work with the office of Institutional Advancement to cultivate potential new donors for the honors program
6. Strengthen Data Tracking on Retention and Completion: The Honors program coordinator will meet in the new few weeks with Institutional Research to develop a plan for better tracking honors students longitudinally. We agree that being able to access this data will allow us to highlight the role of honors in retention and graduation at Salem State, which may help us make a stronger case for additional funding. Longitudinal data will also allow us to identify potential barriers and bottlenecks in our program and to develop better strategies for supporting our students (particularly our transfer and 4+1 students)

On April 11, 2025, the Commonwealth Honors Council Executive Committee voted to reapprove Salem State University 's Commonwealth Honors Program.

RECOMMENDATION

Department of Higher Education staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation received from the Commonwealth Honors Program Executive Committee and recommends that the Board approve the renewal of the membership of **Salem State University** in the **Commonwealth Honors Program**.

TO: Commonwealth Honors Council Executive Committee
c/o Jenifer Whitten Woodring
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401
Boston, MA 02108-1696

FROM: Jenny Shanahan, Assistant Provost, Bridgewater State University (chair)

Ginger Hurajt, Honors Program Coordinator, Northern Essex Community College

Amy Shapiro, Dean of the Honors College, UMass Dartmouth

RE: Commonwealth Honors Site Visit Team Report at Salem State University on February 20, 2025

DATE: March 7, 2025

CC: Kimberly Poitevin, Director of the Honors Program, Salem State University

**Commonwealth Honors Site Visit Team Report
Salem State University (SSU) Honors Program**

Summary and Recommendation

On February 20, 2025, a Commonwealth Honors Council site visit review team conducted a day-long, in-person assessment of the Salem State University (SSU) Honors Program. The site visit review team, comprised of Ginger Hurajt (Northern Essex Community College), Amy Shapiro (UMass Dartmouth), and chair Jenny Shanahan (Bridgewater State University), received and studied SSU's application for re-approval of Commonwealth Honors status prior to the site visit. During the visit, the team met with faculty, librarians, and students active in the Honors Program, Honors Director Kimberly Poitevin, Honors Faculty Fellow Anthony D'Amico, Provost David Silva, and President John Keenan.

The site visit review team recommends reapproval of Commonwealth Honors status for the Honors Program at Salem State University.

This recommendation is grounded in the program's strong alignment with the university mission and Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP) guidelines, a robust honors curriculum, and evidence of community, innovation, and student success in Honors, as shared in the self-study and observed during the visit.

The site visit team identified the following commendations for the Salem State Honors Program.

Commendation #1: Commitment to Student Community and Belonging

From the annual new-student retreat on Cape Cod to the very popular Bagel Tuesdays, the Honors Program places a premium on community-building. Students noted that these activities and gatherings helped them form strong friendships and acclimate to the university. The Honors Director and Honors Faculty Fellow formally and informally advise all 250 honors students--and the Director's office is readily accessible to students right in the Honors Center. Their knowledgeable and responsive mentorship contributes to students' affinity for the program. A centrally located and welcoming Honors Center, interesting and diverse course offerings, close faculty-student interaction, and a supportive honors student club (student HPAC) further contribute to a strong sense of belonging.

Commendation #2: Support for Honors Thesis Scholarship

The program promotes student success in honors thesis experiences. Honors Seminar 1 (Junior Seminar) and Honors Seminar 2 (Senior Seminar) are 1.5-credit courses taken by all honors students in the semester before and semester during their honors thesis. The courses guide students through the process of designing, carrying out, writing, and disseminating a research or creative thesis. The courses include additional professional development around topics such as applying to graduate school and presenting and publishing scholarly work. All SSU honors thesis students present publicly at SSU's Research Day and/or MassURC and have an opportunity to share their work electronically through the campus's digital repository. Those are invaluable opportunities for graduating seniors to enhance their oral and written communication skills and experience a sense of accomplishment in sharing the results of their work with diverse audiences. Students reported that the guidance they receive from faculty mentors and the skills they learn in the Junior and Senior Seminars foster their capacity for independent research and help them develop confidence as emerging scholars.

Commendation #3: Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

SSU's Honors Program serves a diverse student body, including racially and ethnically minoritized students, commuters, first-generation students, and transfer students. The commitment to more equitable access to Honors is evident in the revised admissions and transfer requirements, which will be in place for the incoming cohorts in Fall 2025. This work is responsive to and consistent with the university's broader mission and identity as a soon-to-be-designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). The revised GPA requirements will allow a broader group of students to qualify for Honors, and the more accessible short-answer questions, in place of a longer honors admissions essay, will reduce barriers to apply. Even before the planned changes, the program's demographic data show a growing racial and ethnic diversity in Honors, indicating that diverse groups of SSU students are being admitted to and are persisting in the program.

Commendation #4: Plan for Acknowledging the Contribution of Faculty Mentors by Enhancing the Workload Credit for Honors Theses

Under the MSCA contract, faculty typically earn 0.5 teaching credit for one semester of mentoring an honors thesis. Faculty report that most thesis mentoring stretches over two semesters, though. That is because students often need several weeks for data collection or other early-stage research work; then, after the bulk of the research is complete, they often need another several weeks to draft and revise their written thesis, prepare a conference presentation, and polish the manuscript for submission to the digital repository. In other words, faculty mentors usually earn 0.5 credit for the equivalent of 1.0 credit of mentoring work. We were pleased to hear from the Provost that a change in that model is planned, starting next academic year. The plan is for faculty mentors of honors theses to earn workload credit commensurate with two semesters of mentoring (1.0 credit) when the student's thesis work extends over two semesters. The recognition and compensation of faculty labor in the high-impact work of mentoring students over months of the honors thesis process are commendable practices—and even more notable and appreciated at a time of institutional budget constraints.

Commendation #5: Dedication and Effectiveness of Honors Program Director

The site visit team left SSU with special regard for the dedication and effectiveness of SSU's Honors Program Director, Dr. Kimberly Poitevin. We wish to highlight that Dr. Poitevin's list of responsibilities has grown since she assumed the Director position, all while she manages new budgetary challenges; yet she evinces extraordinary capabilities and success in supporting the program's 250 students. The workload for a Director of a robust Honors Program on a 6-credit/semester APR is often a heavy lift. At SSU, though, the Director seems to have many more responsibilities than we have observed among CHP peers. SSU's Honors Director does all the Honors admissions work that is handled at other institutions, at least in part, by Admissions. Fundraising is a new responsibility of the Honors Director, due to dwindling gift funds and a budget cut of over 50% in FY25. With only 15 hours/week of administrative support, the Director carries a large share of event-planning responsibilities. As the Honors advisor for about 200 second-year through senior-year honors students, she has a heavy advising load, and she is routinely accessible to all honors students, as her office is in the Honors Center. In addition to advising the students directly, she supports the students' major advisors by providing them with customized information each semester about Honors requirements and courses (particularly challenging when working with 4+1 programs, whose students often have trouble completing Honors requirements, especially the thesis). In the midst of all of that, she writes an Honors newsletter every week, which students referenced several times as a valuable source of leads for campus opportunities, scholarships, community engagement, internships, and social events.

The site visit team offers the following recommendations to continue strengthening the Salem State Honors Program

Recommendation #1: Enhance Staffing and Administrative Support

As noted above, the Honors Director currently carries responsibilities for recruitment, admissions, advising, event-planning, budget management, fundraising, curriculum oversight, and thesis coordination—alongside teaching and administrative duties. Although a part-time administrative assistant (15 hours/week) and a Faculty Fellow (3 credits APR per semester) provide support, the scope of the Director’s responsibilities suggests that additional staffing would allow for improved data tracking (e.g., graduation rates), more systematic advising for 4+1 and transfer students, and expansion of fundraising efforts. We recommend that the university explore expanding administrative staff support for Honors and coordinate collaboration and support from admissions, advancement, institutional research, and assessment. In addition to support from staff in other divisions, a Graduate Assistant with experience in data analysis and/or peer advising could be an important asset to the program.

Recommendation #2: Clarify Honors Curriculum Requirements and Develop Honors Learning Outcomes

Multiple conversations highlighted a complex and occasionally unclear set of honors credit requirements—often referred to as 21–26 credits, but also 18 and 24, with routine waivers, especially for transfer students and those in 4+1 and heavy-credit programs. The Honors Director has indicated a desire to restructure the curriculum to clarify the requirements, revise the categories of honors electives to better suit students’ needs, and to develop and assess honors curriculum learning outcomes. Those are important and time-intensive goals that likely cannot be accomplished on a 6-credit/semester APR during the academic year. We encourage the university to support a formal curriculum review (potentially over a compensated summer or with an additional APR) to clarify and streamline requirements, reduce the reliance on waivers, integrate upper-level honors course opportunities in the majors, and identify and assess a set of learning outcomes. We wonder whether the workload associated with up to 26 honors credits is onerous for some students, especially those in 4+1 programs, double-majors, and/or students with significant transfer credits. Since the CHP minimum is 18 credits, it may make sense to create an 18-credit honors curriculum map with flexibility built in, which could minimize the number of waivers and substitutions and offer clarity for students.

Recommendation #3: Formalize the Honors Thesis Distinction in Non-Honors Capstone Courses

Honors students completing their honors theses in non-honors departmental capstone courses are not required to demonstrate a distinction between what they are completing as an honors thesis and what the other students in the class are completing as a capstone for the major. While there is a stated expectation that the honors thesis work should be at a higher level than a standard requirement in the major, there is not a verification of that distinction, other than the requirement for honors thesis students to present their thesis/capstone at SSU Research

Day and/or MassURC. Learning outcomes specific to the honors thesis could form the basis of such a distinction. Other CHP institutions' models may be helpful too, such as the practice of requiring review and approval of honors theses by a committee of three faculty members in the department and/or allied disciplines.

Recommendation #4: Explore Additional Advanced Honors Coursework

Lower-division courses comprise most of the Honors curriculum at SSU. The student meeting revealed an interest in adding upper-level or major-specific honors courses. Transfer students especially noted that because most honors courses are at the 100- or 200-level and fulfill general education requirements, and because transfer students have often completed general education equivalents before transferring, they end up needing to take lower-division honors courses as electives in their junior and senior years. Creating more upper-level honors courses and/or establishing honors contracts in upper-division courses could help retain advanced students and facilitate honors completion, particularly for students who transfer to SSU or enter as first-year students with AP, dual-enrollment, or early-college credits.

Recommendation #5: Develop Sustainable Financial Strategies

Budget constraints have impacted Honors scholarships, conference travel, and co-curricular learning at SSU. The program has been encouraged to use gift funds to replace parts of an operating budget that was sharply reduced in FY25. Without new endowed funds to provide long-term support, Honors opportunities could fade away. Given the positive impact of signature activities (e.g., the annual new-student retreat and Presidents' Day weekend trip), we encourage renewed collaboration with Advancement to cultivate new donors, explore philanthropic opportunities, and articulate the case for ongoing support. This would help sustain high-quality experiential learning and scholarship funding.

If the program can demonstrate with institutional research (IR) data, that participation in Honors is significantly correlated with student persistence at the university (which we suspect is the case), there may be an opportunity to advocate for a larger share of the Academic Affairs budget, as well. Each student retained represents revenue that allows the institution to thrive. A robust Honors Program is critical to that overall retention effort.

Recommendation #6: Strengthen Data Tracking on Retention and Completion

While the Honors Program collects data on total enrollment and racial and ethnic demographics of students, it does not have the capacity to maintain systematic longitudinal records (e.g., tracking which cohorts persist to final thesis completion, or how many transfer students earn the Commonwealth Honors Scholar designation). More comprehensive data collection could illuminate patterns in retention and inform strategies for supporting students, especially those balancing demanding professional majors and/or 4+1 programs. Tracking these data would also be helpful to highlight student success stories and outcomes for prospective donors and prospective students.

Review Criteria

A. Mission

1. The Program has a clearly articulated mission.

The mission of the Salem State Honors Program is “to provide students with an inclusive, stimulating, and supportive environment to explore their passions, engage in the world around them, and realize their potential both in and out of the classroom.” This mission was well-articulated in the self-study and throughout the visit. Students and faculty consistently emphasized a supportive honors community, practices of equity and inclusion, and opportunities for engaging, academic exploration in honors courses and co-curricular learning.

2. The Program mission is aligned with the institution’s mission.

The program’s mission aligns closely with Salem State’s overall institutional mission to “prepare 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.” The institutional commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and public service are reflected clearly in the Honors Program.

B. Organization and Administration

1. Honors Program director/coordinator.

Salem State’s Honors Program is led by a faculty Director who reports to the Provost and functions similarly to a department chair. The Program also has a Faculty Fellow with distinct responsibilities, especially for first-year student advising and for supporting co-curricular activities.

2. Director/coordinator release time. The Salem State Honors Program Director has six (6) credits of course release time each semester. This is in line with the recommended minimum of six (6) credits release time for Commonwealth Honors Program coordinators. The Honors Program Faculty Fellow has three credits of release per semester. While this administrative structure meets CHP standards, the Director’s expanding responsibilities—recruitment, admissions, advising, event-planning, budget management, and fundraising—could exceed the scope feasible with six credits APR. As noted in Recommendation #1 (above), we encourage consideration of additional support, especially with honors admissions, fundraising, data collection, and program assessment.

3. Faculty Honors Program Committee with administrative and student representation.

The Honors Program Advisory Committee includes representatives from the faculty, librarians, administration, and students. They review honors course proposals and make policy recommendations. After a few years' hiatus during union work-to-rule, the committee reconvened in Fall 2024.

4. **Institutional membership in the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC).** Salem State is a member in good standing of the NCHC, as well as the Northeast Regional Honors Council (NRHC).

C. Admissions Criteria

1. **Established Honors Program admission standards.**

The program has a well explained admissions process with a newly lowered GPA threshold (3.4 for incoming students; 3.2 for internal and external honors transfer students) pending governance approval, which should broaden access to a more diverse student population. The new, short-answer application (in place of a longer honors admissions essay) and test-optional policy will likely encourage more students to apply to Honors.

The revised GPA standard places SSU in line with other institutions in the Massachusetts State College and University system. These admissions changes reflect an intentional move toward equity and accessibility, consistent with the program's and SSU's missions.

2. **Freshman admission.** The SSU Honors Program continues to admit academically motivated students who may not meet the exact threshold based on a holistic application including short-answer prompts.
3. **Procedures for the admission of continuing students.** Current SSU students with at least a 3.2 GPA and fewer than 48 credits can apply to join the Honors Program, pending an interview with the Honors Director. The Program also conducts outreach to non-honors students with high GPAs after their first semester, encouraging them to join Honors.

D. Transfer Criteria

1. **Admission to students who graduate from a Commonwealth Honors Program at a community college.** CHP graduates from community colleges are guaranteed admission to SSU's Honors Program. Other transfer applicants with at least a 3.2 GPA (a recently lowered threshold, in alignment with CHP overall GPA requirements) may join if they still have time to complete the honors requirements.
2. **Honors courses accepted for transfer.** All Commonwealth Honors courses (with a grade of B or better) are accepted for transfer to the Honors Program at Salem State. Transfer

students who took honors-designated courses at non-CHP institutions can also transfer their honors courses (with grades of B or better) to Salem State Honors.

3. **Substitution of other academic work to meet honors requirements for transfer.**

The Honors Director often processes substitutions or waivers so that transfers' prior coursework that would be appropriate for honors credit can map onto the SSU honors requirements. Transfer students often arrive with many general education credits already completed, leaving fewer lower-level honors courses available to them except as electives. The Honors Program has accommodated them where possible with course waivers, but adding upper-division honors courses or contracts could streamline completion for transfers.

E. Program Curriculum

1. **Number of courses.**

The honors curriculum at SSU typically consists of 21–26 total credits, including the following courses:

- Honors Freshman Writing (3 credits, waived if a student already satisfied the writing requirement)
- Five honors electives (often fulfilling general education or major requirements)
- Two 1.5-credit Honors Seminars (Junior Seminar and Senior Seminar), which scaffold students' work on the honors thesis and prepare them for graduate school and career
- A thesis course (directed study or within a major's capstone, for one or two semesters (3-6 credits))

Most honors courses are 100- or 200-level to align with general education. A few 300- and 400-level options exist in Nursing, Psychology, and Business.

The SSU Honors Program stated requirements exceed CHP minimums (18 credits, with thesis). However, with waivers and substitutions, SSU students can graduate with Honors with 18 credits.

2. **Diversity of courses.**

The Honors course lineup spans multiple departments—Biology, Psychology, Business, Communication, History, Nursing, Criminal Justice, World Languages, Philosophy, etc.—ensuring that students have disciplinarily diverse learning opportunities. Most courses are at the introductory (100/200) level, which helps first- and second-year students fulfill general education requirements with an honors approach.

The program offers interdisciplinary, themed, special topics seminars (e.g., Global Climate Change, Seminar in World Cultures), allowing for different faculty to teach approved courses through various lenses and approaches.

Students can also earn honors credit through travel courses or study abroad experiences, if they complete a reflective Honors essay and obtain approval from the Honors Director.

Faculty are welcome to propose new honors courses and revise existing courses. Proposals for new or revised honors courses go through an established governance process, including initial review by the Honors Program Advisory Committee.

3. Skills and content areas & connections to the core curriculum.

Many Honors courses (e.g., Honors Freshman Writing (ENL110H) and Honors Speech (SPC102H)) explicitly develop skills of writing, oral communication, and critical thinking that align with general education goals.

Most Honors courses fulfill core (general education) categories: humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and world cultures. This alignment helps students progress toward graduation requirements in classes with smaller caps and more active, discussion-based, and experiential learning opportunities.

4. Research/scholarship.

Every Commonwealth Honors student completes an honors thesis (traditional thesis or creative or experiential project accompanied by a written piece, such as an artist statement). An honors thesis requires independent research and scholarly work, culminating in a written product and public presentation (e.g., Salem State Research Day or MassURC). The final step is digital publication of the thesis in the SSU repository, giving students' work more visibility.

Supportive Seminar Structure for Honors Thesis

- **Honors Seminar 1 (Junior Seminar)** guides students through project development, proposal writing, and initial research design.
- **Honors Seminar 2 (Senior Seminar)** supports data analysis, writing, student/peer review, and presentation skills, while also helping students navigate IRB processes (when applicable) and finalizing their thesis drafts.

5. Access to advisors.

The Honors Director serves as an additional academic adviser for all honors students, providing guidance on course selection, thesis plans, and overall progress in the program. A Faculty Fellow (3-credit release) specifically advises first-year honors students and coordinates student programming, ensuring newer cohorts have consistent, focused support.

Major Advisors: Each Honors student also has a primary advisor in their major department. The Honors Director sends regular communications about honors requirements to the faculty advisors to ensure that everyone working with students has access to Honors requirements and course offerings.

Centralized Honors Center: Located in the Berry Learning Commons, the Honors Center is staffed by student employees and includes the Honors Director's office. Students can drop by for advising and informal check-ins that complement formal advising sessions.

6. Additional honors activities and learning options outside of the classroom.

Community-Building and Co-Curricular Events

- **Fall Retreat:** Held before the start of fall classes, this overnight trip on Cape Cod builds early cohesion among new students.
- **Bagel Tuesdays:** A weekly social hour in the Honors Center offering free bagels, friendly conversation, and program announcements. (This very popular offering came up in conversation in each of the site visitors' meetings!)
- **Fall Convocation and Etiquette Dinner:** Formal gatherings for recognition of honors students, professional etiquette training, and celebrating milestones.
- **Presidents Day Weekend trips** brought students to Boston, New York, and Philadelphia in recent years, at a low cost to student participants (because supported with philanthropic funds).

Student-Led Programming

The student Honors Program Advisory Council (HPAC) is a student organization that plans social events (e.g., murder mystery parties, tie-dye sessions), and community service (e.g., book drives, local garden projects).

Professional Development

- **Three-Minute Thesis Competition (3MT):** Seniors present concise versions of their thesis projects, compete for awards, and hone public-speaking skills.
- **Graduate School/Career Panels:** Panels about applying to graduate/professional school and preparing for a career are offered as part of the Honors Seminars, which bring in staff and alumni to share guidance on applications, career pathways, and funding.
- **Research Conferences:** Students receive encouragement—and, where possible, some financial support—to present at conferences such as MassURC and the Northeast Regional Honors Conference (NRHC). Those pursuing off-campus research (including study abroad) can request Honors grant funding for partial support.

F. Graduation Criteria

To graduate with Commonwealth Honors, honors students meet the following requirements:

- 3.2 cumulative GPA and a B or better in all honors courses
- Completion of at least 18 honors credits (usually 21–26), including an honors thesis
- The thesis requires public presentation (at SSU Research Day, MassURC, or another venue) and final approval by the faculty mentor/advisor and the Honors Program Director.

All completed theses are shared (students decide whether to share just on campus or on the world wide web) in Salem State's digital repository, where they have collectively been downloaded over 100,000 times.

These standards meet CHP guidelines.

G. Program Resources

1. Operating Budget.

The self-study documents several years of budget data, showing an operational budget recently cut from \$23,800 to \$10,300 in FY25. The honors program thus relies on a diminishing gift fund to support signature experiences (e.g., the student retreat, conference travel).

The program receives a separate student-employment budget for student workers (~15–25 hours/week total). There is a part-time administrative assistant who works 15 hours/week in Honors.

The program's reliance on diminishing gift funds could limit sustainability. We applaud the news that the institution has restored some operating funds. Further support will be needed to continue providing funding to offset the costs of student research, travel, and co-curricular opportunities.

2. Additional budget categories:

a. Honors Program scholarships.

- **Honors Program Scholarship:** Most Honors students receive a \$1,000/year scholarship, disbursed as \$500 per semester.
- **Honors Program Foundation Scholarship:** This endowment offers support largely geared toward transfer students. It provided about \$1,000 each to 16 students in the most recent year.

Funding for continuing students depends on maintaining the required GPA and academic standing in Honors.

b. Support for student research and associated travel.

- o **Yeannakopoulos-Richards Gift Fund:** Historically, this \$250,000 donation (now mostly expended) financed a significant number of student grants for research and conference travel. The self-study provides examples of students using these grants to attend professional conferences (e.g., Northeast Regional Honors Council) or to conduct off-campus fieldwork.
- o **Budget Constraints:** While the Honors Department budget now covers limited research/travel expenses, the greatest share once came from that gift account. As these funds are nearly depleted, the self-study notes that sustaining research/travel support depends on new gifts or an increased departmental budget.
- o **Free Conference Participation**
Students regularly participate in Massachusetts Undergraduate Research Conference (MassURC) and SSU's Research Day, which are free of charge for participants.

c. Office space.

The Honors Program is headquartered in the Berry Learning Commons. The Honors Director's office is in that space, adjacent to a student lounge area. This proximity offers student access to advising by the Director, though the transparent glass wall may make it difficult for the Director to conduct uninterrupted work in the office.

d. Support staff.

- o The Honors Program has a part-time administrative assistant for 15 hours/week to assist with clerical tasks and event planning, though this may not be sufficient for a program serving approximately 250 students with significant recruiting, advising, and event-planning needs.
- o The program employs students (about 20–25 hours/week total) to help with front-desk reception, administrative support, and general inquiries from Honors students and visitors.

e. Identifiable Honors Center.

The Honors Center in the Berry Learning Commons is open to honors students for studying, meetings, and informal gatherings. Weekly “Bagel Tuesdays” and many of the student HPAC (student Honors Program Advisory Council) offerings take place there. The space gives the program a physical identity and a communal focal point. Students appreciate having a designated lounge and resource area.

f. Resources for outside speakers.

The self-study mentions that Honors faculty may request small grants to invite guest speakers. For example, a past World Music course received \$600 for a guest musician visit, and an Honors Seminar obtained \$100 for an honorarium. Typical support can cover local travel and/or a modest honorarium. Faculty often partner with other campus departments to support speakers.

g. Public service opportunities, internships, exchange programs, and capstone experiences.

The Honors newsletter, Junior/Senior Seminars, and the student HPAC regularly promote service activities, often provided by SSU's Center for Civic Engagement. Recent examples include volunteering at local community gardens and hosting a book drive for area nonprofits.

While the Honors Program does not centrally administer or fund internships, students are strongly encouraged (particularly in the Junior Seminar) to pursue internships relevant to their majors. They may apply for small Honors grants if an internship requires travel or special expenses.

Students can earn Honors credit for study abroad by completing an "Honors Essay" that connects the experience to their academic goals. The Program's gift funds have historically helped some students defray the cost of travel courses and study abroad, though future levels of support will depend on fundraising efforts.

All Honors students complete an honors thesis, supported by the Junior and Senior Seminars. Faculty mentors receive a workload credit (0.5 per semester) for thesis advising. Small grants for thesis-related expenses (e.g., special materials, travel) can be provided for a few students each year.

h. Social activities included in the Program.

- **New Student Retreat:** An overnight trip on Cape Cod to help first-year students build community, subsidized by gift funds.
- **Fall Dinner and Etiquette Dinner:** Gatherings that bring together students and faculty in a more formal setting.
- **Presidents' Day Weekend Trips:** Cultural or academic excursions at discounted group rates. Students typically pay a small portion of the cost, with Honors funds covering most expenses (e.g., shared hotel rooms, museum or event tickets).
- **Student-Led Activities**
The student HPAC organizes social gatherings (e.g., craft nights, murder mystery parties) with budget support from student government.

H. Curriculum Review Process.

SSU's governance requires that new honors courses follow established, multi-stage procedures. The process for review is thorough. The program's "umbrella" themed courses and special topics seminars help different faculty teach those honors courses without needing to redesign new courses each year. The reactivated Honors Program Advisory Committee will be valuable in supporting and reviewing future curriculum proposals.

Conclusion

The site visit team appreciates the time, energy, and thoughtfulness that our Salem State Honors Program colleagues put into the self-study and the planning for our time on campus. The self-study was thorough, clear, and thoughtfully prepared. The itinerary our day-long visit was well-organized and allowed us to gain helpful insight into the program and the students it serves.

We were impressed by the program's strong sense of community, diverse course offerings, and co-curricular opportunities. We commend the clear dedication to student engagement, inclusion, and academic excellence.

We encourage the university administration to continue providing the resources necessary for the program to remain vibrant, equitable, and aligned with the best practices of Commonwealth Honors.

With the recommendations outlined above, we are confident that the Salem State University Honors Program will continue thriving and providing a model of inclusive, high-impact education for all.

APPENDIX B



MEETING THE MOMENT, SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY: STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028: ANNUAL
REPORT ON STRATEGIC PLAN, YEAR TWO, FY25



MEETING THE MOMENT

Salem State University: Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Annual Report on Strategic Plan

Year Two, FY25

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Executive Summary

FY2025

In its second year, Salem State University's 2023–2028 Strategic Plan (FY25) saw strong momentum and meaningful progress across all seven goals, demonstrating the university's deep commitment to academic excellence, equity, civic engagement, sustainability, modernization, and financial health.

Work done under Goal 1 included efforts to strengthen the Gen Ed program, expand online learning, boost advising efforts, and support faculty development in teaching, learning and research, pilot course section tags in specific areas, and provide career/professional goal development for students. Goal 2's work highlighted Salem State's growing leadership in civic engagement through student-led initiatives, conferences, and community-based learning. Progress on Goal 3 included expanded support for multilingual students and stronger STEM pathways, and positioning the university to pursue federal Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation. Environmental work under Goal 4 led to major clean energy upgrades, increased community involvement, and continued work reducing campus greenhouse emissions. Work related to goal 5 focused on fostering a more inclusive campus with dining improvements, employee training, and new support networks, as well as laying the groundwork for an upcoming campus climate survey. Work done under Goal 6 included Project BOLD, a finalized long-term Campus Master Plan, and upgraded technology to improve day-to-day operations. Finally, Goal 7 work led to an increase of \$4.4M in fundraising (in total, \$58.8 million raised toward a \$75 million target) alongside reforms to financial aid, improved budget processes, and early steps to grow global engagement.

FY25 set a strong foundation for future impact, with clear goals in place to support continued growth and resilience.

Goal One

Academic Excellence and Active Learning

In FY25, Salem State continued to build on its strong academic foundation by launching several key initiatives designed to prepare students for an evolving workforce and global society. A major milestone was the launch of the Program Area for General Education (PAGE) which focused on the categories of first year seminar and personal growth and responsibility, rolled out pilot assessments and introduced the QUEST (question, understand, explore, share, take action) framework. Faculty were supported through teaching and learning programs, as well as research opportunities, and the university expanded its online course offerings. New advising tools and course options were introduced to better support student success, as were opportunities for students to explore careers and scholarly and creative work. Faculty research and community-engaged teaching also gained traction through enhanced support. Looking ahead, Salem State plans to deepen its focus on equity in the curriculum, increase hands-on learning opportunities, expand AI literacy, and strengthen student support systems tied to academic success.

Goal Two

Civic Engagement and Public Good

This past year, Salem State made big strides in strengthening its role as a civic-minded university. Civic learning became more deeply embedded in coursework and students had more opportunities than ever to step into leadership roles. The university co-hosted the first New England HSI/MSI Conference, led a Student Leadership Summit, and helped expand a statewide civic learning network. Student organizations

were active in numerous social justice and service projects, while faculty and students collaborated on research that addressed local community needs. Despite some resource constraints, the university is well-positioned to push this work even further, with plans to finalize civic course tagging, secure a permanent space for the Berry Institute of Politics, and launch a coordinated recruitment strategy to further establish itself as Massachusetts' Civic Engagement University.

Goal Three

Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Salem State made real progress this year in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through programs and support systems that reflect the diverse backgrounds and needs of its students. From partnering with the Center for Civic Engagement to host the inaugural HSI-MSI conference, launching new STEM initiatives and cultural events to creating a Spanish and Portuguese translation protocol, the university took important steps to make campus more accessible and welcoming, as well as a regional leader as an HSI-MSI. SSU received its first private grant to support underserved students ("Strive to Thrive") and student leaders represented the university at national advocacy events. While coordinating efforts across departments remains a challenge, SSU is moving toward federal HSI designation and aims to apply for the Seal of Excelencia. A newly comprised Inclusive Excellence Council focused its attention on four key areas of the university: 1. bias response; 2. Faculty and staff recruitment and retention; 3. LGBTQ gap analysis; and 4. universal design. Future goals include expanding bilingual outreach, embedding inclusive practices across departments, and further strengthening institutional capacity to serve all students equitably.

Goal Four

Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action

Sustainability remained front and center in FY25, with Salem State making meaningful progress on both environmental goals and climate action. From geothermal test drilling to major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions the university took important steps to reduce its carbon footprint. Solar power capacity was expanded, dozens of new trees were planted, and environmental literacy was promoted through new course tags and a Sustainability Seal. While keeping student-led green spaces maintained continues to be a challenge, cross-campus collaboration through the Sustainability Task Force helped keep the momentum going. Next year, Salem State plans to further expand its green infrastructure, integrate sustainability more deeply into academics, and move closer to its long-term climate commitments.

Goal Five

Campus Community and Culture

In FY25, Salem State focused on creating a more welcoming and supportive campus environment for students, faculty, and staff. Improvements in dining emphasized healthier and more sustainable options, and several student support teams received new training to respond to evolving needs. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) received more funding and attention, helping foster a stronger sense of community among diverse groups on campus. While some areas still need attention, these efforts mark an important step toward building a more inclusive and connected university community.

Goal Six

Operational Excellence and Infrastructure

This year, Salem State took steps to improve its campus operations. A 10-year campus master plan was completed with input from all sectors of campus. Major facilities upgrades included roof replacements and the Sam Cioffi Center for student athletes. Final plans for Project BOLD were completed with construction slated to start in FY26. On the technology side, over 370 physical computers for employees were replaced and the Cyber Range/lab was completed and started being operational. A new HR platform (PageUp) also helped modernize hiring and personnel management. Looking forward, priorities include continued BOLD construction, technology expansion, and adapting to the shifting funding landscape.

Goal Seven

Financial Vitality and Sustainability

FY25 was a strong year for fundraising and financial planning at Salem State. The “Meet the Moment” campaign has reached \$58.8 million toward its \$75 million goal, supporting student aid, academic programs, and major capital projects like Project BOLD. The university also overhauled its financial aid policies to improve access and simplify student support. Budget trainings and more transparent planning helped departments better manage their resources. SSU started building infrastructure to support new international student cohorts, though uncertainties around visa policies continue to pose challenges. As the university looks to the future, reducing financial risk will be the top priority.

Goal Work Summarized

Year Two – FY25 Achievements

I. Academic Excellence and Active Learning

GOAL: Develop and support high-quality academic programs and innovative educational experiences that equip Salem State graduates to thrive in an evolving workforce and to navigate confidently in an increasingly complex and global society

1. The Program Area for General Education (PAGE)

Launched in Fall 2024, the Program Area for General Education (PAGE) began its first full academic year with the goal of strengthening, assessing, and rebranding Salem State’s General Education curriculum. Led by a chair and seven faculty members from across the university’s four colleges, PAGE focused on key areas like the First Year Seminar (FYS) and Personal Growth and Responsibility (PGR) categories. In FY25, PAGE rolled out pilot assessments, introduced the QUEST framework (Question, Understand, Explore, Share, Take Action) to give Gen Ed a clearer identity, and worked to engage faculty. PAGE also built partnerships with stakeholders like the Registrar, developed resources to support faculty and students, and worked to better align FYS with broader Gen Ed goals. These efforts have helped lay the groundwork for a more cohesive, accessible, and impactful Gen Ed experience.

2. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

In Summer 2024, the Center for Teaching Innovation (CTI) launched the SoTL Scholars Program, a year-long initiative supporting faculty in research-based exploration of teaching and learning. The first cohort included six faculty members who developed original projects on topics like STEAM collaboration, zines as tools for activism, identity expression through cajitas (sacred boxes), and student views on AI in the classroom. The program kicked off with an intensive summer session and provided ongoing support throughout the year, including a monthly SoTL Critical Friends Group that fostered collaboration, mentorship, and shared reflection.

3. Online Teaching and Learning

The Center for Teaching Innovation (CTI) is leading a strategic push to improve online education at Salem State through its new Digital Learning Landscape Strategy and Educational Innovation Initiative. With the hiring of an Assistant Director for Online Learning in December 2025, CTI has launched several key efforts to support more student-centered and effective online teaching. Highlights include redesigned courses with improved Canvas templates, the creation of an Online Learning Hub for faculty, and expanded professional development opportunities such as Zoom workshops and an 8-week Online Learning Group. CTI has also strengthened cross-department collaboration and is exploring online micro-credentials to support faculty growth. Together, these efforts represent a shift toward more scalable, innovative, and inclusive digital learning across the university.

4. Advising and Curriculum Updates

During FY25, Salem State University made meaningful strides in academic advising and curriculum development. Dubbed the “Year of Advising,” the university expanded peer advising through N360, gathered student feedback to refine the program, and delivered over 40 Academic Planner trainings across 23 departments with the goal of consistency in advising.

On the curriculum side, departments aligned redesign efforts with the university's strategic goals. Highlights included a new combined Criminal Justice and Spanish major, cross-listed forensic science courses developed between Criminal Justice and Geological Sciences, and targeted promotion of the Ethnic Studies concentration. Other notable efforts included internship readiness initiatives in Management, curriculum alignment with equity-focused teaching standards in the School of Education, and new articulation agreements underway in Theatre. The School of Graduate Studies also processed nearly 100 curriculum proposals, reflecting strong faculty engagement in academic planning.

5. CliftonStrengths Implementation

In FY25, Career Services, in collaboration with the Alumni Association and Foundation and the Office of Inclusive Excellence, launched a CliftonStrengths initiative titled "Know Your Value, Build Your Brand, Envision Your Future.". Designed to help students recognize and apply their strengths in career planning, the program engaged 41 students through workshops that integrated the CliftonStrengths tool with the Community Cultural Wealth Framework. Participants were introduced to the eight NACE Career Readiness Competencies and learned how to leverage their strengths in resumes and interviews. Student feedback highlighted a strong demand for continued support in areas like LinkedIn coaching, graduate school prep, and financial literacy. Overall, the initiative combined strengths-based learning with culturally responsive programming to help students gain confidence and build practical skills for life after graduation.

6. Section Tagging Governance Proposal and Implementation

A new governance proposal was approved to introduce course section tags for Civic Learning, Sustainability, and Open Educational Resources (OER), making it easier for students to find classes that align with civic engagement, environmental responsibility, and affordable learning. Piloted in Spring 2025 for OER and Sustainability courses, the tagging system will expand to include Civic Learning in Fall 2025. In addition to helping students make more informed course choices, the tags will also improve how the university tracks progress toward key goals in the strategic plan.

7. Sponsored Projects

Despite facing a tough political environment the Sponsored Projects team made important internal progress. They developed new policies and forms, built a comprehensive inventory of standard operating procedures, and supported contract terminations in collaboration with Legal and the President's Executive Cabinet. These behind-the-scenes efforts have laid the groundwork for more robust grant activity once external conditions improve.

8. Scholars Toolkit Development and Implementation

The Scholars Toolkit initiative was launched to provide stronger support for scholarly and creative work, especially for graduate students and emerging researchers. Over the year, a solid framework for events and resource sharing was put in place. Feedback from focus groups highlighted the need for a connected, ongoing scholarly community instead of one-off events, shaping future efforts to focus more on building lasting connections and sustained engagement.

9. Research Initiatives

Despite leadership changes, the Center for Research and Creative Activity (CRCA) kept research efforts moving forward, with a new faculty director starting part-time in September 2025. In FY25, CRCA reviewed numerous proposals, awarded funding to several projects, organized Research Day to highlight faculty and student work, and hosted Fulbright workshops that saw both a faculty member and student reach the final selection round.

Community-Engaged Research (CER) gained recognition as a key part of Salem State's academic culture, formally integrated into faculty evaluations and supported by new guidelines developed under Professor Sara Moore's leadership. CER's widespread presence across departments and its role in Salem State's Carnegie Community Engagement Classification underscore its growing importance on campus. **Center for Accessible Academic Resources (CAAR)** was created which merged disability services, peer tutoring, and supplemental instruction. This unified approach enhances academic support and accommodations, ensuring all students have the resources they need to succeed. With innovative tools and a focus on inclusivity, CAAR is dedicated to improving student success and retention.

II. Civic Engagement and Public Good

GOAL: Cultivate a civically engaged community of learners and scholars committed to public problem solving in a diverse democracy, and align curriculum, co-curriculum, research, and creative activity with opportunities to promote the public good

1. Conferences and Summits

In the summer of 2025, Salem State co-hosted the first New England HSI/MSI Conference, where civic engagement and antiracist practices were featured prominently in a quarter of the sessions. The university also hosted a Student Leadership Summit with four Massachusetts schools focusing on leadership and servingness, concluding the Summit with a community dinner organized by NorthShore Community Development Coalition. Additionally, Salem State helped launch a statewide HSI/MSI Consortium aimed at strengthening civic engagement as a core part of HSI/MSI identities across Massachusetts.

2. Civic Engagement Programs

Salem State's civic engagement programs in FY25 offered meaningful opportunities for dialogue and activism, including 30 post-election drop-in sessions that brought together about 100 participants for reflection and discussion. During Advocacy Month, themed "If Not Us, Then Who: Our Time Is Now", the university hosted 16 events focused on various social issues and skill-building workshops. Looking ahead, the approval of civic learning course tags for Spring 2026 will help students easily find courses tied to civic engagement and improve tracking of these efforts campus-wide.

3. Academic Integration and Community-Engaged Learning

In FY25, Salem State's academic departments made strong strides in blending academic work with community engagement. The Geology department focused on estuary sustainability and pollution reduction, while the History department contributed to the Salem400+ initiative. The Management department hosted a Business Pitch Competition and launched a career readiness course, and the Maguire Meservey College of Health and Human Services provided civic health programs including workshops led by Marylou Sudders. McKeown School of Education piloted an early literacy program with Boston Public Schools, the Occupational Therapy department partnered with LEO Inc. for developmental initiatives, and the World Languages and Cultures department supported translation projects benefiting schools and public health. Community-engaged research also thrived, with the Chemistry department working on water quality alongside Salem's Resilient Together group, the Geography department conducting policy research for local nonprofits, and the Policy Lab and the Sociology department evaluating Salem's Guaranteed Basic Income program and a LatinX oral history project.

4. Public Events and Outreach

The Berry Institute of Politics had a busy year engaging over 300 people through its Fellows Program, featuring lectures and mentoring from figures like Marylou Sudders and James “Jimmy” Hills. The institute also boosted its visibility with events like an alumni networking gathering at the UMASS Club, which drew 85 attendees including 20 elected officials, and an Alternative Spring Break at the State House focused on political engagement. Meanwhile, the Intergenerational Hip Hop Dance Symposium brought together an audience of approximately 250 students and 175 community members. Performers included 70 youth artists and 34 adult artists in the performance showcase celebrating cultural heritage through performance and community education.

5. Student Organizations and Service Projects

Student organizations and affinity groups at Salem State took the lead on a variety of meaningful service projects throughout the year. They tackled food insecurity by preparing sandwiches for My Brother’s Table, supported college readiness with events like a “college shower” for young women, organized campus cleanups to promote environmental care, and hosted blood and food drives through the Community Service Initiative, showing a strong commitment to both the campus and broader community.

III. Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

GOAL: Increase the diversity of our campus community, and promote equity and inclusion in all programs, policies and practices

1. Inaugural HSI-MSI Conference and Student Leadership Summit

The inaugural HSI-MSI Conference and Student Leadership Summit in July 2025 brought together 400 participants, including 40 student leaders and 12 student employees, helping to establish Salem State University as a key regional leader among Hispanic-Serving and Minority-Serving Institutions in New England. The event also strengthened the university’s ability to support Latinx and underrepresented students, building greater institutional capacity and community.

2. Secured First Private eHSI Grant – “Strive to Thrive”

Salem State secured its first private eHSI grant, “Strive to Thrive,” a multi-year award that will provide coaching support to 100 students over the next three years. The grant also funds professional development for faculty and staff, helping them better serve and support underserved student populations.

3. Implemented Translation Protocol and Strategic Planning Grant

Salem State implemented a new translation protocol, creating Spanish and Portuguese versions of key Admissions and Financial Aid materials. In collaboration with Student Success, the university also developed a bilingual campus directory. These resources are now actively used to improve student recruitment and support, making the campus more accessible to multilingual communities.

4. Increased Culturally Responsive Programming

Salem State expanded its culturally responsive programming by hosting national speakers, broadening heritage month events, and partnering with Sodexo to offer more culturally relevant dining options, all aimed at creating a more inclusive campus experience.

5. Increased Support for Students in STEM

Salem State boosted support for students pursuing STEM careers by launching a SACNAS student chapter, creating a Pre-Health Track for those aiming for medical fields, and enhancing resources and program reviews to strengthen STEM pathways.

6. Expanded Support for Students

Salem State expanded support for students by partnering with Career Services and Enrollment Management to improve access to internships and fellowships, while also creating an IE Community Resource Canvas page to provide ongoing support and resources.

7. Student Participation at HACU Conference

Students actively participated in the HACU Conference, engaging in high-impact practices and advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill, as well as taking part in the HACU Leadership Summit to strengthen their leadership skills and amplify student voices.

IV. Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action

GOAL: Reflect Salem State's core commitment to protecting the natural environment in campus facilities, operations, academics and decision making, and equip faculty, staff and students to understand and engage in addressing the climate emergency

1. Campus Decarbonization Projects

Salem State made major strides in campus decarbonization by drilling test wells for a geothermal system on North Campus and breaking ground on projects aiming for fossil fuel-free heating and cooling in key buildings by 2027. The warehouse located at 68 Loring Avenue was fully upgraded with electric heat pumps, improved insulation, and lighting, contributing to a 49% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions since 2004. Decarbonization plans were also developed for several other buildings, alongside multiple energy efficiency upgrades across campus.

2. Expansion of Solar Infrastructure

The university expanded its solar infrastructure with a new 96 kW array now running on the Administration/Theater building and began working on plans for solar panels on the roof of the Ellison Building, expected to add an additional 76 kW array on the Ellison building.

3. Sustainability in Academic Curriculum

Sustainability became more integrated into academics with governance approval of sustainability course tags and a Sustainability Seal, both set to launch in Spring 2026, helping students easily identify courses that support SSU's environmental mission.

4. Sustainable Landscaping and Tree Planting

The campus also focused on green spaces, planting 54 trees in 2024 alone through grants and partnerships, adding to over 100 trees planted since 2022. Tree planting and landscape restoration were woven into academic programs, blending education with environmental stewardship.

5. Electric Vehicles and Charging Infrastructure

To support sustainable transportation, EV chargers were installed in four parking spots, and the university purchased an electric vehicle to reduce its carbon footprint.

6. Earth Days Programming and Community Engagement

Earth Days programming attracted over 850 participants across 20 climate-focused events, highlighting climate action, education, and student engagement in sustainability efforts..

Goal V. Campus Community and Culture

GOAL: Foster a campus culture that fuels school spirit, sense of community and collegiality, mutual respect and trust, and shared commitment to student success and the University's long-term future

1. Dining Experience Enhancements

Efforts to improve the campus dining experience included programmatic and financial adjustments aimed at sustainability and community needs. The university continues to prioritize increasing access to healthy food choices while implementing strategies to reduce the campus subsidy on dining operations.

2. Strengthening Student Services

Professional development for Title IX investigators, community standards personnel, and members of the care and concern and behavioral intervention teams has been a priority. Over 15 staff members received training in Title IX protocols, threat response, and behavioral intervention, enhancing the university's capacity to support student well-being and safety.

3. Advancing Employee Resource and Affinity Groups (ERGs)

The university has doubled budgets for ERGs, reflecting strong participation and commitment to cultivating a respectful and inclusive workplace culture. Administrative support was provided to ERGs, which include LGBTQ, LatinX, Jewish, Women's, Asian, Grief and Loss, Disabilities, and Black affinity groups. All affinity groups are open to all employees, regardless of one's race, religion, gender, sexual preference or abilities. Next steps focus on clarifying ERG missions, increasing leadership, engagement, and campus-wide awareness.

Goal VI. Operational Excellence and Infrastructure

GOAL: Continuously assess and improve the administrative and operational systems, structures, and processes that support the university's mission of teaching, research and public service, and maintain physical facilities and technologies necessary to deliver the mission effectively and efficiently

1. Campus Master Plan Update

The Campus Master Plan update, presented to the Board of Trustees in April 2025, lays out a 10-year vision for campus development. It includes major renovations alongside cost-effective improvements, aiming to strategically align physical growth with enrollment, academic priorities, and sustainability goals.

2. SSU BOLD Project Funding Plan

The SSU Board of Trustees approved a \$27.3 million bond in May 2025 to support the BOLD Project, with the university planning to use investment earnings to cover debt payments, thus avoiding any increase in student fees. As of June 2025, combined investments and reserves totaled \$56.2 million, surpassing the \$55 million target.

3. PageUp Human Capital Management (HCM) System Deployment

Salem State successfully implemented the PageUp Human Capital Management system to streamline HR operations. The new platform now handles personnel action forms for hiring and related processes, with ongoing training for HR staff and managers to improve efficiency, transparency, and tracking across the university.

4. Building Enhancements

Several building roof replacements were completed. The Sam Cioffi Center was designed and outfitted to support scholar-athletes. Turf was installed in the former natatorium area.

5. ITS Upgrades

Several major technology projects were completed to improve campus operations and communication. Student lab systems were upgraded to enhance functionality and access, and all University Police computers, including cruiser units, were refreshed to ensure reliable performance. More than 370 employee computers were also replaced as part of the ongoing device refresh initiative. ITS launched an Apple caching server, streamlined hybrid classroom carts, and upgraded outdated analog security cameras to modern digital systems for improved clarity and connectivity. ITS implemented a new digital signage solution to deliver more timely information across campus. The cyber lab was completed and is now operational. ITS, Facilities, and University Police are also collaborating on updates to emergency protocols, phones, and campus lock mechanisms to strengthen physical security.

Goal VII. Financial Vitality and Sustainability

GOAL: Fortify Salem State's financial foundation by stabilizing enrollment, growing income from existing and new revenue streams, advocating for greater public funding support, continuing to build a culture of philanthropy, and aligning resources with strategic priorities

1. Meet the Moment (MTM) Campaign Progress

The Advancement team raised \$4.4M for a total of \$58.8M toward the \$75M campaign goal, including \$29.5M in endowed monies. Major philanthropic support this year supported student completion grants, the new cyber range lab, academic programming, and international education.

2. Budget Management and Revenue Growth

Finance focused on improving budget management, updating long-term financial planning, and increasing non-tuition revenue through conferences. Efforts to achieve a balanced budget are ongoing, supported by reserve-management strategies and campus-wide financial training.

3. Financial Aid Policy Overhaul

The University completed a comprehensive overhaul of its financial aid policy to reduce student financial barriers and improve grant utilization and reporting.

4. Global Engagement and International Enrollment

The University is preparing to welcome more students from China, though future capacity will depend on international student access policies

Fiscal Year 2026 Must-Do's

Goal 1: Academic Excellence and Active Learning

First Year Seminar (FYS) and General Education

- Evaluate the effectiveness of First Year Seminar (FYS) offerings and create recommendations for program revision.
- Develop FYS-wide student learning outcomes, an FYS-specific course template, and targeted faculty development programming.
- Establish a written memorandum of understanding between PAGE (Academic Affairs) and FYE (CAE, Student Success) clarifying respective roles and responsibilities.
- Draft and pilot a procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of General Education categories (excluding FYS), including a recommended timeline for reviewing remaining categories.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement

- Strengthen the university's culture of assessment by ensuring each academic unit has clearly articulated student learning outcomes at the course and program levels.
- Implement a consistent plan for assessing outcomes through use of technology tools that support assessment efforts.
- Online Learning and Adult Education
- Analyze existing online courses and programs to identify gaps and unmet student demand.
- Create a three-year roadmap for expanding online course development and instruction, prioritizing flexibility and accessibility for adult learners.

Experiential Learning

- Complete phase two of the study on curricular experiential learning opportunities.
- Integrate experiential learning more fully across programs to enhance capacity, belonging, and student retention.
- International Education
- Develop a collaborative three-year roadmap for international student marketing, recruitment, admission, and matriculation.
- Ensure participation from leadership in the Center for International Education, Enrollment Management, and academic units (especially deans and chairs).

Faculty Development and Mentoring

- In collaboration with HSI-MSI leadership, design and launch a pilot early-career faculty mentoring program.
- Adapt the model originally developed by the North Star Collective (formerly operated through NEBHE).

Academic Identity and Program Distinction

- Review curricular and program offerings to highlight SSU's unique strengths for prospective students.
- Collaborate with departments and marketing to define clear academic pathways from high school or community college to SSU, and from SSU to the workforce or graduate school.

Technology and Student Success Tools

- Review and update practices to encourage greater faculty use of Navigate.

AI, Ethics and Policy Development

- Educate students, faculty, and staff on AI's impact, guided by SSU's mission, values, ethics, and equity commitments.
- Update academic and administrative policies to reflect responsible AI use. Require clear AI-related guidelines in all course syllabi and support programs in defining AI expectations at the program level.

Goal 2: Civic Engagement and Public Good

Engaged Dialogue

- Embed engaged dialogue as a recognizable and routine practice across academic, co-curricular, and administrative settings.

Curricular Integration and Experiential Learning

- Complete phase two of the study on curricular experiential learning opportunities for students.
- Prioritize integration of civic learning across the curriculum.

Assessment and Learning Outcomes

- Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for creating and assessing student learning outcomes for civic learning institution-wide.

Community-Engaged Research (CER)

- Establish and implement recommendations to strengthen understanding of Community-Engaged Research.
- Ensure consistent application of CER across faculty practices, institutional culture, and identity.

Reputation and Enrollment Impact

- Leverage Salem State's reputation as the Civic Engagement University.
- Support enrollment efforts and attract students motivated by community involvement and social impact.

Goal 3: Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Servingness and Inclusive Culture

- Define and embed a campus-wide “servingness” culture.
- Engage with Excelencia to implement best practices toward earning the Excelencia Seal.
- Align HSI and Inclusive Excellence efforts to avoid duplication and maximize impact.

Training and Infrastructure

- Launch scaled servingness training for all employees, tailored to role and need.
- Implement new infrastructure supporting Inclusive Excellence and HSI/MSI initiatives.
- Consider recommendations from the Inclusive Excellence Council.
- Engage with the National Institute for Student Success to inform student retention strategies.

Goal 4: Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action

Sustainability Goals

- Continue progress on decarbonization, solar, EV infrastructure, HVAC upgrades, and sustainability-tagged curriculum.
- Submit Arboretum application; replace EV stations.

Partnerships

- Strengthen collaboration with local agencies (DCR, Salem Sound) to advance sustainability goals.

Goal 5: Campus Community and Culture

Safety and Environment

- Enhance campus security.
- Expand safety training and emergency protocol communication.
- Conduct active attack trainings, launch department-led communications, and streamline student feedback processes.

Community Engagement and Student Experience

- Improve student services based on feedback (dining, weekend activities, ID processes).
- Complete campus climate survey and share findings.

Professional Development and Hiring

- Create inclusive a campus-wide professional development plan focused on cultural competence.
- Incorporate unconscious bias training into all hiring processes.
- Promote email etiquette campus-wide.

Mental Health Support

- Expand outreach of the Resilience Lab.
- Promote 24/7 support services and mental health pop-ups for students and staff.

Goal 6: Operational Excellence and Infrastructure

Systems and Tech Modernization

- Implement and socialize Viking Connect (Polaris replacement).
- Launch Star Rez for conferencing and student housing.
- Complete Windows 10 device replacements.

Process and Space Improvements

- Advance centralized space planning and create a unified system for room reservations.
- Improve purchasing, accounts payable, and budget system functionality.

Capital and BOLD Projects

- Continue implementation of BOLD and related capital projects.

Goal 7: Financial Vitality and Sustainability

Fundraising and Grants

- Align fundraising for BOLD with departmental beneficiaries.
- Focus on unrestricted fundraising to maintain institutional flexibility.
- Coordinate budget management for Commonwealth SUCCESS grant funds.

Revenue Expansion

- Grow summer conferencing opportunities across departments.
- Expand recruitment and marketing for online programs, including enhanced web presence.

Financial Resilience

- Monitor and prepare for federal funding volatility.
- Explore issuance of debt for BOLD as needed.

Grant Oversight

- Establish structured grant management processes with clear accountability and outcome tracking.

2023-2028 Strategic Plan: PEC-Established Internal Targets for Se

KPI	Baseline	2024 Target	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	
On-Time Credit Accumulation* % of students completing their target number of credits in their first year (24 or more for full-time students; 12 or more for part-time students)					
All	64%	66%	67%	67%	
Asian-American/Pacific Islanders				68%	
Black/African American	61%	63%	56%	57%	
Hispanic/Latinx	61%	63%	58%	59%	
Indigenous					
White	74%	75%	72%	70%	
Persistence* % of students still enrolled anywhere in their second fall term					
All	84%	84%	83%	86%	
Asian-American/Pacific Islanders			75%	82%	
Black/African American	84%	84%	84%	84%	
Hispanic/Latinx	83%	84%	79%	82%	
Indigenous			0%		
White	84%	84%	86%	85%	
Degree Completion After Transfer* % of students who graduate from a State University or Umass within four years after transferring from a MA Community College					
All	69%	80%	67%	58%	
Asian-American/Pacific Islanders				71%	
Black/African American	61%	62%	58%	52%	
Hispanic/Latinx	63%	64%	63%	60%	
Indigenous					
White	69%	70%	70%	67%	
Degree/Certificate Completion % of students completing a degree or certificate within six years anywhere					
	F15 cohort		F16 cohort	F17 cohort	
All	64.00%		64.10%	65%	
Asian-American/Pacific Islanders				68%	
Black/African American	64.40%		57.10%	63%	
Hispanic/Latinx	61.90%		60.90%	64%	
Indigenous					
White	64.40%		67.20%	72%	

*These metrics align directly with the DHE's Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, and the DHE is the source of the data shown. The SSU baselines, provided to PEC by Chunju Chen are based on 2022 data

Selected KPI's			
2026 Actual	2027 Actual	2028 Target	Comments
Part-time students)			Baseline: 2021 Cohort. 2024/2028 Targets: 2023/2027 Cohorts respectively. SSU baselines for this and the next KPIs tracked and reported by DHE reflect most current data available. (Chen Notes for 11/15/24 deadline: Baseline: 2022 Cohort...last year=64%)
		72%	SSU and DHE baselines reflect data from the most current cohorts available (data available in 2022). – DHE 2033 baseline for state universities (all races): 67% – DHE 2023 baseline for state universities: 80% (Chen 11/15/24 Latinx last year=61%; African American last year=61%; White last year 74%) (All races % is higher than last year. Some races are not listed here.)
		71%	
		71%	
		76%	
			2024/2028 Targets: 2023/2027 cohorts, respectively
		86%	SSU and DHE baselines reflect data from the most current cohorts available (data available in 2022). – DHE 2033 baseline for state universities (all races): 83% – DHE 2023 baseline for state universities: 90% (Chen 11/15/24: African American last year=84%)
		86%	
		86%	
		86%	
College			2024/2028 Targets: 2023/2027 cohorts, respectively
		71%	SSU and DHE baselines reflect data from the most current cohorts available (data available in 2022). – DHE 2033 baseline for state universities (all races): 60% – DHE 2023 baseline for state universities: 65%
		68%	
		67%	
		71%	
			Data source is National Student Clearinghouse, using 2015 cohort; 2024/2028 Targets: 2018/2024 cohort respectively
F18 cohort	F19 cohort	F20 cohort	
		68%	SSU baselines reflect data for the 2015 cohort . – DHE 2023 baseline for state universities (all races): 72% – DHE 2033 baseline for state universities: 80%
		61%	
		66%	
		70%	

here for the first three metrics; DHE also is the source of the metric definitions.

KPI	FY23 Baseline		FY24 Actual	FY25 (Final 7/9/25)	
Total University Headcount (UG and G Degree-Seeking Students)					
All Students	5980		5585	5602	
Undergraduate Student Headcount (Degree-Seeking)					
All Students	4592		4286	4291	
Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	136 / 3%		123 / 3%	132 / 3%	
Black/African American	430 / 9%		365 / 8.5%	382 / 9%	
Hispanic/Latinx	998 / 22%		992 / 23%	1079 / 25%	
Indigenous	5 / 0.1 %		4 / 0.1%	4 / .1%	
White	2626 / 57%		2402 / 56%	2285 / 53%	
Graduate Student Headcount (Degree-Seeking)					
All Students	1388		1299	1311	
Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	33 / 2%		34 / 3%	28 / 2%	
Black/African American	45 / 3%		58 / 4%	60 / 5%	
Hispanic/Latinx	175 / 13%		171 / 13%	175 / 13%	
Indigenous	0		1 / 0.1%	1 / 0.1%	
White	1018 / 73%		931 / 72%	945 / 72%	
KPI					
Retention to 2nd year	Cohort 2021 (return 2022)	Cohort 2022 (retrun 2023)	Cohort 2023 (return 2024)	Cohort 2024 (return 2025)	
All	74.5%	73.7%	75.16		
Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	100.0%	75.0%	75.00		
Black/African American	75.6%	72.4%	64.58		
Hispanic/Latinx	71.5%	72.1%	77.62		
Indigenous	100.0%	n/a	50.00		
White	74.6%	74.7%	73.90		
Retention to 3rd year	"Cohort 2020 (return 2022)"	Cohort 2021 (return 2024)	Cohort 2022 (return 2025)	"Cohort 2023 (fall 2026)"	
All	60.5%	62.8%	60.84		
Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	61.8%	81.3%	56.25		
Black/African American	56.3%	61.5%	57.89		
Hispanic/Latinx	50.4%	60.4%	57.08		
Indigenous	n/a	100.0%	n/a		
White	65.0%	63.7%	63.54		

FY26 Actual	FY27 Actual	2028 Target	Comments
			2023 Baseline represents Fall 2022 numbers: 2022 University Fact Book Enrollment Report
		5350	The enrollment goals are aspirational and assume SSU will have achieved HSI/MSI.
			2023 Baseline represents Fall 2022 numbers: 2022 University Fact Book Enrollment Report
		4000	Assumptions - increased retention, reduction of DFW rates, increase in online modalities, increase in completion, persistence grants and coaching, updated science building (BOLD), positive impact from increased state aid, including an increase in the transfer pipeline.
		396 / 9.9%	
		1104 / 27.6%	
		2160 / 54%	
			2023 Baseline represents Fall 2022 numbers: 2022 University Fact Book Enrollment Report
		1350	Assumptions – increase in online/hybrid modalities
		86 / 6.4%	
		197 / 14.6%	
		972 / 72%	
			Comments
		Cohort 2027	Cohort 2023 not available yet; 2021 and 2022 cohorts represented
		79%	The same that the most recent cohorts are represented here
		75%	
		80%	
		79%	
		Cohort 2026	Cohort 2023 not available yet; 2020 and 2021 cohorts represented
		79%	The same that the most recent cohorts are represented here
		75%	
		80%	
		79%	

Graduation (6 yr)	Cohort 2016	*Cohort 2017	Cohort 2018	Cohort 2019	
All	55.3%	55.0%	49.77		
Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	30.0%	47.1%	60.87		
Black/African American	50.5%	41.6%	48.33		
Hispanic/Latinx	54.0%	56.4%	42.49		
Indigenous	n/a	50.0%	n/a		
White	57.6%	58.7%	52.92		
KPI	2023 Baseline	2024 Target	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	
Financial Health					
Endowment market value (all funds)	\$52.5M	\$52.5M	\$66.3M	\$74.2M	
Endowment donated principal (all funds)	\$40.7M	\$43.0M	\$48.7M	\$52.0M	
Debt-service-to-revenue ratio	9.74%	9.80%	8.14%	7.48%	
Cash and Investments balance	\$104.3M		\$119.8M	\$122.4M	
Comprehensive campaign dollars raised	\$40.4M / 53% of Goal	\$50.5M	\$54.4M	\$59.5M	
KPI	2023 Baseline	2024 Target	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	
Employee Turnover (faculty and staff)					
Employee Turnover (ALL)	2.62%	9.00%	1.85%	4.78%	
Employee Turnover (Asian-American/Pacific Islanders)		n/a	0.00%	3.28%	
Employee Turnover (Black/African American)	10.00%	9.00%	4.35%	10.00%	
Employee Turnover (Hispanic/Latinx)	16.00%	14.00%	1.38%	8.81%	
Employee Turnover (Indigenous)		n/a	0.00%	0.00%	
Employee racial diversity	21.49%	22.44%	23.90%	**	

** 10/15/25 Chen's note: For fall 2025, IPEDS HR data snapshot will be taken on Nov. 1, 2025 and official data summary will

		Cohort 2022**	*6 yr graduation for cohort 2017 is the most recent available as of April 2024
		60%	**Several F16 and F17 cohorts actuals are higher than target fall 2022 cohort.
			The same that the most recent cohorts are represented here, except that I have preliminary for Cohort Fall 2018.
		61%	
		58%	
		60%	
2026 Actual	2027 Actual	2028 Target	Comments
		TBD	2023 Baseline: as of 6/30/23 for Alumni association and Foundation, Inc. investment portfolio. The AA&F will set this goal as a part of its strategic planning process to be completed in June of 2024. KPI was established by the AAF and the date is not tied to the university's audited financial statements.
		\$55M	2023 Baseline: as of 6/30/23 for Alumni association and Foundation, Inc. investment portfolio. The AA&F will set this goal as a part of its strategic planning process to be completed in June of 2024. KPI was established by the AAF and the date is not tied to the university's audited financial statements.
		TBD	2023 Baseline: as of 6/30/23 NOTE: These figures may be set after K. House receives enrollment targets.
		TBD	2023 Baseline: as of 6/30/23 Note the 2023 Baseline includes funds committed to DCAMM for SSU BOLD project.
		\$75M	2023 Baseline: as of 6/30/23. The Comprehensive Campaign goals of \$50M was approved by the BOT and Foundation in February of 2020. In February 2023 the BOT voted to raise the goal to \$75M. Counting toward the campaign goal started July 1, 2019.
2026 Actual	2027 Actual	2028 Target	Comments
		8.50%	Excludes retirements.
		8.50%	
		13%	
		25%	Percentage of employees who identify as Hispanic, Black, Asian-American and Pacific Islanders 11/1

be available by April, 2026.

FY2025 Goal Stewards

Student Success and Life Readiness:

David Silva, Bonnie Galinski, Chris Macdonald-Dennis

1. Academic Excellence and Active Learning:

David Silva, Cynthia Lynch, Eliza Bobek, Lisa Bibeau

2. Civic Engagement and Public Good:

Cynthia Lynch, Julie Whitlow, Adria Duijvesteijn

3. Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

Chris Macdonald-Dennis, Elisa Castillo, Arlene Theodore

4. Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action:

Brian Vanden Heuvel, Tara Gallagher

5. Campus Community and Culture:

Shawn Newton, Lori Boudo, Mark Quigley, Chris Macdonald-Dennis

6. Operational Excellence and Infrastructure:

Steve Swartz, Luigi Marcone, Karen House

7. Financial Vitality and Sustainability:

Mandy Ray, Sallyann Lopez, Eduardo Valenzuela, Steve Schuetz

APPENDIX B

End-of-Year Reports FY25 Funded Small Projects

• Baseline Setting for Environmental Sustainability	24
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End-of-Year Report for Baseline Setting for Environmental Sustainability: Strategic Plan Goal 4

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Baseline Setting for Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan Goal Four
- **Project Start Date:** September 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** June 30, 2025
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Brian Vanden Heuvel, Tara Gallagher
- **Project Overview:** This project had three parts:
 - Hire intern to establish a baseline for sustainability learning by determining how many sustainability course sections there were in FY2023-2024 across the curriculum.
 - Hire intern(s) to establish a baseline record and map of trees that were planted by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and develop a formal approach to tracking these changes.
 - Develop an approach to integrating the study of the newly established low mow zones into coursework to provide students with opportunities to monitor ecosystem biodiversity.NOTE – no money was spent on this part of the project. See challenges section below.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Objective

The three parts of this project relate to Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objectives:

- 4.6 sustainable landscape
- 4.7 sustainability-related academic offerings
 - **Measurement Type:** establishment of baseline data for sustainability courses, inventorying new trees, and establishing study protocols to integrate low mow zones into coursework
 - **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Establish baseline sustainability course data to enable tracking changes over time and goal-setting; establish protocols for students to use GIS to map and inventory campus trees and begin to make maps and inventory; integrate study of low-mow zones into academic courses.
 - **Supporting Data Actions Taken and Actual Results:**
 - The tree intern organized and corrected tree inventory data from North Campus and Harrington Campus. This involved creating new zones for future tree surveys and creating a digital ID for each tree. This will allow for an effective tree survey of North Campus in Fall 2025. The intern is also currently creating a GIS map of newly planted trees on Harrington Campus to meet a grant requirement and to establish a basis for a future integrated inventory of all trees on that campus.
 - The sustainability course intern evaluated every course section from AY2023-2024 as to whether it likely met the AASHE definition that Salem State use for being a sustainability course. The intern then reached out to deans, department chairs and professors to review and correct the working database. The result was that more than 600 courses that year met the sustainability criteria with almost 10,000 students taking these courses

- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** Academic project benefits students across the entire campus as sustainability course tagging benefits students in all majors. Tree inventory directly benefits students taking GIS, drone, and related sustainability courses while also aiding in promoting SSU's sustainable landscape commitments which benefits student recruitment.
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** An indirect benefit is that this level of understanding of the reach of our sustainability courses will aid us in applying for grants and in talking about our academic focus on sustainability, thus aiding in student recruitment.
- **Actions Taken:** See above under "Supporting Data."
- **Challenges and Solutions:** The low-mow zone project faced some challenges. Students in spring 2024 obtained approval from Facilities for the establishment of three low-mow zones on campus to support native pollinator populations and to allow us to establish a baseline identification of the plants that were established in these zones.

The conditional approval was based information available at the time and limited by other activities on campus. Mowing only once per year allows flowers to bloom continuously throughout the spring, summer, and fall, which supports a range of pollinators that are active during different parts of the season. Having the plants intact over the winter allows the stems of the plants to be used by several species of native bees that remain dormant during the cold months.

Another goal was to use these sites in academic and co-curricular activities with students. Dr. Lynn Fletcher researched best practices for no-kill survey methods for pollinator diversity and started to recruit students for a May/June 2025 project of surveying the low mow zones for pollinator diversity. She also spent time identifying and categorizing over 26 blooming plants on Meier Hall Hill over summer 2024 to provide baseline information on the species present in the first year of the low mow zone. Tara Gallagher, Brian Vanden Heuvel, and Lynn Fletcher held events with students during the fall of 2024:

- September – walk and talk open to the whole SSU community to discuss the benefits of low mow zones and identify plants (Meier Hall hill)
- September – Greenhouse club plant identification on Meier Hall Hill
- October – BIO308 Entomology class insect identification on Meier Hall Hill
- October – Weeding of invasive species event
- **Challenges/Obstacles to the project:** As project BOLD continued to develop and contract limit lines and impact areas were developed, it became apparent that the area offered for study would be impacted by construction. In late April/early May 2025 the low-mow zone north of the tennis courts was discontinued due to neighbor complaints and the Low Mow Zone South of Atlantic Hall and adjacent to the salt marsh was inadvertently mowed by a new contractor. While the Atlantic no mow zone continues to be available for study, Dr. Fletcher cancelled the pollinator survey project for 2025 and has moved the project off-campus. No grant money has been spent on this phase of the project. A baseline data collection effort was started and can be reinitiated if desired.

Next Steps

- **Next Steps for the Project:**
 - **Sustainability course section inventorying:** As tagging of sustainability course sections has been integrated into the course catalog beginning with the Fall 2025 semester (and the development of the catalog in Spring 2024), gathering metrics will be able to occur via reports requested of the Registrar's office so this baseline setting project will not continue as tracking will transition to being a routine function.
 - **Tree Inventory:** Professor Nick Geron will continue to engage students in projects to use their GIS skills to further develop and correct our campus tree inventory. He will use directed study and course special projects as vehicles for obtaining student work and will continue to look for funding opportunities for paid student work.
 - **Low Mow Zones:** No next steps.

End-of-Year Report for Bias Response Training Project

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Bias Response Training at SSU
- **Project Start Date:** Summer 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** Project ongoing
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Carlie Pierre, Monica Leisey, Abby Machson-Carter
- **Project Overview:** This project's main goals were to begin the process of creating anti-bias training at Salem State University to mitigate the impact of bias on campus, informed by data and feedback from students, faculty, and staff. Over the course of initially designing and implementing our workshops, our focus for scaling training sessions has shifted from online-only to include a more in-person format. We see this effort as particularly aligned with the following strategic plan objectives:
 - 1.7 Remove barriers to successful degree program completion through implementation of retention and persistence strategies for at-risk, under-represented, and systemically marginalized learners
 - 2.1 Build on SSU's historic commitment to social justice and civic engagement and expand Salem State's reputation as the Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University
 - 3.3 Create a culture of support for, and expand investment in, professional development for faculty, staff, and student employees around, culturally responsive teaching and learning, student services, and operations in all areas
 - 3.4 Transform academic programs, policies, pedagogies, and practices such that they are rooted in a commitment to racial equity
 - 3.6 Assert SSU's leadership as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) modeling the design and implementation of an intentional, successful plan to serve, support, and empower students at and through all levels of the institution
 - 5.1 Engage faculty, staff, and students in creating and maintaining a supportive environment that promotes student engagement, empowerment, a sense of belonging, and progress toward goals
 - 5.4 Nurture the development of meaningful professional relationships at all levels of the organization and foster an engaged student community that promotes relationship building and involvement in campus life
 - 5.5 Foster physical, mental, social, and emotional wellness among all members of the campus community in an environment that feels safe and prioritizes holistic health

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Objective #1: Train Department Chairs About Bias

- **Measurement Type:** results from surveys
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Desired goals
 1. Increase department chairs' understanding of bias and how it impacts our larger campus community and their respective areas.
 2. Increase chairs' willingness to engage in difficult conversations to disrupt bias/behavior.
 3. Identifying specific actions to reduce bias in their roles and departments.

- **Actual Results:** Actual goals
We were only able to complete one of our two planned workshops with chairs, so we were only able to work on areas 1 and 2:
 1. Increase department chairs' understanding of bias and how it impacts our larger campus community and their respective areas.
 2. Increase chairs' willingness to engage in difficult conversations to disrupt bias/behavior.
 - a. In general, it seemed that the workshop increased chairs' comfort with defining and talking about bias at SSU.
 - b. We also received anecdotal feedback from Julie Whitlow on a need for differentiation in future presentations (e.g., Chairs who already know and teach these topics vs. Those for whom it is a new topic), as well as encouragement to include more student voices and suggestions for action. This feedback helped us pivot and change the direction of our spring activities.
- **Supporting Data:** We used pre- and post-workshop surveys of participants.
 - Pre-workshop survey results (n=39)
 - Post-workshop survey responses (n=10)
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** 39 academic chairs and other administrators in the room.
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** 6,000 SSU students were impacted through training of their department chairs.
- **Actions Taken:**
 - December 2024 initial anti-bias training for department chairs, plus follow-up resources sent afterward.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** We were not able to deliver the second half of our training to the Chairs because there wasn't time in the schedule in the spring. As we continue to develop anti-bias initiatives, we would love university support in helping publicize our efforts with administrators and chairs.

Objective #2: Gather Data from Students, Staff, and Faculty About Experiences of Bias

- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** 8 students in focus groups, 35 faculty and staff in attendance at our April '25 event, and 20 faculty attended our May 21 event and learned about student experiences.
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** The feedback we received from faculty, staff, and students will help us develop training sessions grounded in the specific experiences of the SSU community.
- **Actions Taken:**
 - Inclusive Excellence Student focus group
 - CAAR student focus group
 - Amplifying Student Voices: Addressing Bias and Creating Welcoming Spaces at SSU event, April '25

Challenges and Solutions: Knowing the diversity at Salem State, we weren't sure we were able to fully capture the range of student experiences, so we set up a second focus group at CAAR to hear about the experiences of students with disabilities. Still, we think more focus groups and an updated campus climate survey would help us get a better sense of the experiences of many SSU community members.

Objective #3: Help Faculty and Staff Understand and Respond to Bias at Salem State

- **Measurement Type:** We hadn't planned to offer in-person workshops to faculty and staff this year other than department Chairs, but we can measure how many people attended and learned about bias and bias response at Salem State and considered solutions.
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** at least 50 faculty and staff
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** Affected 200-400 students that faculty and staff will interact with.
- **Actions Taken:**
 - Amplifying Student Voices: Addressing Bias and Creating Welcoming Spaces at SSU event, April '25
 - JEDI Faculty Group bystander workshop presentation April '25
 - CTI Teaching and Learning Symposium pilot bystander workshop May '25
- **Challenges and Solutions:** We are doing a pilot run and gathering feedback on our Bystander Anti-bias workshop this May and would love to have support in offering this workshop at scale in the future.

Objective #4: Create Online Modules for Future Training of Departmental Chairs

- **Measurement Type:** Learning materials created
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Develop two online learning modules for chairs to learn about bias response in the future at SSU.
 - **Actual Results:** These online modules are about 75% complete
- **Supporting Data:** N/A
- **People Impacted:** N/A
- **Actions Taken:**
 - Two anti-bias online modules were outlined and many materials were created. These can become the basis for future training sessions and/or an anti-bias certificate.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** As we shifted our focus to in-person teachings, we chose to wait to launch a campus-wide anti-bias certificate. However, we have many slides, videos, activities, readings, visuals, and other resources. We hope to include these online modules as part of future training sessions.

Next Steps

Next Steps for the Project: Outline the plan for the next year of this project.

- **Objectives:**
 - Build a movement around creating a more welcoming atmosphere at Salem State.
 - Have opportunities for key stakeholder groups (staff, faculty, and students) to learn about bias and build skills to take action around bias.

- **Key Actions**

- o Meet with key stakeholders in Inclusive Excellence to build a vision of what an SSU version of “Equity champions” could look like.
- o Seek funds and support for an equity champion model
- o Train and recruit equity champions to lead bystander workshops
- o Begin to publicize and offer bystander workshops
- o Consider other strategic initiatives, for example,
 - Shorter versions of the bystander training for faculty meetings
 - A bias response certificate with digital components
 - Training sessions for student workers on bias response.

End-of-Year Report for Student Collaborative Action Team

Project Details:

- **Project Name:** Collaborative Action Team (CAT)
- **Project Start Date:** September 11, 2024
- **Project End Date:** May 27, 2025
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Cassie Kao and Sam Ohannesian
- **Project Overview:** This project bridged gaps in resource sharing and employee development, ensuring colleagues felt equipped to support students effectively. We supplemented existing processes by sharing timely information and resources, boosting confidence and easing problem-solving burdens.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements:

Objective 3.3 Create a culture of support for, and expand investment in, professional development for faculty, staff, and student employees around culturally responsive teaching and learning, student services, and operations in all areas.

- **Measurement Type:** Qualitative assessment
- **Key Performance Indicators:**
 - **Target:** Gain tools to be able to listen and respond to colleagues and students effectively
 - **Actual Results:** The actual goal was for colleagues to be knowledgeable about what resources are available
 - **Supporting Data:** We assessed this information qualitatively by asking for feedback
- **People Impacted:**
 - **Direct Impact:** 22 members of the team
 - **Indirect Impact:** Offices where these 22 individuals work; affected the entire student body indirectly through improved community ties
- **Actions Taken:** We had the opportunity for each office to showcase its value proposition, highlighting why students would benefit from engaging with their services and sharing the resources available to support student success.

Objective 5.1 Engage faculty, staff, and students in creating and maintaining a supportive environment that promotes student engagement, empowerment, sense of belonging, and progress toward goals.

- **Measurement Type:** Qualitative assessment
- **Key Performance Indicators:**
 - **Target:** Learn ways to improve our ability to effectively communicate, negotiate, and manage conflict
 - **Actual Results:** The desired goal was to equip staff so they could provide a supportive environment to students
 - **Supporting Data:** Qualitative assessment

- **People Impacted:**
 - **Direct Impact:** about 40 members of the SSU community
 - **Indirect Impact:** The offices in which these 40 individuals work
- **Actions Taken:** We recently participated in a 3-hour webinar hosted by the National Conflict Resolution Center, which provided an engaging and interactive experience. The session also facilitated meaningful connections among participants, allowing them to build relationships with colleagues from diverse backgrounds.

Objective 5.2 Ensure clear and consistent internal communications foster awareness, transparency, trust, and a deeper sense of community among campus stakeholders.

- **Actions Taken:** Throughout the year, we tried to foster trust among this group. These efforts were in the form of conversations and welcoming feedback.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** Early in the year, this group grappled with defining its purpose. Initially, we had a specific objective in mind, but Sam and I soon recognized the need to adjust our approach to avoid duplicating existing structures. Instead, we aimed to create a complementary and beneficial initiative. The final meeting of the semester marked a significant turning point, as we achieved greater clarity on the group's purpose and generated renewed interest among participants.

Objective 5.6 Expand professional development opportunities and encourage lifelong learning for faculty and staff.

- **Measurement Type:** Qualitative assessment
- **Key Performance Indicators:**
 - **Target:** We aimed to provide targeted professional development opportunities for group members, tailored to address specific needs and gaps identified by the group itself.
 - **Actual Results:** Our goal was to create multiple learning opportunities that would deepen our understanding of our students, as well as foster self-awareness and insight into our interactions with them.
 - **Supporting Data:** We assessed this based on conversation and discussions.
- **People Impacted:**
 - **Direct Impact:** The 22 people who are members of this group
 - **Indirect Impact:** Offices where these 22 individuals work; affected the entire student body indirectly through improved community ties
- **Action Taken:** We convened a series of meetings focused on gaining a deeper understanding of our student population. Through collaborations with various offices, including the Center for Accessible Academic Resources, Counseling and Health Services, Inclusive Excellence, and Retention Services, we hosted multiple workshops that provided valuable insights into the diverse needs and challenges of our students. By synthesizing this knowledge, we aimed to better support student success and foster a more inclusive campus environment.

Next Steps:

- The group is poised for continued growth and impact in the upcoming academic year. Our final meeting underscored the unique value of this initiative, which has filled a previously unaddressed need for cross-campus staff dialogue. Moving forward, we envision leveraging CAT as a hub for networking, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing, where staff can engage in meaningful discussions about student trends and cultivate a dynamic think tank environment.

End-of-Year Report for Generative AI Solutions in Higher Education: The Case for an AI Tutor in Undergraduate Statistics Courses

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Generative AI Solutions in Higher Education: The Case for an AI Tutor in Undergraduate Statistics Courses
- **Project Start Date:** June 30, 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** June 30, 2025
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Youqin Pan
- **Project Overview:** This project aims to develop an AI tutor that utilizes cutting-edge technology, specifically ChatGPT, to assist students in comprehending and mastering undergraduate statistics. This funding request aligns with objectives outlined in Salem State's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. Specifically, this project aligns with the goals of academic excellence and active learning, in addition to the goal of justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **GOAL 1: Academic Excellence and Active Learning**
 - 1.2 Provide an array of transformative experiential learning opportunities that prepare students for a lifetime of engaged citizenship, successful careers, and upward social mobility. Providing an AI tutor for students enrolled in undergraduate statistics classes will improve student learning outcomes and academic success. By gathering information about a students' performance and preferences, the AI tutor can provide educational content (e.g., problem sets and explanations) that focus on the student's strengths and weaknesses. The AI tutor can provide real-time feedback, interactive activities, and positive reinforcement and encouragement that boosts the student's confidence and motivation to succeed in the course. In addition, by equipping students with the ability to use AI-generative tools, the project will help students be well prepared in careers that increasingly use AI.
- **GOAL 3: Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
 - 3.2 Incorporate principles of universal design to foster a more inclusive learning environment that acknowledges and supports a diverse range of student needs and abilities and promotes equitable outcomes for all learners.
 - The Stat Tutor directly supports Goal 3.2 by incorporating principles of universal design to create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. This AI-powered tool is accessible online 24/7 and is designed to accommodate a wide range of student needs, learning styles, and academic backgrounds. It offers step-by-step explanations, immediate feedback, and personalized assistance, helping to reduce barriers that traditionally disadvantaged students may face, such as limited access to tutoring, language challenges, or learning disabilities.

By providing consistent support outside the classroom, the Stat Tutor empowers students to learn at their own pace, revisit difficult concepts, and build confidence in statistical problem-solving. It democratizes access to academic support, ensuring that all learners—regardless of socioeconomic status, learning ability, or cultural background—can engage with the course material and achieve success. In doing so, it promotes equitable outcomes and helps the university advance its mission of justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion through practical, technology-driven innovation.

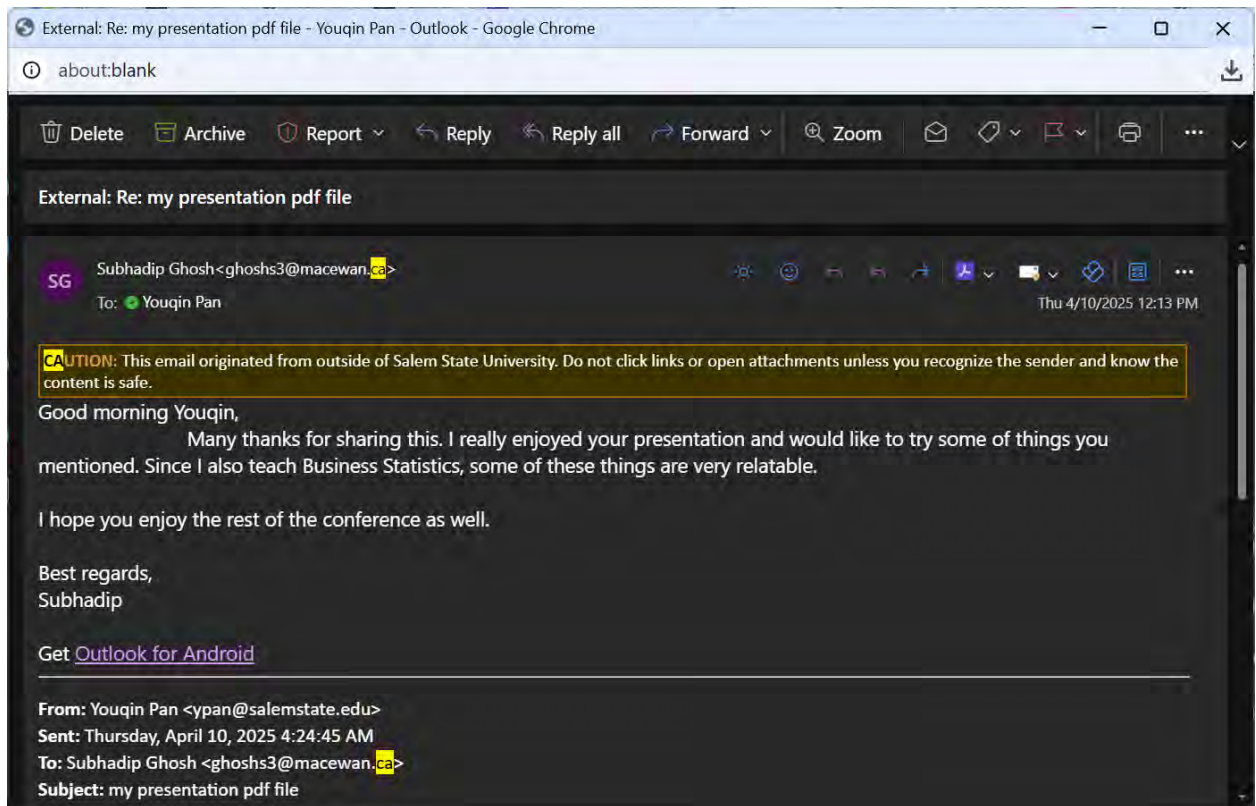
- 3.8 Continue striving to remove financial barriers to access by investing in financial aid for students and championing the cause of providing debt-free public higher education in Massachusetts.
 - The Stat Tutor contributes to the university's goal of removing financial barriers to education by offering free, AI-powered academic support that reduces students' reliance on costly private tutoring or supplemental learning resources. Available at no cost to all students, the Stat Tutor ensures equitable access to academic assistance, particularly benefiting students from low-income backgrounds.

Additionally, the demo cases generated by ChatGPT and integrated into the Stat Tutor serve as high-quality, no-cost course materials. These materials not only enhance learning but also reduce the need for expensive textbooks or paid learning platforms. By integrating the Stat Tutor into the curriculum, the university leverages technology to support academic success while lowering the financial burden on students—an essential step toward championing debt-free public higher education in Massachusetts.

Additionally, I initially planned to create a customized ChatGPT for students to use. However, since not all students are OpenAI Plus members, I conducted research and discovered that I could use Zapier to create a Stat Tutor. I then provided students with a link so they could access it for free.

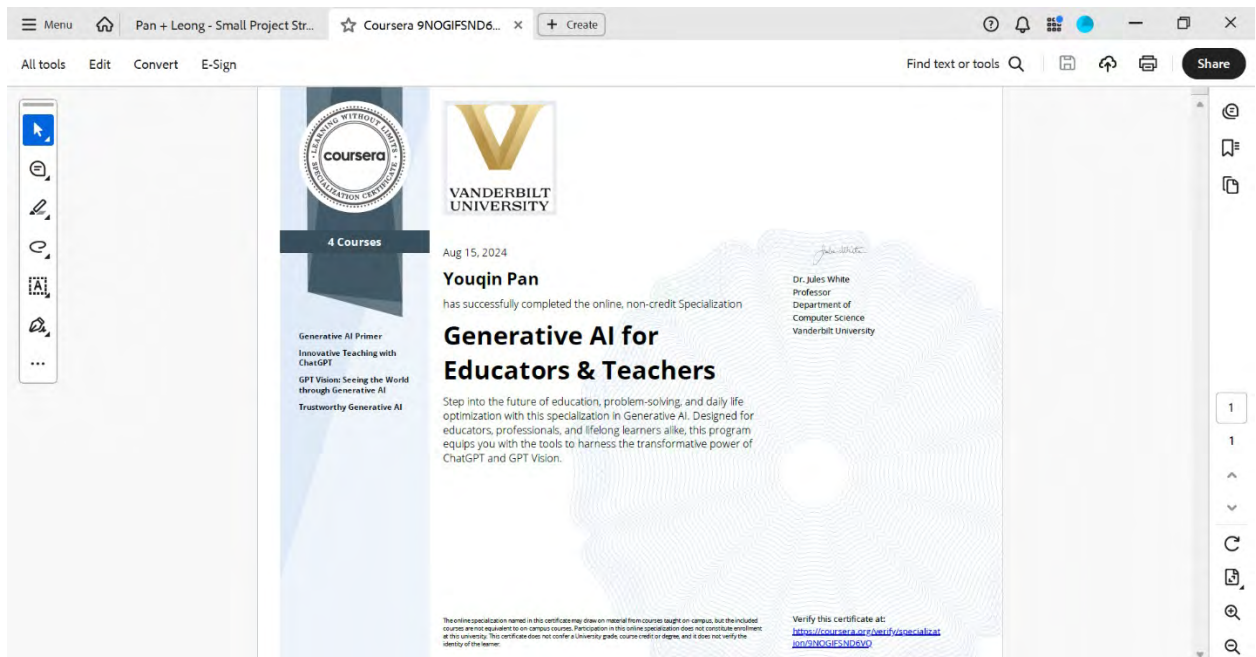
Objective #1: This project aims to develop an AI tutor that utilizes cutting-edge technology, specifically ChatGPT, to assist students in comprehending and mastering undergraduate statistics.

- **Objective #1:** engage students with AI tutor and help them understand and master undergraduate statistics
- **Measurement Type:** Results from surveys and s homework assignments
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** At least 80% of students will report that the Stat Tutor helped improve their understanding of statistical concepts,
- **Actual Results:**
 - 85% of students reported in surveys that the Stat Tutor improved their understanding of key statistical topics.
- **Supporting Data:**
 - **Student Surveys:** End-of-semester surveys showed that about 85% of respondents rated the Stat Tutor as “helpful” or “very helpful” in learning statistics. Several students noted in open comments that the ability to get step-by-step explanations at any time reduced their anxiety and increased their confidence.
 - **Homework Reflections:** In their homework reflections, students described how they used the Stat Tutor to clarify concepts such as hypothesis testing and regression analysis. Many noted that being able to revisit explanations at their own pace was particularly helpful.
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** Impact about 90 students in my ODS 262 classes
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** About twenty people were indirectly affected through improved community ties. I delivered a presentation on the topic and received positive feedback from the audience at the Western DSI Conference in April 2025 (see below)



- **Actions Taken:**

- o I completed online courses on Coursera and earned certificates in *Innovative Teaching with ChatGPT and Generative AI for Educators and Teachers*.



- o Made a customized ChatGPT which allows me to design homework assignments and generate prompts regarding each chapter that I cover in my ODS 262 classes.

- o Students may not be able to access customized ChatGPT if they are not OpenAI Plus members. Therefore, I decided to create a Stat Tutor that all students have equal opportunity to access. Students can use the following link to access the Stat Tutor: <https://stat-tutor.zapier.app/>. The Stat Tutor is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to answer questions.
- o Students were assigned tasks that involved using the Stat Tutor to solve problems and reflect on the usefulness of the AI tutor.
- o AI-related Assignments were created. For example,
 - [ODS262 Assignment 3 Hypothesis Testing with Stat Tutor](#)
 - [ODS262 Regression Assignment with Stat Tutor](#)
- o Stat Tutor Demo Cases were created. For example,
 - Chapter 1_Statistics_Tutor_Demo_Cases_Statistics_Basics
- o Pre-Survey and Post-Survey for my ODS 262 classes were created:
 - <https://elearning.salemstate.edu/courses/1514375/quizzes/2740334/take?preview=1>
 - <https://elearning.salemstate.edu/courses/1514375/quizzes/2740516/take?preview=1>
- o I made a presentation about the project at WDSI conference in April, 2025.
 - [HawaiiConferenceApril.9th2025](#)
- o Post-survey results from one class:
 - <https://elearning.salemstate.edu/courses/1514375/quizzes/2740516/statistics>
- **Challenges and Solutions:**
 - o **Challenge:** One of the key challenges encountered in implementing the Stat Tutor was the potential for students to misuse the tool to complete assignments dishonestly, i.e., by directly copying AI-generated solutions without engaging in the learning process. This raised concerns about academic integrity and reduced opportunities for meaningful learning.
 - o **Solution:** To mitigate this issue, several strategies were adopted:
 1. **Assignment Redesign:** Assignments were reframed to focus on reflection and process rather than just the final answer. For example, students were required to explain each step of the problem-solving process in their own words and reflect on how the Stat Tutor helped them understand the concept.
 2. **AI Interaction Logs:** We encouraged students to submit screenshots or transcripts of their interaction with the Stat Tutor to demonstrate how they arrived at the answer and which questions they asked. This promoted accountability and transparency.
 3. **Class Discussions:** Students were asked to present their problem-solving process in small groups or discussions, reinforcing the requirement to understand the method rather than just submit answers.

Next Steps

- **Next Steps for the Project:** I did not receive a grant for next year; however, I will continue to explore more robust ways to balance AI assistance with independent learning. I welcome any institutional support or peer collaboration to develop secure, AI-integrated assignments.

End-of-Year Report for Mental Health Awareness, Support and Advocacy

Project Details

- Project Name: Mental Health Awareness, Support and Advocacy
- Project Start Date: September 2024
- Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete: August 2025
- Project Owner/Lead: Jean MacLachlan, PhD, OT and Katelyn Adams M.Ed.
- Project Overview: Through on-campus collaboration and community partnerships, increased mental health support, advocacy, awareness, and education initiated, developed and implemented for the Salem State University campus.

Student Advocacy and Support:

- SSU students, with the support of the CCE, developed a **Mental Health Political Advocacy Coalition** due to students voicing their ongoing concern about the mental health crisis on and off campus. The coalition raised awareness about mental health and increased students' access to wellness resources on and off campus to support student success. They hosted two high impact events. The first, Voices and Visibility led by Mental Health Declassified, facilitated a student discussion around mental health in the BIPOC community. **Fifteen students attended and were directly impacted.** The second, a mental health tote bag painting program that provided students the opportunity to create art while receiving resources for mental health, and self-care items. **Fifty students attended and were directly impacted by this event.** Additionally, tabling was done to raise awareness about the coalition and mental health resources in the community. The coalition **recruited over 115 students** to join their listserv to receive more information about the coalition, mental health resources, events, and meetings. Tabling, emails and marketing indirectly informed and impacted close to 200 students. **Challenges:** The advisor of the coalition was a graduate student who was learning her role in how to mentor and advise an advocacy coalition. This process took time which led to a delayed start. Through the process she experienced communication and scheduling challenges with the student Co-chairs. **Strategic plan goals met: 1.4, 1.7, 2.5, 3.3, 5.1, and 5.5**
- SSU dormitory resident advisors (RA) were provided with a **Mental Health 101 workshop** to strengthen their ability to navigate and effectively support student initiated mental health conversations and refer students in crisis to appropriate resources. The NAN Project **ran two workshops for all SSU resident advisors**, providing non-clinical training to introduce common mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, ADHD and PTSD as well as the signs of challenges in addition to practical responses and strategies to identify a student who may be struggling. There were **57 RAs attended and were directly impacted and 2,500 students living in the dorms indirectly impacted as a result of RAs participating in the training.** **Challenges we faced included** learning that the content that was provided in the workshop was more foundational knowledge that many of the RAs had gained earlier in the year. **Strategic plan goals met: 1.4, 1.7, 2.4, 2.5, 3.3, and 5.5**

An additional RA mental health training is being provided at the SSU RA orientation in August 2025. This QPR workshop will help resident advisors to recognize the risk factors and clues of someone who may be suicidal, as well as a safe intervention to help a struggling peer get to the needed support.

- Two **Mental Health and Substance Use civic dinners** were implemented providing opportunities for SSU students to engage with community advocates and leaders to support political, social and community changes regarding mental health. **There were a total of 64 attendees. Students shared the following reflections post event,** “Mental health advocacy starts with advocating for yourself.” “Increase daily conversations with people on campus about mental health and substance use 2 resources and needs.” “We must continue to have conversations about substance use to end the stigma and continue to advocate” The only **challenges** were that advocates had unforeseen circumstances that resulted in late arrivals or being unable to attend.
Strategic plan goals met: 1.4, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 3.3, 5.1, 5.4, and 5.5
- Peer to peer **mental health mindfulness and wellness groups** were provided to undergraduate students throughout the month of April. **Four occupational therapy graduate students** developed and implemented the groups as part of their occupational therapy mental health level I fieldwork experience. All groups were supervised by Prof. Jean MacLachlan. The groups focused on the following topics: Sensory skills for wellness, Mindfulness skills for wellness, Reflection skills for wellness, Coping collections, First aid for the soul, and Grounding yourself in the moment. A total of **30 undergraduate students attended and were directly impacted. In every group student participants reported they didn’t know about all of the SSU mental health services available** (free online, no cost therapy, etc.) and were appreciative of the mental health services and resources material provided. Students from a few different groups requested the peer to peer groups continue next year with specific requests made to run them at the SSU chapter of Phi Sigma Phi sorority; first year student programs and throughout the semester, not just prior to exams:
Challenges: The biggest challenge was finding effective ways to “market” and inform students about the groups.
Strategic plan goals: 1.4, 1.7, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 5.1, and 5.5
- **The Civic Fellows Advocacy Campaign** addressed the issue of mental health for young people. They raised awareness for Bill H.595 which would mandate mental health clinicians in K-12 schools. The Civic Fellows educated the campus through multiple tabling sessions and encouraged folks to write to their elected officials in support of the legislation. The second part of their project involved curating and implementing a panel discussion at NAN project’s Empowering Youth Voices 2025 Summit. The session was titled, “Salem State’s Declassified College Survival Guide.” In this workshop Civic Fellows alleviated the fear surrounding college by sharing personal stories, fostering thoughtful discussion, and sharing pieces of advice from students across campus through a student-designed Zine. Civic Fellows answered questions regarding financial aid, taking a gap year, changing your major, gaining mental health and disability support services in college, and why they chose SSU! Many of the Fellows shared the impact SSU had on them and why the youth should consider our university as an option to pursue an education. The zine created by fellows is now being utilized by the SSU Orientation and Admissions Office to support incoming first year students attending SSU.
People impacted: 65 attended the panel discussion, 250 students were educated through tabling, and hundreds of incoming students impacted through SSU Orientation and Admissions.
Strategic plan goals: 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 5.8, 7.1.

Faculty Education and Training:

- Faculty participated in the two civic dinners addressing community resources and political advocacy opportunities for mental health and substance use issues. Some faculty incorporated the event into their course curriculum. A combined QPR and Mental Health 101 workshop is scheduled for the new and adjunct faculty August 2025 orientation. With an ever-increasing number of students struggling with mental health, this workshop will provide new and adjunct faculty with skills and resources to support their students who are approaching them about mental health symptoms and concerns. 3

Community Partnership and Collaborations

- The following agencies and law makers collaborated with and participated in the SSU mental health awareness, support and advocacy activities: **Behavioral Health Services at Lifebridge, Lynn Community Mental Health Center, Mental Health Advocacy for Kids, Mental Health Declassified, NAMI Greater North Shore, The NAN Project, Representative Sean Reid, Senator Becca Rausch, Senator Joan Lovely, and SSU Counseling and Health Services.**

Upcoming August 2025

- **Mental Health QPR Workshop**
 - The NAN Project will **run two workshops in the SSU resident advisor orientation (August 2025)** to recognize the risk factors and clues of someone who may be suicidal, as well as a safe intervention to help a struggling peer get to the needed support.
 - 50+ RAs are expected to attend and be directly impacted
 - **2,500 students living in the dorms indirectly impacted as a result of RAs participating in the training**
 - **Strategic plan goals:** 1.4, 1.7, 2.4, 2.5, 3.3, and 5.5
 - **Future plans:** We will provide a post survey to determine the benefit of continuing this program for future orientations.
- **QPR and Mental Health 101 Combination Workshop**
 - The NAN Project will run a workshop at the **new and adjunct faculty orientation, August 2025.** With an ever increasing number of students struggling with mental health, this workshop will provide new and adjunct faculty with skills and resources to support their students who are approaching them about mental health symptoms and concerns.
 - **30 new and adjunct faculty are expected to attend and be directly impacted**
 - **Hundreds of students taking courses from the faculty in the training will be indirectly impacted**
 - **Strategic plan goals:** 1.4, 1.7, 2.4, 2.5, 3.3, 5.1 and 5.5
 - **Future plans:** We will provide a post survey to determine the benefit of continuing this program for future faculty trainings.

Next Steps

Next Steps for the Project:

- Offer more peer-to-peer wellness/mindfulness groups throughout campus
 - Connect with sororities to incorporate mindfulness/wellness groups in their calendar
 - Connect with student athlete clubs to provide mindfulness/wellness groups
 - Determine better timing, marketing, advertising, etc.
 - Interprofessional collaborations (social work, MS in Counseling Program, etc.)
 - Offer more level I fieldwork opportunities for occupational therapy graduate students running groups on campus

- The Mental Health Political Advocacy Coalition plans to continue and expand membership under the leadership of student Co-Chair Dikate ONeill and will be advised by a CCE staff member to ensure the success and sustainability of the coalition.
- Mental Health training for RA's will now be offered in the beginning of the semester and content will be tailored based on identified needs of the RAs.
- We plan to continue to offer mental health related civic dinners within an academic year and continue to engage and learn from advocates in the field.
- The civic fellows plan to continue advocacy work on mental health and student success under the leadership of Graduate Assistant, Liv Duarte.
- The CCE will be implementing the Intergenerational Connections Program to address chronic loneliness and support student and community members' mental health.
- Facilitate a needs assessment that will advise us on programs and focus for faculty or RA Trainings.
- The programming outlined for this grant project addressed the following **SSU strategic plan objectives**:
 - 1.4 Engage students and scholars in improving the human condition through academic programs, research, and creative activities that address the pressing matters of our time, including social justice, racial equity, health disparities, climate change, and economic inequality
 - 1.7 Remove barriers to successful degree program completion through implementation of retention and persistence strategies for at-risk, under-represented, and systemically marginalized learners
 - 2.2 Increase our campus community's understanding of the intersection of civic engagement with justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion work
 - 2.4 Organize and enhance experiential learning opportunities and increase use of high-impact practices to support students' personal development and professional preparation
 - 2.5 Strengthen the university's capacity to foster students' leadership skills for the purpose of social change
 - 3.3 Create a culture of support for, and expand investment in, professional development for faculty, staff, and student employees around, culturally responsive teaching and learning, student services, and operations in all areas
 - 5.1 Engage faculty, staff, and students in creating and maintaining a supportive environment that promotes student engagement, empowerment, sense of belonging, and progress toward goals
 - 5.5 Foster physical, mental, social, and emotional wellness among all members of the campus community in an environment that feels safe and prioritizes holistic health

End-of-Year Report for Reinvigorating Professional Writing at SSU

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Reinvigorating Professional Writing at SSU
- **Project Start Date:** August 1, 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** May 17, 2025
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Jonanthan Fitzgerald
- **Project Overview:** Reinvigorating Professional Writing at SSU is an initiative of the English Department to restore an important concentration to the English major which will benefit students across our campus. The Professional Writing Concentration has been a vital offering provided by our department that has given students from any major the opportunity to fulfill their W-II writing requirement with professionally relevant classes like ENL 310 Introduction to Professional Writing, ENL 311 Editing for Publication, and ENL 314 Writing in the Workplace, as well as W-II courses in digital writing, travel writing, and food writing. After austerity measures over the past several years prevented the hiring of new faculty members to replace two retired past program coordinators, this concentration and its enrollments have suffered greatly. However, with the recent innovation hire of Professor Jonathan “Fitz” Fitzgerald, we have an opportunity to reinvigorate this program and charge it with new goals that are in line with our HSI-MSI aspirations and the strategic plan.

Our revised Professional Writing program, which Professor Fitzgerald has been hired to coordinate, will build on SSU’s historic commitment to social justice and civic engagement and expand Salem State’s reputation as the Commonwealth’s Civic Engagement University. It will provide students with the knowledge and abilities needed to be ethical, just, and effective professional and digital writers. To this end, we proposed this project, which aims to:

- Present the new Professional Writing concentration to the university community
 - Ensure that this concentration and its offerings in the general education curriculum fulfill the aims of the strategic plan
 - Provide professional development for all instructors teaching courses in the professional writing concentration to ensure that our curriculum meets the goals of the strategic plan
 - Provide an opportunity for a student or students in the Art + Design Department to develop professional experience by assisting in the re-envisioning of Red Skies, the Professional Writing concentration’s student e-zine.
 - Add a new high-impact practice to the professional writing concentration by offering an opportunity for instructors and students to attend a conference in the discipline.
- **Changes to Original Plan:** When submitting the grant application, it was assumed that in-person professional development opportunities for the faculty teaching courses for the Professional Writing Concentration would be offered multiple times over the course of the academic year. While one event was successfully held in October, we decided that the funds and time for a November event would be better spent on other aspects of our efforts.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Objective #1: Present the new Professional Writing concentration to the university community

- Every effort related to this grant was, in some way, in service of this larger overarching goal. Our sense was that after years without active promotion, it would be important for English majors and the greater community to simply be made aware that the concentration existed and that it was being reinvigorated. To this end, a number of initiatives proved successful at presenting the concentration anew.
- Discussed in further detail later, *Red Skies Magazine* was reborn this year. At the start of the year, many students—including English majors—did not know that RSM existed. To illustrate, in the first semester, before RSM was moved to a new platform, the site received 2,600 views. In the second semester, at its new home redskiesmagazine.com, the site was viewed more than 6,800 times. Outreach efforts included a newly active Instagram account as well classroom announcements, and physical and digital flyers around campus. In the second semester, a more direct connection was drawn between RSM and the Professional Writing concentration, when we re-wrote the catalogue copy and updated the website's about page to indicate that RSM is published "under the auspices of the Professional Writing Concentration in the English major." No doubt, raising RSM's profile also raised that of the PW concentration.
- Additional measures to present the new PW concentration include use of the English department's Viking Connect site. We added an internship page with info about internship opportunities, which was among the most visited within the English department site. To that end, 12 students took advantage of internship opportunities, which, due to Fitz being both internship coordinator and Professional Writing concentration coordinator, were linked for students.
- Finally, throughout the academic year, a number of students joined the Professional Writing concentration or the Professional Writing minor, and many more were exposed to it through W-II writing classes taught by Fitz including two sections of Introduction to Professional Writing (fall/spring), Digital Writing, and Editing for Publication.

Objective #2: Ensure that this concentration and its offerings in the general education curriculum fulfill the aims of the strategic plan

- Significant efforts were made to align the Professional Writing concentration with the university's strategic plan. In fact, the inspiration behind the motivation to reinvigorate professional writing was the English department's commitment to a foundational emphasis on justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- This year, Fitz engaged with the Center for Civic Engagement, meeting with Cynthia Lynch and Katelyn Adams early in the fall semester to establish a relationship between the PW concentration and the Center. Fitz also attend workshops on integrating civic engagement activities into courses, which resulted, in the spring semester, in a partnership between Salem Alliance for the Environment (SAFE) and Fitz's Editing for Publication course. In a similar vein, many of the internship opportunities we sought out for students—and placed them in—had strong ties to the community including the Mass Poetry Festival, Swampscott Tides, and Salem's Poet Laureate. Finally, Fitz and a PW concentrator published op-eds in The Daily Item in an effort to further engage in the community.
- These publications and the reinvigoration of internships also encouraged more active learning, prompting students to learn by doing. Finally, as we began the process of analyzing and, ultimately, reforming the PW concentration, we do so with an eye toward continuing the tradition of academic excellence within the English department.

Objective #3: Provide professional development for all instructors teaching courses in the professional writing concentration to ensure that our curriculum meets the goals of the strategic plan

- Early in the fall semester, Fitz identified and met with all members of the English faculty who teach in the Professional Writing concentration. Through meetings over coffee, dinners, emails, and casual conversations, we were able to get a sense of what these instructors were teaching in their courses as well as a sense of how they would best be served by the new PW coordinator. Additionally, we solicited course goals and outcomes from each in an effort to make the concentration more coherent. This work was fruitful and is ongoing.
- Additionally in the fall, we held a lunch and invited all members of the English department to hear their impressions of the PW concentration and to ask what they would like to see as we begin to update it. This valuable conversation led to some concrete, in-progress goals including re-writing the degree map and introducing new courses. It was important to have the support of the department in this effort.
- Finally, in the spring, a number of instructors and students in the PW concentration were invited to attend the Power of Narrative Conference at Boston University. This time proved transformative for all that attended. It provided inspiration for students, professional development for faculty, and an overall sense of cohesion for the concentration.

Objective #4: Provide an opportunity for a student or students in the Art + Design Department to develop professional experience by assisting in the re-envisioning of the Red Skies, the Professional Writing concentration's student e-zine.

- This objective was perhaps the most straightforward and also among the most successful. In the spring semester, in consultation with Amy Kunberger in the Art + Design department, a student was identified to take on the task of rebranding Red Skies Magazine. That student, Jalen Moriarty proved to be an excellent choice. In 40 hours of work over the course of the semester, Jalen came up with several different branding options, which he presented to his professor, the Red Skies staff, and me. His work was stellar from the get-go, but, of course, we had some feedback. Jalen worked with us over the course of the semester to revise his original designs, resulting in a beautiful new brand for RSM (which you can see at <https://redskiesmagazine.com>). This work was both an incredible active learning experience for Jalen and an excellent example of inter-departmental collaboration.

Objective #5: Add a new high-impact practice to the professional writing concentration by offering an opportunity for instructors and students to attend a conference in the discipline.

- As noted above, an excellent capstone of these efforts to reinvigorate PW at SSU was the opportunity to attend the Power of Narrative Conference at Boston University in March. Faculty and students alike got to hear from professional writers, editors, and journalists discussing their craft. All who attended learned a lot from the various workshops and sessions, but a kind of meta-benefit of this event was the way it helped faculty and students come away with a more definite sense of what the PW is and can be. The opportunity to have this experience together—and to share meals and conversations reflecting on what we learned—proved to be an overwhelming success, such that we intend to continue the tradition for years to come.

Next Steps

Next Steps for the Project:

- The intention of this project was to give the Professional Writing concentration the jump start it needed after years of near-dormancy. In this respect, the project was a tremendous success. We are well positioned, with the hiring of a new faculty coordinator, the rebirth of Red Skies Magazine, the renewed interest in internship opportunities, and the in-progress curriculum redesign, to see a new invigorated PW concentration. Still, this project provided the initial push, but there is much more work to do.
- In the 2025-2026 academic year, we will continue these efforts on all fronts. With its new branding and increased readership (plus a new free newsletter subscription model) Red Skies Magazine will continue to be a venue for student writing as well as a flagship publication of the Professional Writing concentration. Interest in internships continues to be high. The curriculum updates begun this year will be formalized in the fall when we present them to the English department for adoption. We will continue our efforts to publicize the PW concentration, including with digital and physical brochures, and access to the concentration will be expanded—pending departmental approval—to our 1-2-1 students from Nanjing, China. Finally, as noted above, we will continue to bring faculty and students together to attend the Power of Narrative conference, and we are in the beginning planning of stages of a complimentary on-campus event hosted by the Professional Writing concentration.
- We are incredibly grateful for this grant and the way it helped give us the boost we needed to begin this process of reinvigorating professional writing at SSU. There are many challenges ahead, but we are far better prepared now than we otherwise would have been.

End-of-Year Report for Small Project Grant: Training Investigators, Decision Makers and Support People for Title IX and Community Standards Processes

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Training Investigators, Decision Makers and Support People for Title IX and Community Standards Processes
- **Project Start Date:** September 1, 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** June 30, 2025
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Mike Coughlin and Grace Napolitano
- **Project Overview:** Community Standards and Title IX seek \$5,000 to recruit, train, and compensate professional employees to serve as investigators, decision-makers, and support persons.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

- Recruiting staff to serve in these roles
- Having sufficient staff available for each Conduct Board and/or Title IX Hearing
- Have recruited staff participate in one live training
- Having staff participate in a subsequent on-line training through the SUNY Student Conduct Institute
- Receiving a commitment from staff to continue into the next academic year (2025-2026) to serve when the grant \$ is no longer available

Objective #1,2,3, etc.: [Specific Goal or Metric]

- **Measurement Type:** Percentage growth of staff serving in volunteer roles
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - Target: To have staff serve as volunteers and prevent having to hire external investigators and/or decision makers at prohibitive cost to SSU.
 - Actual Results: We recruited, trained, and retained 12 staff to serve in these roles. We did not have to hire external agencies to handle any student matters. Thereby cutting significant costs for the University.
 - Supporting Data: We spent zero dollars on external agencies for student cases.
- **People Impacted**
 - Direct Impact(s): We did five live Conduct Boards.
 - Indirect Impact(s): We have staff prepared to fully adjudicate all high level Conduct and Title IX student matters for the next year.
- **Actions Taken:** We provided two live, in-person trainings. As a follow-up, each volunteer had the opportunity to complete an online training through SUNY SCI.

- **Challenges and Solutions:** The Title IX regulations changed in middle of the academic year. This came on the heels of an entirely new process being implemented in Fall 2024. We pivoted to have the staff complete the SUNY SCI Title IX training, based on the reimplemented 2020 Title IX regulations. A new policy for the state system is being developed this summer and staff will receive additional training once that is complete.

Next Steps

- **Next Steps for the Project:** The objective is to continue to have staff available to serve as investigators, advisors, and decision makers for student conduct boards and in Title IX matters. Our groups is probably just about large enough, but we want to continue to strategically grow the pool. At times, certain staff in certain offices are simply too busy to volunteer for anything additional. Additionally, staff leave (or get sick, take FMLA, etc.) so growing the bench is essential.

Retaining and growing the team isn't something we're particularly worried about. We are using some of the final remaining grant money for a training in late June. At that meeting, we will seek to gather commitments from folks to continue to serve as volunteers. Based on initial conversations, everyone seems interested in continuing. Additionally, there are several other staff that have expressed interest in joining. We will continue to offer trainings yearly to folks serving in these roles. The grant money was incredibly helpful in getting this established and we are deeply grateful. This improved process better serves our students, saves SSU money, and allows staff to work collaboratively and develop their professional skill set.

End-of-Year Report for Transfer Connections Graduate Assistant

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Transfer Connections Graduate Assistant
- **Project Start Date:** October 2, 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** April 29, 2025
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Avril Hevey-Doucette, Associate Director, Transfer Services and Degree Audit (unit of the Registrar's Office)
- **Project Overview:**
 - o The original vision of the project was to replicate on a scaled back level, the Transfer Connections Partnership that we have with North Shore and Northern Essex community colleges, with *Bunker Hill Community College*.

The goal of the NECC, NSCC, SSU Transfer Connections program is / was* to support a DHE initiative to facilitate transfer between the three schools strengthening Salem State's financial foundation, align resources with priorities and foster innovation to drive new revenue streams. It also helps to engage students in their learning and promote attainment of academic, personal and career goals.

** The NSCC, NECC, SSU Transfer Connections program changed somewhat recently and is now more Admissions focused.*
 - o In early November 2023, Bonnie Galinski (of Enrollment Management at the time), Elaine Concepcion (Admissions), Megan Miller (Registrar), and Avril Hevey-Doucette (Transfer Services / Registrar's Office) met to discuss the future of Transfer Connections, a recruitment partnership between Salem State, North Shore and Northern Essex Community Colleges (NSCC, NECC). Specifically, we discussed what it might look like to extend the partnership to include Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC). I suggested that we should pilot a scaled back version of the NSCC / NECC program with BHCC, and staff it with a Graduate Assistant for the 2024 – 2025 academic year.
 - o The nature of the role of the Transfer Connections Coach for NSCC and NECC was originally based on 'intrusive' advising, and involved a close, time-consuming relationship between the Coach and the students in the program. Adding another community college to the NSCC /NECC partnership would only dilute its impact and have the coach running from campus to campus, exhausted and unable to serve the students in the way that was intended. Given that we could not hire another professional as the BHCC Coach, a graduate Assistant might be an ideal, less costly solution.
 - o I applied for a Graduate Assistant via the standard process to do so but was not successful. I then applied for the Strategic Plan Small Project Grant (\$5000). There were 41 proposals, so it was a competitive process but happily we were awarded a grant for the 2024-2025 academic year, for the proposed 'Transfer Connections Graduate Assistant'.
 - o Reporting to myself, the associate registrar for transfer services and degree audit at Salem State University, the intention was that the Transfer Connections Graduate Assistant for Bunker Hill Community College would work with staff in admissions and transfer services, student support, and advising at Salem State and Bunker Hill, to provide coaching and advising to students enrolled at Bunker Hill to obtain an associate degree and bachelor's degree.

- o The job description was as follows:
 - Initial point person for Bunker Hill Community College students interested in transferring to Salem State University and their advisors to provide course and program equivalency information and guidance in addition to admissions process information and guidance. Coach will primarily meet with students via Zoom. Opportunities for BHCC campus visits but not required.
 - Manage student transitions between campuses including counseling students about class requirements needed to transfer smoothly.
 - Develop transfer guides across the institutions – easy mapping/seamless pathways.
 - Assist with data entry to various computer systems such as PeopleSoft, College Source TES database, MAST (Mass Department of Higher Education state transfer equivalency database)
 - Ensure the transferability of coursework and coordinate course descriptions
 - Meet with staff/faculty to educate about the Transfer Connections initiative and to inform about processes and policy.
 - Promote and manage reverse transfer between the community college and state university.
 - Develop reports to provide status update and work with systems to track students.
- o The required qualifications were as follows:
 - Bachelor's degree and current enrollment in a Salem State University graduate program
 - Eligibility for an SSU Graduate Assistantship position
 - A general understanding of the educational process from high school to graduation from college
 - Ability to maintain a high degree of confidentiality
 - Must be organized and extremely detail oriented
 - Excellent interpersonal skills
- o 'Bonus' qualifications (desired but not required) were listed as:
 - Bilingual Spanish/English is strongly preferred. Other language abilities will also be considered
 - Relevant advising and/or transfer experience
 - Knowledge of and experience with the application of curriculum, transfer advising and academic policies
 - Familiarity with and proficiency using computer systems such as Microsoft Office, Navigate, Sales Force and PeopleSoft
 - A valid driver's license and ability to travel between campuses
- o The pay rate was \$17.50 per hour. The hours per week were flexible but would generally be about 7 hours per week, primarily online but with some in-office days.
- o It took some time to recruit and hire our coach but finally Amit Agarwal, a soon -to-be 'Double Viking' was hired as the Bunker Hill Community College Transfer Connections Coach for the 2024 -2025 academic year.

- o A bit about Amit:
 - Amit Agarwal transferred to Salem State University from India, where he attended Bennett University, New Delhi. Amit earned his Bachelor of Science in Psychology (Cum Laude), from Salem State in 2020. Following completion of a Graduate Certificate in Business Administration from Northeastern University in 2021, Amit returned to Salem State to complete his Master of Business Administration in May 2025. Amit's experience, including as a systems support specialist at Boston University's College of Engineering, and as founder of 'Sikkim2Salem', a non-profit initiative that recruits and supports students from the Himalayas and India, and his passion for higher education made him the ideal candidate for the position.
- o Amit began at the beginning of October 2024.
- o As a graduate assistant is not a professional position, and given it is a one-year term, it was clear from the beginning that the nature of the role would have to be different in scale and scope than that of the NSCC and NECC Coach. Amit would need to rely heavily on the TES course equivalency database and on program-to-program articulation maps in order to advise BHCC students. Amit would also need a solid understanding of Salem State University curriculum, of BHCC's curriculum, and of state transfer policy (MassTransfer).
- o The first week or so was an overview of the goals of the program, an overview of SSU and BHCC curriculum, and an introduction to the relevant resources and advising tools. Amit spent some time reviewing relevant materials and resources such as the academic catalog for both SSU and BHCC, the MassTransfer website (including MT and Commonwealth Commitment policy and implementation guidelines, Reverse Transfer, MAST course equivalency database, etc.), the TES database including advising notes, it's limitations etc. We spent some time looking at real student examples to learn how these policies are applied, the usual business processes, and frequently asked questions.
- o We reached out to BHCC again (I had let them know initially upon hearing we'd been awarded the grant) to ask how involved they'd like to be with the project.
- o While the intention early in the year was that we'd have TES and some specific program to program maps complete and ready for use by the time the coach began, we were not as ready as we'd hoped we'd be. Given our resources, the complexity of the project, and forever conflicting priorities, this is 'par for the course' in Transfer Services (and I would say in Enrollment Management in general). It became clear that the best place to begin was for Amit to work on these aforementioned tools, the foundation of any advising and recruitment work.
- o Amit's knowledge and skills in the use of AI became immediately apparent. We decided that a good first step was to use AI to create the templates for the program-to-program maps. In the past, we would create a simple Word document grid and copy and paste the community college program into it and fill in the map from there. Not only did Amit create the grids in record time using AI, compared to how we had done it before, he also taught the team how to do it for future use with other schools. Amit later presented on this topic to the transfer team and Megan Miller, University Registrar.
- o Amit participated in the annual Community College visit day on October 11. We showcased our pilot program, discussing with the participating CC's how this idea could work for all of us, and brainstormed some ideas for future exploration. In preparation for this event, we had Amit map some programs for other feeder community colleges too - NECC, NSCC, and Mass Bay Community College, all in attendance.

- o On October 24, 2024, Amit assisted Terry Wheeler (Admissions), in staffing the Bunker Hill CC Transfer fair. Amit used this opportunity to network with BHCC Transfer professionals.
- o Amit then focused on one map in particular, the BHCC computer science transfer program. Computer Science is the trickiest transfer program to articulate for various reasons. While there is a state Computer Science MassTransfer Pathway, we (Salem State) have not signed on to it as it does not work for our ABET accredited program. Amit worked directly with Dr. Manish Wadhwa, Chair of Computer Science, in the evaluation of coursework, combining course requirements of the BHCC program to map them to ours, creating a clear, easy to follow map for the use of students, BHCC and SSU advisors.
- o In early November, once Amit had a chance to complete 'transfer bootcamp' so to speak, and was ready to meet with students, it was time to begin outreach efforts. We discussed a strategy. Amit ran the list of applicants from BHCC so far, for the spring and fall 2025 semesters. Amit learned how to identify the target audience, running lists of students at various points in the process to send targeted communications. Student response was unfortunately quite low and slow.
- o Meanwhile, Amit continued working with the Chair of the Computer Science department to obtain course equivalencies and articulate the program to our Computer Science program.
- o Amit began working on maintenance of the PeopleSoft course equivalency database for Bunker Hill coursework. This work was in the context of a larger Transfer Services team project underway, the implementation of a new approach to how we use, build and maintain this database in general / for all schools. Amit rebuilt the database for BHCC course equivalencies, ensuring that all courses were entered, titles and credit units were accurate, and the new structure was in place.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Objective #1,2,3, etc.: [Specific Goal or Metric]

- **Measurement Type:** In an ideal world, we would ultimately measure the success of a program like Transfer Connections by application, admission, matriculation, and retention rates of the students transferring from those institutions. As it takes a number of years to establish and foster the key variables of such a program, for example: advisor and student relationship building, advising tools, visibility, familiarity, demonstrated success of previous students, measurement of the success of such a program in it's first few years, particularly it's first year, is more meaningful if done anecdotally.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - o Target: Again, in year three and four of such a program, the desired metric would be an increase in the number of students applying to Salem State from Bunker Hill. Later years would then include a reduced rate of non-transferable coursework, a reduced rate of non-major-applicable transferred coursework, improved acceptance, matriculation, retention and graduation rates.
 - o Actual Results: As this project was a one-year project, the goal was to 1) hopefully see an increase in applications and 2) anecdotally observed establishment of advising relationships with BHCC students and advisors. We did not really expect to observe an increase in admissions applications; it would have been a bonus effect if it had occurred.
- **People Impacted**
 - o **Direct Impact(s):** A Transfer Coach / this model of recruitment and advising impacts students at various points in the pipeline – from those just starting at the community college, to those who have already applied and been admitted to Salem, potentially approximately 100 students per 'stage'. For example, 100+ first year BHCC students, 100+ second year BHCC students,

ideally ready to be supported through their application, admission, matriculation, orientation, registration and first semester at SSU. 100+ students who have gone through the process and who are ready to graduate or who have graduated, and possibly become involved as alumni program am

- o **Indirect Impact(s):** The potential impact of an effort like this in terms of numbers of students, is likely in the low thousands mark over multiple years.
- **Actions Taken:** The vision for this project was to get a sense of the scale and scope of what would be needed to launch such a model using a graduate student verses a full time professional. While we had our projections and theories based on experience, it was important to try it, to go through the process in real time, with real life experience of it to really know and demonstrate if it could be feasible or not.
- **Challenges and Solutions:**
 - o While staffing an advising role such as a 'transfer connections coach' with a graduate student / non-professional person is arguably viable, it has various drawbacks. (Enough that I believe we have proved it is not viable / effective enough to be worth the time it takes to set up and train).
 - o Regardless of whether the coach is a fully paid professional or not, this role cannot be fully effective as a one-year term. Transfer is remarkably detailed. For a one-year term, the coach would need to have the TES course equivalency database be fully populated and accurate and would need it to include all sorts of advising notes. Even if that were in place, there would need to be adequate training to know what to look for, to have a general idea of the kinds of issues that relevant and how to apply the many rules and policies that are at play. Essentially, by the time an individual in this position (graduate student or even a temporary professional) would have established even partially, the knowledge base necessary to carry out the role, their term would be close to its end.
 - o A graduate student's primary 'job' is their schooling. Amit, as a student employee, was not able to work over the winter break, precisely the busiest time in terms of student response to feedback (i.e. student questions about transfer credit, MassTransfer status, spring course selection at BHCC, admission application status etc.)
 - o We can provide all the maps in the world, but we will always have prospective students with hugely varied educational backgrounds. Remarkably few students have followed any advising maps prior to connecting with an SSU advisor or admissions representative. Many have attended multiple institutions prior to their most recent one to SSU. A one-year term is simply not enough to gain the necessary experience to know how to advise on many scenarios.
 - o The scale and scope of the project was relatively limited – the Admissions Office was stressed in terms of staffing during the time period and so would not have been able to 'take on' this experiment with me to the extent possible in theory (knowing this, I did not ask them to). I.e. Amit did not read applications or make admissions decisions. There were times when if Amit had been able to review and admit a student, that would have been ideal.

Next Steps

- **Next Steps for the Project:**
 - o Now that (I feel at least) we have demonstrated that 1) a graduate student and 2) a one-year and/ or part time position is not sufficient to take on the role of Transfer Connections Coach, we can be assured that seeking to expand a program like Transfer Connections in general, i.e. beyond it's current scope or to additional institutions beyond NSCC and NECC, would require additional full time professional staffing (based on our current resources and technology at least).

- **Essential takeaway**

- o While I suspected the outcome would be as it is, it is important to experiment and at least try out an idea. The cost savings of having a graduate student verses a professional as a TC's Coach would have been significant, and would have if it had worked, likely allowed us to provide such a support to many more of the community colleges in the state system. Despite the project not being successful in its primary goal, every penny spent of this grant was 100% worth it in the peripheral benefits alone. Thanks to Amit's work 1) we have made massive progress with the maintenance of our equivalency databases (course equivalency updates and accuracy, consistency across the three databases we 'use', PeopleSoft, TES, and the DHE 'MAST' database), 2) we made progress with relationship building with Bunker Hill transfer advisors 3) we embarked on a new venture – how AI can be used to streamline and advance Transfer Services.

End of Year Report for Intergenerational Hip Hop Dance Symposium

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Intergenerational Hip Hop Dance Symposium
- **Project Start Date:** May 1, 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** February 1, 2025
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Karen Gahagan
- **Project Overview:** The Salem State Intergenerational Hip Hop Dance Symposium celebrated the rich legacy of Hip Hop and Street Dance and served as a convening for Hip Hop and Street Dance practitioners (artists, educators, and students) in the greater Boston area and the North Shore. It provided an opportunity for all students and campus community members to learn about Hip Hop culture and was open to North Shore residents of all ages to attend as participants and audience members.

Hip Hop and Street Dance serves as a vehicle for self-expression, community building, creativity, empowerment, and social change, while also offering economic opportunities and fostering cross-cultural understanding. Historically, dance forms of the African Diaspora, including Hip Hop and Street Dance, have been left out of or tokenized in academic curriculum and scholarly communities. Salem State is poised to be a leader in changing that perspective and this symposium was a first step toward that end.

The Symposium's programming was developed with two strategic plan goals in mind:

- Goal II -Civic Engagement and Public Good
- Goal III- Justice, Diversity Equity, and Inclusion

The Symposium also aligned with the addition of new dance faculty Jarell Howard Rochelle in AY24-25. He is creating the connective tissue to grow Hip Hop and Street Dance as an area of study within the BA in Dance, as well as incorporating Hip Hop and Street Dance cultural expression in curricular and co-curricular contexts.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements:

Objective #1 – Build an audience for Hip Hop and Street Dance programming and their impacts around community building, empowerment, and social change (strategic plan 2.1 and 2.2)

- **Measurement Type:** Attendance numbers
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** 150 attendees across all symposium events
 - **Actual Results:** 425 attendees across all symposium events
 - **Supporting Data:** Registration lists and door tallies
- **People Impacted –**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** Audience - approx. 250 students/175 community members; 70 youth artists and 34 adult artists in the performance showcase; 15 artists in other symposium events

- **Indirect Impact(s):** This is difficult to quantify; however, the number of individuals who engaged with this programming as either a performer/participant or audience member legitimizes Hip Hop and Street Dance programming within our scholarly and institutional spaces, representing rich forms, cultures, and histories that have been systematically marginalized and suppressed in these spaces.
- **Actions Taken:** Audience tracking was done through reservations as well as tracking attendance at the door. We also captured emails for a substantial portion of attendees (reservations/post-event survey) that can be used to communicate about future programming. The post-event survey also gave us information about the most effective tools for this communication.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** If we were to do this again, we should refine the information we gather about attendees to get a detailed picture of who is engaged and apply tools to follow future engagement.

Objective #2 -Prioritize research, creative activity, and knowledge creation that contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning, particularly as they relate to the experiences of students from historically under-represented communities

- **Measurement Type:** Survey data
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Validating that programming and creative activity focused on Hip Hop culture holds value for our community. We had no baseline to gauge this.
 - **Actual Results:** 90% of our survey respondents ranked symposium programming five out of five stars while 8% ranked it four out of five stars.
 - 100% of our survey respondents indicated a desire for more of this programming in the future
 - **Supporting Data:** Post-event survey results/audience observation
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** Audience - approx. 250 students/175 community members; 70 youth artists and 34 adult artists in the performance showcase; 15 artists in other symposium events
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** Although a small ripple, we can document one student who decided to enroll in a Hip Hop class after attending the symposium. The UNDGRD Street Dance Collective (informal campus group) participated in our Spring Arts Coffeehouse and are proactively working to expand their reach into the community since this event. This programming and associated creative activity provide desperately needed representation and cultural relevance for Black and brown students and community members.
- **Actions Taken:** A post-event survey answered by sixty participants confirmed that program content was viewed as high quality, inclusive and presented in a culturally appropriate manner. While not as precise as a survey, observations and conversations at events revealed active engagement among attendees, high energy, and palpable joy throughout the three days of the event. Comments about the feeling of community engendered by these events were frequent.

Objective #3 -Organize and enhance experiential learning opportunities and increase use of high-impact practices to support students’ personal development and professional preparation

- **Measurement Type:** Students in symposium support roles
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** 15 students
 - **Actual Results:** 57 students
 - **Supporting Data:** Participation as communications/content partners, performers, and technical/production support.
- **People Impacted**
 - Direct Impact(s): 8 dance students, 20 members of the B.E.E.S and 16 members of The Brotherhood, 12 members of the Hip Hop Dance Ensemble, and 1 CCPA student assistant.
 - Indirect Impact(s): Hard to quantify with numbers but we know the positive reactions and good work by these students who were involved behind the scenes. The symposium allowed us to lay the groundwork for more experiential opportunities as we develop future programming. Students who engaged with social media posts whether they attended or not are now aware of this programming. Students /community members who engaged with the library’s IDEA Den gained knowledge about Hip Hop culture, the B.E.E.S. and The Brotherhood and the inclusion of Hip Hop centered programming.
- **Actions Taken:** Student involvement was focused in two areas:
 - the dance program and
 - student life.

Dance students worked as the part of the technical and production team throughout the symposium including workshops, a dance battle and the closing night’s performance showcase. All of this afforded them the opportunity to work with regional professionals including noted artists Luis Davila, JoJo Caidor, DJ Will B, Xavia “S!CK” Perkins, B-boy El Nino, and The Floor Lords. The Hip Hop Dance Ensemble performed at the dance battle and in the performance showcase, sharing creative space with these artists. The CCPA student assistant was also involved in social media work leading up to the symposium and operational support during the symposium.

This event also gave us the opportunity to make connections with both the B.E.E.S and The Brotherhood. Each organization assisted with promotion for the event through their communications channels, drove audience to events, and provided playlists for the lobby area for the performance showcase. Angel Garcia of The Brotherhood provided introductory remarks discussing the power of Hip Hop culture at the symposium’s film festival.

Finally, we coordinated with the library so that their January IDEA Den was about Hip Hop. The online libguide included “The Brotherhood’s Jukebox” and “The B.E.E.S. Hip Hop playlist” also curated by the members of those organizations.

Objective #4 -Enhance SSU’s impact in the North Shore region by working with community stakeholders to identify societal challenges that can be addressed through meaningful, collaborative partnerships

- **Measurement Type:** Community partners participating in the symposium
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** 5 -8 external partners to support the symposium programming and speak to Hip Hop as an expression of identity and a tool for social change
 - **Actual Results:** 8 external partners (organizations and individuals)
 - **Supporting Data:** Participation in creating/presenting the symposium and as resources for future programming
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** Audience - approx. 250 students/175 community members; 70 youth artists and 34 adult artists in the performance showcase; 15 artists in other symposium events
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** future programming, see next steps below
- **Actions Taken:** External relationships were developed through personal outreach including phone calls, emails, Zoom meetings and Professor Rochelle making personal connections at partner events. While we had some relationships with the Boston area Hip Hop and Street Dance community they were best described as transactional. This symposium was a step to deeper engagement with this community, as we could demonstrate that SSU is committed to including Hip Hop and Street Dance and Hip Hop culture in our curricular and co-curricular work long-term. Our nascent organizational partners include: The Salem Public Library, Lynn Music Foundation, Phunk Phenomenon Dance Complex, The Flavor Continues and The Floor Lords. Individuals with whom we established relationships for future growth included the symposium’s Battle judges and DJ. The success and culturally appropriate execution of that event make them ambassadors for us. All these voices speaking about us in the larger Hip Hop community, validate our place in this work.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** The biggest challenge we face is capacity, both personnel and fiscal. We will have to be selective around next steps with any of these connections so that meaningful, balanced, and effective partnerships are built.

Next Steps

- **Next Steps for the Project:** Funding limitations do not allow for a repeat of this symposium as presented in 2025. However, the symposium laid the groundwork and connections for programming that we anticipate taking place in AY2025-2026:
 - Megatron will be our dance Artist in Residence in fall 25, the first Hip Hop and Street Dance Artist in that role. Megatron is a co-founder of The Floor Lords and a legend of Street Dance and Hip Hop culture. He will rehearse weekly with SSU students and create a work to be presented in the Salem Dance Ensemble fall concert.
 - Anticipated guest artist Jason “Slayer” Green fall 2025 and a spring guest artist TBD
 - Expansion of UNDGRD Urban Street Dance Collective to be open to high school students, building on the intergenerational thread of the symposium.
 - Hip Hop curriculum offerings that include Hip Hop History (DAN330), Hip Hop Technique (DAN130), and for the first time ever, Cyphering (DAN136).

- o Hosting “A Trike Called Funk” as part of the fall 2025 Student Involvement and Activities Fair. This is a community event with a capital “C” and will include participatory opportunities for all, as well as a dance battle.
- o Continue to build on the relationships that were established with external partners as part of the symposium development process.
- o Professor Rochelle recently hosted a workshop at Bates Elementary School and will seek similar community outreach opportunities going forward.
- o Continuation of informal campus Hip Hop and Street Dance sessions on Wednesday nights, started by Professor Rochelle during AY24-25.

APPENDIX C

End-of-Year Reports FY25 Funded Large Projects

- **CliftonStrengths**
 - **CliftonStrengths Appendices**
- **Digital Learning Landscape**
- **Enhancing Experiential Learning at Salem State through Riipen.com Mico-Internships**
- **Expanding Peer Advising**
- **Scholars Toolkit**
- **Stationary Micro Food Marts**
- **Student Behavioral Intervention Team (SBIT)**
- **Year of Advising**
- **Recruitment and Conversion Text Messaging**

End-of-Year Report for CliftonStrengths

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Advancement of CliftonStrengths at SSU: “Invest in Strengths, Build your Future”
- **Project Start Date:** Fall 2019
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** Ongoing
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Helaina Polito, Career Services
- **Summary of Project:** CliftonStrengths is an assessment tool that helps students, faculty, and staff identify and leverage their unique talents. Career Services uses this strengths-based approach to help students engage in self-reflection, increase self-awareness, enhance career planning, promote leadership development, improve confidence, and build effective teamwork skills. By focusing on strengths, we challenge the deficit mindset and inspire students to leverage their natural strengths to achieve academic, personal, and professional success. CliftonStrengths workshops and coaching sessions align with NACE’s eight career readiness competencies, setting students up for lifelong career management and workplace success.
- **Summary of Goals:**
 - Build an asset-based culture of career-readiness at Salem State.
 - Integrate NACE Career Readiness Competencies into CliftonStrengths workshops.
 - Develop and launch the CliftonStrengths Institute.
 - Partner with Retention Services to develop a system in N360 to tag and track students’ Top 5 Strengths and interaction with CliftonStrengths.
 - Collaborate with Institutional Research to analyze potential correlations between CliftonStrengths engagement and student outcomes including post-graduation preparedness and success.
 - Create pre- and post-workshop surveys to gather student feedback on confidence related to the learning outcomes.
- **Tie to Strategic Plan:** Our project supports the Student Success Imperative is to **“expand high-impact programmatic and engagement initiatives that prepare students for future careers and help students build confidence, connections, and life-skill learning outside the classroom.”** After completing the CliftonStrengths assessment, students receive a personalized report of their top natural talents. CliftonStrengths workshops are designed to provide a common asset-based language for students to embrace and articulate their impressive skillsets and abilities with confidence. Interactive discussions with peers, career development templates, and career-ready learning outcomes are embedded in the workshops and CliftonStrengths Institute. This directly supports the **Strategic Plan Goal I - Academic** Excellence and Active Learning Goal to “develop and support high-quality academic programs and innovative educational experiences that equip Salem State graduates to thrive in an evolving workforce and to navigate confidently in an increasingly complex and global society.”

In addition, this initiative supports **Strategic Plan Goal V - Campus Community and Culture, objective 5.1 “to engage faculty, staff, and students in creating and maintaining a supportive environment that promotes student engagement, empowerment, sense of belonging, and progress toward goals.”** Gallup conducted a case study at Bentley University, one of the nation’s top-ranked career services offices according to The Princeton Review, and research showed students who have a strong understanding of their CliftonStrengths are “1.9 times more likely to be confident that they will obtain a good job after graduation” and “1.6 times more likely to say

that the university prepares them well for life outside of college” (Gallup, 2018). The confidence gained and feeling that the student is connected to and supported by the University is essential for their sense of belonging, growth and development. CliftonStrengths is an on ramp for students to interact with Career Services. Student feedback from the pre- and post-workshop surveys highlight gains in self-confidence, self-awareness, goal setting, career reflection and readiness (Report Appendix B). Our partnership with Inclusive Excellence and use of the Community Cultural Wealth model further supports student identity development, self-worth, agency and confidence (Report Appendix D).

- **How the project changed from the original plan:**

- o Didn’t develop a committee, but developed stronger and new partnerships across the university
 - Partnerships of the past year include: Advancement*, Alumni Association and Foundation*, Center for Civic Engagement, First Year Seminar*, Healthcare Studies Department, Inclusive Excellence*, Institutional Research*, Orientation, Residence Life, Retention Services*, Student Life, Year of Advising Committee*

Note: *Designates new partnership

- o Didn’t create a train-the-trainer model, but explored the possibility
 - We explored a potential partnership with the Year of Advising Committee to promote CliftonStrengths through a train-the-trainer program, discussing costs, effectiveness, and approach. Although the proposal didn’t move forward, we shifted focus to building university partnerships and gathering student feedback and interactions data.
- o Shift in thought process and plan for assessing the impact of CliftonStrengths following conversations with Institutional Research
 - In conversation with Institutional Research, we began to outline what next steps would be necessary to assess the potential impact of CliftonStrengths on engagement with Career Services and retention. Interactions with Career Services increase career readiness and student engagement, and student engagement has a positive relationship with retention. Having a method to track CliftonStrengths interactions with Career Services in N360, will allow the opportunity to work with Institutional Research to analyze data and review potential correlations and impact.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Objective #1: Build an Asset-Based Culture Focused on Career-Readiness

- **Measurement Type:** Student Feedback from Pre- and Post-Workshop Surveys
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - o **Target:** Collect qualitative feedback from students through the development of Pre-and Post-Workshop Surveys and measure student confidence levels related to the workshop learning outcomes.
 - o **Actual Results:** Increase in self-reported student confidence levels across all learning outcomes.
 - o **Supporting Data:** Student survey feedback was submitted into a Microsoft Form. Graphs show increased self-reported student confidence levels across all learning outcomes. The data collection period began in November 2024 and the students rated their confidence level on a 4-point scale (Very Confident, Confident, Somewhat Confident, Not Confident).
 - o Note: If interested in additional detail, Quantitative data is highlighted in Appendix A; Qualitative data and graphs are highlighted in Appendix B; Learning Outcomes are listed in Appendix C.

- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** 232 students were invited to complete the CliftonStrengths assessment and attend workshops. 191 students completed the assessment. 182 students completed the pre-workshop survey and 153 completed the post-workshop survey. Students self-reported increased self-confidence related to the learning outcomes.
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** Faculty and staff received workshop handouts, Team Strengths Grid, and pre- and post-survey materials. Potential increased buy-in and additional partnership with faculty and staff. Possible adoption of asset-based language, teaching, and mentoring approaches by faculty and staff
- **Actions Taken:**
 - Created CliftonStrengths workshop content on leadership style.
 - Created two new workshops for the inaugural CliftonStrengths Institute, which infused the recognition of and appreciation for students' Cultural Wealth Capital to encourage identity development, self-worth, agency, and confidence.
 - Career development topics now include content on: infusing strengths into resume and cover letters, practicing elevator speeches for networking, preparing for common interview questions using the STAR Method, reflecting on core values and determining workplace fit, supporting identity development through Community Cultural Wealth, setting goals, practicing email etiquette for interacting with future employers, developing understanding of team dynamics and the value they bring to a team.
 - Standardized Employment, Engagement and Academic workshops based on the population (i.e., goal setting focus for First Year Seminar, transferable skill conversations for Student Employees, progressive career readiness concepts for three levels of Healthcare Studies academic classes, working in teams discussions for Engagement Groups, etc.)
 - Integrated NACE Career Readiness Competencies and new learning outcomes (Appendix C).
 - Launched pre- and post-workshop feedback forms (November 2024)
- **Challenges and Solutions:**
 - Limited CliftonStrengths Coaches/Career Services staff hinders scaling one-on-one appointments and workshop outreach.
 - Virtual/hyflex students have lower survey completion rates compared to in-person participants.

Objective #2: Plan and Host a CliftonStrengths Institute: Know Your Value, Build Your Brand, Envision Your Future

- **Measurement Type:** Attendance numbers, student feedback from pre- and post-workshop surveys, and student feedback from post-event survey
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - Target: 40 students to attend a multi-session day-long CliftonStrengths Institute
 - Actual Results: 41 students and 1 faculty member attended at least one or more sessions
 - Supporting Data: Students checked into the event using the N360 event tap-in kiosk. Attendance was also tracked at each individual session to determine which students attended more than one session. Students who attended a CliftonStrengths session completed a pre- and post-workshop survey. Students who attended any of the four sessions received a post-event survey. ClipperCash incentives were offered to encourage participation in providing feedback. Additional event details, session topics and qualitative student feedback available in Appendix E.

- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** 41 students attended at least one session. Student feedback themes include: resume workshop was particularly helpful, appreciation for cultural wealth capital content and financial literacy session. Students expressed additional interest in: LinkedIn advice, one-on-one resume coaching, career guidance, networking, graduate student level support, health insurance benefits guidance
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** Increased student awareness of Career Services office and resources. Promoted the graduating student survey. Enhanced partnerships between Career Services, Inclusive Excellence, and Alumni Association and Foundation.
- **Actions Taken:**
 - Collaboration between Alumni Association and Foundation (Mike Mitchell), Inclusive Excellence (Carlie Pierre, Elisa Castillo), and Career Services (Helaina Polito, Wynter Bendinelli-Volz, Steve Maser).
 - Developed two new CliftonStrengths workshops focusing on Cultural Wealth Capital to promote student identity development, self-worth, agency, and confidence.
 - Held a Career Success Resource Fair with resume reviews, professional development stations (tie-tying, headshots, Career Closet), resource tables (CliftonStrengths, Inclusive Excellence, graduating student survey), giveaways (laptop case) and lunch provided.
 - Financial Literacy session with an alumni guest speaker.
- **Challenges and Solutions:**
 - The Institute was held on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, in the Ellison Campus Center. Scheduling conflicts due to day/time of sessions; students suggested multiple institutes or weekend events.
 - To maximize workshop effectiveness, students were encouraged to complete the CliftonStrengths assessment beforehand. For future events, we plan to partner with academic classes or student groups such as student employees or student leaders to promote pre-registration, ensuring students get the most out of the Institute.
 - There were multiple Financial Literacy programs planned throughout the year across campus, presenting opportunities for future collaboration and coordination.
 - The Art of Small Talk and Etiquette Dinner sessions were cancelled due to minimal student pre-registrations.

Objective #3: Establish Cross University Partnerships around CliftonStrengths and Promote an Asset-Based Culture on Campus

- **Measurement Type:** Growth in Number and Extent of Partnerships
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - Target: Grow the number and extent of partnerships across the university
 - Actual Results: We have established partnerships with 13 new individuals across 7 distinct areas: Inclusive Excellence, Alumni Association and Foundation, First-Year Seminar, Healthcare Studies, Retention Services, Institutional Research, and the Year of Advising Group. Additionally, we have scheduled a 3-hour CliftonStrengths training session for Advancement's Summer Retreat in June 2025.
 - Supporting Data: Quality of partnerships is shown in the development of new initiatives, and number of students and staff served

- **People Impacted**

- **Direct Impact(s):**

- Launched inaugural CliftonStrengths Institute and incorporated the Community Cultural Wealth model
 - Implemented N360 tagging system with Retention Services
 - Began partnership discussions with Institutional Research for future data analysis
 - 232 students invited to workshops; 191 assessments completed
 - 18 one-on-one coaching sessions
 - 16 professional staff attended a CliftonStrengths workshop (Inclusive Excellence and Residence Life); 26 professional staff to participate in an upcoming training (Advancement)

- **Indirect Impact(s):**

- Promoted the eight NACE Career Readiness Competencies—Career and Self-Development, Communication, Critical Thinking, Equity and Inclusion, Leadership, Professionalism, Teamwork, and Technology—among students, faculty, and staff.
 - Enhanced student experience and engagement by integrating identity development, self-worth, agency, and confidence into workshop discussions and reflective practices.
 - Initiated the integration of CliftonStrengths into SSU's culture by making students' Top 5 Strengths and their interactions with CliftonStrengths (Academic, Engagement, Employment, 1:1 Coaching, Assessment Only) visible to faculty and staff via N360.
 - Established a foundation for accurate and expanded assessment through a partnership with Institutional Research.

- **Actions Taken with Key Partnerships:**

- Secured new First Year Seminar faculty partnerships; Emphasizing CliftonStrengths, teamwork and goal setting for students.
 - Collaborated with Alumni Association and Foundation and Inclusive Excellence to integrate Financial Literacy and the Cultural Wealth Model into the inaugural CliftonStrengths Institute: Know Your Value, Build Your Brand, Envision Your Future.
 - Supported Carlie Pierre's participation in Gallup's Global Strengths Coach training to enhance facilitation capabilities.
 - Developed new leadership style and career preparation workshop content for Healthcare Studies.
 - Developed the N360 tagging system via Retention Services to lay the foundation for future assessment with Institutional Research.

- **Challenges and Solutions:**

- Despite facilitating two successful First Year Seminar workshops in the Fall, three Spring workshops had to be changed to Career Services Overview presentations or canceled due to few students completing the assessment. One-on-one coaching sessions were offered to students who completed the assessment; however, none scheduled an appointment.

The integration of both asset-based frameworks requires an overview of CliftonStrengths and Community Cultural Wealth, which limits time for interactive discussions and activities. To enhance engagement, we plan to condense background information, provide a reflective handout, and make the content more interactive.

Objective #4: Track student interactions with CliftonStrengths to analyze correlations with positive outcomes and post-graduation success

- **Measurement Type:** Develop a system to track the number of students' who have interacted with CliftonStrengths and the way in which they have interacted
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:**
 - Provide a list of students who completed the CliftonStrengths assessment to date and how they interacted with Career Services to Retention Services.
 - Categorize student interactions with CliftonStrengths (Academic, Engagement, Employment, 1:1 Coaching, Assessment Only) and include Top 5 Strengths as student tags in N360
 - Actual Results: CliftonStrengths data for 2,218 students provided to Retention Services. 1,904 students' interactions with CliftonStrengths and Top 5 Strengths tagged in N360.
 - Supporting Data: Partnership with Institutional Research to track outcomes over time. Data will be used to review potential correlations with positive student outcomes and post-graduation success
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** 1,904 students' interactions with CliftonStrengths and Top 5 Strengths tagged in N360. Faculty and staff can now see student's Top 5 Strengths. The Reporting feature and Analytics Feature (Intervention Effectiveness and Population Health Dashboard sections of N360) can now be used for assessment purposes.
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** Tagging CliftonStrengths in N360 contributes to a culture of recognizing CliftonStrengths in the SSU community.
- **Actions Taken:**
 - Career Services provided Retention Services with a list of 2,218 students who have completed CliftonStrengths to date. These students completed CliftonStrengths between the Fall 2020 – May 8, 2025.
 - 1904 students tagged in N360 with CliftonStrengths interaction categories: CS – Academic, CS – Employment, CS – Coaching, CS – Engagement, CS – Assessment Only. These tags enable reporting and analytics in N360.
 - Upcoming discussions with Institutional Research to review potential correlations.
- **Challenges and Solutions:**
 - Students with a f_lastname@salemstate.edu email address were not included in the upload – unfortunately N360 cannot mass upload data by username. Career Services will need to provide the SSU ID number. In total, 314 rows were not yet tagged in N360.
 - An interaction category cannot be listed more than once. This poses a challenge as some students have interacted with CliftonStrengths more than once. Career Services tracks the number of interactions in a separate Excel database.
 - Student engagement with CliftonStrengths varies. To better track interactions, we're now categorizing students in N360 as "assessment only" or by their type of active engagement (academic, engagement and/or employment workshops or 1:1 coaching) starting Fall 2024.

Next Steps

Next Steps for the Project:

Objective #1: Continue to build an asset-based culture, using CliftonStrengths as a tool to engage with Career Services. Focus on building student confidence in their transferable skills and career readiness.

- **Key Actions:**
 - Embed CliftonStrengths in 1-Credit Career Compass Course
 - Continue to develop existing and establish new cross university partnerships
 - Continue to foster the partnership with Inclusive Excellence combining the CliftonStrengths and Community Cultural Wealth models
 - Collaborate with Carlie Pierre and the Leadership Programs Committee to create a Leading with Strength and Cultural Wealth Workshop for Student Leadership Development
 - Offer introductory presentations or other informational resources to faculty and staff regarding the value of the NACE Career Readiness Competencies, CliftonStrengths and Community Cultural Wealth model to promote an assets-based culture when advising, mentoring and teaching students
 - Develop a Discovering My Strengths and Cultural Wealth Reflection Worksheet using CliftonStrengths and Community Cultural Wealth
- **Support Needed:**
 - Support in sharing success stories and testimonials to show examples of how strengths-based approaches have positively impacted our students' academic and career development.

Objective #2: Refine the CliftonStrengths Institute: Know Your Value, Build Your Brand, Envision Your Future event

- **Key Actions:**
 - Explore building the Institute offerings into Student Life Student Employee training and/or Student Leadership Program.
- **Support Needed:**
 - Explore opportunities for alumni or employer partners to serve as guest speakers during the CliftonStrengths Institute.
 - Seek additional partners who will link the program to their area to encourage student participation (Junior/Seniors, student employees, student leaders, etc.)

Objective #3: Partner closely with Institutional Research and Retention Services

- **Key Actions:**
 - Over the past year, we laid the foundation of tracking student interactions with CliftonStrengths in N360 via support from Retention Services. Next, we will work closely with Institutional Research on potential correlations and assessment.
- **Support Needed:**
 - Strategic input from Institutional Research and Retention Services to analyze the interactions data we are collecting.

CliftonStrengths Large Strategic Planning Grant: 2024-2025

Appendices

Appendix A: CliftonStrengths Workshops and 1:1 Coaching Appointments

Date	Group	Requested By	Total Students Invited	Total Students Completed Assessment	Total Students Who Did Not Complete	Content Category	Notes on Challenges
Fall 2024	First Year Seminar	Margo Shea	21	16	5	Academic	
Fall 2024	First Year Seminar	Annette Chapman-Adisho	15	14	1	Academic	
Fall 2024	Healthcare Studies Seminar	Patrice DeLeon	16	14	2	Academic	
Fall 2024	Healthcare Studies Cornerstone	Patrice DeLeon	20	20	0	Academic	
Fall 2024	Healthcare Studies Seminar	Amanda Mack	13	13	0	Academic	
Fall 2024	Career Compass 1 Credit Course	Kimberly Jones	11	11	0	Academic	
Spring 2025	Orientation Leaders	Vi Thai	15	12	3	Employment	
Spring 2025	Resident Assistants	Travis Fleming	50	32	18	Employment	Tech Issue with CliftonStrengths Platform Impacted Assessment Completion Rate
Spring 2025	Healthcare Studies Seminar	Eric Schisler	13	13	0	Academic	
Spring 2025	Healthcare Studies Seminar	Amanda Mack	10	10	0	Academic	
Spring 2025	Healthcare Studies Cornerstone	Patrice DeLeon	16	15	1	Academic	
Spring 2025	Healthcare Studies Leadership	Amy Everitt	20	15	5	Academic	
Spring 2025	Inclusive Excellence Ambassadors and Grad Assistants	Carlie Pierre	9	9	0	Employment	

Date	Group	Requested By	Total Students Invited	Total Students Completed Assessment	Total Students Who Did Not Complete	Content Category	Notes on Challenges
Spring 2025	First Year Seminar Section 1	Mathew Barlow	20	4	16	N/A	Workshop Switched to Intro to Career Services due to Limited Assessment Completion
Spring 2025	First Year Seminar Section 2	Mathew Barlow	16	2	14	N/A	Workshop Switched to Intro to Career Services due to Limited Assessment Completion
Spring 2025	Civic Engagement Fellows	Kate Adams	8	8	0	Engagement	
Spring 2025	First Year Seminar	Annette Chapman-Adisho	10	1	9	N/A	Workshop Canceled due to Limited Assessment Completion
Spring 2025	Career Compass 1 Credit Course	Kimberly Jones	4	4	0	Academic	
Fall 2024	1:1 Coaching Appointment	Kimberly Jones	29	11	18	1:1 Coaching	5 Canceled Appointments
Spring 2025	1:1 Coaching Appointment	Kimberly Jones	22	7	15	1:1 Coaching	4 Canceled Appointments and 4 No Shows
			283	209	74		

Appendix B: Pre- and Post-Workshop Survey Results from Student Participants

When looking at the pre-workshop survey compared to the post-workshop survey, an increase in self-reported student confidence level is shown across all learning outcomes.

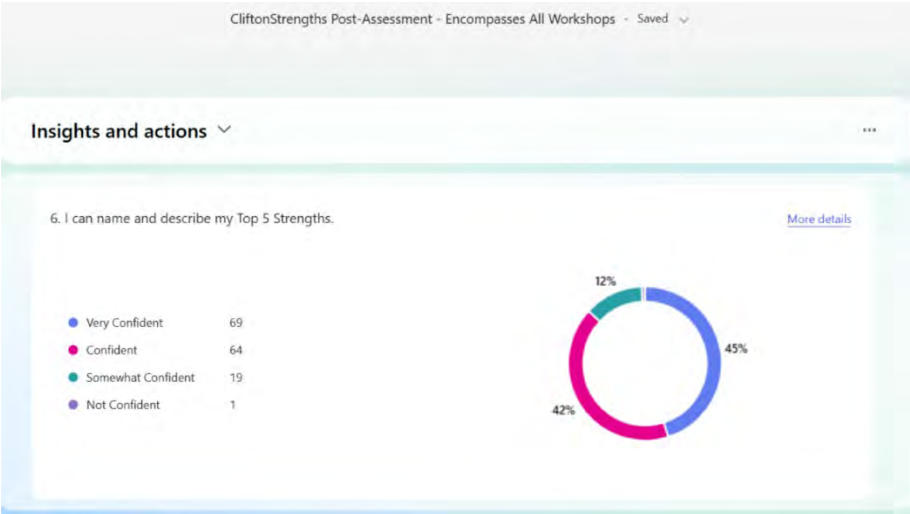
*The feedback below was provided by students in the following workshops:

- Academic (2 FY Seminars, 3 Healthcare Studies' Seminars, 2 Healthcare Studies Cornerstones, 1 Healthcare Studies Leadership in Healthcare)
- Employment (1 Orientation Leaders, 1 Resident Assistants, 1 Inclusive Excellence Ambassadors)
- Engagement (1 Civic Engagement Fellows, 2 Cultural Wealth/Career Prep Institute Workshops)

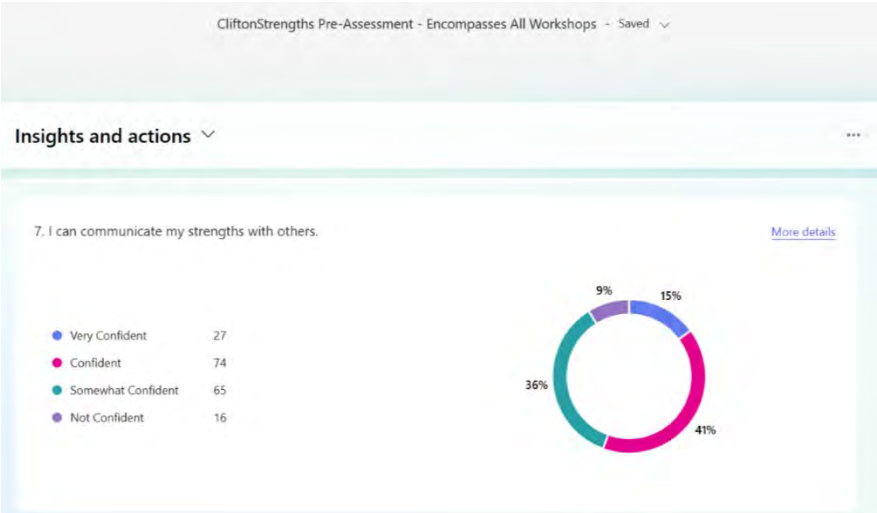
The most requested topic was "preparing for career success (121)", which helps inform our focus on infusing NACE career readiness competencies in tandem with CliftonStrengths coaching and the Community Cultural Wealth framework.

The following statements were shared by students in the post-workshop survey.

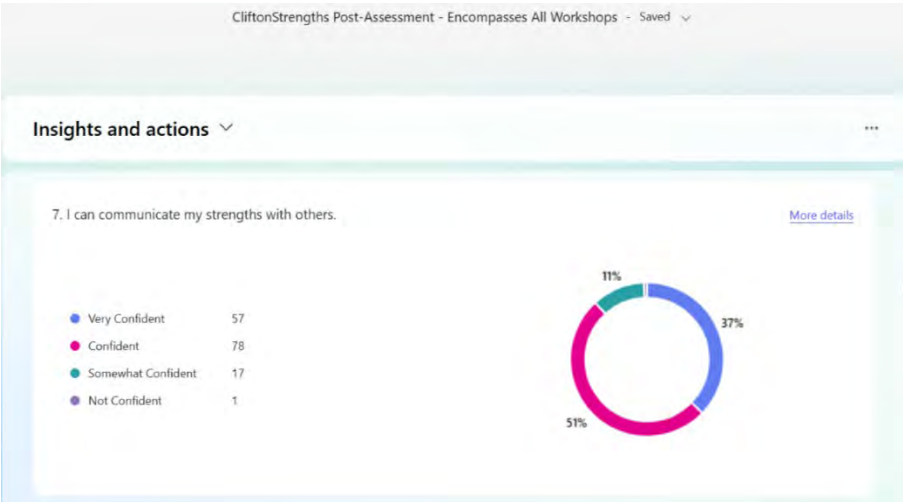
When asked "What impact do you feel this presentation had on you? What did you enjoy?", students said...



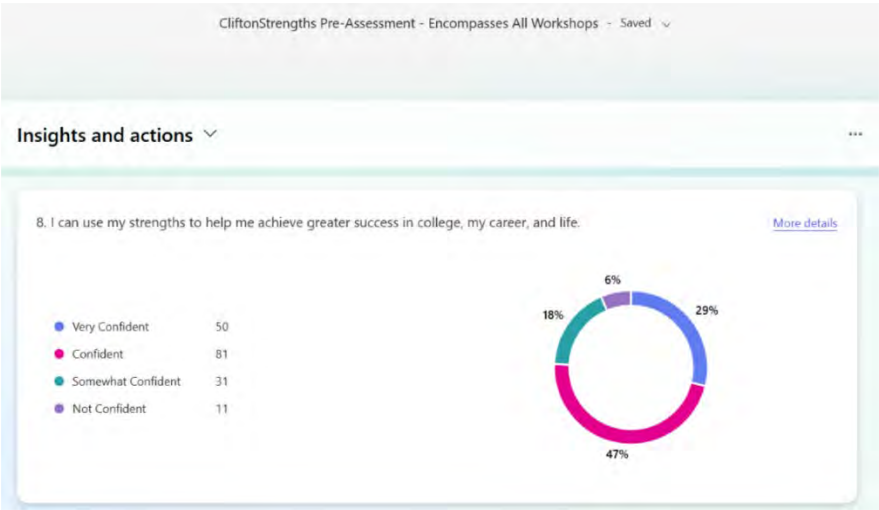
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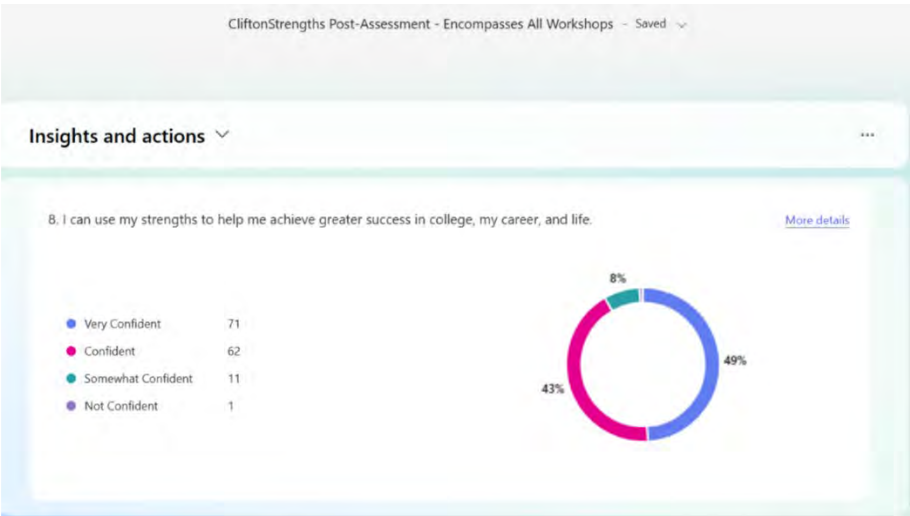
PRE



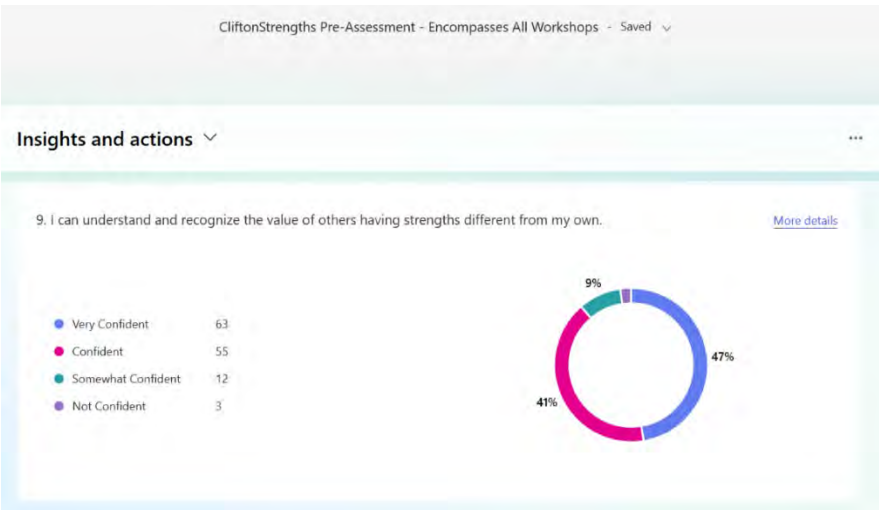
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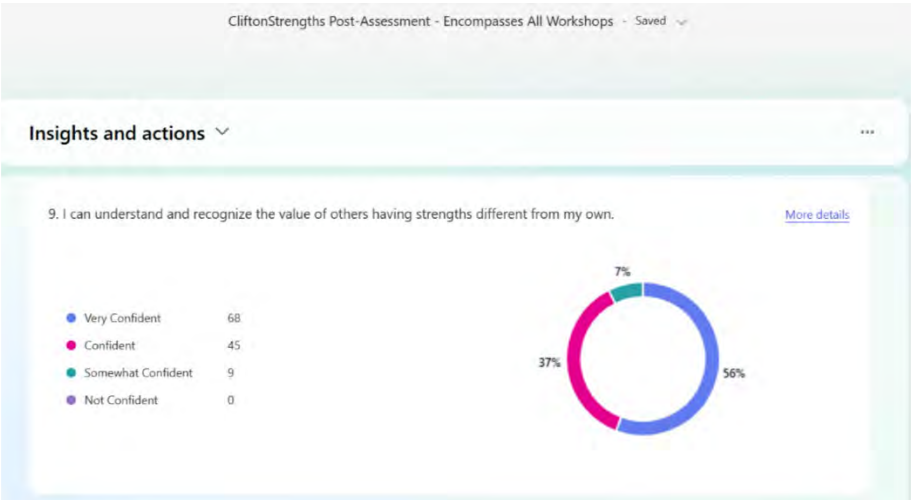
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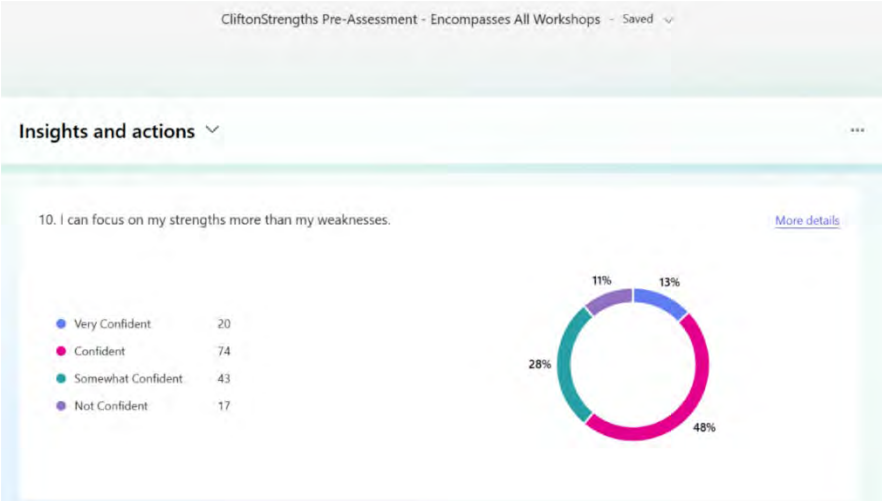
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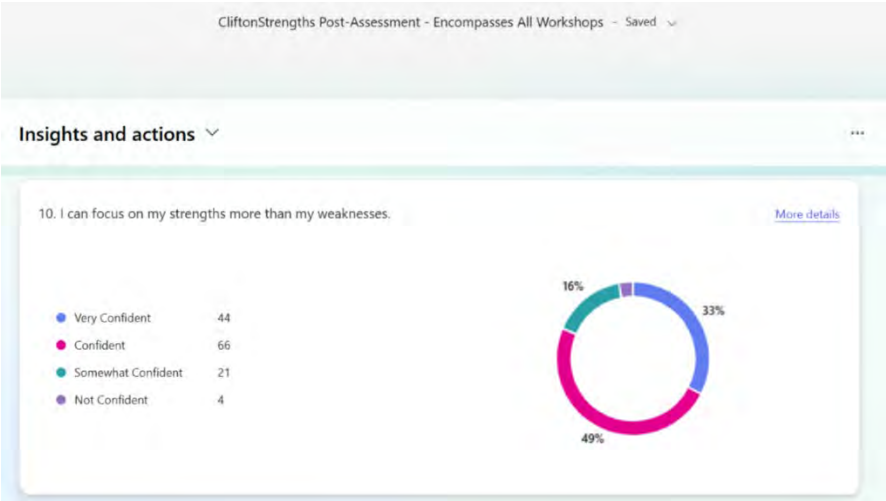
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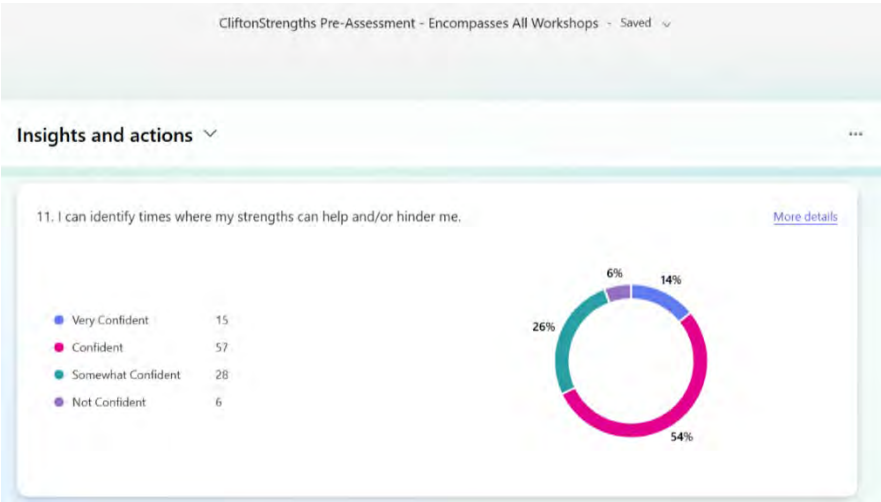
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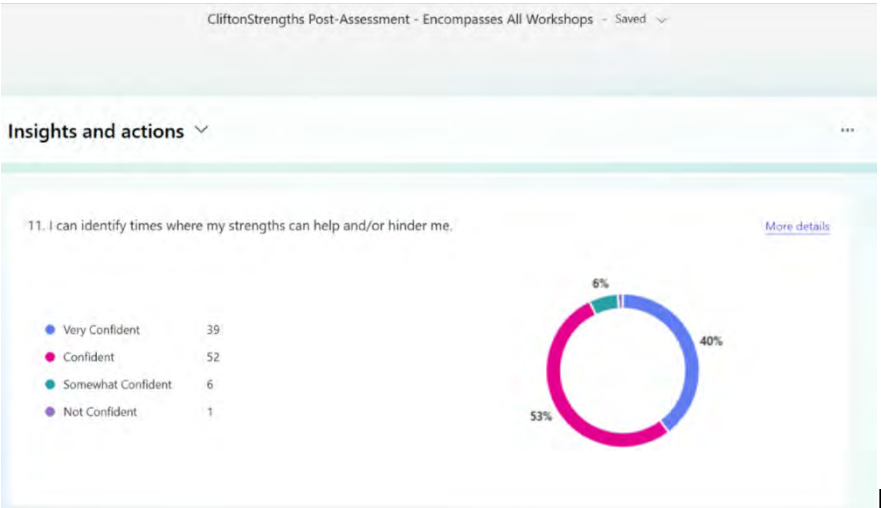
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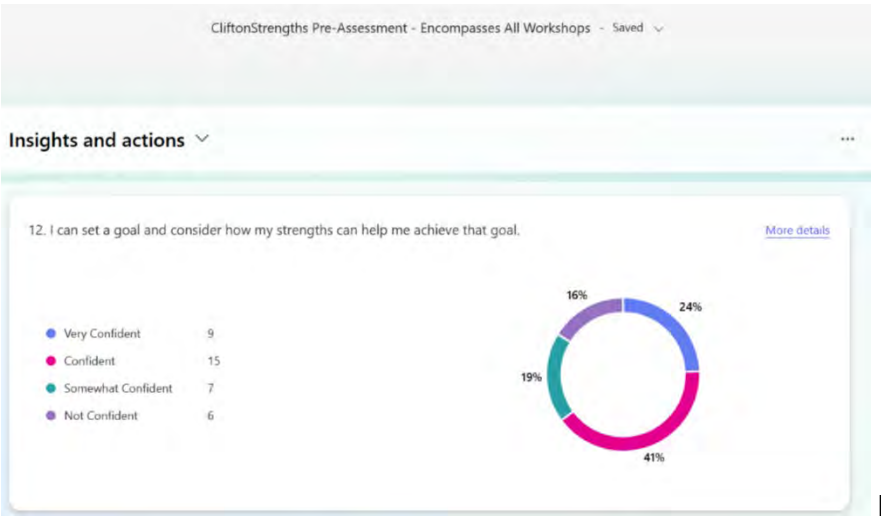
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PRE



POST



PRE

Insights and actions

12. I can set a goal and consider how my strengths can help me achieve that goal.

[More details](#)

Very Confident	14
Confident	16
Somewhat Confident	2
Not Confident	1



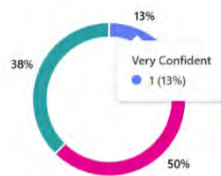
POST

Insights and actions

13. I can clearly communicate my strengths, skills, and/or experiences when introducing myself to others.

[More details](#)

Very Confident	1
Confident	4
Somewhat Confident	3
Not Confident	0



PRE

Insights and actions

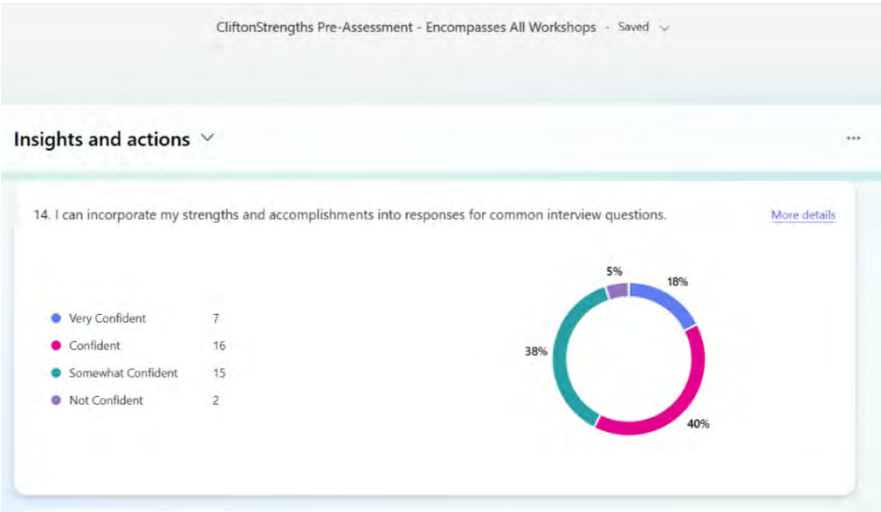
13. I can clearly communicate my strengths, skills, and/or experiences when introducing myself to others.

[More details](#)

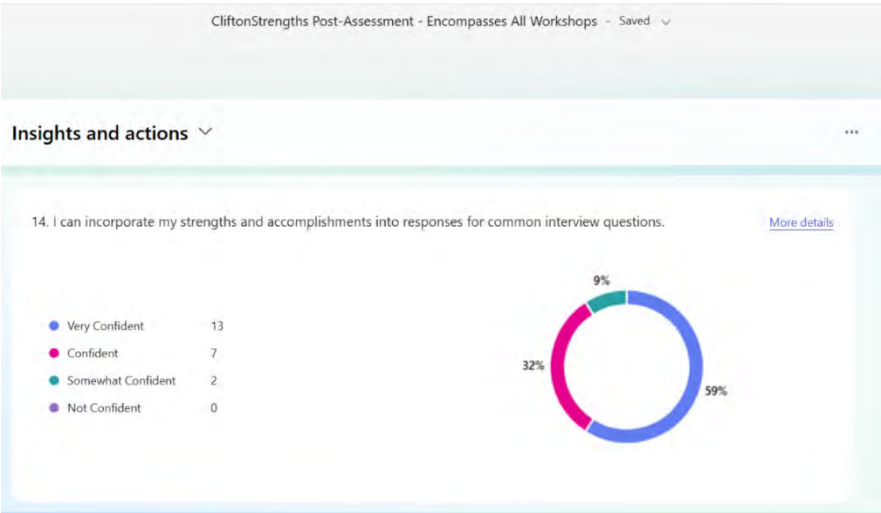
Very Confident	3
Confident	2
Somewhat Confident	0
Not Confident	0



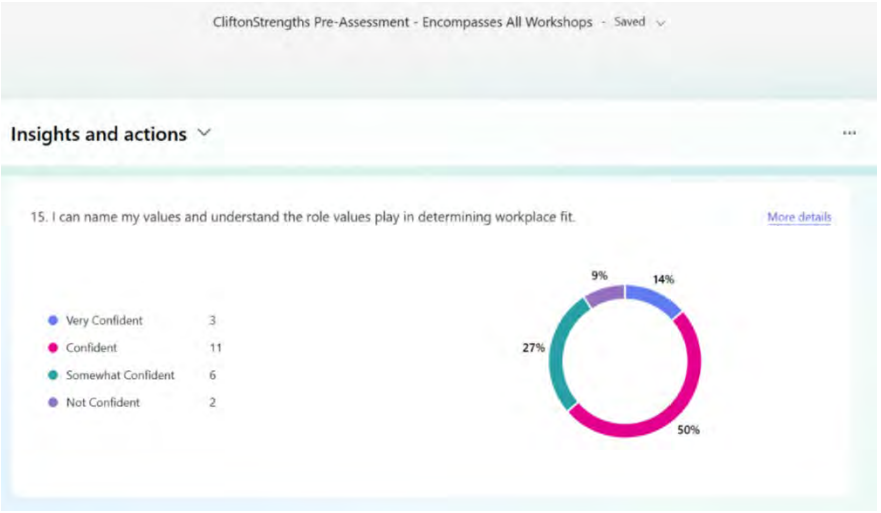
POST



PRE



POST



PRE

Insights and actions

15. I can name my values and understand the role values play in determining workplace fit.

[More details](#)

Very Confident	5
Confident	6
Somewhat Confident	0
Not Confident	0



POST

Insights and actions

16. I can identify my strengths-based leadership style.

[More details](#)

Very Confident	4
Confident	5
Somewhat Confident	5
Not Confident	0



PRE

Insights and actions

16. I can identify my strengths-based leadership style.

[More details](#)

Very Confident	5
Confident	3
Somewhat Confident	0
Not Confident	0



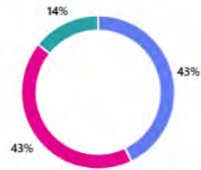
POST

Insights and actions

17. I can understand the value of leading with a strengths-based mindset.

[More details](#)

Very Confident	6
Confident	6
Somewhat Confident	2
Not Confident	0



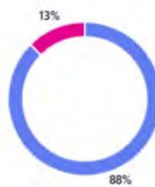
PRE

Insights and actions

17. I can understand the value of leading with a strengths-based mindset.

[More details](#)

Very Confident	7
Confident	1
Somewhat Confident	0
Not Confident	0



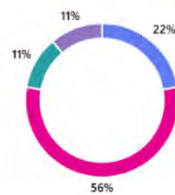
POST

Insights and actions

18. I can incorporate my strengths and accomplishments into my resume.

[More details](#)

Very Confident	2
Confident	5
Somewhat Confident	1
Not Confident	1



PRE

Insights and actions

18. I can incorporate my strengths and accomplishments into my resume.

[More details](#)

Very Confident	6
Confident	2
Somewhat Confident	1
Not Confident	0



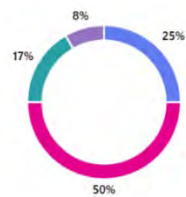
POST

Insights and actions

19. I can identify the cultural capital I bring.

[More details](#)

Very Confident	3
Confident	6
Somewhat Confident	2
Not Confident	1



PRE

Insights and actions

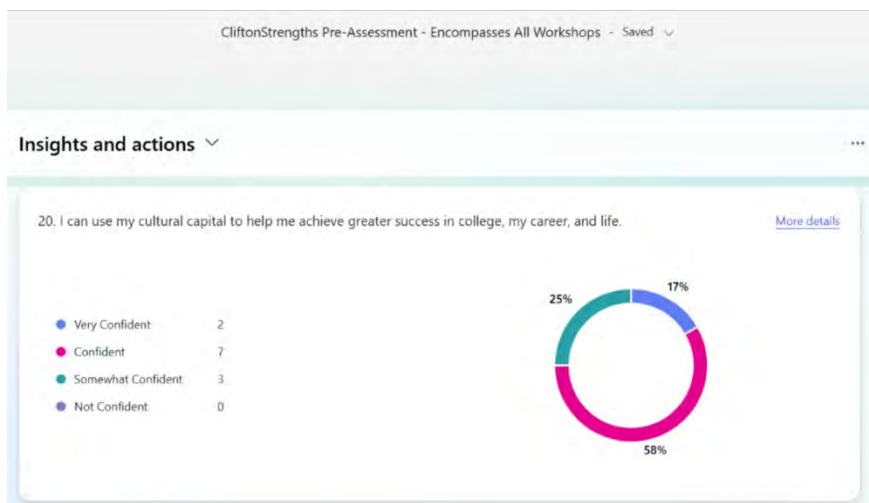
19. I can identify the cultural capital I bring.

[More details](#)

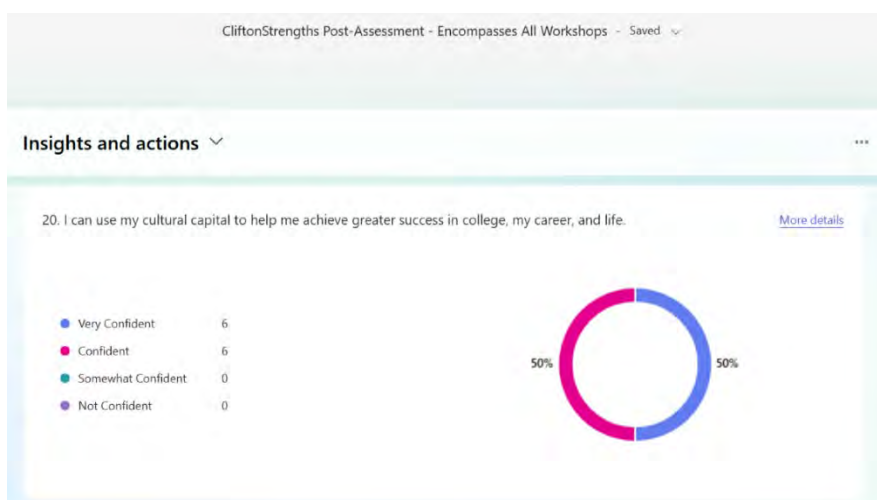
Very Confident	5
Confident	7
Somewhat Confident	0
Not Confident	0



POST

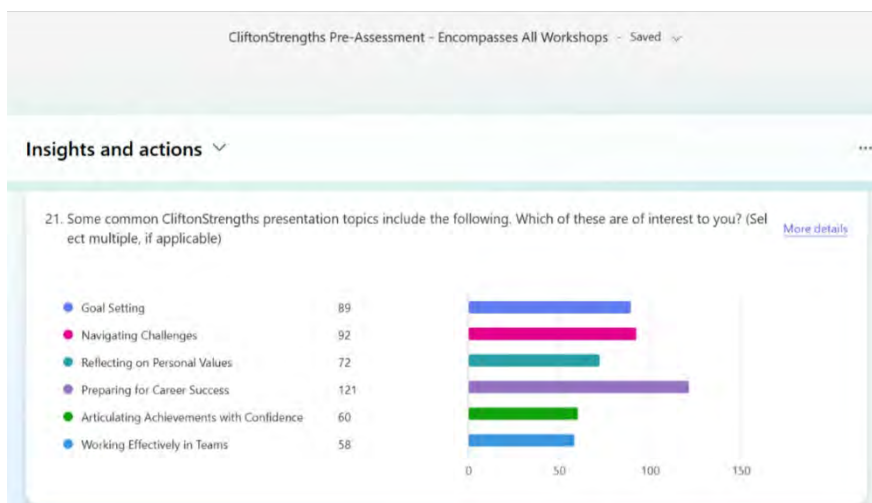


PRE



POST

When asked about interest areas, students indicated the below in the pre-workshop survey:



Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness

- "It reminded me that I am unique and that I should be proud of who I am rather than trying to live quietly"
- "I really enjoyed how this presentation reminded me of who I am and what makes me, me with actual definitions explained to help me better understand."
- "It was refreshing as sometimes I forget about the strengths I have"
- "Put a term on the strengths I possess. Realized I had more strengths then I thought. Hard to determine top!"
- "I liked this presentation it really made me open my eyes and think more positive about myself. I think it's so easy to bash yourself instead of giving credit when it's due. My favorite activity was definitely the Best of Us."
- "I liked hearing our different cultural capitals"
- "This presentation made me feel more confident with myself and pushed me to want to put my 5 strengths into my daily life."

Teamwork

- "I learned a lot about my strengths and what they mean about how I work as a member of a team."

Goal Setting, Career Reflection and Readiness

- "Honestly made me rethink a lot of careers I've had, and the impact they've had on my trajectory."
- "It helped me realize my strengths and how to navigate them. How to set goals."
- "I found it very helpful when preparing for a interview or setting up my resume."
- "I enjoyed learning how to apply my strengths to my resume & to common interview questions."
- "This presentation gave me a better understanding on resumes and the best way I could utilize my skillsets"
- "Being able to leverage innate strength with regards to my career success."
- "It helped me think about my career!"
- "Better prepared to use my strengths in job applications and interviews."
- "How to make your cover letter specific to job applying for"
- "I am more familiar with cover letter and resume. I enjoy knowing more about my strengths."
- "I enjoyed practicing my "elevator pitch."

When asked "What could be improved", a summary of recommendations from the students included:

- Print out chart of the CliftonStrengths domains for students
 - Color prints
- More interactions/activities/visuals
 - Potentially get them up and moving during the workshops
 - Switch up partners for pair and share discussions
 - Use videos

- Clarify more that students can schedule a one-on-one meeting to dig in deeper about their specific career goals and application of their strengths report
- More time digging into and thinking through own strengths
 - Less time sharing in groups
 - More time with real world applications either in for academic success or for future career preparation

Appendix C: CliftonStrengths and NACE Career Readiness Competencies

We emphasize the below NACE Career Readiness Competencies in the content of all CliftonStrengths workshops and embedded the skill development in our learning outcomes.

1. Career and Self-Development

- Defined by NACE as the ability to “proactively develop oneself and one’s career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one’s organization” (2022).
- This competency has been embedded in our CliftonStrengths workshops via:
 - Conversation about NACE competencies
 - Identify Core Values and Workplace Fit Discussion
 - The CliftonStrengths for Students Platform provides customized reports for students and additional resources to help them set goals and leverage their strengths. These reports include the personalized Top 5 Strengths Report and CliftonStrengths for Students Report.
 - Integration of Community Cultural Wealth – Supporting student identity development and deepening their sense of self-worth, agency, and confidence.
- Sample Learning Outcomes
 - “I can name and describe my Top 5 Strengths.”
 - “I can use my strengths to help me achieve greater success in college, my career and life.”
 - “I can focus on my strengths more than my weaknesses”
 - “I can clearly communicate my strengths, skills and/or experiences when introducing myself to others.”
 - “I can identify the cultural capital I bring.”
 - “I can use my cultural capital to help me achieve greater success in college, my career, and life.”

2. Communication

- Defined by NACE as the ability to “clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization” (2022).
- This competency has been embedded in our CliftonStrengths workshops via:
 - Infusing Strengths into Resume/Cover Letter Language Development
 - Articulating a success or accomplishment (Pair and Share Activity with Peer)

- Elevator Pitch (Template Use and Verbal Practice)
- STAR Method for Interview Prep
- The Best of Us Activity (Students reflect and verbally articulate when they are at their best and at their worst, what their team/peers/faculty member can count on them to do and what they need from their team/peers/faculty member to be successful)
- Sample Learning Outcomes
 - “I can communicate my Strengths with others.”
 - “I can clearly communicate my strengths, skills and/or experiences when introducing myself to others.”
 - “I can incorporate my strengths and accomplishments into responses for common interview questions.”
 - “I can incorporate my strengths and accomplishments into my resume.”

3. Critical Thinking

- Defined by NACE as the ability to “Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information” (2022).
- This competency has been embedded in our CliftonStrengths workshops via:
 - Balconies/Basements Activity (Discussion on how strengths can help/hinder success)
 - Theme Awareness Activity (Reflection and sharing strategies to overcome challenges)
 - Goal Setting (Name It, Claim It, Aim It Gallup Framework)
- Sample Learning Outcomes
 - “I can identify times where my strengths can help/hinder me.”

4. Equity and Inclusion

- Defined by NACE as the ability to “Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.” (2022).
- This competency has been embedded in our CliftonStrengths workshops via:
 - Identify and leverage cultural wealth capital
 - Balconies/Basements - Understand others may approach situations differently, and our strengths influence how others may perceive/misperceive us (and vice versa)
 - Community Cultural Wealth integration – recognizes and leverages the strengths and knowledge that students from nondominant communities bring with them—rather than framing them from a deficit perspective. The integration of the framework with CliftonStrengths supports identity development and fosters self-authorship.
- Sample Learning Outcomes
 - “I can understand and recognize the value of others have strengths different from my own.”
 - “I can identify the cultural capital I bring.”
 - “I can use my cultural capital to help me achieve greater success in college, my career, and life.”

5. Leadership

- Defined by NACE as the ability to “Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.” (2022).
- This competency has been embedded in our CliftonStrengths workshops via:
 - Gallup Leadership Framework and Discussion of Leadership Style
- Sample Learning Outcomes
 - “I can set a goal and consider how my strengths can help me achieve that goal.”
 - “I can identify my strengths-based leadership style.”
 - “I can understand the value of leading with a strengths-based mindset.”

6. Professionalism

- Defined by NACE as the ability to “Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.” (2022).
- This competency has been embedded in our CliftonStrengths workshops via:
 - Infusing Strengths into Resume/Cover Letter Language Development
 - Email Etiquette Discussion and Template Sharing
- Sample Learning Outcomes
 - “I can name my values and understand the role values play in determining workplace fit.”
 - “I can incorporate my strengths and accomplishments into my resume.”
 - “I can clearly communicate my strengths, skills and/or experiences when introducing myself to others.”

7. Teamwork

- Defined by NACE as the ability to “Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities” (2022).
- This competency has been embedded in our CliftonStrengths workshops via:
 - Recognizing the value you bring to a team/understanding the value in teams with diverse strengths (Strengths in Teams Discussion/Team Strengths Grid)
- Sample Learning Outcomes
 - “I can understand and recognize the value of others have strengths different from my own.”
 - “I can identify my strengths-based leadership style.”
 - “I can understand the value of leading with a strengths-based mindset.”

8. Technology

- Defined by NACE as the ability to “Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.” (2022).
- This competency has been embedded in our CliftonStrengths workshops via:
 - Use of the CliftonStrengths for Students Platform

Appendix D: CliftonStrengths X Community Cultural Wealth

Community Cultural Wealth Overview

Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) is an assets-based framework developed by Dr. Tara Yosso that highlights the valuable knowledge, skills, and experiences (framed as capitals) that students from nondominant communities possess. Rather than viewing their lived experiences from a deficit lens, the CCW model emphasizes the strengths of these communities. CCW emphasizes that students have accumulated diverse forms of capital that can be leveraged for social mobility and success.

Key aspects of Community Cultural Wealth:

- **Challenging Deficit Perspectives:** CCW counters the idea that historically minoritized communities lack cultural resources, instead recognizing the wealth they possess.
- **Strengths Focused:** The model emphasizes the diverse forms of capital that marginalized communities bring to the table, including their unique experiences, knowledge, and skills.
- **Six Forms of Cultural Capital:** Yosso's model identifies six types of cultural capital: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant.
 - Aspirational Capital: The hopes and dreams that individuals hold for the future.
 - Linguistic Capital: The various language and intercultural communication skillsets.
 - Familial Capital: The knowledge, network, and skills learned within the family.
 - Social Capital: The networks of social connections that individuals have within their community, which can provide support and access to resources.
 - Navigational Capital: The ability to navigate complex systems and institutions, including schools, healthcare, and government agencies.
 - Resistant Capital: The knowledge and skills developed through resisting oppression and challenging inequality.

Integration of CliftonStrengths and CCW at Salem State University

An integration of CliftonStrengths and Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) offers a powerful framework for recognizing and affirming both individual assets and the collective strengths embedded in our students — particularly our students from historically non-dominant communities.

As we implement the Roadmap to Servingness, Career Services has partnered with Inclusive Excellence and with HSI-MSI Servingness to develop education and training opportunities from an Assets-based, Culturally Affirming Approach to:

- Support students in identifying transferable skills rooted in both talent and cultural capital
- Foster student success and support persistence by affirming identity, promoting equity, and supporting holistic development.
- Enhance faculty and staff preparedness for welcoming, advising, and mentoring for students.

An Asset-based Approach to Student Development

- Both frameworks reject viewing individuals from a deficit lens. CliftonStrengths centers on talents; CCW highlights cultural and communal assets and knowledge.
- By integrating CCW and CliftonStrengths, we can support our students in developing language to identify and name their talents, skillsets, and experiences and communicate those to leverage opportunities.

- An integrated framework can also explore a more inclusive, culturally affirming leadership development model for student leaders.

Example of Integration of CliftonStrengths and Community Cultural Wealth

CliftonStrengths Strengths	Related CCW Capital(s)	Example
Empathy	Familial, Social	Understanding family dynamics and supporting peers emotionally
Strategic	Navigational, Resistant	Navigating complex systems with a strategic lens
Communication	Linguistic, Aspirational	Using storytelling to inspire and mobilize community
Learner	Aspirational, Navigational	Lifelong learning as resistance to systemic inequities
Belief	Resistant, Familial	Holding strong values rooted in community and justice

Impact on Persistence and Student Success

CCW aims to challenge systemic inequalities and create more equitable and inclusive environments for marginalized communities. By recognizing and valuing the community cultural wealth of marginalized groups, individuals and institutions can create opportunities for social mobility, educational success, and broader social justice.

Appendix E: CliftonStrengths Institute Post-Event Student Feedback

Event Description:

CliftonStrengths Institute: Know Your Value, Build Your Brand, Envision Your Future

Tuesday, April 22, 2025 from 10:00 am – 4:30 pm in Ellison Campus Center

Event Timeline:

9:45 am Check-in table located in Ellison Campus Center lobby. Students receive a pen and padfolio.

10:15-11:45 am CliftonStrengths Know Your Value and Build Your Brand* - Join us to recognize and embrace your top strengths. Learn how to showcase your impressive skillset and experiences with confidence on your resume. Cultural Wealth Capital conversations included in partnership with Inclusive Excellence. ECC Underground

12-1:30 pm Career Success Resource Fair – Quick resume reviews offered, learn how to tie a tie station, take a free professional headshot, shop our free Career Closet, CliftonStrengths resource table, Inclusive Excellence resource table. Table promoting the graduating student survey. Laptop case giveaway and lunch provided. ECC Commuter Lounge & Career Services Office

1:45-2:45 pm Financial Literacy Workshop - Graduation is on the horizon. New jobs, new places to live, and new expenses are all big changes coming your way. Join Tim Hamm '85 for a conversation on all the things you'll need to learn, including debt management, credit, budgeting, and saving. In partnership with Alumni Association and Foundation ECC Metro

3-4:30 pm CliftonStrengths Envision Your Future* - Develop strategies for leveraging your strengths to succeed in your job/internship search. Tips and tools provided to help you ace your next interview. Cultural Wealth

Capital conversations included in partnership with Inclusive Excellence. ECC Underground

4:45-5:45 pm Session Cancelled Art of Small Talk - Unfortunately, this session was cancelled due to cost and minimal student pre-registrations. In partnership with Alumni Association and Foundation

6:00-8:00 pm Session Cancelled Etiquette Dinner - Unfortunately, this session was cancelled due to cost and minimal student pre-registrations. In partnership with Alumni Association and Foundation

Student Feedback:

The quotes below are verbatim provided by students who attended the CliftonStrengths Institute on April 22, 2025. A Microsoft Form survey was sent via email to all CliftonStrengths Institute student attendees following the event. All students who completed the survey were entered for a chance to win \$50 ClipperCash for their feedback.

When asked, **"In general, what did you enjoy about this event? Did you find anything particularly helpful?"**, students said...

- "I really enjoyed the CliftonStrengths Workshop because it helped me better understand my personal strengths and how they relate to my professional development. I found it especially helpful to first identify my own strengths through the assessment, as this gave me more confidence and clarity about what I'm good at. What stood out to me the most was learning how to translate those strengths into concrete and relevant information on my resume. This practical application made me realize that my unique qualities can actually be valuable assets in the job market. The workshop also provided useful examples and guidance on how to present my strengths in a professional and impactful way, which I found very helpful for future resume writing and interviews."
- "Lots of great tips on what to put on resume but also how to set it up best"
- "I liked the important topic discussions. Especially for financial literacy"
- "I enjoyed the opportunity of learning how to build our strengths into our careers, also glad about the opportunity to learn about our ethnic/cultural aspect"
- When asked, "In general, how could this event be improved?" , one student said...
- "...Maybe plan it on a weekend where classes aren't interfering with it. I would've loved to attend every session but couldn't due to my classes being at the same times."

When asked, **"Please share any additional comments or suggestions"**, one student said...

- "Should have these institutes once a semester!"

References

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<https://www.gallup.com/education/228566/strengths-based-approach-career-services-higher-education.aspx>

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End-of-Year Report for Digital Learning Landscape Strategy and Educational Innovation Large Strategic Planning Grant

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Digital Learning Strategy
- **Project Start Date:** December 8, 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** December 8, 2026
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Eliza Bobek/Sahar Hussain
- **Project Overview/Summary:** SSU's Center for Teaching Innovation (CTI) received a two-year grant that includes 3 components to support online teaching and learning across the university. The first component is aimed at providing cross-discipline faculty/program/department support through partnerships for online learning and teaching needs. The project is led by the newly hired Assistant Director for Online Learning (ADOL), Sahar Hussain. Courses are being redesigned to be more student-centered through the implementation of online teaching and learning best practices. The second component focuses on the creation of a centralized hub for online learning will enable CTI to foster current interests in online learning while encouraging the creation of new courses, programs, and initiatives that align with contemporary student expectations and interests. The third component will build online infrastructure to meet the changing demographics and needs of our current and future SSU student population. There are no deviations from the original plan. As the project started less than 6 months ago, preliminary progress is being made to meet each goal.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Objective #1: Supporting Online Learning through Cross-Department Partnerships

- **Measurement Type:** MOUs from the BSB and CTI faculty professional learning community co-led by Sahar Hussain, Business Faculty Lead, J.P. James, and ITS Educational Technologist, Cecilia de Medeiros; survey data collected from faculty providing insight into faculty experience in redesigning courses using the CTI SSU Canvas Template: Basic; Canvas data dashboard.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** A commitment from the School of Business (BSB) leadership and faculty to redesign 4 courses using the SSU Canvas Template: Basic; 1:1 check-in with ADOL and ITS; and recurring group meetings.
 - **Actual Results:** Three commitments from BSB faculty redesigning the following courses: ODS 333, MKT 241N, and FIN 800.
 - **Supporting Data:** Faculty survey sent to determine experience building courses using the SSU Canvas Template, which aspects of the template were most useful in the course design, challenges faced using the template, and observable student engagement or performance changes since using the template.
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** 6+ faculty, BSB leadership, ITS, and 494+ predicted students for all 3 courses for the upcoming year. The prediction is based on past years enrollment data and current Fall 2025 enrollment for all sections (Canvas dashboard).
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** Generated high interest among faculty circles and across departments to consider engaging in online course redesign work with the ADOL and the CTI. This resulted in the creation of an Online Learning Group (OLG) of faculty members across different departments

which will be detailed in the subsequent section.

- **Actions Taken:** Collaborated on a MOU between CTI and BSB; initial meeting was March 11, 2025, followed with weekly/biweekly BSB, ADOL, and ITS group meetings. ADOL and ITS, supported the faculty in Canvas building through pedagogical and technical support. Courses are being reviewed, shared, and blocks are being addressed during meetings.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** Initially, 4 faculty members committed to the MOU but 1 dropped from the FPLC. The faculty member felt they should be able to use just the main page from the CTI Canvas template and omit the rest of the features for their course redesign. However, the MOU clearly stated the template in its entirety needed to be used, while still allowing for elements of flexibility in customizing features as they applied to individual courses, i.e., discussion posts, knowledge checks, etc. Other challenges that were presented included changing the MOU completion due date since faculty were preoccupied with other commitments including, Academic Advising, Commencement, and other university-wide initiatives. The MOU course completion deadline was updated to June 13, 2025. The ADOL also found that since faculty held varying degrees of confidence and experience levels using Canvas, personalized support was necessary. The process of including an ITS team member helped respond to some of the challenges but adding positions for Online Learning team members who are regularly available would be a more efficient approach in closing the resource gap.

Objective #2: Facilitating Online Learning through Faculty Online Learning Groups (OLGs)

- **Measurement Type:** A faculty interest survey was disseminated to deans/chairs to gauge interest for 4 faculty members who were interested in engaging in an Online Learning Group (OLG) to integrate the SSU Canvas Template: Basic and participate in group meetings following a condensed/shortened version of the BSB MOU model.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - Target: A commitment from 4 faculty from various departments.
 - Actual Results: Four faculty members committed to participating in the newly created OLG representing Healthcare Studies, Occupational Therapy, School of Social Work, and School of Education.
 - Supporting Data: Survey results revealed all 4 faculty members were interested in integrating the Canvas template and enhancing student engagement with online teaching and learning best practices. One faculty member was particularly interested in creating more community building opportunities for students.
- **People Impacted**
 - Direct Impact(s): 9+ faculty, leadership, ITS, and 169+ predicted students for all 4 courses for the upcoming year. The prediction is based on past years enrollment data and current Fall 2025 enrollment for all sections (Canvas dashboard).
 - Indirect Impact(s): Generated high interest among faculty circles and across departments to consider engaging in online course redesign work with the ADOL and the CTI. This resulted in the creation of professional development workshops which will be detailed in the subsequent section.
- **Actions Taken:** Collaborated an online course-build process with the OLG which included scheduled group meetings with the ADOL and ITS and regular check-ins. The initial meeting date was May 29, 2025. The ADOL and ITS are currently supporting the faculty in Canvas course redesign by offering pedagogical and technical support. Courses are being reviewed, shared, and blocks will be discussed during meetings.

- **Challenges and Solutions:** The short-term OLG was designed to cover 4 faculty members at the cost of \$500 each. This shorter version of the BSB FLC included fewer check-ins and scheduled meetings to allocate time for faculty to partake in the building itself. However, due to time/fund constraints, meeting less frequently as a group or in a 1:1 setting could take away from the overall experience and impact of the online course redesign. The solution for future OLGs would be to allocate \$2,000 per faculty member, like BSB's rates, to ensure there's adequate time and funding to build on the BSB course redesign model.

Objective #3: Collaborating on Best Practices by Offering Online Learning Professional Development Opportunities Internally and Externally

- **Measurement Type:** An interest survey was disseminated to faculty members to participate in a professional development workshop focusing on Turning Virtual Rooms into Vibrant Classrooms Using Zoom Breakouts to increase student engagement; Presenting at local and national conferences; Presenting at the Teaching and Learning Symposium about Building the OL ecosystem at SSU.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Five faculty members across disciplines participate in a 2- part professional development workshop; Gain approval to present at Massachusetts Colleges Online (MCO) virtual conference on June 11, 2025; Present at SSU and raise awareness to the programs and resources available in OL at SSU.
 - **Actual Results:** Six faculty members and a Dean from the College of Art and Sciences, Occupational Therapy, Chemistry and Physics, the School of Social Work, and the School of Education attended the Zoom workshop and are currently scheduling 1:1 time to integrate the strategies learned from the workshop. The workshop took place on June 2, 2025. The MCO proposal committee confirmed the ADOL's presentation: Digital Leap: Fast-Tracking Online Education at a Small University. Presented Trending Now: Building the Online Learning Ecosystem at SSU on May 21, 2025.
 - **Supporting Data:** A pre-workshop survey collected data before the Zoom workshop, faculty members identified challenges navigating Zoom, planning for and monitoring student engagement, and pre-planning breakout rooms as obstacles in successful implementation. During the workshop, faculty members learned structured facilitation techniques, discovered effective monitoring approaches, and were provided with ready-to-use templates that make online collaboration feel natural for their students. A separate post-workshop feedback survey was sent to collect overall experience, challenges faced, and the next steps which include scheduling a 1:1 with the ADOL to implement the Zoom strategies they worked on.
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** Zoom workshop: 6+ faculty members, leadership, and over 100+ SSU students; MCO: A collaborative of 24 State university and Community Colleges host their annual conference with a high attendance rate of instructional designers, faculty members, leaders, community partners, and service providers; Over 40+ faculty members attended the session at SSU.
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** The faculty members using the newly acquired Zoom strategies can share best practices with their peers so there is increased application of online teaching and learning best practices. The MCO provides SSU with the opportunity to be recognized as a leader in Online Learning.
- **Actions Taken:** The Turning Virtual Rooms into Vibrant Classrooms Using Zoom Breakouts professional development workshop was created using feedback results of the faculty survey dissemination as described above. Faculty members were interested in being supported in navigating

Zoom, planning for and monitoring student engagement, and pre-planning breakout rooms. Following the workshop, a post-workshop survey was sent to collect faculty experience and implementation data. One-to-one consultations are currently being scheduled with faculty and the ADOL to fully integrate the strategies from the workshop into their courses. The ADOL submitted a proposal for the MCO conference to highlight SSU's journey towards digital learning and it was approved. The presentation will take place virtually on June 11, 2025. A separate proposal has been sent by the ADOL to the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD) network which is pending approval. Presented Trending Now: Building the Online Learning Ecosystem at SSU on May 21, 2025.

- **Challenges and Solutions:** There were no challenges faced with this objective.

Objective #4: Creating a Centralized Hub for Learning

- **Measurement Type:** The creation of a centralized hub for learning can enable the CTI to foster current interests in online learning while encouraging the creation of new courses, programs, and initiatives that align with contemporary student expectations and interests.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Creating an online learning hub can help our programs be deliberate in the offerings and our faculty learn more about general best practices in online spaces. Libguides will be the main platform to house the hub.
 - **Actual Results:** The initial online hub is in its initial phase. Resources, multimedia, professional development materials, rubrics, case studies, reports, and literature are currently being compiled.
 - **Supporting Data:** An initial resource outline detailing the organization of the LibGuides page for the Online Learning Hub has been shared with Eliza Bobek, Director, and at an SSU leadership meeting. The outline follows research based best practices.
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** 5+ CTI team members have current access as the hub is still a work in progress.
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** Once the hub is functional, the indirect impact is all the faculty members and students that can benefit from its resources.
- **Actions Taken:** The LibGuides is being built at a sustainable rate by the ADOL.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** As there are no other available team members working on this project, the ADOL finds it challenging to allocate significant amounts of time to completing the online hub independently. The project could benefit from adding team members to the OL team to expand and complete the work within the grant completion date. The Online Learning hub will be a live page that will continue to have regular edits/changes and updates which will require a dedicated team member.

Next Steps

- **Next Steps for the Project:** As the project has only been active for 6 months, there are plans to expand the digital learning strategy by adding on another program-wide partnership to focus on online course redesign. The creation of additional OLGs and professional development workshops focusing on online learning will further SSU's digital strategy initiatives. The centralized hub for learning will continue to be developed at a steady rate.
- **Support Needed:** The creation of a permanent, long-term, ADOL/Director role in addition to OL team members will support in the expansion of the digital strategy initiatives across faculty/programs/departments at SSU.

End-of-Year Report for Enhancing Experiential Learning at Salem State through Riipen.com Micro-Internships

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Enhancing Experiential Learning at Salem State through Riipen.com Micro-Internships
- **Project Start Date:** June 2024-June 2025
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** June 2027
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Zlatinka Blaber and Youqin Pan
- **Project Overview:** The project, “Enhancing Experiential Learning at Salem State through Riipen.com Micro-Internships,” seeks to expand the use of Riipen.com—North America’s leading experiential learning platform—across Salem State University beyond its current implementation in the Bertolon School of Business and College of Art and Science. By doing so, the initiative aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world industry experience.
- **Main Goals**
 1. **Expand High-Impact Programmatic Engagement:**

Supports Student Success Imperative #1 by giving students access to real-world projects, fostering skill development, career preparation, and professional confidence.
 2. **Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:**

Aligns with Student Success Imperative #2 by offering equal access to micro-internship opportunities across all demographics.
 3. **Advance Strategic Plan Goals:**
 - o **Goal I – Academic Excellence and Active Learning:**

Offers students hands-on experience that enhances employability, academic performance, and lifelong learning.
 - o **Goal III – Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:**

Promotes equitable access to experiential learning for all students, particularly through curriculum-integrated micro-internships.
 4. **Cross-Departmental Adoption:**

Extend Riipen usage from the business school to other departments like Computer Science, Economics, and others, enhancing interdisciplinary engagement.
 5. **Institutional Accreditation Support:**

Helps meet experiential learning requirements for program accreditation such as AACSB (for business) and ABET (for computer science).
- **Strategic Plan Alignment:** The proposal directly advances the university’s strategic goal to deliver high-quality academic experiences and prepare graduates for a dynamic, global workforce. It also fosters inclusion and engagement, tying into SSU’s broader commitment to justice and equity.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Objective #1: Expand High-Impact Programmatic Engagement and

Objective #2: Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- **Measurement Type:**

1. **Percentage Growth:** Number of departments and faculty adopting Riipen projects over three academic years.
2. **Survey Results:** Student and faculty satisfaction with Riipen experiences.
3. **Employment Outcomes:** Student job placements and employer feedback.
4. **Engagement Metrics:** Participation and completion rates of Riipen projects.
5. **Learning Assessment:** Rubric-based evaluations and pre/post self-assessment of skills.

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Summary for Riipen Strategic Initiative**

KPI Category	Target	Actual Results*	Supporting Data
Departmental Adoption	At least 5 new non-business departments using Riipen	Fall 2024: 3 departments (business) Spring 2025 3 business departments 1 computer science department	Tracking through Riipen platform and course rosters
Faculty Participation	15 faculty members integrating Riipen by Year 3	Fall 2024: 3 business faculty Spring 2025: 3 business faculty Spring 2025 2 computer science faculty	Faculty usage logs and training session attendance
Student Participation	500 students engaged across 3 years	Spring 2025: Approx. 120 students	Enrollment data and Riipen usage reports
Student Satisfaction	≥85% positive feedback in post-project surveys	TBD – post-project surveys to be conducted	Riipen's survey tools, course evaluations, and optional reflection assignments
Employment/Internship Leads	≥30% of participating students report career networking gains	Anecdotal examples collected; baseline being established	Alumni Relations tracking, LinkedIn data, and employer feedback on Riipen
Skill Development	Demonstrated growth in self-reported and instructor-rated skills	TBD – evaluation in pilot and scaling phases	Pre-/post- surveys, rubric assessments, and project deliverables

*Actual results reflect early-stage implementation; full data collection will occur in the pilot and scale phases during Years 2 and 3.

- **People Impacted**

- o **Direct Impact(s): Approximately 500 students** over three academic years will directly engage in Riipen micro-internships through coursework across various departments. Estimated from 120 students in Spring 2025 and a projected expansion to include more departments and classes.
 - **At least 15 faculty members** will incorporate Riipen projects into their teaching, gaining access to industry-aligned pedagogical tools and professional development opportunities.
 - **15+ industry partners** will directly collaborate with SSU students, receiving project deliverables and engaging with the student talent pipeline.
- o **Indirect Impact(s): Over 1,000 community members and potential employers** will be indirectly affected through enhanced graduate preparedness, improved community ties via alumni and business engagement, and long-term workforce development.
 - **Institutional impact** on departments like Business and Computer Science, which rely on experiential learning for maintaining accreditation (AACSB and ABET), thereby improving program quality and sustainability.
 - **Enhanced perception of SSU** at Open Houses and in admissions marketing through Riipen project promotion, potentially influencing hundreds of prospective students and their families annually.

- **Actions Taken:**

1. Met with Riipen representatives to gain a better understanding of how the Riipen system works and how to assist faculty in setting up their accounts.
2. Assigned team members to different departments to meet with faculty and introduce Riipen to their departments. Please refer to the detailed activity reports for more information.
3. Held team meetings to discuss issues and explore possible solutions.
4. Created three surveys—student, faculty, and employer—for assessment purposes.
5. Engaged with potential Riipen adopters to encourage them to integrate Riipen into their classes.
6. Communicated with employers regarding potential matches between classes and opportunities on the Riipen platform.
7. Adopted the Riipen platform in classes. For team members who have not yet adopted it, they are actively seeking matches for their courses.



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- **Challenges and Solutions:** If applicable, describe any obstacles faced and how they were addressed. If currently facing a roadblock, describe the obstacle and indicate what assistance it needed to move forward. As team members actively involved in the implementation of the Riipen initiative, we encountered several challenges during the initial rollout phase:
 1. **Faculty Hesitation and Lack of Awareness Challenge:** Many faculty members outside the Bertolon School of Business were initially unfamiliar with Riipen and expressed concern about the workload or relevance of the platform to their courses.
Solution: We will address this by conducting targeted outreach, including departmental visits and one-on-one meetings to explain the benefits and demonstrate use cases. Faculty champions from early adopter departments also will share their positive experiences, which help build trust and interest.
 2. **Limited Experience with the Platform Challenge:** Some faculty members and students had difficulty navigating the Riipen platform due to lack of prior experience.
Solution: We will organize hands-on training sessions in collaboration with Riipen's onboarding team. These sessions will cover account setup, project posting, and matching procedures. Ongoing support will also be provided through follow-up Q&A meetings and real-time email/chat support during the semester.
 3. **Matching Faculty Projects with Employers Challenge:** Finding appropriate industry partners to match specific course needs proved time-consuming for some faculty.
Solution: We will work closely with Riipen account managers to refine project descriptions and optimize matches.
 4. **Time Constraints in Academic Scheduling Challenge:** Incorporating a 10–20-hour micro-internship into a 14-week semester required careful planning to avoid disrupting existing curricula.
Solution: We will collaborate with faculty during the syllabus planning phase to ensure that Riipen projects will be well-integrated and aligned with learning outcomes.
 5. **Ongoing Adoption Current Roadblock:** While adoption within the business school is progressing well, expansion into other departments is still limited. Some faculty remain uncertain about how Riipen aligns with their discipline.
- **Assistance Needed:** We would benefit from additional institutional support in the form of incentives for early adopters and clearer communication from department chairs endorsing the platform. Continued help from Riipen's successful team to provide tailored recommendations per department would also be valuable.

Next Steps

- **Objective:** To **pilot the expansion** of Riipen-based micro-internships into at least 3 new non-business departments at Salem State University and demonstrate its value across diverse academic disciplines through successful faculty adoption and measurable student engagement.
- **Key Actions:**
 1. **Department Recruitment and Faculty Outreach**
 - o Identify and recruit faculty champions in target departments (e.g., Computer Science, Economics, Communications).
 - o Host informational sessions and workshops to introduce Riipen and share success stories from the Bertolon School of Business.

2. Faculty Training and Curriculum Integration

- o Organize hands-on training sessions in collaboration with Riipen's onboarding team.
- o Assist faculty in embedding Riipen projects into syllabi, aligning with course outcomes and accreditation goals.

3. Launch Pilot Projects

- o Implement Riipen projects in at least 5 new courses across 3 departments.
- o Ensure each course includes a 10–20 hour micro-internship embedded in the semester grade.

4. Ongoing Support and Troubleshooting

- o Offer real-time support to participating faculty and students during the semester.
- o Coordinate with Riipen account managers to address technical or logistical issues.

5. Data Collection and Impact Assessment

- o Administer pre- and post-project surveys to assess student learning, satisfaction, and skill development.
- o Collect faculty and employer feedback via the Riipen platform and supplementary surveys.

End of Year Report for Expanding Peer Advising

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Expanding Peer Advising to Support Student Success and Degree Attainment
- **Project Start Date:** 9/1/2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:**
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Randy Cloke and Melissa Thayer
- **Project Overview:**

This proposal seeks funding to increase student payroll to hire additional Peer Advisors.

By increasing the number of Peer Advisors available through the Academic Advising office, there will be expanded opportunities for enhanced academic advising, skill-building and mentorship, and overall improved academic outcomes for students, especially those in academic difficulty.

We had two main goals, utilize peer advisors to increase peer support for students in academic difficulty and be a driving force in the implementation of academic planner for AY25. As described below, the latter goal was largely achieved. The former goal (outlined below) was hindered by an unexpected staffing change in the proposed graduate position. Due to this change, the graduate position was unfilled for all but a short time in the fall term and this significantly hampered the intention to more greatly expand peer advising. Specifically, this position was designed to lead the creation and implementation of student support programming and academic planner workshops. Without this position, the proposed activities needed to be scaled back. Additionally, this position was also intended to assist with supervision of the peer advisors.

For AY26, the graduate position description has been adjusted to focus on the aforementioned programming creation and implementation, assessment of those programs, and campus partner collaboration to advertise and enhance those programs.

Strategic plan 1.7: Remove barriers to successful degree program completion through implementation of retention and persistence strategies for at-risk, under-represented, and systemically marginalized learners

Additional Peer Advisors will provide all students with opportunity to have dedicated peer support for skill-building and mentorship. Combined with the below enhancements to the academic advisement process, we believe that these expanded supports, available for all students, will lead to increased retention and graduation. Additionally, we believe this will lead to lessened numbers for students who fall into negative academic standing, and better outcomes for those who do.

Accessible data regarding the overall profile of students on Academic Probation/Warning are currently not widely available. Based on our experience, we believe that systemically marginalized learners are overrepresented in the population of students who fall into academic difficulty. The supports we have designed and will roll out with the approval of this funding will seek to address those outcomes and that disparity.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Objective #1: Implement Academic Planner

- **Measurement Type:** Through a N360 campaign, tracking the number of scheduled and attended appointments.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - Target: Increase appointments from fall 2024 to spring 2025 semester
 - Actual Results: Increased from 160 appointments in fall 2024 to 200 appointments in spring 2025.
 - Supporting Data: Utilized N360 appointment reports
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):**
 - Fall 2024: Outreach to 2655 students resulting in 160 appointments scheduled between October 7, 2024 -November 1, 2024.
 - Spring 2025: Outreach to 2089 students resulting in 200 appointments scheduled between March 3, 2025 – April 4, 2025 (including spring break).
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** Reminded students of the upcoming faculty advising period and importance of being prepared. Faculty advisors whose students brought to them an academic plan for review, consideration, and discussion.
- **Actions Taken:** Prior to the N360 campaign, peer advisors were trained on the value of and how to create academic plans. Utilized a N360 campaign to encourage students to prepare for faculty advising by meeting with an Academic Advising peer advisor.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** Project start date changed due to proposal approval which altered the hiring and onboarding timelines for new peer advisors.

Next Steps

- **Next Steps for the Project:**
 - August 2025 – post graduate position for hiring and interviewing selected candidates.
 - September 2025 – hire and train graduate coordinator. Post, interview, and hire for open peer advisor positions.
 - October 2025 – train new peer advisors. Roll out of faculty advising prep campaign.
 - November 2025 – registration
 - December 2025 – outreach to eligible, not registered students

End-of-Year Report for The Scholar's Toolkit

Project Details

- **Project Name:** The Scholar's Toolkit
- **Project Start Date:** September 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** June 2027
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Danney Rasco
- **Project Overview:**
 - Most Central Student Success Imperative: Expand high-impact programmatic and engagement initiatives
 - Main Goals:
 - Identify resources and contributors that can enhance scholarly and creative activities, especially among graduate students
 - Provide engagement opportunities for current graduate students and other members of our campus community and region
 - Curate the resources for future cohorts of graduate students
 - Enhance the reputation of Salem State University

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Objective #1: Elicit Interest and Engagement from Students, Faculty, and Community

- **Measurement Type:** Registration behavior and Follow-up surveys
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target 1:** Registration of 50+ individuals for each session
 - **Actual Results 1:** Registrations ranged from 24 to 44 individuals with Data Visualization and Personal Knowledge Management having the highest registrations.
 - **Supporting Data 1:** Actual registrations were pulled from Zoom for each session.
 - **Target 2:** Majority of respondents reporting session was "Very Engaging"
 - **Actual Results 2:** Across all sessions, 93% of respondents reported the sessions were "Very Engaging" (64%) or "Engaging" (29%).
 - **Supporting Data 2:** Follow-up surveys were conducted at the end of each session with links provided in the chat and a follow-up email.
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** Through the sessions and follow-up emails sharing resources, almost 150 individuals (students, faculty, and community members) received resources.
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** ~1500 individuals. Sessions were announced via campus news, LinkedIn, Facebook, and similar outlets. As of May 2025, we have over 370 followers on LinkedIn and over 1100 followers on Facebook, and our engagement is reasonably good on the platform. For example, we had 221 reactions, 21 comments, and 5 reposts, not to mention over 4,5000, from April 29 to May 28. This engagement is partially thanks to posting engaging and relevant content, similar to the information related to the Scholar's Toolkit.

- **Actions Taken:** Sessions were announced across multiple platforms: SSU event calendar, graduate student newsletter, News to Use email, direct emails to GA/RA assistants and supervisors as well as graduate program coordinators, LinkedIn, Facebook.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** Informally, attendance was approximately 60% of the number of registrants for each session. However, we did not formally track attendance, and attendance was low for one session that was later in the Spring semester – possibly related to Massachusetts spring break overlapping with session. In future, we intend to track actual attendance more effectively, and we will check the spring break calendars in our region.

Objective #2: Enhance SSU Reputation

- **Measurement Type:** Survey Results
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target 1:** All respondents reporting the presentation was “Very Well Tailored” or “Well Tailored” to the audience.
 - **Actual Results 1:** 100% of respondents reported the sessions were “Very Well Tailored” (79%) or “Well Tailored” (21%) to the audience.
 - **Supporting Data 1:** Follow-up surveys were conducted at the end of each session with links provided in the chat and a follow-up email.
 - **Target 2:** All respondents reporting they were “Very Likely” or “Likely” to recommend future Scholar’s Toolkit presentations to others.
 - **Actual Results 2:** 100% of respondents reported they were “Very Likely” (86%) or “Likely” (14%) to recommend future sessions to others.
 - **Supporting Data 2:** Follow-up surveys were conducted at the end of each session with links provided in the chat and a follow-up email.
- **People Impacted**
 - See objective 1
- **Actions Taken:** Each speaker was introduced to the audience in a preparatory session. Key characteristics (e.g., students’ fields of study, demographics) were presented for their consideration, and their initial thoughts on topics were discussed to think about applications relevant to the audience.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** In one session, too much guidance was potentially given, and the speaker may have moved slightly outside their core area of expertise in an attempt to “better” appeal to the audience. This approach was not effective, and later preparatory sessions were thoughtful discussions about the speakers’ areas of expertise and interests and how they may align with student interests and needs.

Next Steps

- **Next Steps for the Project:** We have developed a foundation, and we have an effective structure for organizing events and sharing information to encourage sign-ups. However, a follow-up focus group revealed an interest in developing a more ongoing community, instead of disparate sessions. Additionally, while we intended to develop social media posts summarizing a few key points from each presentation, this activity was difficult – there was concern that the material would be inaccurate or poorly reflect the expertise of the invited speaker. Given these two issues, the next steps are to:
 1. Identify an external speaker who can provide a series of presentations on topics identified by the graduate students, and
 2. Construct our agreement with them, so draft content for social media posts (and possibly a brief video or two) is created to accompany each presentation. This content will be used as a teaser trailer for the upcoming events, and help us to share information a broader audience for individuals who cannot make the full session.

End-of-Year Report for Stationary Micro Food Marts

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Stationary Micro Food Marts
- **Project Start Date:** September 9, 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** May 2025 (South); ongoing (Farmer's Fridge)
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Vice President Karen House, working with campus dining services provider Sodexo
- **Project Overview:**
 - South Campus Express was designed to re-institute a limited retail food service offering on South Campus in response to requests from South Campus staff. This location was placed in operation on September 9, 2024. It has been unsuccessful due to insufficient sales demand. Based on the number of South Campus occupants, the services offered were limited to pre-made items and were available for six hours/day.
 - The Farmers Fridge fresh/healthy item vending machines were designed to serve all Salem State University community members including faculty, staff, resident and commuter students at locations on campus where food options are not currently available, enhancing the quality of campus life. Farmers Fridge arrived on campus in January 2025 with a location in each of O'Keefe and Berry Library.
 - Both initiatives expanded food and beverage offerings in direct response to feedback from students, faculty, and staff, demonstrating that their voices are being heard and valued. This attempted to enhance campus satisfaction and foster a stronger sense of community and belonging. The Farmers Fridge initiative provides convenient access to healthy dining options through self-serve retail and enhanced vending, available to students, employees, and campus visitors alike.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Goal 5, objective 5.1

Objective 5.1: Engage faculty, staff, and students in creating and maintaining a supportive environment that promotes student engagement, empowerment, sense of belonging, and progress toward goals

- **Measurement Type:**
 - **South Campus Express:** volume of sales; net revenue
 - **Micro food marts/Farmers Fridge:** volume of sales; net revenue
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** To satisfy a desire for additional dining service options identified by the campus community in a way that is fiscally sustainable.
 - **Actual Results:** South Campus Express is considered a failure based on net financial loss for the year of almost \$23,000 and the limited number of patrons since inception (849 total patrons, not unduplicated, or average of 29 patrons per week.) The average transaction amount was \$4.86. Total sales revenue was \$4,128.

The Farmers Fridge initiative has been successful and well received thus far. In less than half the time that the South Campus Express unit was open, Farmer's Fridge patron count was almost as high (746); sales revenue was more than double, at \$10,875.21 and average transaction amount was \$8.20. The net impact to the Salem State dining program of this commission model was a positive \$1,087.52. We believe the sales will grow as more campus constituents become aware of the Farmer's Fridge locations and offerings.

- **Supporting Data:**

- **South Campus Express:** See above
- **Micro food marts/Farmers Fridge:** See above

- **People Impacted**

- **Direct Impact(s):**

- **South Campus Express:** 849 total patrons since inception
- **Micro food marts/Farmers Fridge:** Since inception in January, 746 patrons have taken advantage of this option

- **Indirect Impact(s):**

- **South Campus Express:** n/a
- **Micro food marts/Farmers Fridge:** n/a

- **Actions Taken:** Different methods of providing dining services were scoped out and evaluated based on the occupancy of the proposed location, the desirability of the offering, one-time startup costs, ongoing costs and the net revenue potential. This involved internal (Sodexo) evaluation as well as vendor solutions. The selected vendor solution for North and O'Keefe, the Farmer's Fridge, is a third-party for-profit endeavor who retains the right to accept or decline a proposed location based on perceived business opportunity. Data was collected internally such as class counts, number of visitors, etc. In addition, there was contracting work and software setup activities to allow Clipper Card payment tender to be used. In addition, the university's dining consultant (Porter Khouw) conducted a survey in November/December 2024 to gauge campus wants, needs, and sense of satisfaction and value with food service at SSU.

- **Challenges and Solutions:**

- **South Campus Dining:** Due to lack of patronage and operating at a net loss, the location/offering is considered a failure. This location has been closed given its lack of financial sustainability.
- **Micro food marts/Farmers Fridge:** The library location is performing better than the O'Keefe location. If Farmer's Fridge determines the O'Keefe sales are insufficient to be viable from their perspective, we may lose this location in the future.

Next Steps

- **Next Steps for the Project:**
 - o **South Campus Dining:** The equipment has been removed from South Campus Express and the venue will shut down. Some self-service items (microwave, cold food storage, and coffee making) have been installed for the convenience of students, students, faculty, and staff
 - o **Micro food marts/Farmers Fridge:** Sales and patronage will be monitored and marketing will be enhanced to ensure the community is aware of both FF locations. The hope is that O'Keefe usage will be increased and that the Farmer's Fridge there will be able to be retained.
 - o **General:** The consultant's dining survey will continue to be undertaken at least every two years, so that the desires and reactions of the campus to the dining services will be monitored and used for continuous improvement. In addition, the Finance and Facilities division works closely with Sodexo to evaluate financial performance of this major contract. Since the pandemic, dining is operating at a loss. Each year, progress has been made to reduce the loss (subsidy) and the goal is to get to at least break even.

End-of-Year Report for Student Behavioral Intervention Team (SBIT) Professional Development

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Student Behavioral Intervention Team (SBIT) Professional Development
- **Project Start Date:** February 25, 2025
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** September 30, 2025
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Cassie Kao (initially proposed by Jessica Stevens)
- **Project Overview:** This project aimed to enhance the capabilities of the Student Behavioral Intervention Team in assessing risk, providing timely responses, and supporting students while ensuring campus safety. By focusing on professional development, the project contributed to strategic imperatives related to retention, academic excellence, justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as campus community and culture.

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

- **Tie to Strategic Plan:**
 - Goal I.** Academic Excellence and Active Learning. By ensuring a safe academic (and social) environment through risk evaluation and intervention, the SBIT team plays a critical role in supporting high-quality academic programs and innovative educational experiences.
 - Goal III.** Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Training in national best practices enables the SBIT team to identify student needs more accurately, facilitating early intervention and promoting a more just and equitable campus.
 - Goal V.** Campus Community and Culture. The project supported objectives 5.5 and 5.6 by fostering wellness among campus community members and expanding professional development opportunities for staff. It also aided SBIT to promote a stronger community through expert behavioral intervention.
- The professional development initiative with NABITA resulted in SBIT members gaining clarity on their role and the importance of objectivity in handling situations. The team developed a shared sense of camaraderie and motivation to continually assess and improve their processes, ensuring equitable treatment of students and community safety.
- **Actions Taken:** Key actions resulting from the professional development include:
 - Training on the NABITA risk rubric to assess real-time behavioral concerns
 - Plans to increase the SBIT group's work
 - Enhanced collaboration among team members on a weekly basis and on an "as needed" basis.
- **Challenges and Solutions:**
 - The SBIT team continuously addresses behavioral incidents through ongoing effort and collaboration, ensuring proactive and accurate responses.

Next Steps

- **Next Steps for the Project:** Looking ahead to the next academic year, the SBIT team plans to:
 - o Establish a web presence to increase awareness of the group's existence and work
 - o Review and update the Student Life Emergency Protocols
 - o Conduct tabletop exercises to refine response strategies
 - o Define core and ad hoc team members
 - o Develop a communication plan for elevating students and situations to the Threat Assessment and Management Team

End-of-Year Report for Student Collaborative Action Team

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Year of Advising
- **Project Start Date:** September 11, 2024
- **Projected End Date/End Date if Project is Complete:** May 13, 2025
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Sam Ohannesian, Megan Miller, Carmen Amado, and Amy Everitt, Gayle Fischer (withdrawn)
- **Project Overview/Summary:** This proposal emerged from a year-long collaboration between faculty and administrators in the Academic Planner Implementation Team. The Year of Advising aimed to build upon prior efforts that identified advising as a critical priority for student success retention (Academic Advising Initiative 2013; Academic Advising Initiative Committee 2015).

Key Metrics and Objective Measurements

Objective 1.7: Remove barriers to successful degree completion through implementation of retention and persistence strategies for at-risk, under-represented, and systemically marginalized learners.

- **Measurement Type:** Mixed methods: Quantitative student engagement data and Qualitative feedback from faculty
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Increase student engagement with pre-advising resources
 - **Actual Results:** 537 at-risk students, under-represented and systemically marginalized learners attended a Peer Advising Prep session before meeting with faculty advisors
 - **Supporting Data:** Scheduling data through N360-Staff; conversation with faculty advisors
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** The 537 students who received peer advising; faculty advisors who received more prepared students
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** Students sense of preparedness; University with increased efficiency in student advising
- **Actions Taken:** Recruited and trained peer advisors; Expanded peer advisor sessions; Used N360 Staff and Student to promote and schedule sessions; Collected pre and post feedback from session to further prepare and refine in the future.

Objective 3.3: Create a culture of support for, and expand investment in, professional development for faculty, staff, and student employees around, culturally responsive teaching and learning, student services, and operations in all areas

- **Measurement Type:**
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Host professional development opportunities with broad faculty, staff, and student participation.

- **Actual Results:** Although trainings for N360's Academic Planner, no further professional development sessions were held.
 - **Supporting Data:**
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):**
 - **Indirect Impact(s):**
- **Actions Taken:** Explored a number of ways to engage the members of the campus community to submit proposals and be involved. Twelve proposals were received, but there were only a small amount of solid proposals, and two were withdrawn due to other commitments.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** Several challenges such as the loss of a key faculty champion member, bandwidth and engagement of implementation team members, and misalignment of opening day expectations.

Objective 5.1: Engage Faculty, staff, and students in creating and maintaining a supportive environment that promotes student engagement, empowerment, sense of belonging, and progress toward goals

- **Measurement Type:** Mixed methods: Quantitative student engagement data
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Increase student engagement with pre-advising resources
 - **Actual Results:** 1,464 students attended a Peer Advising Prep session before meeting with faculty advisors
 - **Supporting Data:** Scheduling data through N360-Staff
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** The 1,464 students who received peer advising; faculty advisors who received more prepared students
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** Students sense of preparedness; University with increased efficiency on student advising
- **Actions Taken:** Recruited and trained peer advisors; Expanded peer advisor sessions; Used N360 Staff and Student to promote and schedule sessions; Collected pre and post feedback from session to further prepare and refine in the future.

Objective 5.4: Nurture the development of meaningful professional relationships at all levels of the organization and foster and engage student community that promotes relationship building and involvement in campus life

- **Measurement Type:** Qualitative Assessment
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Facilitate improving cross-role relationships and increase student co-curricular participation.
 - **Actual Results:** Academic Planner Implementation Team members were engaged in cross-functional groups to develop advising strategies to accompany planner training.
 - **Supporting Data:**

- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** The faculty and administrators who participated in the planning and delivery of academic planner trainings and workshop development.
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** A broader array of faculty were exposed to this goal and the work being done throughout the Student Success Division, particularly in CAE.
- **Actions Taken:** Facilitated consistent opportunities for faculty and staff engagement and collaboration throughout the academic year
- **Challenges and Solutions:**

Objective 5.6: Expand professional development opportunities and encourage lifelong learning for faculty and staff

- **Measurement Type:**
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Host professional development opportunities with broad faculty, staff, and student participation.
 - **Actual Results:** Although robust trainings for N360's Academic Planner, no further professional development sessions were held. Only minor interest from the community in submitting proposals for the YOA professional development workshops. Extensive discussions of advising challenges and review of advising survey results conducted at full team meetings.
 - **Supporting Data:**
- **People Impacted**
 - **Direct Impact(s):** N/A
 - **Indirect Impact(s):** N/A
- **Actions Taken:** Explored a number of ways to engage the members of the campus community to submit proposals and be involved. Twelve workshops were received, but there were only a small number of actionable proposals.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** Several challenges such as the loss of a key faculty champion member, bandwidth and engagement of implementation team members, and misalignment of opening day expectations.

Objective 6.3: Enhance operational capacity to support students throughout the calendar year cost-effectively through innovative, collaborative approaches to expanding services and resources available to students in need

- **Measurement Type:** Operational metrics
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Target:** Implement service expansions to students during non-peak times.
 - **Actual Results:** Peer advisors will be doing post summer 2025 orientation outreach to first-year students for questions/concerns about fall; Peer advisors will create and send academic plans to first-year students.
 - **Supporting Data:** N360 reporting and analytics

- **People Impacted**
 - o Direct Impact(s): 600-700 incoming first-year students; faculty advisors who will receive more prepared students
 - o Indirect Impact(s): Students' sense of preparedness; University with increased efficiency on student advising
- **Actions Taken:** Peer advisors will use the full suite of N360 tools to communicate, engage, and prepare incoming fall 2025 first-year students.
- **Challenges and Solutions:**

Next Steps

Next Steps for the Project: Our original strategic planning grant was submitted as a combination of two separate proposals, one initiated by the Academic Advising office and the other initiated at the request of the Academic Planner Implementation team. The approval of the proposal included an expectation to fully fund the FY26 request. Although the professional development components of the Year of Advising initiative were significantly stalled due to the loss of one of our lead faculty champions early in the academic year, the bandwidth of implementation team members, and the lack of overall community interest in participating in proposal development, we strongly support and urge the allocated funds associated with Academic Advising Peer Advisors be available to academic advising for FY26.

The additional Peer Advisors and the expansion of student support have demonstrated they are central to our academic advising model and students' success.

We believe that it is possible to reinvigorate the Year of Advising initiative, but leadership transition in the Center for Academic Excellence, and engagement from academic leadership will be key to the future success of this endeavor. Many of the challenges in relation to the YOA initiative were related to the conflation of the Academic Planner implementation and the Year of Advising project, so it is recommended that if the YOA professional development initiative is to continue to receive strategic planning funding, it be restructured.

A proposed path forward is as follows:

- Continue peer advising expansion
- Conduct Fall 25 post-advising period faculty survey on peer registration prep session effectiveness
- Evaluate student satisfaction survey results and make needed adjustments
- Reformulate Academic Planner Implementation Team as Advising Taskforce under co-leadership of new AVP CAE and an academic leader (school/college dean or Vice Provost), including faculty champions and CAE Deans and Directors.
- Reengage workshop proposers and potentially seek external professional development experts
- Review reports of the 2011 and 2015 advising initiatives as well as recent faculty survey results and create benchmarks, update goals.
- Create advisor appreciation marketing campaign

End-of-Year Report for Recruitment and Conversion Text Messaging

Project Details

- **Project Name:** Recruitment and Conversion Text Messaging
- **Project Start Date:** September 2024
- **Projected End Date:**
- **Project Initiator:** Eduardo Valenzuela
- **Project Owner/Lead:** Steve Schuetz and Sara Sullivan
- **Project Overview/Summary:** This initiative aims to improve communication with potential and incoming SSU students by introducing text messaging as an additional channel for delivering timely information about events, deadlines, and onboarding activities. By reaching a mobile-centric audience that engages less with email, the project will help ensure critical actions—such as completing FAFSA, registering for Orientation, and attending Accepted Students Day—are completed, supporting enrollment goals. Originally launched in 2022 but delayed due to policy gaps, the project is now ready to resume

Due to personnel changes this project is still in the implementation phase.

APPENDIX D

AY2024-2025 YEAR END STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND INITIATIVES REPORT

Strategic Goal Annual Progress Report

Goal Steward: Cynthia Lynch, Assistant Vice Provost, Civic Engagement and Academic Strategic Support

Report Period: FY 2024–2025

Strategic Goal: ONE

Summary of Annual Progress

Provide a summary of the progress made toward this goal over the past year, highlighting how this work builds upon previous efforts toward achieving the goal

Introduction

As outlined in this report, Goal One: Academic Excellence and Active Learning encompasses a broad and institution-wide scope, with its core centered in Academic Affairs. Academic Affairs is a complex division comprising 30 academic departments across four academic schools, the School of Graduate Studies, and the College of Continuing and Professional Studies. Within Academic Affairs there are four distinct program areas, and administrative and academic centers, institutes, and policy labs. In addition to strategic priorities set by senior leadership for the 2024-2025 academic year, each academic department, center and program area establishes its own goals aligned with the university's strategic plan and documents its progress through annual reports submitted to the deans, vice provost, and provost. This summary draws from those reports and the strategic plan input system with a focus on Salem State's "must-do" priorities.

It is important to acknowledge that this year's progress occurred amidst significant challenges. Academic affairs and the broader institution had to navigate and respond to the rapidly shifting national political climate, all while remaining committed to our core mission and values. Despite these external pressures, and in the face of growing public skepticism and criticism of higher education, substantial progress has been made in advancing Goal One, as detailed in the following summary.

Summary of Annual Progress

1. Program Area for General Education (PAGE):

The Program Area for General Education (PAGE) was created in the late spring of 2024 and began its inaugural year, in the fall semester of 2024. During the 24 - 25 academic year, PAGE developed a plan to assess the First Year Seminar (FYS) and Personal Growth and Responsibility (PGR) General Education categories. Composed of the program area chair and seven lead-faculty with representation from each of the four colleges, PAGE made significant progress in creating a new branding of the General Education, ensuring compliance with criteria, and strengthening Gen Ed culture. By year's end, the group also established internal workflows and strategies for collaboration with key campus stakeholders. Key accomplishments include:

- Launched pilot assessments focused on First Year Seminar and Personal Growth and Responsibility
- Conducted an initial assessment of the Vertical Writing Model led by writing program administrators

- Held several General Education Forums and offered faculty professional development
- Introduced QUEST (Question, Understand, Explore, Share, Take Action) as an acronym to describe and re-brand the Gen Ed curriculum in order to both help students better understand the basis for Gen Ed at Salem State and to have a common framework for advisors, faculty and students to refer to Gen Ed
- Researched Gen Ed delivery and student success
- Created a PAGE SharePoint site for internal and campus-wide use
- Developed a working framework connecting PAGE and First Year Seminar
- Produced orientation videos and collaborated with the Registrar on substitution procedures.

2. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

In Summer 2024, CTI launched the SoTL Scholars Program, engaging five full-time and one part-time faculty in year-long, research-based inquiry into teaching and student learning. This year-long program began with a week-long June launch followed by ongoing project development, implementation, and dissemination support. Faculty projects explored: STEAM and Library Makerspace collaborations, Zine creation as social justice activism, use of cajitas (sacred boxes) for identity exploration, student perspectives on AI-innovative teaching.

A monthly SoTL Critical Friends Group provided accountability, mentoring, feedback, and community for SoTL Scholars and other instructors across SSU interested in conducting SoTL research.

3. Online Teaching and Learning

The CTI is developing a Digital Learning Landscape Strategy and Educational Innovation Initiative that will create a reconceptualized space for online learning and offer cross-discipline faculty/program/department support for redesigning courses to be more student-centered and focused on online teaching and learning best practices. A new Assistant Director for Online Learning (ADOL) hired in December 2025, is advancing this work through partnerships and outreach across campus. Key activities include:

- MOU development with the Bertolon School of Business for course redesign and course redesign and Canvas Template integration.
- Creation of an Online Learning Hub with curated resources for faculty and staff.
- Revision of CTI Canvas template to enhance faculty use and student learning.
- Professional development on using Zoom to create engaging, vibrant classrooms. workshop will be offered in June to highlight how faculty can turn virtual rooms into vibrant classrooms.
- Launch of a new 8-week Online Learning Group (OLG) to support course redesign in small faculty groups.
- Cross-department partnerships are being developed including the Summer Bridge Academy, to increase student success.
- Ongoing research into online micro credentials for faculty.

4. Advising and Curriculum Updates

Year of Advising: Efforts focused on strengthening advising as a key student success strategy. The following progress was made during the 2024-2025 academic year:

- Recruited, trained, and expanded peer advising session using N360.
- Collected feedback to improve peer advising programs.
- Trained faculty and staff in Academic Planner across 23 academic departments through over 40 training sessions and individual support.

Curriculum Updates

Academic departments across the university continued to redesign and enhance curriculum in alignment with the 2023–2028 Strategic Plan. Highlights include:

- **Criminal Justice and World Languages and Cultures:** Launched a new combined Criminal Justice and Spanish program to meet the growing demand for criminal justice professionals with advanced Spanish language skills. This significant initiative also supports the university's strategic goal of becoming a Hispanic-Serving Institution.
- **Criminal Justice and Geological Sciences:** Formed a Forensic Science Curriculum Subcommittee that developed five new cross-listed courses focused on forensic science in criminal investigations. All courses were approved by UCC. These offerings incorporate advanced lab technologies, field evidence collection, crime scene reconstruction, and formal report writing to prepare students for interdisciplinary careers in forensic investigation.
- **Interdisciplinary Studies:** Invested time and resources into developing and distributing marketing materials for the Ethnic Studies concentration and minor across campus.
- **Management:** Introduced a new prerequisite course for all internships—BUS220: Career Development—designed to equip students with professional skills, including self-awareness, resume writing, interviewing, and workplace expectations. This course aims to enhance students' success in internships and strengthen their representation of both themselves and Salem State.
- **McKeown School of Education:** Engaged in comprehensive curriculum alignment with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's revised Professional Standards for Teachers. These standards emphasize evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices. Faculty addressed programmatic gaps by revising syllabi, course objectives, assignments, and rubrics, with a particular focus on family and community engagement and reflective practices.
- **Theatre:** Initiated articulation agreement discussions with Bunker Hill Community College and the Community College of Rhode Island. These agreements aim to streamline transfer pathways for students entering Salem State's Theatre program from these two-year institutions.
- **School of Graduate Studies:** Adopted a more proactive role in the early review of curriculum proposals. In the past year, the school reviewed a total of 98 proposals, including:
 - o 13 new courses
 - o 56 course changes
 - o 1 new program
 - o 19 program changes
 - o 1 program deletion
 - o 7 policy changes

5. Clifton Strengths Implementation

Career Services, in collaboration with the Alumni Association and Foundation and Inclusive Excellence, hosted a CliftonStrengths Institute themed "Know Your Value, Build Your Brand, Envision Your Future".

- 41 students participated in one or more sessions.
- Two new culturally affirming workshops were developed using CliftonStrengths and the Community Cultural Wealth Framework
- Students were introduced to the 8 NACE Career Readiness Competencies.
- Workshops focused on using strengths for resumes and interviews.

Student feedback included interest in: resume and LinkedIn coaching; career and graduate school guidance, networking opportunities, and financial literacy and health insurance resources.

6. Section Tagging Governance Proposal and Implementation

A governance proposal was successfully approved to introduce section tags for Civic Learning, Sustainability and open educational resources (OER). These tags will support data collection aligned with strategic plan KPIs and improve course selection for students seeking civic learning, sustainability content, and affordable course materials. OER and Sustainability section tagging was piloted in spring 2025 and civic learning tagging is launching in fall 2025.

7. Sponsored Projects

Progress in Sponsored Projects was significantly hindered by the current political climate. Instead of achieving the goal of increasing grant funding, Salem State experienced the loss of some federal awards, severe reductions in state funding, and the suspension of potential proposals due to misalignments between the university's values and certain expectations of the current federal administration. Despite the setbacks, the Sponsored Projects team made progress in policy development, form and site development, SOP and policy inventory and needs, and provided essential support to Legal and the PEC in managing the termination of federal awards and contracts.

8. Scholars Toolkit Development and Implementation

This initiative aimed to identify resources that support scholarly and creative activities, especially for current and prospective graduate students and foster broader engagement opportunities within the campus and regional community. Over the past year, a foundational structure was developed for organizing events and sharing information to promote participation. Follow-up focus groups indicated an interest in building an ongoing, cohesive community rather than isolated sessions.

9. Research Initiatives

- Leadership of the Center for Research and Creative Activity (CRCA).has been in flux since the retirement of the previous director. For the coming academic year, a faculty director has been selected to assume a leadership role, part-time, in September 2025. The CRCA's faculty fellow worked collaboratively with the chair of URAC and members of URAC in support of internal grants and research APR proposals. CRCA and URAC reviewed 22 scholarship support proposals, two seed grant proposals and 10 research APR proposals. CRCA recommended to the Provost funding for 16 scholarship support grants and 3 summer grants.
- Research Day was coordinated by a team and showcased undergraduate and graduate student, and faculty research.
- Fulbright writing workshops were held for faculty and students with one faculty member and one student advancing to the final round of selection.

- **Community-Engaged Research:** Community-Engaged Research (CER) is increasingly common at SSU and has been recognized in the MSCA Day Contract as a distinct criterion for evaluating full-time faculty during reappointment, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review processes. In response, the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE), under the leadership of Sociology Professor Sara Moore, developed a draft outline of recommendations to guide faculty, Institutional Review Boards, research support offices, and evaluators. This summer, the recommendations are being expanded and supported by a comprehensive literature review. CER is now occurring across nearly every academic department and was a central component of SSU's recent submission for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

Key Activities and Initiatives

Provide detail on the **three** most impactful.

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/ Person	Outcomes and Metrics
		Not Started In Progress Completed Delayed		<i>Provide a brief update. Include quantitative and/or qualitative indicators aligned with the goal. What data or evidence is there that progress is being made?</i>
Assessment and Dashboard Development	1.3, 6.8, and is an AY25 "must-do" priority.	In Progress (some portions completed)	Megan Williams and faculty	Salem State made progress in fostering a culture of assessment and continuous improvement. With strong leadership from the deans and several department chairs, many academic areas have developed robust assessment plans that are—or will soon be—integrated into eLumen Insights for ongoing monitoring and analysis. PAGE made progress in aligning its common intellectual experience outcomes with the proposed Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), which remain under review. Additionally, a Salem State Data Dashboard was launched during the academic year. This comprehensive tool consolidates institutional, system-wide, regional, and national data and supports early identification of at-risk students, enhancing the university's ability to respond proactively.

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/ Person	Outcomes and Metrics
Generative AI	1.3, 1.4, 3.3, 5.4, 5.6 and is an AY25 “must-do” priority.	In Progress (some portions completed)	Eliza Bobek and faculty	To support the SSU community in navigating the evolving impact of generative AI tools in higher education, the CTI convened an AI Advisory Group composed of faculty and staff from a wide range of departments and support areas. The group meets monthly to discuss emerging AI-related needs and priorities. Throughout the 2024–25 academic year, the group gathered input and feedback from the campus community, developed support resources, and offered initial recommendations on how best to address the implications of generative AI on teaching, learning, and research. A subset of the group participated in the AAC&U Institute on “AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum” during the 2024–25 academic year. CTI Faculty Innovation Showcase: Generative AI in the Classroom CTI hosted a faculty showcase featuring a panel of SSU instructors discussing their evolving perspectives on the role of generative AI in teaching and learning. Panelists represented a cross-section of the university and shared varied levels of AI literacy and use cases, providing a rich and diverse context for attendees as the campus community continues to explore the professional and personal implications of AI. “Teaching in the Age of AI” Faculty Professional Learning Community (FPLC) CTI launched the second iteration of its “Teaching in the Age of AI” FPLC in 2024–25, building on its initial offering in AY 2023–24. This cohort focused specifically on participants who identify as new or emerging learners in the area of AI literacy. The program offers targeted guidance, curated resources, and opportunities to apply AI literacy directly to upcoming courses through concrete deliverables and peer-supported learning.

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/ Person	Outcomes and Metrics
Experiential Learning	Strategic Imperative 5, Goals 1.2, 1.4, 2.4, and is an AY25 “must-do” priority	In Progress (some portions completed)	Cynthia Lynch and faculty	In AY 2025, CCE launched a qualitative study examining how Salem State integrates civic learning, experiential learning, community-engaged pedagogy, and other high-impact practices into undergraduate programs. As part of this effort, the CCE conducted a preliminary review of all 121 undergraduate plans of study to identify required courses that embed civic content and utilize experiential learning methods. Findings show that 120 of the 121 programs require at least one experiential learning course, with most requiring more than one. Notably, 101 programs include a culminating experiential component, such as a capstone, internship, or both. Of these, 33 programs offer an additional optional culminating experience for major credit. Additionally, 103 programs require at least one experiential learning course that is not a capstone or internship, introducing students to high-impact practices earlier in their academic careers. In total, 82 programs require both a culminating experience and at least one additional experiential course, ensuring students engage in experiential learning at multiple stages of their academic journey. Phase two of the study, scheduled for summer 2025, will involve a deeper analysis of each program’s experiential learning structure, with the goal of informing a comprehensive evaluation of teaching practices and outcomes. There has also been a notable increase across academic departments in expanding internships, redesigning curriculum to support experiential learning, integrating COIL for global engagement, and developing faculty-led study abroad opportunities. A new university-wide Internship Policy was also adopted, requiring all for-credit internships to be reported to the Dean and completed prior to awarding credit to improve both risk management and accountability

Challenges or Barriers

Identify any internal or external challenges that impacted progress toward the goal.

Several internal and external challenges impacted progress toward the goal:

- **Reduction in operating budgets**, limiting the ability of some academic units to sustain programming at previous level and to expand key initiatives.
- **Reliance on short-term grant funding and Massachusetts Student Success funds** to support critical programming, creating instability and limiting long-term planning.
- **Insufficient physical and digital infrastructure**, highlighting the need for expanded capacity to support evolving academic and operational needs.
- **Ongoing responsiveness to national political developments** affecting higher education, including changes to grant funding, threats to academic freedom, and issues impacting student well-being.

Reflections and Next Steps

What are your main takeaways from this year's efforts? What are the proposed next steps for the upcoming year?

Reflections: Academic Year 2024-25 brought several complex challenges around a common theme: **navigating uncertainty**. Yet throughout, the SSU community demonstrated remarkable adaptability, collaboration and commitment to our academic mission.

- **Finances:** Reductions in the university's operating budget not only limited some of the work done in academic units but contributed to an already challenging campus morale. The uncertainty of being able to deliver a fully robust academic mission with fewer resources was alleviated (in part) to a much welcome one-time, partial infusion of operating funds. What remains is a challenging level of uneasiness about funding levels in the next several years.
- **Enrollment:** Ongoing enrollment declines have left many wondering when we might see stronger numbers in both headcounts and credits. Particularly steep enrollment declines in some academic programs has raised questions around their long-term viability – at least in their current configuration. Several departments are exploring new models and partnerships that respond to evolving student interests and workforce needs.
- **Personnel:** The retirement of several academic leaders, one dean and one associate dean, along with the retirement or resignation in collaborating units brought with it the uncertainty of how important activities (e.g., research day) would be realized. Interim and/or contracted support was appointed as needed to ensure the smoothest possible operations and transitions. This challenge resulted in opening space for fresh perspectives and opportunities for emerging leadership.
- **Political Upheaval:** The change in federal administration in January 2025 introduced great uncertainties in Academic Affairs: significant misalignments between the values of the university and those of the current federal government challenges our commitment to adhere to our stated mission and values. Policy and rhetoric from Washington erodes our confidence in institutional independence, academic freedom, and the personal safety of many in the Salem State community. This reality fosters anxiety and fear in members of our community, and results in the erosion of time committed to core priorities as we meet frequently at every level to discuss and plan for the impact of a variety of rulings and executive orders. As a community, we are meeting these challenges with hope, resilience, and activism, and, despite the sense of uncertainty as to what might lie ahead as we enter into the next academic year, faculty, administration, and staff remain in solidarity about the value of our mission and the commitment to our students.

The following Academic Affairs 2025–2026 next steps are informed by the information from this report. The Academic Affairs leadership team will meet later this summer to develop strategic priorities for AY2026.

1. Finalize and Integrate Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

- Adopt and align ILOs across programs and PAGE.
- Expand use of eLumen to support continuous assessment.

2. Strengthen Experiential Learning Across Programs

- Complete Phase Two of the experiential learning study.
- Support faculty in embedding experiential components in lower-division and gateway courses.

3. Advance Equity-Focused Curriculum Redesign

- Support program redesigns in response to enrollment trends and equity goals.
- Promote interdisciplinary and HSI-aligned offerings.

4. Integrate Artificial Intelligence into Academic Endeavors

- Grow faculty AI literacy through FPLCs, toolkits, and course integration.
- Review and Refine institutional AI policies

5. Refine a Salem State Research Infrastructure

- Support new CRCA leadership
- Expand student research opportunities
- Finalize Community-Engaged Research guidelines and integrate into faculty development.

6. Foster Campus Resilience and Belonging

- Implement student-informed advising and career readiness support.
- Offer spaces for reflection, dialogue, and wellness in response to campus climate challenges.

Strategic Goal Annual Progress Report Template

Goal Steward: Cynthia Lynch, Assistant Vice Provost, Civic Engagement and Academic Strategic Support

Report Period: FY 2024–2025

Strategic Goal: Goal Two

Summary of Annual Progress

Provide a summary of the progress made toward this goal over the past year, highlighting how this work builds upon previous efforts toward achieving the goal.

Introduction

As the Commonwealth Civic Engagement University, Goal Two plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of Salem State University (SSU). Guided by a mission and values that attracts civic minded, and justice-orientated students, SSU fosters a vibrant campus community through a wide variety of events that enhance student retention. The relational nature of these programs creates an inclusive and welcoming environment that promotes a sense of belonging. Salem State's commitment to student leadership provides students with the skills and resources needed to thrive in today's competitive job market. This commitment also allows Salem State to invest in students' growth and development as community leaders.

This summary draws from academic department annual reports, AY25 strategic grant reports, and the strategic plan input system, with a focus on Salem State's "must-do" institutional priorities.

Summary of Annual Progress

Advancing the connection between community engagement and student servingness was a FY 25 "must-do" priority. In partnerships with HSI/MSI Initiatives, and supported by a \$200,000 HEIF Grant, the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) co-hosted the Inaugural New England Hispanic and Minority Serving Institutions Conference in July 2024. Civic Engagement was a central theme, with approximately 25% of the sessions dedicated to community engagement and antiracist civic engagement.

As part of the same HEIF grant, the CCE and HSI-MSI Initiatives hosted the Student Leadership Summit, bringing together students from Salem State University, Bunker Hill Community College, Holyoke Community College, and MassBay Community College. The summit emphasized student empowerment and servingness, culminating with a community dinner at Casa de Abuela, hosted by the NorthShore CDC in downtown Salem.

In collaboration with grant partners, the CCE and HSI/MSI initiatives are also spearheading the development of a statewide HSI/MSI Consortium, ensuring civic engagement remains central to what it means to be a Hispanic Serving Institution in Massachusetts.

The Salem State Intergenerational Hip Hop Dance Symposium celebrated the legacy of Hip Hop and Street Dance, gathering artists, educators, and students from the Greater Boston area and the North Shore. Held in January, the symposium was open to the public and over 250 people including 175 community members; 70 youth artists and 34 adult artists for the performance showcase, alongside 15 artists in other symposium events.

The Berry Institute of Politics Fellowship brings two public servants to campus to share their knowledge, skills, and experiences with students exploring and pursuing careers in politics and public service. This year, SSU welcomed Marylou Sudders and James "Jimmy" Hills. Their seven visits included class lectures, mentoring sessions, speaker events, and workshops, engaging nearly 300 students, faculty, staff, and community members. Student organizations including Macro Social Work Alliance, Civic Fellows, Brotherhood, Bold Educated Empowered Sisters (B.E.E.S), and the Alliance participated in multiple sessions with one or both fellows. The

fellowship concluded with a special Farewell Fellows event featuring, a live taping of *JavawithJimmy*, attended by 30 guests and livestreamed to thousands.

Post Election Drop In Sessions created a space for community reflection and conversation. Approximately 30 sessions took place between Election Day and Thanksgiving, with around 100 participants. Feedback emphasized appreciation for having a space to connect, process, and ask questions during a critical civic moment.

Civic Learning Section Tags: During the FY25 academic year, the CCE contributed to a successful governance proposal to introduce section tags for Civic Learning, Sustainability and OER. This initiative is an important step in collecting data on student participation in civic learning and civic engagement within our existing systems. Several KPIs in the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan require reporting on this type of engagement. The Civic Learning section tag will also help students more easily identify courses that incorporate civic learning or civic engagement, enabling them to intentionally register for these opportunities. Implementation of the civic learning section tag will begin with spring 2026 registration, taking place in fall 2025.

Academic departments across the university continue to embed civic engagement into their curriculum in alignment with the 2023–2028 Strategic Plan. Highlights include:

Geology: The department actively collaborates with the Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Partnership, part of the EPA's National Estuary Program, to protect and restore the estuarine resources of Ipswich Bay, Massachusetts Bay, and Cape Cod Bay. Recent efforts include faculty participation on the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee and student-led field and lab analyses in the Duxbury/Kingston/Plymouth Harbors to support environmental sustainability. Ongoing collaboration with Salem Sound Coastwatch focuses on maintaining a sustainable Salem Sound, including baseline data collection and research on turbidity caused by phosphorus-driven phytoplankton blooms, with strategies now in development to reduce contamination.

History: Under the leadership of Dr. Margo Shea, the History Department's undergraduate concentration and graduate certificate in public history play a vital role in Salem State's engagement with the region's robust heritage sector—particularly in Essex County, home to more heritage organizations than any other U.S. County. Since 2019, 60 students have completed internships at 35 organizations, and both faculty and students have made significant contributions to the Salem400+ initiative, including a forthcoming faculty-edited volume, *Salem's Centuries*, to be published in January 2026.

Management: The Management Department hosted its Annual Business Pitch Competition, where students competed for cash prizes and received feedback from local entrepreneurs. In addition to expanding experiential learning in the classroom, the department continues to grow internship opportunities across the North Shore and has introduced a new prerequisite course, BUS220: Career Development, to better prepare students with professional skills before entering the field.

MMHHS: Berry IOP Fellow Marylou Sudders delivered a presentation on March 4, 2025, reflecting on the lessons of COVID-19—offering both retrospective insights and forward-looking perspectives on the most significant pandemic since the 1918 influenza. The event, co-sponsored by the School of Nursing and led by Professor K. Adee, was attended by students from Public Health courses and SON faculty. On April 10, 2025, Sudders also met with students from NUR 210: Health Assessment and two Healthcare Studies classes to provide an overview of Medicare, Medicaid, and the ACA, followed by a discussion on advocacy and political action. In the fall, students from MMHHS will form a health-related advocacy coalition to advance key public health issues.

MSOE: Faculty in the School of Education collaborated with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care to develop and pilot a rubric for evaluating preschool language and literacy curricula, in partnership with the American Institutes for Research and Boston Public Schools. Through a Massachusetts Early Literacy Consortium grant, faculty also provided summer tutoring to students at risk for reading difficulties in Pentucket Regional and Peabody public schools.

Occupational Therapy: An exemplary model of community-engaged learning is the ongoing partnership with LEO Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to supporting vulnerable families through holistic services. Since 2019, students have worked alongside LEO's Blossom Street team to design and implement play-based developmental programming, conduct screenings, and educate parents about gross motor, fine motor, and emotional regulation activities that they can implement at home. This collaboration provides students with hands-on experience while addressing critical service gaps in our region.

World Languages and Culture: The World Languages and Cultures department led impactful community translation projects in French and Spanish, engaging students in real-world applications. French students collaborated on the Dictionary of Franco-American Authors and a Paris-based cultural heritage project, resulting in a digital publication of translated folktales accessible globally. Spanish students provided vital translation and interpretation services for Salem Public Schools, contributed to a bilingual Global Health Glossary in partnership with Nursing and Healthcare Studies, and translated the SSU Commencement Program to support inclusive campus celebrations.

Clubs and Organizations: Salem State's clubs and organizations foster a strong culture of community engagement both on campus and throughout the greater Salem area. Highlights of their involvement include:

- The Brotherhood and InterVarsity prepared over 60 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for My Brother's Table.
- The Black Student Union and IFC supported the SMART Girls Summit at Girls Inc., while BEES hosted a "college shower" for young women preparing to attend college.
- The Greenhouse Club, KCore, and PRSSA collaborated on a large-scale campus cleanup.
- The Community Service Initiative organized multiple food and blood drives, supporting local needs and campus health efforts.

Advocacy Month: The CCE hosted a 30-day initiative designed to help students develop and strengthen their advocacy and civic leadership skills and learn how to apply them to drive positive change. The theme this year was *If Not Us, Then Who: Our Time Is Now*. Sixteen events were offered, addressing 10 social issues and a variety of advocacy skills. Topics explored included public health, immigration, voting rights, mental health, peace and security, LGBTQ+ rights, food insecurity, substance use, women's empowerment, and workforce development. Skill building sessions focused on relational and grassroots organizing, power mapping, and lobbying.

Expanding IOP Visibility Across the Commonwealth: The Berry Institute of Politics made significant progress toward its goal of increasing visibility across Massachusetts through an Alternative Spring Break trip to the State House and a high-impact alumni networking event. In partnership with SSU Alumni Relations and the Womble Dickinson Government Affairs team, the IOP hosted its second alumni reunion at the UMASS Club in Boston, drawing 85 attendees—including 20 current and former elected officials and 30 SSU alumni. The event not only fostered student-professional connections but also reinforced the Berry IOP's growing reputation as a statewide hub for political engagement, policy dialogue, and public service career development.

Community-Engaged Research: Community-Engaged Research (CER) is increasingly common at SSU and has been recognized in the MSCA Day Contract as a distinct criterion for evaluating full-time faculty during reappointment, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review processes. Here are a few examples from academic departments:

- **Chemistry:** In CHE 321 (Quantitative Analysis), students design, execute, and analyze a project based on drinking water samples we obtained from our partners, the community researchers from Salem's Resilient Together group located in The Point Neighborhood. This project culminates in a full-length scientific journal article that they have written on their project. This past year they also had the option to present the results of our class's work to our community research partners at the December meeting of the Resilient Together group.

- **Geography:** In Spring and Summer 2025, Professor Marcos Luna collaborated with Geography and Sustainability students Mia Amaral and Emma McIntyre to support the Anti-Displacement Roundtable’s efforts to evaluate zoning proposals for affordable housing development in Chelsea. Students in GPH942 conducted data analysis for The Salem Pantry and Greenbelt, contributing a formal report and a GitHub repository, respectively, with Greenbelt integrating the data into their food and farm coalition dashboard. Additional projects included tree canopy assessments for three North Shore communities and drone- based environmental monitoring with the Marblehead Conservancy and Salem Sound Coastwatch, providing students with hands-on research and data analysis experience.
- **Policy, Politics and International Relations and the North Shore Policy Lab:** The Policy Lab supported several community-engaged research projects this year. Notably, the Lab collaborated with the City of Salem and Professor Sara Moore (Sociology) on UPLIFT Salem, a quasi-experimental evaluation of a Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) program using surveys and interviews. Another project, in partnership with the Latino Leadership Coalition and Welcoming Immigrant Network, involved collecting and analyzing oral histories from early Latino/a immigrants to Salem, with students creating a narrative analysis and Story Map.

Faculty, staff and students also support the region through board service, workshops, and presentations, advancing the university’s civic engagement mission.

Key Activities and Initiatives

Provide detail on the three most impactful.

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/ Person	Outcomes and Metrics
		Not Started In Progress Completed Delayed		<i>Provide a brief update. Include quantitative and/or qualitative indicators aligned with the goal. What data or evidence is there that progress is being made?</i>
Carnegie Community Engagement Re-Classification	FY 25 “Must-Do”; Goals 1.5, 2.1, and 2.6	Completed	Center for Civic Engagement and the entire campus community	After a 15-month process that engaged stakeholders from across the institution and the broader community, we submitted Salem State’s 101-page Carnegie Community Engagement Classification application on April 5. This comprehensive report highlights the depth, breadth, and impact of civic engagement at Salem State, as well as the equitable and collaborative relationships we maintain with our community partners.

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/ Person	Outcomes and Metrics
Civic Learning within Academic Programs Qualitative Study	FY 25 "Must-Do"; Goals 1.3, 2.3, and 2.4	Completed first phase second phase in progress.	Center for Civic Engagement and the entire campus community	To Support th FY 25 "Must Do" Priority, a study was conducted to implement the recommendations from the <i>"Every Student, Every Degree: College Civic Learning for Today's Students and Tomorrow's Democracy"</i>. This initiative also aligns with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's directive that all public colleges and universities make students' civic learning and democracy engagement an essential part of students' pathways through postsecondary education. The qualitative study examined how Salem State integrates civic learning into every student's plan of study. Findings revealed that 77 out of 121 academic programs require courses with civic learning content, with five additional programs offering civic learning as an optional requirement. These results are encouraging and reflect SSU faculty's commitment to embedding the pressing matters of our time and public problem solving into their disciplines. Civic learning plays a critical role in helping students gain the knowledge and skills needed to understand the social context of their fields and contribute meaningfully to the public good. Phase two of this study is taking place over the summer and will involve a deeper analysis of each program to assess the distribution and timing of civic learning within the curriculum.
Mental Health Small Strategic Plan Grant	Goals 1.4, 2.5, and 5.1	Completed	Occupational Therapy and Center for Civic Engagement	A \$5,000 grant secured by Professor Jean MacLachlan and Kate Adams from the Center for Civic Engagement led to impactful outcomes: Hosted two civic engagement dinners focused on Mental Health Issues, with over 70 attendees and nine guest advocates, including three elected officials. Provided mental health advocacy training to all SSU Resident Advisors. Launched an SSU Mental Health Coalition which organized two successful events and advocated for Bill H595, legislation that would mandate mental health clinicians in K-12 schools. Coalition members also tabled at events and recruited over 115 students to join a listserv, with outreach efforts indirectly impacting nearly 200 students. Graduate OT students gained valuable hands-on experience by facilitating six Mental Health, Mindfulness, and Wellness groups for SSU undergraduate students across campus. Developed, implemented, and supervised by Professor MacLachlan, these sessions not only supported campus-wide well-being but also provided OT students with practical training in group facilitation, therapeutic communication, and mental health promotion.

Challenges or Barriers

Identify any internal or external challenges that impacted progress toward the goal.

Several internal and external challenges affected progress toward the goal:

- **Reduced operating budgets** limited the university's ability to sustain previous levels of civic engagement programming and expand key initiatives across campus and in the community.
- **Inadequate physical infrastructure:** The Center for Civic Engagement currently lacks sufficient space to house the Berry Institute of Politics, due to the growing number of students who both work and gather informally within the Center. Hopefully with the completion of Project Bold, space can be identified as a home for the Berry Institute of Politics.
- **Need for ongoing responsiveness to national political developments:** Emerging issues in the national political landscape, particularly those impacting student well-being, continue to demand timely and thoughtful institutional responses.
- **Coordination Challenges** related to Salem State's designation as the Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University. This is particularly challenging as this identity could be leveraged as a recruitment tool across various academic and administrative departments.

Reflections and Next Steps

What are your main takeaways from this year's efforts? What are the proposed next steps for the upcoming year?

- Reflections:
- Next Steps:

Reflections

1. Civic engagement is increasingly integrated into the academic experience. With 77 of 121 academic programs requiring civic learning components, there is clear institutional commitment to embedding public problem-solving and social responsibility across disciplines.
2. Collaborative partnerships enhance impact and visibility. Initiatives like the HSI/MSI Conference, Mental Health Coalition, Faculty Community-Engaged Research, and the Intergenerational Hip Hop Symposium demonstrate how cross-campus and community partnerships elevate civic learning, student belonging, and regional engagement.
3. Students are eager to lead and engage in meaningful civic action. Programs such as the Berry IOP Fellowship, Student Leadership Summit, and Advocacy Month reflect a growing demand for leadership development and connections to career and internship opportunities.
4. Infrastructure and coordination are key to sustaining momentum. While civic initiatives are thriving, challenges related to space, budget, and interdepartmental alignment highlight the need for structural support to match the pace of innovation and student engagement.

Next Steps

1. Expand infrastructure to track civic engagement outcomes, including implementation of civic learning section tags, completion of experiential learning study, and evaluation tools for campus-wide programming.
2. Secure a permanent, dedicated space for the Berry Institute of Politics within the context of Project Bold, supporting student programming, visibility, and collaboration.

3. Develop and launch a unified civic engagement recruitment strategy, aligning academic programs, co-curricular offerings, and strategic messaging around SSU's identity as the Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University.

Supporting Documents (Optional)

Attach or link any additional materials that support this report (data charts, communications, case studies, etc.).

Strategic Goal Annual Progress Report Template

Goal Steward: Elisa Castillo, AVP for HSI-MSI Initiatives

Report Period: FY 2024–2025

Strategic Goal 3: JDEI

Summary of Annual Progress

Provide a summary of the progress made toward this goal over the past year, highlighting how this work builds upon previous efforts toward achieving the goal

Key Activities and Initiatives

Provide detail on the three most impactful.

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/ Person	Outcomes and Metrics
		Not Started In Progress Completed Delayed		<i>Provide a brief update. Include quantitative and/or qualitative indicators aligned with the goal. What data or evidence is there that progress is being made?</i>
Hosted the Inaugural HSI-MSI Conference (July 2024) and Student leadership Summit (Sept 24)	Strategic Plan 2.1/ 2.2/ 2.3/2.4 /2.5/ 3.6/ 5.4 / 5.6	Completed	HIS-MSI / CCE – Elisa and Cynthia, campus team, student employees.	400 participants and 40 student leaders, as well as 12 student employees. Established SSU as the lead HSI in NE and expanded our network. Built capacity to serve and center growing student population.
Secured first private eHSI grant – Strive to Thrive.	Strategic Plan 1.7/ 2.4/ 3.6	Completed	HSI-MSI and CAS and Student Success and IT (Elisa, Brian, Laura, Mathew, Steve)	Private grant will provide coaching support to 100 students for the next 3 years, in addition to providing professional development for campus partners.
Implemented translation protocol and obtained strategic planning grant	Strategic Plan 3.6/ 3.7/ 7.1	Completed year 1, in progress		Created Spanish and Portuguese translation for admissions and financial aid material, as well as created bilingual directory in collaboration with student success. Materials used in admissions.
Increased culturally responsive programing	Strategic Plan 1.4/ 2.2/ 2.3/ 3.6/ 4.7/ 5.1/ 5.6	Completed and in progress for next year	Elisa, Carlie, faculty fellows, campus partners, student employees	Brought national speakers to campus for campus programing, collaborated with Sodexo to increase dinning options, expanding heritage programing,
Increased supports for students in STEM	SSU Strategic Plan 1.2 1.4/ 1.7/ 2.4/ 2.5/ 3.7	Completed	Dr. Laranjo, Elisa, student employees.	launch SACNAS and helped increase resources to create a Pre-Health track for students interested in medical school. Supported Prof. Laranjo during APR and student employees to develop these outcomes
Increase capacity to serve immigrant students.	Strategic Plan 3.6/ 5.6/	Completed and in progress for next year	Elisa, Carlie, Dream Team, CCE, student employees.	Supported Dream Scholars program, and collaborated with career services and enrollment management to increase access to internships and fellowships. Helped create IE Community Resource Canvas page

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/ Person	Outcomes and Metrics
Brought students to HACU	1.2/ 2.4 / 3.6/ 5.1	Completed. Same next year	Elisa and campus partners – Hannah IOP	Increase student engagement in high impact practices and center student feedback. Student engage in Advocacy on Capitol Hill and participated in Leadership Summit.

Challenges or Barriers

Identify any internal or external challenges that impacted progress toward the goal.

Internal communication and prioritization.

Reflections and Next Steps

What are your main takeaways from this year's efforts? What are the proposed next steps for the upcoming year?

- Reflections:
- Next Steps:
 - o Launch MA HIS-MSI Consortium
 - o Apply for the Federal HSI designation and Apply for the Seal of Excelencia
 - o Make data informed decision to prepare grant and fundraising proposals to increase student enrollment and student success as HIS.
 - o Implement the Strive to Thrive Program, providing Thrive coaching to a cohort of 100 students in CAS and MMCHHS with the goal of increasing retention and student success / close equity gaps
 - o Initiate a new Servingness faculty mentoring program
 - o Continue to support and institutionalize translation protocol with the goal of increasing family engagement, student enrollment and student success
 - o Increase capacity to serve Latino/ Hispanic/ Caribbean/ Multilingual/ Post-traditional students.
 - o Increase student sense of community and belonging through campus art and programing. This includes new speaker series and faculty led travel.
 - o Increase community and family brand awareness of SSU's commitment and leadership as 4 year HSI. Engage in bilingual marketing, and leverage regional and national networks
 - o Increase scholarship related to New England communities and student populations, or regional HSIs and MSIs.

Supporting Documents (Optional)

Attach or link any additional materials that support this report (data charts, communications, case studies, etc.).

Strategic Goal Annual Progress Report Template

Goal Stewards: Tara Gallagher, Sustainability and EH&S Coordinator,
Brian Vanden Huevel, Dean College of Arts and Sciences

Report Period: FY 2024–2025

Strategic Goal 4: Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action

Summary of Annual Progress

- Began tagging sustainability course sections in course catalog.
- Initiated North Campus Decarbonization project to bring fossil fuel-free heating and cooling to two North Campus buildings by test-drilling geothermal wells.
- Eliminated fossil fuels from 68 Loring warehouse space.
- Reduced GHG emissions 49% from 2004 – 2024
- Planted 54 trees.
- Solar array on Administration/Theater commenced operation and array on Ellison commenced installation.
- Engaged 850 students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community members in 20 climate-themed Earth Days programs.
- Added electric vehicle charging to four parking spaces behind Stanley and purchased an electric vehicle (Nissan Leaf).

Key Activities and Initiatives Provide detail on the four most impactful.

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/Person	Outcomes and Metrics
		Not Started In Progress Completed Delayed		<i>Provide a brief update. Include quantitative and/or qualitative indicators aligned with the goal. What data or evidence is there that progress is being made?</i>
Campus Decarbonization	4.3 Implement emission reduction strategies	Geothermal project initiated, campus-wide energy projects initiated, 68 Loring decarbonization complete	Luigi Marcone, Facilities	<i>Drilled test wells for geothermal wells and broke ground on BOLD and decarbonization projects that will drill approximately 100 geothermal wells to support an eventual clean energy loop for North Campus buildings and allow for the fossil fuel-free heating and cooling of Horace Mann and the Meier Lab addition in 2027. Completed the decarbonization of 68 Loring warehouse space by replacing the gas boiler and gas furnace with electric heat pumps, upgrading lighting, and adding insulation. Completed multiple energy efficiency projects across campus. Reduced GHG emissions by 49% from 2004-2024. Decarbonization plans completed for Harrington Campus and O'Keefe/Gassett.</i>

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/Person	Outcomes and Metrics
North Campus Decarbonization	4.3 Implement emission reduction strategies	Expand solar opportunities on campus	Tara Gallagher, Sustainability	<i>96 KW solar array on Administration/Theater rooftop went into operation in April 2025 bringing SSU's total installed solar capacity to 1060 KW. Initiated installation of 76 KW solar array on Ellison.</i>
Sustainability in Academics	4.7 Sustainability-related academic offerings meet student needs	Complete for FY25	Brian Vanden Heuvel, Arts and Sciences	Proposal to tag sustainability course sections in the course catalogue so that students can more easily find them was approved by governance and integrated into the spring course listing of Fall'25 courses. Sustainability Seal approved.
Sustainable Landscape	Ensure natural areas are sustainable	Ongoing	Tara Gallagher, Sustainability	Planted 36 trees on Harrington Campus via DCR \$31,950 grant. DCR planted 18 trees elsewhere on campus bringing us to 102 trees planted since 2022 via the DCR Greening the Gateway City Program. New trees have been integrated into various academic courses.

Challenges or Barriers

Efforts to maintain pollinator garden and low mow zones as part of student-driven initiatives have been stymied by contractor mowing of these areas and by neighbor objections to one of the low mow zone areas.

Reflections and Next Steps

What are your main takeaways from this year's efforts? What are the proposed next steps for the upcoming year?

- **Reflections:** Sustainability Task force with membership from academics, operations and students was a great addition (commenced in FY24) to sustainability program development on campus.
- **Next Steps:**
 - o Embed sustainability course section tagging more firmly in practice and examine data on student interest in these courses, enabling the development of related faculty support programs.
 - o Complete Ellison solar project and initiate project on Bertolon roof.
 - o Upgrade electric vehicle charging stations in parking garage which are at end-of-life.
 - o Accelerate North Campus Decarbonization project and expand energy efficiency and decarbonization efforts with additional projects across campus.

Supporting Documents (Optional)

Attach or link any additional materials that support this report (data charts, communications, case studies, etc.).

See saalemstate.edu/sustainability.

Strategic Goal 5:

Due to personnel changes there is no Goal 5 Annual Report for Year Two, FY25

Strategic Goal Annual Progress Report

Goal Stewards: Karen House, VPF&F, Luigi Marccone, AVP Capital Projects and Facilities, Steve Swartz, CIO

Report Period: FY 2024–2025

Strategic Goal 6: Operational Excellence and Infrastructure

Summary of Annual Progress

Goal Six is ambitious and expensive. Much work was undertaken and progress achieved. Architectural plans for BOLD were advanced, a construction manager was hired, groundbreaking was celebrated, and a financial structure for the related debt was developed and approved. The update to the university's master plan was completed, which will be informative as the Commonwealth develops its proposal process given new funding anticipated from the BRIGHT Act. Several building roof replacements were completed as well as Cioffi Center build out and turf installation in the former natatorium area. Several important technology projects were completed to enhance campus operations and communication. Select student lab systems were replaced to improve functionality and access for students. All University Police computers, including those in cruisers, were refreshed to ensure reliability and performance in critical public safety functions. Additionally, more than 370 employee computers were upgraded as part of the university's ongoing device refresh initiative. ITS launched the Apple caching server and streamlined hybrid classroom carts. The university also upgraded outdated analog security cameras to modern digital cameras across campus, significantly improving clarity and connectivity. In collaboration with Facilities and Marketing and Communications, a new digital signage solution was implemented to provide more timely and effective communication to students and employees throughout the campus. The cyber lab was completed and placed into operation. ITS, Facilities, and University Police are collaborating on upgrades to emergency protocols and phones and beginning to analyze opportunities to update lock mechanisms to enhance physical security. The Human Resources department successfully deployed a new system to streamline hiring and certain HR management functions. All of these projects were conceived or begun in prior years; the university continues to build on those plans, studies, and funding allocations in order to deliver the outcomes discussed.

Key Activities and Initiatives

Details on the three most impactful initiatives are in the chart below.

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/ Person	Outcomes and Metrics
		Not Started In Progress Completed Delayed		<i>Provide a brief update. Include quantitative and/or qualitative indicators aligned with the goal. What data or evidence is there that progress is being made?</i>
Update the university's 10-year master plan	6.5 Update the campus master vision plan and continue to chip away at deferred maintenance	Completed	Facilities – Luigi Marcone	A final written report was received from the consultant, CannonDesign, in June 2025, following a verbal presentation to the Board of Trustees in the April 9, 2025 meeting. The master plan provides a road map for campus development over the next ten years. It includes large projects as well as smaller, easier to implement projects to tackle as time and money permit.
Develop a plan for BOLD funding	6.4 Complete the transformative SSU BOLD project to address major capital needs and establish a compact, efficient campus core and 7.6 Ensure policies, systems, budgeting practices, and staff competencies are adequate to sustain financial health.	Completed	Finance and Facilities – Karen House	A motion for the MSCBA to issue \$27.3 million in bonds for SSU BOLD was approved by the Board of Trustees on May 28, 2025. The university plans to fund debt service through investment earnings, avoiding any increase in student fees, and yielding a significant asset when the debt service is complete. Transfers to the investment fund and debt service reserve fund were accomplished in early June. As of 6/30/25, the total balances set aside are valued at \$56.2 million combined, against an initial target of \$55.0 million.
Deploy the PageUp HCM system for streamlined hiring and HR management	6.8 Pursue strategies to standardize, streamline, as necessary upgrade, and support technology systems and infrastructure across campus.	In Progress	Human Resources – Mark Quigley	The system was procured and installed. Hiring and additional HR functions processed via Personnel Action Forms were switched over to the platform during FY25. Training is ongoing.

Challenges or Barriers

Identify any internal or external challenges that impacted progress toward the goal.

- Master Plan:** this project was managed by DCAMM although 100% funded by SSU. This limited the university's ability to influence the scope, direct the consultant, and manage the progress of the work.
- BOLD Funding:** this project was impacted by DCAMM's ever changing cash flow projections, which dramatically shifted our understanding of how much SSU funding would be needed at specific time frames. In addition, we needed multiple meetings and discussions because the size of this project and university's commitment are sufficiently large that the "typical" state approach did not fit the fact pattern of this project well. Typically, the university would be asked to turn over all funds that DCAMM thought they may need in a given fiscal year on the July 1 start of that year; this is incompatible with appropriate and prudent financial management on behalf of the university given lack of reliability of the schedule and cash flow projections. The shifting projections literally made the difference between an ask for \$45 million in FY26 to a (June 2025

projection) of only \$8 million for FY26. 3. PageUp HR System: All system deployments involve process change, training, and communication. The implementation of PageUp was no exception, and the need to maintain data pertaining to recruitments that were started in iCIMS but completed in PageUp added anticipated complexities.

Reflections and Next Steps

What are your main takeaways from this year's efforts? What are the proposed next steps for the upcoming year?

- **Reflections:** This was another year of making good progress toward improving the technological and physical infrastructure of the university. There is much to be proud of and excited about, even as the university navigates changes flowing from the federal government.
- **Next Steps:**
 - o Continue to pursue BOLD and Decarbonization, as well as the other funded projects for summer 2025 and AY25-26. Build swing space in the library, evaluate and fund the FF&E needs.
 - o Issue BOLD debt and manage the investments to generate debt service funding as per the approved plan.
 - o Support a new VP of Finance and Facilities to ensure seamless financial planning and management.
 - o Monitor and deal with impacts of reduced Federal support and funding for higher education, and Federal changes that may flow from related impacts to the Commonwealth's budget.
 - o Study the impact of President Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill" and subsequent executive orders limiting funding and tax credits for solar and wind generation of electricity and its impact on the university's sustainability goals
 - o Monitor and be prepared to leverage new opportunities with BRIGHT act.
 - o Continue to build out the HR functionality within PageUp.
 - o Implement a new housing system and integrate its functionality with a growing summer conference business.
 - o Complete the security consultancy and determine the next steps to improve systems for access control.
 - o Finish the digital sign project with remaining locations online before September.
 - o Replace or upgrade over 400 Windows 10 computers before support ends in October 2025.
 - o Finish upgrading and renovating 5th floor classrooms in Meier Hall. Construction has been completed, new furniture is in storage, and IT/AV improvements are in progress.
 - o Commission an engineering study to plan for the replacement of the Stanley building data center and redesign the fire protection system to remove water sources from the environment. Replace the wireless system in all residence halls this summer, providing modern connections for students living on campus.

Supporting Documents (Optional)

Attach or link any additional materials that support this report (data charts, communications, case studies, etc.)

Please find attached the following pictures:

Modernization of Horace Mann and Meier Hall



Cyberange



Tennis Courts



Strategic Goal Annual Progress Report

Goal Stewards: Sallyann Lopez, Sr. Dir. Budget and Continuous Improvement, Mandy Ray, VP Advancement, and Steve Schuetz, AVP Enrollment Management

Report Period: FY 2024–2025

Strategic Goal: Seven

Summary of Annual Progress

In FY25 significant progress has been made across several strategic initiatives. The Advancement team has raised \$58.8M toward the \$75M Meet the Moment campaign goal, including \$29.5M for endowments. Major philanthropic support includes grants for completion grants, the cyber range, academic programming, and international education. Finance was focused on improving budget management, updating long-term financial planning, and increasing non-tuition revenue through conferences. IT has finalized a comprehensive asset inventory, while Marketing has completed key staffing hires and conducted a cautious brand review. Additional academic and outreach efforts include the development of a Human Performance Institute and expanded geo-forensic programming and outreach.

The University has completed a comprehensive overhaul of its financial aid policy to reduce student financial barriers and improve grant utilization and reporting. Efforts to achieve a balanced budget are ongoing, with reserve management strategies in place and campus-wide financial training underway. Plans to increase conference revenues and streamline event procedures are also in progress. In global engagement, the university is preparing to welcome more students from China, though future capacity depends on international student access policies.

Key Activities and Initiatives

Provide detail on the three most impactful.

Activity/ Initiative	Strategic Objective(s)	Status (pick one)	Department/ Person	Outcomes and Metrics
		Not Started In Progress Completed Delayed		<i>Provide a brief update. Include quantitative and/or qualitative indicators aligned with the goal. What data or evidence is there that progress is being made?</i>
Raise \$75M in MTM Campaign		In progress	Advancement	Advancement has raised \$58.8M as of June 30, 2025 (78% of goal). Breakdown: Financial Assistance \$29M; Student Success \$12.5M; Unrestricted \$14.3M; SSU BOLD \$2.9M
Guide the university toward achieving a balanced budget within the next three years while effectively managing reserves		In progress	Finance	Training departments on budget tools and reports to increase financial fluency and monitoring capability.
Increase Conference Revenues		In progress	Finance and Enrollment Management	Strategy in development to grow non-tuition revenue via expanded conference operations and campus collaboration.
Build operational capacity in the area of global engagement in advance of welcoming new cohorts of students from China, India, and Philippines		In progress	Academic Affairs and Center for International Education	Staffing expansion at the Center for International Education already initiated

Challenges or Barriers

- International Student enrollments could be impacted by new visa restrictions and policy changes.
- Fundraising for SSU Bold is ramping up but capital campaign planning is still underway.
- Staffing Changes: There have been several key changes this past fiscal year:
 - o Appointment of new VP for Student Success
 - o Welcomed a new Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management
 - o Appointment of new VP for Advancement
 - o Three Front-line Fundraiser position vacant
 - o Retirement of VP for Finance and Facilities and appointment of Interim VP for Finance and Facilities
 - o Conference Services moving to oversight under student life and the hiring of conference service staff

Reflections and Next Steps

- The university has made commendable progress in advancing strategic goal seven. The near-completion of the Meet the Moment campaign—with \$58.8M raised—demonstrates strong donor confidence and momentum, even as planning for the SSU Bold capital campaign continues to take shape. However, the vacancy of three front-line fundraiser positions presents a potential risk to sustaining this momentum and should be addressed as a priority, especially under the leadership of the newly appointed VP for Advancement.
- In global engagement, while preparations are underway to welcome new international student cohorts—particularly from China—uncertainty around visa policies and access could disrupt enrollment plans. The university will need to remain agile, closely monitoring policy changes and adjusting recruitment and support strategies as needed.
- Operationally, there has been notable movement in leadership and reflect a time of leadership transition that can present both opportunities for fresh perspectives and challenges in maintaining continuity. Continued focus on training, financial planning, and cross-departmental coordination will be essential to sustaining progress during this period.

Overall, FY25 reflects a year of strategic advancement coupled with organizational shifts. The foundation for continued success is clearly being built, but attention to staffing stability, policy risk management, and campaign readiness will be key to realizing the university's longer-term goals.

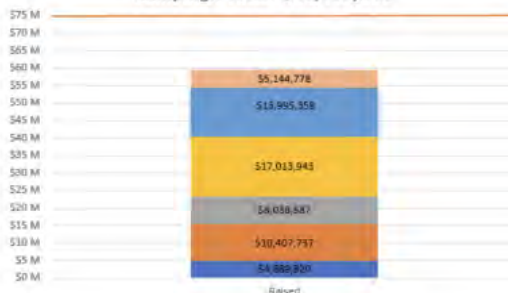
Supporting Documents (Optional)

Monthly Fundraising Dashboard Fiscal Year 2025 June 30, 2025

FY25 Totals: 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025

Dollars:	\$5,144,778
Donors:	2,230
Donations:	2,837
Median Gift:	\$50
Avg. Gift:	\$1,813

Campaign Total: \$59,490,322



Campaign Progress





Salem State University
352 Lafayette Street
Salem, MA 01970
978.542.6000
salemstate.edu/strategic-plan

APPENDIX C



RE-CLASSIFICATION: THE CARNEGIE FOUNDATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING
APPLICATION

Re-Classification: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Submitted by Salem State University on 5/20/2024. Last modified on 4/5/2025.

Application Deadline

April 21st, 2025 at 11:59 PM CST

Use of Data

The information you provide will be used to determine your institution's community engagement classification. Only those institutions approved for classification will be identified. At the end of the survey, you will have an opportunity to authorize or prohibit the use of this information for other research purposes.

Community Engagement Definition

Community engagement describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial creation and exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

The purpose of community engagement is the partnership (of knowledge and resources) between colleges and universities and the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

Community engagement describes activities that are undertaken with community members. In reciprocal partnerships, there are collaborative community-campus definitions of problems, solutions, and measures of success. Community engagement requires processes in which academics recognize, respect, and value the knowledge, perspectives, and resources of community partners and that are designed to serve a public purpose, building the capacity of individuals, groups, and organizations involved to understand and collaboratively address issues of public concern.

Community engagement is shaped by relationships between those in the institution and those outside the institution that are grounded in the qualities of reciprocity, mutual respect, shared authority, and co-creation of goals and outcomes. Such relationships are by their very nature trans-disciplinary (knowledge transcending the disciplines and the college or university) and asset-based (where the strengths, skills, and knowledges of those in the community are validated and legitimized). Community engagement assists campuses in fulfilling their civic purpose through socially useful knowledge creation and dissemination, and through the cultivation of democratic values, skills, and habits - democratic practice.

Primary Applicant's Contact Information

Please provide the contact information of the individual submitting this application (for Carnegie foundation use only).

Re-Classification: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Submitted by Salem State University on 5/20/2024. Last modified on 4/5/2025.

First Name

Cynthia

Last Name

Lynch

Email

clynch@salemstate.edu

Phone Number

978-542-2873

Title

Assistant Vice Provost for Civic Engagement and Academic Strategic Support

Institution

Salem State University

Is this application for:

A single campus institution applying for endorsement or a multi-campus institution applying for endorsement of multiple campuses. Note, if this application is for a multi-campus institution, evidence of institutional commitment to community engagement must demonstrate commitment on each campus of the institution.

Is this your second reclassification application?

Yes

Institutional type (check all that apply):

HSI
Four-Year Public

Re-Classification: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Submitted by Salem State University on 5/20/2024. Last modified on 4/5/2025.

Mailing Address 1

352 Lafayette St

Mailing Address 2

-- empty or did not respond --

City

Salem

State

MA

Zip Code

1970

Full Name of Institution's President/Chancellor

John Keenan

President/Chancellor's Email Address

john.keenan@salemstate.edu

Full Name of Chief Academic Officer

David Silva

Chief Academic Officer's Email Address

david.silva@salemstate.edu

Full-Time Undergraduate Equivalent Enrollment (as reported in IPEDS)

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Submitted by Salem State University on 5/20/2024. Last modified on 4/5/2025.

4713

Full-Time Graduate Equivalent Enrollment (as reported in IPEDS)

1213

Number of Full-Time Equivalent Staff (as reported in IPEDS)

1320

Number of Full-Time Equivalent Faculty (as reported in IPEDS)

295

SECTION 2: Campus, Community, and Community Engagement Context

1. Describe your institution in a way that will help provide a context to understand how community engagement is envisioned and enacted. Include descriptions of the institution and community. If your institution has multiple campuses, please describe each campus for which you are seeking endorsement. **(Maximum 1,000 word count per response below)**

a. Region; founding and history; current institutional mission; institutional culture; types of degree programs; and demographics of student, faculty, and staff populations

Salem State University (SSU), established in 1854, is a comprehensive master’s-level public institution in Essex County, Massachusetts, primarily serving the region known as Boston’s “North Shore.” SSU has partnered with communities in all 34 Essex County cities and towns and many local, regional, statewide and national organizations over its 170-year history. The university offers 32 undergraduate degree programs in arts and sciences, education, health and human services, and business, along with graduate programs that provide degrees in 24 fields and a continuing education division that offers both credit and non-credit programs. One hundred percent of these departments involve faculty and students in a variety of community-engaged experiences. The breadth of these experiences are both curricular and co-curricular, research-oriented and creative, and provide opportunity and access for each interested student.

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Submitted by Salem State University on 5/20/2024. Last modified on 4/5/2025.

Salem State, originally founded as Salem Normal School, has a long and deep history of community engagement within the region. Only the fourth such institution in Massachusetts and the tenth in the United States, Salem Normal School was welcomed by the City of Salem, which endowed its first one-building site. The institution has since grown to a multi-campus university, the alma mater to over 73,000 living alumni, approximately 79% of whom are Massachusetts residents with 53% of those living in Essex County.

As described on our website, SSU's mission states: "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."

SSU is also the second most diverse and third largest state university in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, serving 11 of the 26 Gateway Cities. SSU has met the eligibility requirements to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and is pending federal designation from the Department of Education, which we will apply for in 2026. As demographic trends for our region, state, and country show the Hispanic and minority populations are on the rise, we are proud that Salem State University is on the road to becoming the first four-year, public comprehensive Hispanic Serving – Minority Serving Institution in Massachusetts. As an active member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), we continue to establish best practices to serve this growing population of students on our campus, and we remain intentional about engaging in culturally enhancing approaches that center Latinx ways of knowing and being, with the goal of providing transformative experiences that lead to positive academic (e.g., graduation, post-baccalaureate degree enrollment, job placement) and nonacademic (e.g., community engagement, critical consciousness, racial identity development) outcomes for all students.

SSU students, staff and faculty create a campus culture of community engagement that reflects this diversity through the 6,239 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled and 1,331 faculty and staff employed (2023-2024 SSU Fact Book). SSU serves a growing student body from traditionally underserved populations, including first-generation (25% in 2023), low-income (40% of students were Pell-eligible in 2023), students of color (43% undergraduate; 27% graduate in 2023), students with disabilities, veterans, and non-traditional aged students. Twenty-two percent of the faculty identify as Faculty of Color and 54% of the faculty identify as female (binary options only provided). Twenty-three percent of university staff identify as People of Color and 59% identify as female (binary options only provided).

Leveraging data collected in support of SSU's first Carnegie Community Engagement application, dedicated individuals and offices across the university were able to build a rhetorical and infrastructural path towards the institutional identity of Salem State as "The Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University." After the last Carnegie application, in 2019, the civic engagement committee developed a strategic plan for the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE), where several of the faculty working on it referred to SSU as the Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University. A faculty coalition was then created and proposed to the president that Salem State should identify as "The Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University." After considering the proposal, the president supported the idea on the grounds that "there has never been a more important moment for our citizenry to participate in civic and democratic life. The

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future of our country, state, and city depends on the work undertaken at public universities: I assert that Salem State is called to assume a leadership role in these efforts and that the time for doing so is now” (President Keenan, personal communication, January 2022). The president then brought the proposal before the President’s Executive Council (PEC), who recommended the proposal go through the Strategic Planning Process, through which there was unanimity in SSU assuming the identity of the Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University.

Since this declaration, civic and community engagement are now highlighted in university marketing, while continuing to be infrastructurally embedded in the institution’s mission, vision, strategic planning, and recruitment and supported by university executive leadership and the Board of Trustees. As SSU continues to serve as a resource to advance the region's cultural, social, and economic development, it strengthens its presence as a thought leader in key academic sectors: education, science, health care, business, arts and humanities, and the social sciences. Whether conducting community-based research with local food pantries, collaborating with local municipalities to produce and interpret water sample data, connecting research findings with non-academic audiences, or supporting the proactive prevention of suicide, SSU brings its intellectual and human capital to bear on local issues with global implications. Moreover, the university has been a top producer of Fulbright Scholars the past four years and is committed to bringing students into important global discussions, thereby inspiring them to “think globally” and “act locally.” Central to these efforts are commitments to place, educational access, diversity and inclusion, academic excellence, and student success. For SSU, community engagement is embedded in the very fabric, culture, and history of the university: it frames the institution’s identity and guides how it educates.

b. Leadership priorities, vision, and strategic plan, initiatives and other features that shape and distinguish the institution, particularly as they relate to community engagement

Salem State University has made important strides in living out its commitment to continuous improvement. To fulfill the university mission, leadership priorities and vision focus on:

- equipping students to enhance their social mobility to improve the future well-being of themselves, their families, and their communities, thereby diversifying our region’s body of social, economic, cultural, and political leaders;
- promoting the development of a broad range of practical skills and habits of mind, through both classroom-based learning and community-engaged practice, that equip students with the knowledge and confidence required to address contemporary issues of central concern and enter 21st-century careers prepared for success;
- leveraging Salem’s unique place in the American historical, cultural, and geographic landscapes as a vital asset in cultivating an intellectually vibrant and civically engaged community of learners and scholars; and
- serving as a leader, partner and resource for the North Shore region while working collaboratively with other state universities and community colleges in Massachusetts to create a more equitable public higher education system.

In 2023, Salem State updated its strategic plan. The Assistant Vice Provost (AVP) for Civic Engagement and Academic Strategic Support co-chaired the process to ensure core commitments to student success in a variety of ways that strengthen student engagement with the community and center civic engagement. Specifically, the Strategic Plan dedicates Goal II to

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Submitted by Salem State University on 5/20/2024. Last modified on 4/5/2025.

Civic Engagement and Public Good: Cultivate a civically engaged community of learners and scholars committed to public problem solving in a diverse democracy, and align curriculum, co-curriculum, research, and creative activity with opportunities to promote the public good. Within this goal, there are 6 objectives:

- 2.1 Build on SSU's historic commitment to social justice and civic engagement and expand Salem State's reputation as the Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University.
- 2.2 Increase our campus community's understanding of the intersection of civic engagement with justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion work.
- 2.3 Expand and strengthen the university's regional connections for experiential learning, civically engaged pedagogical and curricular innovation, scholarship, and creative endeavors.
- 2.4 Organize and enhance experiential learning opportunities and increase use of high-impact practices to support students' personal development and professional preparation.
- 2.5 Strengthen the university's capacity to foster students' leadership skills for the purpose of social change.
- 2.6 Enhance SSU's impact in the North Shore region by working with community stakeholders to identify societal challenges that can be addressed through meaningful, collaborative partnerships.

Additionally, civic and community engagement have been intentionally woven throughout all the other strategic plan goals through some of their objectives:

Goal I. Academic Excellence and Active Learning: Develop and support high-quality academic programs and innovative educational experiences that equip Salem State graduates to thrive in an evolving workforce and to navigate confidently in an increasingly complex and global society.

- 1.2 Provide an array of transformative experiential learning opportunities that prepare students for a lifetime of engaged citizenship, successful careers, and upward social mobility.
- 1.3 Design and deliver academic programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels that are cross-disciplinary, civically minded, culturally responsive, and anti-racist.
- 1.4 Engage students and scholars in improving the human condition through academic programs, research, and creative activities that address the pressing matters of our time, including social justice, racial equity, health disparities, climate change, and economic inequality.

Goal III. Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Increase the diversity of our campus community, and promote equity and inclusion in all programs, policies, and practices.

- 3.1 Continue to promote equitable access and boost college participation through expanded partnerships with PK-12 districts and improved, barrier-free transfer pathways for community college students.

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3.8 Continue striving to remove financial barriers to access by investing in financial aid for students and championing the cause of providing debt-free public higher education in Massachusetts.

Goal IV. Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action: Reflect Salem State's core commitment to protecting the natural environment in campus facilities, operations, academics and decision making, and equip faculty, staff and students to understand and engage in addressing the climate emergency.

4.2 Demonstrate leadership in climate action and climate justice by engaging the Salem State community and broader North Shore region in educational and collaborative initiatives that raise awareness and contribute significantly to efforts to safeguard local resources.

Goal V. Campus Community and Culture: Foster a campus culture that fuels school spirit, sense of community and collegiality, mutual respect and trust, and shared commitment to student success and the University's long-term future.

5.8 Equip and engage members of the SSU community to be effective advocates and ambassadors for Salem State in the wider community

Goal VI. Operational Excellence and Infrastructure: Continuously assess and improve the administrative and operational systems, structures, and processes that support the university's mission of teaching, research and public service, and maintain physical facilities and technologies necessary to deliver the mission effectively and efficiently.

6.6 Enhance physical infrastructure and facilities management plans to improve access and optimize experiences for all who attend, work at, or visit the university.

Goal VII. Financial Vitality and Sustainability: Fortify Salem State's financial foundation by stabilizing enrollment, growing income from existing and new revenue streams, advocating for greater public funding support, continuing to build a culture of philanthropy, and aligning resources with strategic priorities.

7.5 Foster a campus-wide culture of philanthropy and deepen engagement with Salem State alumni and the wider community

One example of how we live these values is our Early College (EC) program that partners with local school districts and allows high school students to enroll in college courses. These programs focus on school districts that have a large number of students who are under-represented in higher education. SSU and our EC partners were recently selected to be part of an Early College Educator Pipeline Project with the goal of diversifying the teacher workforce in school districts. This program serves more than 400 high school students, strengthening our relationship with these communities and enacting our commitment to inclusion and community engagement.

c. Describe the communities to which the institution is accountable to, including community characteristics, community priorities, and the

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relationship of the community to the institution

Essex County, one of the earliest counties in the United States (1643), comprises coastal and riverine cities and towns with diverse ecosystems and economies. Essex County has a population of over 800,000 people, 66.9% who identify as white (non-Hispanic) and 22.5% who identify as Hispanic. The county median household income is over \$90k a year with great fluctuation between towns (nearly \$58k in Methuen and nearly \$250k in Boxford), and an average poverty rate of 9.72%. Essex County is home to the Essex National Heritage Area, which promotes and protects cultural, historic and natural heritage. The region also features some of the Commonwealth's most diverse cities, including six of Massachusetts' 26 "Gateway Cities," midsize urban centers that anchor regional economies around the state. These cities enable seamless pathways from high school to SSU or through regional community colleges (North Shore Community College [Lynn/Danvers] and Northern Essex Community College [Haverhill]). Salem State's community engagement maps heavily, but not exclusively, to its academic strengths and the region's attributes. According to the Essex County Community Foundation's Essex County impact report, the finance, healthcare and social assistance, and professional and business services sectors are Essex County's primary growth areas. Salem State matches these with strong programs in healthcare (Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Healthcare Studies), social issues (Social Work, Criminal Justice, Psychology), business and finance (Accounting and Finance, Management, and Marketing Decision Sciences), environmental studies, education, business, and the liberal arts.

Community-identified priorities in cities and municipalities across Essex County include Salem State partnerships focusing on many areas including but not limited to: addressing new perspectives on teaching the Holocaust in K-12 school districts across the county; protecting, restoring, and enhancing the estuarine resources of Ipswich Bay, Massachusetts Bay, and Cape Cod Bay; understanding the histories of African Americans in Essex County and using the past to effect and drive change in the present; completing low-income taxpayer returns, helping filers get refunds collectively over \$100k; offering adaptive sports opportunities to disabled residents of the North Shore; meeting the staffing needs of 12 school districts across the North Shore through a fellowship program; offering bilingual paraprofessionals and early career educators a Master's in TESOL so they can become licensed as an English as a second/additional language classroom teacher through a Teacher Pipeline Program; supporting district-based leadership professional learning experiences; offering dual-enrollment and early college courses at local high schools across the county; and educating and informing school librarians across the county and state on diversifying collections to ensure they mirror the students in every school.

The Gateway City with which the university works most frequently is our host municipality, Salem, the second largest source of new students for the university (9.3%). Salem is a large historic coastal municipality known for its rich maritime history, literary legacy, and the infamous Witchcraft Trials of 1692. Demographically, it primarily consists of white (71.5%) and Latino (19.7%) residents. Salem is unique because of its local political scene, which is a hub for advocacy and activism. Many local politicians, past and present, local and regional, have either attended or graduated from Salem State and continue to build strong ties and bridges with the university, including eight current incumbents: Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll; Essex County District Attorney Paul Tucker; State Senator (2nd Essex District) Joan Lovely; State Representative (7th Essex District) Manny Cruz; State Representative (16th Suffolk District) Jessica Giannino; State Representative (12th Essex District) Tom Walsh; and Ward 6 City Councilor (City of Salem) Meg Stott. Additionally, the current president of Salem State was

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raised in Salem and is the city's previous State Representative (2005-2014). While the median household income is ~\$79,000, making it strongly middle-class, over 13% of the population lives below the poverty line. Many Salem-identified community priorities leverage the expertise and resources of Salem State, to include partnerships addressing food insecurity, affordable housing, Salem's history, arboretum research, water quality, and LGBTQ+ services. Salem State has a very strong relationship with the City of Salem, both formally through initiatives like our Services in lieu of Taxes (SILOT) agreement and historically through participation with neighborhood associations, and informally by providing Salem State graduates that work in the City's office (to include former mayor, Kim Driscoll). Salem State also quite frequently works with community members and organizations in The Point Neighborhood Historic District, which is 74.2% non-white, primarily Latino. The Point is distinguished from surrounding neighborhoods by its population density, lack of green space, high proportion of multi-family housing, and high concentration of immigrants.

Another Gateway City the university works closely with is Lynn, MA, which is the largest source of new students for SSU (16.5%) and is a town adjacent to Salem. Lynn is the largest city in Essex County with ~100,000 residents. Demographically, it primarily consists of Latino (42.9%), white (35.6%), and black (10.8%) residents. The median household income is ~\$70,000, with 14.1% of the population living below the poverty line. Community-identified priorities have sparked collaborations with Salem State that include developing grant-funded community safety initiatives, providing play-based learning experiences to local families, and creating family literacy kits that foster home/school connections and promote important literacy and language skills at home through Head Start programs.

2. Describe the institutionally sanctioned definition of community engagement and related terms. **(Maximum word count: 500 per response below)**

a. List the terms and definitions here that provide the institutional standards for community engagement. Provide context for the creation of the definition and standards of high-quality community engagement, including how it was determined and approved, how it is used, and any evidence of its effectiveness in guiding community engagement on campus in relation to your last classification? If the definition of community engagement has been refined/revised since the last classification, describe the rationale, process of change, and the extent to which the revision has had an impact. Additionally, you can provide a website link where the institution-wide definition of community engagement appears. You may skip "b" below if you answer "a" here. Proceed to "b" if unable to answer "a".

In our previous application, we did not provide an institutional definition of community engagement, but instead focused on definitions of service-learning, civic learning with engagement, and critically engaged civic learning. Each of these types of curricular community-engaged definitions are still used in various pockets of the university, however, the greatest

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change since our previous application is that we now have an institutional definition of civic and community engagement at Salem State: “Civic Engagement at Salem State leverages and builds on student, faculty, and staff knowledge and experience to equitably collaborate with community partners, address critical public issues, and align curriculum, scholarship, research, and creative activity with the public good.”

The CCE first crafted this definition, adapted from the MA Department of Higher Education, for use in their Strategic Plan, which then overlapped into the university’s strategic plan thereafter. While there was no official governance process to approve this definition, the university president, the President’s Executive Council (PEC), and the university-wide strategic planning committee agreed to change the university’s branding to “The Commonwealth’s Civic Engagement University”, and this is the definition that has appeared on official university publications and marketing materials.

Standards for high-quality community engagement extend from this definition and are applied in a variety of contexts and offices across the university, to include curricular governance through course section tagging, Student Life community service requirements for student groups, and accreditation standards for teacher-prep programs, to name a few. For course section tagging, courses must adhere to one or both of the following standards: 1) Public Engagement Knowledge and Skills: Course content focuses primarily on building knowledge and communication skills that will help students engage in advocacy, activism, and/or collective action and/or building knowledge and skills related to contemporary political issues and institutions and or public policy; and 2) Public Engagement Application and Action Orientation: Course content focuses primarily on understanding various types of social inequalities with the goal of promoting meaningful social change.

Additionally, this definition of community engagement is used to inform Salem State’s global engagement; DEI efforts; and HSI/MSI initiatives. For example, involvement in the CHEP-D China 1+2+1 program (a consortium of universities in the U.S. and China that grant dual degrees to students from China studying at SSU for two years and providing study travel opportunities in China for SSU students) is informed by this definition and helps our internationalization and global engagement efforts as well as attends to our mission of preparing global citizens. Another example is our new Center for Equity, Education, and Belonging in the Inclusive Excellence office, which supports curricular and community engagements that nurture our diverse student body, and initiatives positioned to positively impact marginalized faculty and staff communities. Lastly, as part of our HSI/MSI Roadmap to Servingness, our planning document for becoming an HSI/MSI, one key area is community building and engagement with once and future students and families (alumni, prospective students and families).

b. If your campus does not have an institutional definition of community engagement, are there definitions and standards provided within a unit or division that are used to define community engagement? If so, list the terms and definitions for high quality community engagement. If you answered “a”, skip.

-- empty or did not respond --

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3. Describe how the institution ensures that students, faculty, staff, and community partners have equitable access and opportunity to community engagement activities and partnerships. Equitable access and opportunity require focused efforts to address systems and structures that create barriers to participation.

(Maximum word count: 500 per response below)

a. Describe the relevant contexts—both within the institution as well as beyond (local, regional, national)—that shape how equitable access and opportunity in community engagement is defined, discussed, planned, enacted, and held accountable on your campus.

At SSU, we pride ourselves on our inclusive campus culture and commit to hold justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as values and practices that are embedded into the heart and soul of the institution. Our Inclusive Excellence (IE) office employs a broad and inclusive definition of diversity that includes (but is not limited to) disability, gender, sexual orientation, social class, language, age, religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, veteran status, and other important social dimensions that are part of the campus community. Linked to justice, equity, and inclusion, diversity is more than just attaining a numerical goal of diverse constituents. Our focus is the continuous transformation of the university into a vibrant community that embeds diversity and inclusiveness throughout the institution in various holistic ways like demographics (numbers), curriculum, policies, and leadership. This lens and approach to inclusion informs all university initiatives focused on equitable access and opportunities, including our community-engaged initiatives, where the IE office and other offices like the CCE help hold these values accountable across the university.

Ways in which this is enacted tend to happen through collaborations between IE and other offices. For example, our Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration has been running for over 35 years and is open to the community and includes public schools in the event planning and celebration (via MLK writing awards); we partner with the Peabody Essex Museum, Cabot Theater, and City of Salem for all our heritage and pride celebrations; all our heritage and pride celebrations are open to the community; we have maintained representation on Salem's Human Rights Coalition and Race Equity Commission in recent years; we engage with the Massachusetts Tribe in Salem monthly through a meeting organized by the City of Salem that informs our acknowledgement and reparations initiatives on campus; our Building Inclusive Academic Communities (BIAC) is an inclusive pedagogy co-mentoring program for senior and junior faculty and graduate and undergraduate students to build community as they examine their own social identities, share their understandings of what makes an inclusive classroom, develop knowledge of the theory and practice of inclusive pedagogy, and design teaching and learning practices that foster greater student and community engagement and academic achievement; and our Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) program offers students opportunities to engage with peers from around the world.

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One concrete example of our work with the Massachusetts Tribal Council was the establishment of our Land Acknowledgement (led by students and adopted by SSU in Spring 2023) and development and implementation of initiatives that work toward repairing the injustices continuously being committed on the Indigenous People of this land.

b. Describe institutional systems and structures that address equitable access and opportunity in community engagement for students, faculty, staff, and community partners. This may include, infrastructure, programs or initiatives, policies, procedures and practices, staffing, office, finance, network or coalition of centers, campus climate survey, hiring/recruitment etc.

Since the creation of the CCE in 2015, it serves as the nexus point for SSU to connect with community organizations. Community partners now have one identifiable office to contact when they have an identified need for which they would like to collaborate. These opportunities are broadcasted across the university through university email listservs, CCE newsletters, social media posts, and direct outreach for specific department or discipline expertise. Students learn about these opportunities through faculty, academic advisors, or directly from the CCE.

Two ways the CCE reinforces the importance of equitable access and opportunity to community engagement is through research, education, and professional development on critically engaged civic learning (CECL) and anti-racist community engagement. CECL professional development addresses the problem of power dynamics and building equity, where faculty learn how to account for power and privilege, both in terms of who has access to traditional sources of power and who holds knowledge that can be leveraged for meaningful social change. One example is the creation of the CECL publication by two SSU faculty, an SSU administrator, and a community partner. Through the co-creation of this research, each co-author acknowledged the assets and authority brought by each to the table, which helped to build mutual respect and break down the “us and them” dichotomy that often privileges academic knowledge over lived experience.

The university also maintains several centers focusing on various aspects of community engagement, to include: the Center for Childhood and Youth Studies, Center for Community Schools, Center for Economic Development, the Center for Educational Leadership, the Center for Interprofessional Education and Collaboration, Bates Center for Public and Global Affairs and its North Shore Policy Lab, Student Government Association, and the Center for Justice and Liberation. In addition to this question, these centers will be discussed in greater detail throughout this application. Through these various centers, professional development focuses on the equity of assets and resources. The disparity in material resources reinforces unequal power dynamics, requiring educational institutions to critically consider their own positionality and seek to make material resources more equally available. One way that faculty do so is by incorporating funding acquisition (e.g., grants) in project development that is used to compensate community members and organizations.

Acknowledging and addressing power dynamics also requires reciprocity, namely that efforts are mutually beneficial to all stakeholders. Based on the notion that the collective can do more together than any one group can do alone, stakeholders engage in realistic, transparent, and accessible communication that involves all community partners at every step. In order to accomplish this, stakeholders encourage an inclusive dialogue of equals where teams work

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together to determine and assign roles and responsibilities that both attend to partners' skills and strengths and provide opportunities for growth. For example, the Center for Childhood and Youth Studies regularly meets with faculty, local organizations, community members and students to discuss issues, identify strategies for change, and implement programs.

c. Describe how the campus ensures that community partners have “significant voice” and input into institutional or departmental planning and collective goals.

While informal communication channels have always existed for community input into university-community engagement practices, more formal channels have been established over the past decade. In 2018, a community advisory board was established for the CCE, co-chaired by one member of the CCE and one community partner, and consists of 16 representatives from various community organizations throughout the North Shore region as well as representatives from the CCE, one faculty member, and two students. Some of the community partner representatives are also alumni of Salem State and provide unique feedback from this dual perspective. New board members are considered and invited based on their expertise in addressing the pressing matters of our time regionally. The board meets once a semester and serves as an official pipeline from the community directly to the CCE.

The CCE also provides other communication channels for community partners through its community partner breakfasts and networking luncheons. Community partner breakfasts serve as a networking opportunity for community and university representatives as well as an opportunity to solicit feedback about the university's engagement efforts from local agencies and organizations. The CCE also holds networking opportunities for faculty, staff and community partners to meet and establish preliminary conversations for potential collaborations, which afford community partners the ability to provide feedback and guidance on approaches to collaboration.

Additionally, community voice is central to the work of university centers in planning community engagement. Community members serve on the boards and/or provide input at meetings for the following university centers, each housed in Academic Affairs and overseen by the Provost: Center for Childhood and Youth Studies, Center for Community Schools, Center for Economic Development and Sustainability, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and Bates Center for Public Affairs. The regional business community, northeast legislative delegation, arts community, nonprofit partners, local mayors, and superintendents were also invited to provide input on the university Strategic Plan. Several SSU representatives serve on boards and commissions within the city and bring feedback from the outside world into campus.

From the executive level of the university, the president is very committed to creating opportunities for “significant voice” and input into institutional or departmental planning and collective goals. President Keenan meets regularly with local, state and federal officials, including monthly meetings with the mayor of Salem, to discuss university priorities, as well as public needs and opportunities. President Keenan also serves on several local and regional boards, including MassHire North Shore Career Center Board, New England Council, North Shore Alliance for Economic Development, North Shore Advisory Board of the Anti-Defamation League, North Shore Chamber of Commerce Directors, Voices Against Injustice Advisory Board, and serves as President of the Life Science Consortium of the North Shore, the Salem Partnership,

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and Northeast Consortium of Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts (NECCUM). President Keenan and other SSU representatives additionally meet with area superintendents to meet the needs of graduating seniors and identify earlier pathways to higher education that are more accessible and affordable.

d. Describe the resources made available to community partners that support community engagement (e.g., professional development, compensation, materials, space, acknowledgement, awards).

SSU provides a wide variety of resources to community partners in support of community engagement. The university is party to a Services in Lieu of Taxes (SILOT) agreement with the City of Salem. University contributions include direct, in-kind, revolving, and grant funding for many areas of cooperation between SSU and the City. SSU also provided \$50,000 to local businesses and nonprofits via sponsorships/memberships last academic year.

Infrastructurally as part of the SILOT agreement, SSU permits the City of Salem and its departments use of university space at no cost for public events and meetings and provides Salem residents use of 100 spaces in the university's O'Keefe Center parking lots during snow emergencies. Additionally, the CCE reserves spaces for local nonprofits to run board meetings on campus when available. The university also provides in-kind services to the City of Salem through mutual aid from university police to city police, no-cost training for police officers, and participation in local emergency planning, often providing space for such trainings on campus.

The Enterprise Center (EC) is housed at SSU and serves as a small business incubator for the North Shore. The EC provides local businesses lower-cost rent, office space, support from the Small Business Development Center, and access to the university as a potential client (if services are applicable) while contributing financial resources and support for community partnerships and community development. The EC is also a founding member of the North Shore Alliance for Economic Development, which brings together regional leaders, including mayors, legislators, and business and nonprofit leaders, to partner on large projects that will impact the region.

SSU is the host institution for TRIO Upward Bound, which provides academic instruction, enrichment activities, and college access to low-income high school students in Lawrence, MA, most of whom are the first in their families to attend college. To promote college retention, TRIO students participate in a six-week on-campus summer program, which includes a four-week residential component that helps students thrive in higher education. Students also receive year-round academic support from TRIO staff and mentors.

Additional resources include free admission for Salem residents to all SSU athletic events, 60 annual arts events, 80% of which charge no admission along with free Salem nights for select ticketed events, and free and open public access to the university library. Through the SERV program, all university employees who have worked for at least 6 months may apply to use up to 7.5 hours of paid leave per month during work hours to volunteer in the community. SSU representatives provide expertise through their service on state and local boards and commissions, such as the Amesbury Planning Board, the Commonwealth's Environmental Justice Advisory Council, the Essex County Commission on the Status of Women, the City of Salem's Board of Health, the Salem Food Policy Council, and Voices Against Injustice, to name a few.

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e. In what ways does the campus collect information from partners to ensure accountability to the community—in particular reciprocity, mutual benefit, and respect?

The university has many mechanisms to collect formal and informal feedback from community partners. Formal mechanisms include: the CCE Community Partner Survey, the pressing matters survey, community partner breakfasts, and the Community Advisory Board. Community engagement is incorporated into most campus-wide surveys, which gather data on community impact, community partner feedback, and/or community participant response.

Additionally, individual courses, programs, and activities collect feedback from community partners regarding their respective collaborative efforts. Examples include data collected from alternative spring break trips and the First Year Day of Service program. For the alternative spring break data collection, host Habitat for Humanity chapters and student participants are surveyed based on the learning outcomes of the trip. For SSU's First Year Day of Service, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners are surveyed; one-on-one meetings with community partners are held to elicit feedback that shape projects for the following year; reflection sessions are held during the event; a large group reflection/sharing session is held the evening of the event; and Day of Service reunions are held, which always include an opportunity to reflect and make suggestions. Additionally, institutional data are examined longitudinally to compare Day of Service cohorts to their peers for fall-to-fall retention and fall-to-spring persistence.

Informal assessment mechanisms include community perceptions that are shared at community partner breakfasts and CCE summer networking opportunities, among the staff of the President's Office, CCE, Civic Engagement Committee, Community Advisory Board, related student organization leaders, and respective community partners. These perceptions serve as a critical feedback loop as part of the on-going cycle of continuous improvement toward ensuring reciprocity, mutual benefit and respect between the university and the communities it serves.

Additionally, in 2021, SSU invited public comment as part of the university's self-study process for its ten-year, comprehensive evaluation conducted by the regional accrediting body, New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE). Prior to the NECHE site visit, the university shared its own extensive self-study report publicly, soliciting comments from the public over a period of months before the external accreditors' visit and their subsequent report. Feedback about SSU and its self-study was sought from the public, campus partners, and the regional community and invited to be sent to NECHE directly. The efforts to solicit comments were made through paid advertisements in the Salem Evening News and direct, written appeals to regional legislators and organizations, including the offices of the Massachusetts State Senator, State Representative, Salem Mayor, Salem Chamber of Commerce, Salem Partnership, CCE community partners, and SSU alumni board.

SSU Board of Trustee meetings, including committee meetings, are subject to the open meeting law in Massachusetts, MGL c. 30A, meaning that, with few exceptions, all deliberations are done in public. Each full board meeting includes an opportunity for public comment as well. Minutes are kept of all meetings and are posted on SSU's website, as part of the university's efforts to be transparent and accountable.

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4. As evidence for your earlier classification, you provided a description of the campus-wide coordinating infrastructure (ie., center, office, network or coalition of centers, etc.) to support and advance community engagement and you reported how it is staffed, how it is funded, and its reporting line.

a. For Re-Classification, describe what has changed, if anything, with this infrastructure, its mission, staffing, funding, and reporting since the last classification. If the campus has more than one center coordinating community engagement, describe each center, staffing, and purpose and indicate how the multiple centers interact with one another to advance institutional community engagement. Provide any relevant links that support the narrative. (Maximum word count: 500)

The CCE still serves as the primary coordinating center for community engagement at SSU and works very closely with the Center for Justice and Liberation (CJL), HSI/ MSI Initiatives, the Frederick E. Berry Institute of Politics (IOP), the Alumni Association, and External Relations to support its mission. These offices interact with each other to advance institutional community engagement through periodic meetings, notifications of news and events, and resource sharing and support.

The CCE is now housed under the Provost's Office and is operated by the Assistant Vice Provost for Civic Engagement and Academic Strategic Support and staffed by a full-time assistant director, a Faculty Fellow, a graduate student, several student employees, and shared support staff. The CCE is responsible for developing and supporting programs that connect students, faculty, staff, and alumni to the greater community.

Housed with the CCE, the Berry IOP was established in 2019 and is operated by an executive director, full-time assistant director, several student staff members, and receives additional staff support from Academic Affairs. The Berry IOP is a non-partisan institute that was established to celebrate the extraordinary career of the late Senator Fred Berry by prioritizing meaningful civic education. The Berry IOP expands political engagement at SSU and in the North Shore by bringing policymakers, political leaders, and public officials to campus.

The CJL (formerly the LEAD Office) is located under Student Life and houses all of SSU's identity-based student clubs and organizations. CJL's mission targets the engagement of students in leadership and social justice topics. The center supports a leadership institute and peer network initiatives like The Brotherhood, which encourage active engagement and broader social awareness. The office also supports various student groups whose members engage in community service and engagement activities.

The Alumni Association's Civic Engagement Committee works on several initiatives throughout the year that include service activities, volunteering with students on campus, organizing

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community programming with the City of Salem and hosting drives for local nonprofits in need. A major community event the Alumni Association holds is the Global Day of Service, which celebrates and mobilizes thousands of SSU alumni, students, parents, employees, and friends of SSU to improve their community through service.

External Relations manages the university's relationships and serves as the primary liaison with federal, state, and regional governments, as well as community, business, and nonprofit entities with a focus on advancing the university's strategic goals and objectives. Housed within the President's Office, the office interacts with internal and external entities to gain an understanding of mutual need with an eye on opportunities to continually grow positive relationships that serve our students, SSU, the North Shore region, and the Commonwealth as a whole.

The Academic Affairs Office promotes and coordinates civic engagement efforts, including signature events, such as Alternative Spring Break trips, Blood Drives, and food drives. The Assistant Dean advises the Community Service Initiative, a student organization engaging dozens of students in more than one thousand hours of service annually.

b. Describe the most recent internal budgetary allocations dedicated to supporting institutional engagement with the community, and what has changed, if anything, with the budgetary allocations since the last classification. Describe whether the sources of these funds are permanent or temporary. Describe how budget shortfalls may have impacted funding for community engagement. (Maximum word count: 500)

Both permanent and temporary sources of funding are annually dedicated to support institutional engagement with the community. The CCE's permanent annual budget (excluding center staff salaries) is \$80,000 and is allocated through the university. This funding is used towards general programming, faculty stipends, professional development, student employment, and Day of Service. Additionally, the Berry IOP receives a \$200,000 annual appropriation through the state budget, which is used to promote public service and civic engagement through programs, student scholarships, educational opportunities and related events that offer inclusive and firsthand civic learning experiences for students. Two gift funds have also been established, one for the CCE (\$19,000) and one for the Berry IOP (\$65,000), with another \$10,000 from other temporary funding sources. Over the past few years, the CCE has regularly applied for and received Higher Education Innovation Funds to support anti-racist community engagement research and professional development efforts.

The CJL's permanent annual budget is \$140,000 (excluding staff salaries), \$66,000 of which is allocated from the Salem State Student Government Association for new and existing programs related to initiatives supporting education and awareness of and among our varied student identities on campus.

The Salem State University Alumni Association and Foundation Inc. (AAF) allocated 82.8% of its annual budget in fiscal year 2024 to departmental gifts, scholarships, endowment awards and SSU Bold in addition to supporting both internal and external community enrichment programming and events. This budget is not state-appropriated (i.e., not through the university budget).

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Civic engagement programming has also been consistently supported through donations from individual donors and allocations from the university's unrestricted fund. In fiscal year 2025, the CCE received \$15,000 from the unrestricted fund, along with over \$14,000 in individual contributions. Additionally, in 2024, a generous benefactor established an endowment with a \$70,000 gift, further strengthening the CCE's long-term sustainability.

c. As evidence provided for your earlier classification, you described strategic fundraising efforts and/or external funding (grants) specifically undertaken to support community engagement. For Re-Classification, describe the most recent strategic fundraising efforts and/or external funding (grants) specifically undertaken to support community engagement and identify any specific endowments earmarked for community engagement. (Maximum word count: 500)

The priorities for the current comprehensive university fundraising campaign, Meet the Moment, are improving access to SSU by keeping the costs of education attainable; prioritizing student success—academic, personal, and professional; unifying our campus through SSU BOLD by creating leading-edge facilities; and evolving to meet the needs of our community through unrestricted resources when a challenge or opportunity arises.

Following the success of the institution's first comprehensive campaign, the Meet the Moment™ campaign set an ambitious goal of \$75M, the largest philanthropic endeavor in the history of Massachusetts' nine state universities. As of June 30, 2023, we have reached 54% of that goal, raising over \$40M which includes two gifts that broke records as the largest cash gifts to a Massachusetts state university: a \$10 million gift to the McKeown School of Education from Cummings Foundation in August 2022 to strengthen and diversify the educator pipeline; and a \$6 million gift from Kim Gassett-Schiller '83, '18H and Philip Schiller in 2021 to create Viking Completion Grants, which have helped 156 juniors and seniors overcome their final financial hurdle to earning their degree.

The pandemic shined a light on regional and generational inequities, particularly for our student demographic. For example, given the students SSU serves and our reputable School of Social Work, the private family foundation Accelerate The Future selected Salem State to establish a scholarship for Master of Social Work (MSW) students aimed at increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of practitioners in community-based organizations throughout the Commonwealth. By covering 20 students' entire cost of education, the scholarships significantly minimize debt and encourage future practitioners to work in the public system serving historically marginalized populations in underserved communities rather than moving into private practice, thereby multiplying the community impact of their investment in education.

The record-setting \$10 million investment in the McKeown School of Education by the Cummings Foundation is another example of matching a donor's goals to university priorities to foster long-term community success. Through this investment, the McKeown School will greatly expand programs and initiatives aimed at diversifying the educator pipeline, a priority for the Commonwealth and the gateway communities we serve. These programs include: expanding the cohort-based program for teacher pipeline development from gateway cities; creating a center for professional learning aimed at retaining teachers and school leaders, including

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support for developing anti-racist and equity-focused instructional and leadership practices; preparing educators to meet student needs beyond preK-12 education, such as early childhood literacy; and supporting pathways to licensure for hundreds of emergency-licensed teachers in the region; among other efforts. This extraordinary collaboration between faculty and staff will continue to strategically build on our academic strengths and provide support where students need it most.

Lastly, the CCE applied for and received four Massachusetts Higher Education Innovation Fund grants between 2020 and 2024, ranging from \$132,000 - \$250,000. These grants supported initiatives focused on developing anti-racist community engagement professional development, holding the Inaugural New England HSI summer conference and Student Leadership Summit in 2024, and BIAC co-mentoring program.

5. Describe how community engagement efforts have been impacted and shaped by recent local, national, and/or global events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, greater attention to racial and social justice, the crisis of decreasing trust in democracy and institutions, and natural disasters. (Maximum word count: 500)

Throughout this application we describe various ways recent crises have impacted SSU and our community engagement efforts. One overarching thread in these responses is SSU's unwavering commitment to community engagement.

During COVID, SSU quickly pivoted to virtual engagement, and while some opportunities were permanently paused or concluded, most were only temporarily paused while new initiatives were even created. During COVID, our Civic Fellows program stayed active and we continued outreach to community partners to strengthen relationships. Our Fall 2020 First Year Day of Service was not offered, but has been offered every year again since 2021. In Fall 2021, our First Year Day of Service was smaller and more intimate while we still navigated CDC COVID guidelines. That year we also offered a Sophomore Day of Service for students who were not offered the opportunity in 2020. Our Day of Service event slowly grew over 2022 and in 2023 was at full capacity (pre-COVID) numbers again. Our annual Advocacy Day event turned virtual during COVID and became Advocacy Week, with virtual programming and engagement throughout the week. Since COVID, interest in this event has grown so much that we now offer an Advocacy Month of community-engaged programming and opportunities.

In response to returning students' interest in connecting with the community and a "normal" (i.e., pre-COVID) college experience, we began a new initiative, Civic Dinners, for students to come together to eat, network, and learn from advocates about how they can get involved and make change. We also began another new initiative, Hunger-Free Coalition, which is a partnership between the CCE and the SSU Wellness CARE Team to reduce and destigmatize food insecurity on campus. Goals of the coalition include ensuring students are knowledgeable of the resources available to support their basic needs and advocating for the Hunger Free Campus Bill (S.835/H.1293) at the Massachusetts State House, which has been able to secure funding in the state budget for students experiencing hunger and homelessness.

In response to the current civil rights movement, community-engaged racial justice advocacy initiatives have grown across campus. In 2021, the Berry IOP Fellows included former Boston

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Mayor Kim Janey and Tran-Rights lawyer Jennifer Levy, who provided education and opportunities for students to engage in civil rights issues. A university residence hall, previously named Viking Hall, was renamed Charlotte Forten Hall in honor of the first African American graduate from Salem State College, an initiative that was led by a SSU student. The dedication ceremony was open to and celebrated by members of the campus and local community.

Lastly, temporary family housing was made available at the SSU Bates Housing Complex during the pandemic for housing-insecure Salem families and for isolation housing for Lynn Community Health Center and the Northeast Arc employees exposed to COVID. After COVID, this complex served as temporary Emergency Housing Assistance in response to the state's housing crisis, housing Massachusetts residents, immigrants, and refugees until 2024. Salem State was the only state university to serve this community.

6. Describe how the institution tracks and assesses engagement with communities. Be sure to describe: **(Maximum word count: 500 per response below)**

a. How the institution maintains systematic campus-wide tracking of engagement with the community, including the purpose for tracking, what data is collected, what systems are used to track data, who is responsible for collected data, how often data is collected, and how data is used. (Maximum word count: 500)

To ensure that we are systematically tracking community engagement activities and their impact campus-wide we have implemented several different institutionalized accountability measures:

1) Goal two of Salem State's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan is Civic Engagement and Public Good. To assess the progress of the strategic plan in Academic Affairs the provost requires each department in their annual report to write one-two pages describing how their department is contributing to the success of the university as related to the seven goals of the 2023-2028 strategic plan.

2) For the 2023-28 strategic plan, Salem State created an "Input System" to allow documentation and tracking of how the campus community is meeting those goals. The Input System is designed to collect information on initiatives or specific activities at several points: a) when working toward or on an initiative; b) at the conclusion of an initiative or project; and/or c) at the end of the semester. The information is used by the Goal Stewards (2-3 stewards/goal who are responsible for collecting data and reporting on goal progress), who submit bi-annual strategic plan update reports that document overall campus progress toward meeting goals and objectives. The bi-annual reports are used to update the campus community, our Board of Trustees, and the Board of Higher Education on progress toward meeting the goals of the strategic plan. The input system allows deans and associate deans access to information that describes initiatives and accomplishments in their areas. It can also be used as a source of information for those on campus who are leading accreditations, and grant-related and

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fundraising initiatives. The Goal Stewards for Goal 2: Civic Engagement and Public Good submitted reports in the fall 2023 and spring 2024.

3) The strategic plan has a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that the Goal Stewards and members of the president's leadership team are responsible for collecting. This quantitative data is meant to complement the qualitative data that is collected through the Strategic Plan Input System. Additionally, the AVP for Civic Engagement and Academic Strategic Support created and proposed class section tagging in support of this effort. Section tagging contributes to data collection for Strategic Plan KPIs and the Roadmap to HSI/MSI Servingness, as well as those required by the MA DHE.

The data collected is shared with the campus community through the president's annual address, written communications, and at additional forums and meetings. It is shared with the community through community partners meetings, the annual community partner breakfast, and the advisory board. The above data is used for campuswide annual reports, and it is sent to the DHE to report on Strategic Plan and required civic learning and civic engagement reporting. The data is also shared with the Board of Trustees through an annual presentation by the AVP for Civic Engagement and Academic Strategic Support. Finally, this data is used as a source of information for those on campus who are leading accreditations, and grant-related and fundraising initiatives.

b. Any campus-wide assessments or self-studies of community engagement (not including this application) that has taken place since the last application, including the purpose for the assessment or self-study, what data were collected, who was responsible for conducting the assessment or self-study, how is the assessment or self-study were used. (Maximum word count: 500)

The university conducts a schedule of assessment efforts to collect data periodically on student experiences, discuss trends and results, and foster continuous improvement and accountability. Since Spring 2021, the following have been conducted: VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) assessment of critical thinking among Commonwealth Honors students; NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) administered to first-year and seniors in 2022; SSI (Student Satisfaction Index) and ACHA (American College Health Association) administered to all students in 2023; and two homegrown surveys of graduating seniors and graduate students, conducted annually.

In Spring 2021, SSU prepared its NECHE ten-year comprehensive evaluation self-study, to which NECHE commissioners observed, "We further give credit to SSU for its emphasis on civic learning and engagement that is now recognized by the institution's Community Engagement Carnegie Classification," in their November 29, 2021 letter.

In 2022, the NSSE survey was administered on campus. Having established baseline data for SSU students, the university now administers this instrument on a three-year cycle. Among the results from the NSSE survey, SSU seniors reported gains from 2019 to 2022 on several items, including:

- Understanding people of other backgrounds (+10%)
- Working effectively with others (+3%)

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- Acquiring job or work-related knowledge or skills (+2%)
- Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics (+3%)
- Solving complex real-world problems (+2%)
- Being an informed and active citizen (+3%)

When compared to peer institutions, 2022 SSU first-year (FY) and senior (SR) students reported higher levels of:

trying to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective (SR +8%, FY +3%), including diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions (SR +6%, FY +8%), and connecting their learning to societal problems or issues (SR +3%, FY +3%), which directly relates to the values articulated in SSU's mission: preparing a diverse community of learners; contributing responsibly to a global society; advancing the region's cultural, social, and economic development. Compared with New England public university students, Salem State seniors also reported participating in community service or volunteer work 24% more of the time a week on average, which was found statistically significant by the assessors. Overall, the NSSE results demonstrate widespread student involvement in High-Impact Practices across demographic categories. The NSSE topical module on inclusivity and engagement with diversity results indicate evidence of students' sense of belonging and acceptance of diversity higher than peer institutions.

The results from these assessments have been shared on the university website, intranet, and with several campus constituencies; including the President's Leadership Cabinet, a forum of over 100 academic and administrative leaders; the Student Life committee; as well as promoted on campus social media and poster campaigns. A newly re-organized Assessment, Sponsored Projects and Institutional Research (ASPIR) division was formalized in 2023-24, which gives structure to institutional and departmental assessment that supports community engagement tracking and assessment.

SECTION 3: Institutional Identity and Culture

1. Specify changes in executive leadership since your last classification and the implications of those changes for community engagement. (Maximum word count: 500)

Since our last application, there has only been one change in executive leadership. In 2023, we hired a new Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion (VPDI). The VPDI and the AVP for Civic Engagement meet monthly to discuss how diversity and inclusion are being woven into all curricular and co-curricular civic and community engagement opportunities. Additionally, the university created a new position, Assistant Vice President for HSI-MSI Initiatives. This position meets with the AVP for Civic Engagement weekly, as both lead areas that are key to SSU's core identity, and it is important to map out how HSI-MSI initiatives will maintain a core focus on community engagement in equitable, anti-racist, and culturally appropriate ways.

To maintain our commitment to community engagement, Salem State knows it does not just require the dedication of the highest echelons of the university but also every decision-making

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level within and across the university. We have remained dedicated to this value in the hiring decisions we make and the individuals we select to guide and lead our university. In recent years, we have had smaller leadership changes that have created smaller ripples across the university that also continue to bolster and reinforce our commitment to community engagement.

A major collaborative initiative between these two positions was a New England Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution Conference hosted by Salem State in summer 2024. To support this work, the two AVPs applied for and received a Higher Education Innovation Fund grant for nearly \$250,000. This conference was open to the university and public and invited attendees to learn about the growing Latino/a/e/x population and the importance of Hispanic and Minority Serving Institutions in New England. Plenary and breakout sessions with local and national experts focused on data, policy, legislative priorities, best practices for recruiting and serving students of color, cultural wealth, anti-racist civic engagement, asset-based community development, inclusive pedagogy, language and translation practices, transfer practices and prior learning credit, campus leadership, grant opportunities, and much more.

Additionally, in 2019, the Director for the Center for Civic Engagement was promoted to Executive Director upon the creation of the Frederick E. Berry Institute of Politics. Since then, she has also been promoted to Assistant Vice Provost for Civic Engagement and Academic Strategic Support. These promotions have visibly shown the university's structural commitment to community engagement.

A new Associate Vice President and Dean of Students was hired, someone who previously worked at the institution and returned. This specific hire was significant as someone who was already familiar with and committed to the university's focus on community engagement and continues to move that commitment forward in the area of his work. With his hire, the university also saw the hire of 2 new Associate Deans of Students, one who has previous experience at SSU, and another who has worked at a Carnegie Community Engagement-classified university.

2. Provide a letter from the President/Chancellor or Provost (Vice President for Academic Affairs) that includes the following: (Maximum word count: 500)

- *Their perception of where community engagement fits into their leadership of the institution,*
- *Community engagement's relationship to the institution's core academic identity, strategic direction, and practices, and*
- *How community engagement is institutionalized for sustainability in the institution.*

Please EITHER copy and paste the text of the letter in the following textbox OR provide a web link.

See attached .pdf letter.

OR upload a PDF copy of the letter below:

- [Carnegie Community Engagement Classification Support - April 2025.pdf](#)

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In addition to the letter, provide evidence of recent statements of affirmation of community engagement. In the grid below, provide two excerpts from the relevant documents and up to two web links to the full document if it exists.

3.1. Annual addresses/speeches (Maximum word count: 500, Weblink (if available):

President John D. Keenan's remarks at the Salem Mayoral Forum held on campus on February 23, 2023:

"We are proud to host this event, which was a partnership among: The Frederick E. Berry Institute of Politics at Salem State University, League of Women Voters – Salem, The Salem Partnership, Point Neighborhood Association, Historic Derby Street Neighborhood Association. Tonight's Mayoral debate is an opportunity for the Salem community to hear from the five candidates running for Mayor and learn about their visions for the City of Salem. As you know, this is a special election to fill the remainder of the term made open by the successful election of Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll.

We have a full house tonight, and combined with the dozens, if not hundreds, of neighbors tuning in via SATV or through online streaming, I think it is safe to say that our community is invested in Salem and cares about its future. As both a lifelong Salemite and the president of Salem State, where many people in this room teach, work, go to school, or are alumni, I am not at all surprised.

One of the hallmarks of the Salem State experience is our commitment to civic engagement. In fact, with our long tradition of collaboration and partnership within the region, we consider ourselves to be THE Commonwealth's civic engagement university. As part of these efforts, and through the support of State Senator Joan Lovely and former Representative Paul Tucker, The Frederick E. Berry Institute of Politics at Salem State, known as the Berry IOP, was founded in 2019 to commemorate the legacy of the late State Senator Frederick E. Berry who passionately represented the 2nd Essex district for 30 years. The Berry IOP aims to expand political engagement at Salem State and in the North Shore. Last month, our campus received the 2022 Investing in Institutionalization Award from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition for our efforts in boosting student voter registration. This gives me great hope for our future."

President John D. Keenan's remarks at the Voices Against Injustice Salem Award Ceremony on November 15, 2022:

"Voices Against Injustice has a long tradition of recognizing exceptional human rights advocates among us and tonight is no different. As the Commonwealth's civic engagement university, Salem State University is deeply committed to connecting to the greater community. Civic engagement is embedded in the fabric of who we are and what we do. I often say that we not only prepare students for their careers, but we prepare them to be leaders in their communities. We are proud of the long list of ways in which our students, faculty, staff, and alumni have worked to fight for social justice, address issues of public concern, and create a more equitable and inclusive society for all. We are also proud to collaborate with Voices Against Injustice as we work to ensure that our future leaders seek solutions to difficult civic issues while prioritizing human rights and social justice."

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3.2. Published editorials (Maximum word count: 500, Weblink (if available):

AVP of Civic Engagement Cynthia Lynch's September 25, 2019 op-ed in Boston Globe: "Hopeful signs of new student voters"

"Friday's Globe was uplifting to anyone who values youth voices and activism.

After reading about student walk-outs in favor of climate advocacy ("For climate strike, they've done their homework," Page A1, Sept. 20), I turned the page to learn that college student voting rates had doubled ("College voter turnout more than doubled in 2018," Nation, Sept. 20).

This good news reflects my experience at Salem State University, where I serve as director of the Center for Civic Engagement. According to the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data that we received last Thursday, our students' mid-term voting rate nearly doubled in 2018, to 47 percent. This number is well above the 39 percent national average.

Considering that Salem State's student body is 44 percent Pell eligible and 35 percent first generation to college, our voter engagement efforts help to ensure that students of various backgrounds are represented in elections. In addition to our voter education and get-out-the-vote efforts, we also had an early-voting site on campus in 2018. I am grateful that Massachusetts law made this possible.

With other state legislation proposed to remove voting barriers, we might just have a student electorate more eager than ever to get to the polls."

AVP of HSI/MSI Initiatives, Elisa Castillo, is quoted in a July 15, 2024 Boston Globe article on the New England Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution Conference:

"'The National Science Foundation is coming to our conference so that they can educate all of us in how we can apply for grants,' she said. 'A lot of larger corporations are looking to HSI to help diversify their workforce.' She's already getting inquiries. 'Amazon had a robotics day and they reached out to me and said, 'Hey, you're becoming an HSI, right? Do you want to send some students to robotics day?' and I'm like, they're on the bus.'

Back to the conference, which is funded by a grant from the Healey administration: It will be held July 17-18 at Salem State and will feature sessions on financial aid, ways of engaging with Latino and other underrepresented families, and understanding who Latinos are in New England.

'Hispanics here in New England come from all different parts of the Caribbean and Central and South America,' Castillo said. 'My students are Colombian and Brazilian. Compared to the Southwest, our Latino population is also more multilingual. And our students are more likely to come from mixed-status immigrant families, which adds an additional layer of complexity.'

In the region, there tends to be a large focus on the private institutions. 'But I think our public colleges and universities are the workhorses of our region,' Castillo said. 'We're the ones educating our teachers, and our social workers and our nurses; we're the ones educating the population that stays in New England.'"

3.3. Campus publications (Maximum word count: 500, Weblink (if available):

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Excerpt from Roadmap to Servingness (2023):

“Community Building and Engagement with once and future students and families (alumni, prospective students and families)

Overview: Truly serving our students, families, and communities’ means being sensitive to the needs and assets of multilingual and diverse communities. More data is needed to better understand our community. While the percent of Hispanic students will drive our designations, it is important to ensure that all students of color and their families feel included in our Viking community, and all community members understand the benefits of becoming an HSI-MSI.

Short-Term Recommendations (Y 1-2): Implement robust data gathering practices to best understand our students and their families, and analyze data to ensure that we know:

- Who are our students now? Language use, specific ethnic identifications and national backgrounds;
- Who are we losing in the Admissions pipeline (including recruitment long before application) and why?
- Who could we attract to SSU as we move closer to full HSI-MSI status? Outreach and build network with Latinx and diverse communities and organizations on the North Shore.
- Create SSU HSI-MSI external advisory council of community partners.
- Support and network with regional organizations focused on the success of the Hispanic, Latinx, and BIPOC communities.
- Support the McKeown School of Education’s engagement with local school districts. Expand culturally responsive engagement with prospective students, their families, and communities.
- Host culturally responsive and welcoming BIPOC recruitment and community events.
- Highlight culturally responsive activities, services and curricula as part of the admissions process.
- Identify or increase the visibility of resources for students to help them access the university and educational programs (such as transportation, financial aid, wellness, etc.).
- Continue to offer connection and resources in various modalities (in-person/ remote) and languages (English/ Spanish/ Portuguese/ Creole).
- Support student life and campus partners in culturally responsive programs and communication strategies with Viking families.”

Excerpt from Admissions Viewbook (2023):

“We’re a vibrant community of learners and leaders in the historic seaside city of Salem, Massachusetts. Salem State University is a community of change-makers, positively impacting the Commonwealth through our academic programs and community engagement initiatives.

WHY SHOULD YOU CHOOSE SSU?

- A rich historical and cultural heritage, located in the historic city of Salem, renowned for its witch trials and significant role in American history
- A diverse range of academic programs and majors, catering to various interests and career paths
- Exploratory program for students who haven’t selected a major, providing opportunities to explore majors and interests
- Emphasis on hands-on experiences through internships, research opportunities and experiential learning, providing you with practical skills and real-world exposure to complement your classroom education

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- A supportive environment for students with diverse backgrounds and perspectives where you can forge lifelong connections with classmates, faculty and staff
- Opportunities to give back and make a positive impact through volunteerism, service-learning courses and partnerships with local organizations, cultivating a sense of civic responsibility and social awareness among the student body”

3.4. Other (Maximum word count: 500, Weblink (if available):

University Update from President Keenan (internal university email, October 2023):

“This fall, I am invigorated by Salem State’s vibrant campus life and the 5,908 students we welcomed to campus this September, including 837 freshmen, 264 transfer students and more than 1,500 resident students. Our campus has so much to be proud of as we look back on all that was accomplished over the last several years:

In May, we successfully launched our \$75 million comprehensive campaign, Meet the Moment™, centered on our commitment to student success. We’ve taken the campaign on the road and visited our alumni and friends in Florida, California, Maine, Washington, D.C., and locally to spread awareness and garner support. Together we have raised more than \$40 million toward that goal, including \$2.6 million raised in Viking Scholarships.

Earlier this year, we initiated Salem State’s 2023-28 strategic plan, Meeting the Moment, developed on the heels of its successful predecessor that brought about NECHE accreditation, Carnegie Classification as a Civically Engaged Campus, AACSB accreditation for the Bertolon School of Business, eight new academic programs, advancement breaking the record twice for the largest gift in state university history, a significant increase in the endowment, the Commonwealth’s investment in SSU BOLD, and so much more.

The creation of a working group for Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and Minority Serving Institution (MSI) initiatives further highlights our commitment to student success and accessibility for anyone that chooses to attend Salem State University. As an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution by virtue of those attending already, we’ve devoted resources to ensure a focus on servingness and have established the first senior-level position dedicated to HSI/MSI initiatives in Massachusetts higher education.

We’re continuing to remove financial barriers in support of Viking students by extending our freeze on tuition and mandatory fees through summer 2024, the second time in recent years. We also announced a partnership with North Shore Community College and Northern Essex Community College in which students transferring to Salem State with an associate degree from one of those institutions can be eligible for a \$3,000 scholarship.”

Excerpt from Provost’s remarks to new faculty at Salem State University (September 2023):

“Here at Salem State, we take seriously our identity as ‘The Commonwealth’s Civic Engagement University.’ We embrace partnerships with so many people and so many organizations beyond the boundaries of our campus.

In fact, I would like to draw your attention to an important characteristic of the SSU campus: there is no ‘main gate.’ There is no fence around us. There are no walls that hem us in. It’s almost always the case that as you move from one part of campus to another, you’ll need to walk through our surrounding community, with its homes and its shops, with an MBTA bus passing through and soon – very soon, I hope – a train station!”

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4. Describe how community engagement is emphasized as part of the institution's brand message identity or framework. (Maximum word count: 500)

Community engagement is a core focus of the Salem State brand as can be seen in the following examples. As previously described in Section 2, in 2022, the university reframed university branding for Salem State to be “The Commonwealth’s Civic Engagement University.” This rebrand has been enacted in every aspect of university marketing, promotion, and identity, to include university boilerplates, taglines, and mission and vision statements.

As the digital gateway to SSU, the website emphasizes the importance of civic engagement as an essential component of the university’s brand identity and mission. This can be seen through the publication of the Vision statement and Strategic Plan on the website, which highlight the university’s commitment to serving the communities of the North Shore, creating a globally aware and culturally diverse campus environment, and undertaking systemic change. The website also highlights civic engagement as a core value of the institution.

In addition to the website, marketing materials also reinforce SSU’s commitment to community engagement through new student orientation packets, the SSU Admissions Recruitment Material/Viewbook, the President’s welcome back letter, university social media platforms (X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Flickr, Instagram, and YouTube), and a 2023-28 Strategic Plan publication, in which civic engagement and public good are specifically listed as the second goal, but can also be seen threaded throughout each of the goals listed. The Center for Civic Engagement also has marketing materials that emphasize the importance of community engagement through their brochure, fliers, website, public Canvas page, and programs.

News coverage of Salem State focuses on community engagement and includes topics such as: First Year Day of Service, volunteer events with local organizations, community collaborations, student activism, sustainability, faculty community-engaged scholarship, political op-eds, racial justice on campus, Earth Days community-campus events, the Darwin Festival, and alternative spring break opportunities, among others.

The university social media accounts generally try to promote larger civic engagement events that are open to the public, such as speaker panels on ballot issues. The university sees solid engagement on posts related to service initiatives, like the First-Year Day of Service, especially when stories from the local news are posted. The President and the Provost routinely tweet from their individual accounts when they attend civic engagement events. Finally, student-focused accounts like @SalemStateCCE, @LifeatSSU, @FYSuccess, @belongingatssu, and @ssu_cjl encourage students to attend advocacy speaker events, register to vote, participate in community events, and sign up for service opportunities, among others.

Lastly, a community engaged university identity is also reflected in the university’s hiring practices through the hiring process. Once hired, new faculty and staff are introduced to the CCE through new employee orientations.

SECTION 4: Quality of Community Engagement Relationships and Academic

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Partnerships

High-quality community engagement partnerships are mutually beneficial, reciprocal and asset-based. Mutual benefit is the assurance that all parties involved achieve outputs and/or outcomes that serve their interests. Reciprocity includes all partners, especially community partners and students, as thought-partners and collaborators who help decide and inform the direction, activity, assessment, and dissemination of the partnerships’ efforts. Asset-based is recognizing and valuing the knowledge, capacities, resources, and resilience of all partners, especially community and student partners.

1. Describe at least five but no more than eight representative examples of academic-community partnerships (i.e., institutional, centers, departmental, and faculty/staff) that are connected to the academic core of the campus—which includes teaching, learning, and research, and illustrate both the breadth and depth of community engagement during the most recent academic year.

Please keep in mind that you will be requested to offer a list of community partners who will receive a partnership survey after submission of the application. All partners from this section should be included in the partner survey specified in section 10.

Partner #1

Project/Collaboration Title	Essex National Heritage Area
Community Partner Name	Beth Berringer, Director of Education Programs
Community Partner Contact	Info@EssexHeritage.org
Name of community organization/group	Essex National Heritage Area
Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.)	McKeown School of Education

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Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership	To encourage and support in-service teachers in Essex County to engage students in place-based learning that connects them with the “historical, cultural, and natural resources of Essex Natural Heritage Area.” Through this partnership, Essex National Heritage Area and SSU are able to offer EDG 825: Topics in Placed-Based Education to in-service teachers for a very discounted price of \$350. This course provides a structured project-based learning opportunity for in-service teachers to help them integrate place-based learning into their curriculum and pedagogy. Beth Berringer, the Director of Ed Programs at Essex heritage is the adjunct we hire to teach this course. This is a graduate-level course that in-service teachers take to earn additional college credits toward the Masters + 15 credits pay lane (local teachers unions have an established salary matrix. Teachers are able to access higher pay through completion of additional college credits. This course provides 3 credits.
Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the partnership	This partnership came to be because Beth was an adjunct for us in community education. In her work at Essex National Heritage, she provided professional development to in-service teachers. She had gotten a lot of feedback from teachers that they wanted this professional development but needed to take college credits to move up the pay structure. She came to leadership in McKeown and they created this course and figured out how to make it affordable for in-service teachers. This partnership is mutually beneficial to SSU as it helps fulfill our mission as the Civic Engagement University by responding to community needs and providing needed structure to ensure teachers are supported in this work and can access higher pay.
Length of Partnership	13 years
Number of faculty involved	1
Number of staff involved	1
Number of students involved annually	8 in-service teachers each year on average
Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership	EDG 825 Topics in Placed-Based Education
Grant funding, if relevant	Essex Heritage has received a grant to support this partnership
Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	N/A

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Impact on the community	Eight in-service teachers take EDG 825 that results in teachers gaining the skills to plan and implement place-based lessons to 275 children across Essex county, to include fourth and fifth graders studying the environmental impact of Ipswich river with the Ipswich River Watershed Association; high school students working with Freight Farm to learn about farming in limited space, comparing growth rates between hydroponic and aquaponic techniques, and providing crops to peers in the school's culinary program in a sustainable food project; third graders working with the Marblehead Museum, Maritime Gloucester, and Salem Sound Coastwatch to study the history of marine ecology and test current water quality and data about fish.
Impact on the campus	This partnership benefits Salem State as it continues to solidify our reputation as a resource to in-service teachers, providing excellent experiential, community-based opportunities. High quality opportunities and partnerships that meet the needs of the community help to maintain and increase enrollment in the school of education even as many universities face declines. Additionally, as in-service teachers take this professional development course and improve their ability to integrate experiential learning into their teaching, they become stronger practicum mentors for the pre-service teachers enrolled in our teacher prep program.

Partner #2

Project/Collaboration Title	Nursing Partnerships
Community Partner Name	Salem Council on Aging (COA) and Lynn Housing Authority (LHA)
Community Partner Contact	Teresa Arnold, Salem Council on Aging Director, tarnold@salem.com Jose Fernandez Castillo, Lynn Housing Authority, jcastillo@lhand.org
Name of community organization/group	Lynn Housing Authority, Salem Council on Aging, Salem Housing Authority, Peabody School System, Malden School System, Malden Department of Health, Lynn Department of Public Health
Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.)	Nursing Department
Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership	Through the NUR 415B Public and Population Health Nursing, students conduct community assessments that evaluate demographics, community resources, poverty rates, and unemployment statistics, and identify high risk areas. As a result of the assessments, the students engage in health promotion programs at various agencies.
Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the partnership	Nursing students, under the direction of clinical faculty, work in partnership with the COA participants to develop health education programs around important issues that impact the health and well-being of the older adults in the community. The nursing students provide education, counselling, immunizations, and screenings that help older adults live more healthfully and thus directly supports the mission of the COA while also providing students hands-on learning experiences.
Length of Partnership	2.5 - 5 years

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Number of faculty involved	2
Number of staff involved	
Number of students involved annually	100
Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership	NUR 415B Public and Population Health Nursing
Grant funding, if relevant	N/A
Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	N/A
Impact on the community	With the Lynn Housing Authority, students work with residents of the housing authority to offer health education, provide resources for residents facing food insecurity, teach residents how to create low sodium and healthy meals, offer exercise and movement workshops, and provide training on safe medication disposal. With the Salem Council on Aging, students provide Mobile Market support and other food insecurity resources, recipes that include ingredients that folks can get from the Mobile Market, and health prevention workshops. With the Lynn Department of Public Health, students have done significant work around multilingual health resources and education around food and housing insecurity. Students have also done epidemiology mapping of opiate overdoses in the city.
Impact on the campus	The nursing students gain valuable insights into the challenges that older adults living in the community face. Additionally, they learn about the myriad of resources available for older adults including transportation options, socialization opportunities, social work support around housing and utilities, and the daily congregate meals available at the COA. By learning about the resources within the community, the students are better prepared to develop realistic, actionable plans for patients returning to or coming from community settings. Students also learn about the impact of health policy on resource allocation in the community through the examination of the federal and state policies that support older adults living in the community. In working with the Lynn Housing Authority, nursing students gain cultural competency, communication skills, and collaboration skills by working as part of an interprofessional team within this setting.

Partner #3

Project/Collaboration Title	Center for Economic Development and Sustainability (CEDS)
Community Partner Name	Laura Swanson
Community Partner Contact	lswanson@enterprisectr.org

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Name of community organization/group	Northshore Alliance for Economic Development
Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.)	Lori Krebs, Geography and Sustainability Department
Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership	There are 34 cities and towns that make up the North Shore, many of which don't have the budget and resources to collect economic development data about their communities and depend on the Center for Economic Development and Sustainability (CEDS) at Salem State University for this information. The North Shore Alliance for Economic Development commissioned CEDS to produce the Future of Work: Overview of Trends Report. As a region, it is important to understand the workforce demands in terms of job types and what barriers or challenges future employees may have that will prevent them from staying in the region. This study assists policymakers, employers, and educators to understand the complexity of the future workforce. From January to May 2024, students enrolled in higher education across the North Shore were surveyed to understand how we can retain the talent of college graduates in the region. Five hundred and eighty respondents from 75 communities completed surveys and a further 89 participated in focus groups at participating institutions of higher education that provided insight regarding their future employment, including the barriers and opportunities they perceive.
Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the partnership	Through the GPH 410 Internship in Geography course, student interns created a North Shore Business Snapshot report. This annual report supports two student interns with interest in any of the following areas: business and industry composition, workforce development, data gathering, analysis and/or report writing. The endeavor is paid through contract work with MassHire and the Northeast Workforce Investment Board and then functions as a resource for policymakers and SSU. Students benefit from paid real world experience and the community benefits from the report as many of the municipalities who work with CEDS cannot afford to create commission reports.
Length of Partnership	20 years
Number of faculty involved	3
Number of staff involved	1
Number of students involved annually	30
Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership	GPH 315 Geography and the Global Economy, GPH 410 Internship in Geography
Grant funding, if relevant	N/A

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Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	Future of Work: Overview of Trends Report: Student team members assisting in all aspects of research were chosen from both graduate and undergraduate programs across campus and including, Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Business Administration, English, Education, and Geography and Sustainability. Future of Work – Talent Retention of College Graduates in the Region Report: A continuation of The Future of Work efforts undertaken by the North Shore Alliance for Economic Development, this study sought a deeper dive into retaining talent across communities of the North Shore.
Impact on the community	This research explores what the future workforce is seeking in terms of job types and industries and examines trends among successful businesses. The research is invaluable for the community via the North Shore Alliance for Economic Development to help employers and municipalities better understand this information. Specifically, data was gathered and analyzed in response to the changing landscape of business and employee-employer dynamics, including: Assessing best practices for the future of work such as hybrid and remote; Policy research aimed at understanding underutilized labor sources, workforce regulation and practices; Identifying the key skills employers are seeking from the workforce of the future; Understanding what students are seeking from higher education and their expectations post-graduation. Results were shared at the Future of Work Symposium held June 28th, 2023 at the Hawthorne Hotel, Salem MA https://northshorealliance.org/events/future-of-work-symposium/ .
Impact on the campus	Students working toward degrees in multiple disciplines are able to build their skills during (often paid) internships and research projects. Many of our students are not in financial positions to take on unpaid internships. Students are able to build professional connections they may not otherwise have access to as first-generation college students or those who wouldn't be able to access work experience as unpaid interns. In addition, this work helps higher education institutions, like Salem State, better understand the workforce demands of the region, allowing the colleges and universities to provide the programs necessary to meet them.

Partner #4

Project/Collaboration Title	VITA Tax Assistance
Community Partner Name	Shantel Alix Fernandez (NSCDC)
Community Partner Contact	shantel@northshorecdc.org
Name of community organization/group	North Shore Community Development Coalition (North Shore CDC)
Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.)	Currently, George Gray, SSU's Bertolon Business School. This program has run for over 30 years prior under the leadership of another faculty member.

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Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership	The SSU VITA tax assistance program is a free resource to the community in partnership with the North Shore Community Development Coalition. The VITA program is an IRS-sponsored program that provides underserved populations with free income tax preparation with the objective of maximizing available tax credits, with major emphasis on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). This partnership at SSU has existed for over 50 years and continued its efforts through the COVID pandemic. During that time, community members would safely drop off their tax forms at Espacio, a local community center located in the Point Neighborhood, and students would receive training over the phone and materials were mailed/delivered to their homes. The students receive training from December to January, and the program runs for 8 weeks, typically mid-February to April, ending before April 15th. The VITA student volunteers make a substantial commitment of time to participate in the VITA program; additionally, they attend approximately 22 hours of mandatory training and must pass three IRS certification exams before they can begin volunteering. Students work in a team setting to support community members with their taxes and all work is checked before being submitted to the federal government. Currently, VITA services are offered at the North Shore Community Development Coalition on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 4:00 – 6:00 pm, the Salem Public Library on Thursdays from 4:00 – 6:00 pm, and at Salem State on Saturdays. There are many students who continue in the program, post-graduation as alumni. Their most successful marketing strategy has been through word of mouth from community members.
Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the partnership	Students gain valuable skills that they can add to their resume while supporting community members with no-cost tax support. This collaboration has also helped community members to become more aware of what the North Shore CDC, SSU, and the Salem Public Library offers by opening their spaces to the public.
Length of Partnership	30 years
Number of faculty involved	Professor Gray is the only faculty involved in the process but a majority of the faculty in the School of Business promote this program to their students.
Number of staff involved	
Number of students involved annually	10 – 25 students a year.
Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership	Various tax courses on campus as well as managerial accounting.
Grant funding, if relevant	Professor Gray applied for a competitive grant in the past that was offered to universities offering the VITA program. That grant was used to pay for student meals.
Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	N/A

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Impact on the community	This program serves between 120 – 130 community residents a year. This program has served multiple generations of families. In the 2022-23 academic year alone, VITA completed 240 taxpayer returns helping filers gain refunds of over \$102,000 collectively.
Impact on the campus	Around 25 students a year are trained to support community members in doing their taxes. This is an excellent skill for students to learn and it is also a resume builder. Tax support is offered on our Central Campus, so it provides Salem State exposure to the community.

Partner #5

Project/Collaboration Title	LEO, Inc
Community Partner Name	Lisa Mcfadden
Community Partner Contact	lisam@leoinc.org
Name of community organization/group	LEO, Inc
Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.)	Occupational Therapy (OT) department
Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership	Each year, the OT graduate students work with the LEO early head start program to help the families of their enrolled students and the teachers screen for and address developmental delays/disabilities. This partnership stalled during COVID due to childcare regulations that limited adults from entering the program space. After COVID, the partnership was re-invigorated. Most recently, the OT students provided developmental screenings and hosted a family event to teach LEO teachers and families how to promote skill development in children with developmental delays. This was also a collaboration with world languages and cultures, whose students provided Spanish language translation and interpretation.
Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the partnership	The resulting partnership has benefited children and families in our community as well as enhancing the professional development of SSU OT students. SSU OT students were able to help our community partner by completing well over 100 developmental screenings with children at high risk for developmental challenges. SSU OT students also offered dozens of hours of parent training on topics such as facilitating motor development, potty training, toddler sleep strategies, and child mental health.
Length of Partnership	2018 - present
Number of faculty involved	5
Number of staff involved	1

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Number of students involved annually	46
Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership	OCT 715 OT Analysis and Intervention III; SPN 385 Community Placements (Spanish Translation Internship)
Grant funding, if relevant	N/A
Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	None, but a national presentation by a representative team was given at the May 2023 Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Meeting in Boston, MA.
Impact on the community	Children of color and low income families (those enrolled in LEO's programs) are 75% less likely to receive necessary developmental interventions before kindergarten. This developmental screening helps to close this gap and provides LEO staff and children's families with referrals to early intervention and strategies to support their children's development. Additionally, we send a group of students to LEO each year for First Year Day of Service.
Impact on the campus	Ninety-five Occupational Therapy students have benefited from the experience of an authentic collaboration based on equitable community engagement principles with a community-based organization serving marginalized and minoritized children and families. SSU OT students had the opportunity to practice principles introduced in the classroom - including pediatric occupational therapy assessment and intervention practices, cultural humility, and occupational justice - in 'real-time' and in powerfully interactive settings.

Partner #6

Project/Collaboration Title	Collins Middle School/SSU Near Peer Mentoring
Community Partner Name	Chelsea Banks, Dean of Innovation
Community Partner Contact	Cbanks@salemk12.org
Name of community organization/group	Collins Middle School
Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.)	Education Scholars of Color Program (ESOC), the Center for Civic Engagement, the Frederick E. Berry Institute of Politics

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Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership	This partnership paired freshman and sophomore students of color interested in teaching careers with 8th graders from Collins Middle School. The Near Peer Mentoring Groups met twice a month for the 2023-2024 school year to explore topics related to identity, belongingness, and college and career options. The 8th graders met in small groups led by an SSU student of color who was compensated for their time. Additionally, we have also partnered with Collins Middle School for Day of Service since 2019.
Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the partnership	This partnership allowed SSU students with an interest in teaching to build their leadership skills working with middle school-aged students while earning a stipend for their time. SSU students reported an increase in their sense of belonging at SSU and increased self-efficacy related to working with youth. The 8th grade students got to interact with near peer mentors of color, explore their identities, and familiarize themselves with the SSU campus. Many of the 8th grade students had not worked with college students before or visited a college campus. An additional partnership with Collins included a civic program where 8th graders collaborated with us by presenting election candidate profiles at SSU and sharing their research findings with our campus community during fall semesters. In the spring semester we hosted a Civic Brunch on campus that provided 8th graders and SSU students with the opportunity to network with local advocates on a variety of social and environmental issues over a meal.
Length of Partnership	3 years
Number of faculty involved	2
Number of staff involved	3
Number of students involved annually	10
Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership	All education majors take EDC 115: Intro to Education. This course includes the history and purpose of formal education and introduces students to a variety of education related careers that includes options outside of the traditional preK-12 setting. Whenever possible, the ESOC students are cohorted into the same section of EDC 115. Many of the ESOC students acted as near peer mentors while they were taking EDC 115 and were able to connect their experiences as mentors to what they were learning, gain experience leading small groups in an out of school setting and with an age group they may not have previously engaged with or considered working with.
Grant funding, if relevant	This collaboration has been supported by funded stipends from the WPS Institute.
Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	N/A

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Impact on the community	The Near Peer program was a successful aspect of the Collins Middle School Reimagining Middle School Pilot Project. Pilot students had decreased rates of absenteeism, higher test scores in math reading, and science, and self-reporting higher levels of belonging than their peers not in the pilot program. Based on the success of the Pilot, CMS has integrated Near Peer Mentoring into the entire 8th grade. For the civic program, 8th graders received college student mentorship to create civic action plans, which were displayed at our annual Hall of Fame where our campus community provided digital feedback through a QR code. We also provided five SSU student leaders with the opportunity to facilitate Advocacy 101 workshops with 8th graders at Collins Middle School while mentoring them through the process of developing a civic action plan. Our Civic Fellows worked one-on-one with 8th graders on campus to review their civic action projects and provide feedback on the 8th graders' final projects.
Impact on the campus	Our ESOC students built leadership skills, gained resume worthy experience working with middle schoolers, increased their sense of belonging and earned a stipend for their work. For the civics program, SSU student leaders were provided the opportunity to facilitate Advocacy 101 workshops with 8th graders while mentoring them through the process of developing their civic action plan. Our Civic Fellows worked one-on-one with 8th graders on campus to review their civic action projects and provide feedback, enhancing the college students' mentoring and leadership skills.

Partner #7

Project/Collaboration Title	Salem Food Pantry
Community Partner Name	Mike Lilley
Community Partner Contact	mikelilley@thesalempantry.org
Name of community organization/group	Salem Food Pantry
Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.)	Center for Civic Engagement, Economics department
Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership	In 2019, SSU offered a university warehouse space on Loring Avenue to the Salem Pantry to host a pop-up market for the community. This location served many residents but did not reach our student population as intended. The mobile market came to our North and Central campuses in the fall of 2023. Today the Salem Pantry provides free groceries on all three campuses at Salem State. Mike Lilley came to CCE to ask for a faculty partner to make sense of their data. We introduced Mike and Dr. Kurt Von Seekamm in Economics at the community partner breakfast. Dr. Von Seekamm and his students reviewed the data and made recommendations of where to set up mobile markets and help the pantry plan to meet needs outside of the traditionally known times (thanksgiving, winter holidays) and to help the pantry understand the patterns of who, when, and for how long people were utilizing the pantry service. This course runs yearly and collaborates with the pantry.

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Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the partnership	Students in Dr. Von Seekamm's classes engage in the high impact practice of experiential learning. The SSU Mobile Market serves over 400 students per semester. The Salem Pantry benefits from pro bono economics consultation and data analysis. Mike Lilley, Director of Programs and Partnership at the Salem Pantry also serves as the Co-Chair of our Community Partner Advisory Board, which advises the CCE on our work with the community; and two Salem State University employees reciprocally served on the Salem Pantry's board as well. Lastly, the Salem Pantry is able to leverage their partnership with Salem State to obtain grants and support their fundraising campaign.
Length of Partnership	5 years
Number of faculty involved	2
Number of staff involved	7
Number of students involved annually	6 in ECO401, 450 students for pop-up
Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership	ECO 401 Economic research
Grant funding, if relevant	The Salem Pantry has obtained grants to help support this work. Additionally, in Massachusetts, Salem State students advocated for and achieved a Hunger-free campus state line item in the state's budget, which allocated 20k at first and now 40k to address food insecurity on college campuses across the state.
Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	Dr. Von Seekamm presented on how economics professors can partner with community organizations to meet the data analysis needs of the organization and provide students with experiential learning.
Impact on the community	The Salem Pantry will be able to use the research collected in this project to better serve the community in more effective and efficient ways. Salem Pantry also recently held a Nourishing Our Neighborhoods event in partnership with Whole Foods at our O'Keefe Athletic Center to serve students and residents. This is a nationwide program aimed at expanding the capacity and capability for community-based food rescue organizations. The Salem Pantry was selected, highlighting its impact on the community. The Salem Pantry was awarded the Inaugural Community Partner Award in the fall of 2024 for their sustained commitment and leadership to advancing equitable and meaningful community change.
Impact on the campus	The mobile market came to our North and Central campuses in the fall of 2023. Today the Salem Pantry provides free groceries on all three campuses at Salem State. Students also benefited from the Nourishing Our Neighborhoods event mentioned above. The Salem Pantry has engaged our students in the following capacities: Volunteer and internship opportunities; Tours of their facilities; Providing nonperishables for our campus pantry; Providing ice cream donations for our Mobile Market Launch Party (Dec 2023); Serving as guest advocates for civic dinners; Serving as a member of the SSU Hunger Free Campus Coalition; and Serving on the Massachusetts Hunger Free Campus Coalition.

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Partner #8

Project/Collaboration Title	Sergeant Arboretum and Greenlawn Cemetery
Community Partner Name	Christine Lutts
Community Partner Contact	friendsofgreenlawn@gmail.com
Name of community organization/group	Sergeant Arboretum, Greenlawn Cemetery, City of Salem
Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.)	Biology Department, Geography and Sustainability Department, Art + Design Department, Megan Schumaker Murphy (as Faculty Fellow)
Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership	This project is one of our most interdepartmental projects. We currently have faculty from the Biology Department, Geography and Sustainability Department, and now the Art + Design Department. Biology faculty are working to identify and catalog samples of multiple unknown and rare species across a 55-acre public space. Faculty from the Geography and Sustainability Department are using GPS to map the cemetery. Faculty in Art + Design are supporting efforts to preserve the chapel artwork in the cemetery.
Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the partnership	Through this partnership, students receive experiential learning and community networking opportunities that they are able to leverage to complete research projects for competitive workforce and graduate school applications. In turn, the community receives arboretum information and mapping data, and are able to make more informed decisions as to how to maintain the integrity of the cemetery and natural space. Through this collaboration, Sergeant Arboretum has received official arboretum status.
Length of Partnership	5 years
Number of faculty involved	7
Number of staff involved	2
Number of students involved annually	52
Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership	BIO 300: Botany; BIO 407: Directed Study in Biology; GPH 340: Geographic information systems; GPH 343: Drones and Aerial Imagery: Applications and Image Analysis
Grant funding, if relevant	Faculty received a \$3k internal SSU grant to support community-engaged work.

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Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	Faculty worked collaboratively to map over 1,000 trees and shrubs across 25 acres (half of the cemetery) and identified 300 species of trees and shrubs.
Impact on the community	Through this collaboration, the Salem community has gained the establishment of an official arboretum and additional community green space, which benefits from the identification and mapping of species after information was lost to time. Community partners in this collaboration also benefit from continued consultations on where the best place to inter bodies to preserve rare plants is.
Impact on the campus	The impact of this collaboration on Salem State students is the opportunity for students to apply their scientific knowledge and skills to engage with a real world situation, and receive mentorship in academic writing and presenting as well as networking opportunities. Through this collaboration, faculty have been able to conduct research, leading to presentations and the opportunity for publications.

2. In comparing the partnership responses from your previous classification with the responses above, please reflect on what has changed in the quality, quantity, and impact of your academic community partnership activity. (Maximum word count: 500)

At the time of our last application, SSU's Center for Civic Engagement was in its infancy. We were focused on creating a foundational understanding of the community, learning from the university and the region what they needed from our Center, and just beginning to emerge as a nexus for community engagement. Now, as the Center enters our ninth year, we've established ourselves as an integral aspect of community engagement across the North Shore and can focus on serving and advocating with our community. Most of the partnerships we highlighted in our first application are ongoing but have deepened. We have chosen to focus on different partnerships for the reapplication in order to demonstrate the ever expanding breadth of community-engaged work at SSU. We've also seen a shift from partnerships that involve one faculty member or department to larger collaborations that span departments and involve multiple faculty members with diverse skills sets.

While the work of listening to our region's needs is ongoing, we are able to balance this work with providing support to faculty and staff professional development and mentoring related to their community-engaged work. We serve as a site for networking and matchmaking not only between SSU faculty and staff and community partners, but also between community partners working to address the same or similar pressing matters of our time. For example, during Spring 2024, the Salem Pantry Mobile Market began weekly pop-up stops at the Salem Community Life Center during the hours that SSU nursing students were on-site. Students assisted Salem Council on Aging (COA) participants in making healthy food choices based on dietary restrictions and health conditions as well as nutritious recipes based on the weekly food offerings that facilitated the participants' ability to easily create healthy nutritious lost-cost meals at home from the food available through the mobile pantry. The students printed the recipes with detailed preparation instructions and cost-estimates, in both English and Spanish, and provided the recipe cards to the participants. In addition to addressing food insecurity, the students' teaching improved participants' health literacy around cardiovascular disease and chronic disease management. An added benefit of the students' involvement is their ability to help older adults navigate the healthcare system, encourage use of preventative services, and foster

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social connections that are important to long term health outcomes.

A rather significant development that has occurred since the inception of the Center for Civic Engagement is that we now have the privilege of partnering with community organizations led by SSU graduates who participated in community-engaged learning and research projects during their years as SSU students. This is a direct reflection of the fact that our students are the community. They come to SSU aware of and committed to mitigating the pressing issues in our community, and they leave SSU with the knowledge, skills, and professional connections to do that work.

3. Describe specific systematic actions, strategies and assessment that are used to ensure the institution, academic units (colleges, departments), and faculty and staff are building partnerships that center mutual benefit, reciprocity, and asset-based partnerships. Be sure to describe: **(Maximum word count: 500)**

- a. **What activities and strategies are used to include community partners reciprocally for mutual benefit and collective action?**
- b. **How do these activities and practices encourage authentic collaboration and reciprocity with community partners?**
- c. **In what ways does the institution collect and share feedback and assessment of academic community partnerships and shared goals to deepen, understand and improve reciprocity, mutual benefit, and asset-based engagement?**

One of our most successful activities is our annual community partner breakfast, which has grown so much in the last two years that we were at capacity in the event space and have to move to a gymnasium space next year. Each year, this breakfast brings together representatives from community organizations and SSU faculty and staff. The main feedback we get from attendees is the tremendous value they find in having the time and space to network with others, which they don't have the time to do during the course of their usual work weeks. For several months after the breakfast, the Center of Civic Engagement fields multiple requests for followup and guidance on next steps for partnerships between faculty and community partners and between community partners. This breakfast also provides the opportunity for us to take in qualitative feedback from the community about their needs, experiences working with us, suggestions for improvement, and other needs. Additionally, we hold meetings with our community partner advisory board once a semester during which we actively seek feedback. For

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example, when the team at SSU was working to develop the Principles for Anti-racist Community Engagement, we sought their expertise. Once the principles were written, we hosted professional development and book studies open to community partners. This group was also consulted in the development of the university's current strategic plan.

To build on the community partner breakfast example a little more, this activity is a perfect example of an activity that practices authentic collaboration and reciprocity with community partners. Over the last decade, the CCE has worked intentionally to not only identify the disparate, individual community partnerships across the university but to build a robust and connected network of community partnerships that sustainably deepens our relationships across communities in authentic and mutually beneficial ways. Activities like the breakfast create organic networking opportunities for faculty members and community partners to not only connect across community-university divides but also internal university silos and disenfranchised community networks. The university not only benefits from our relationships with community partners, but they also benefit from accessing our robust network of community partnerships.

Formal mechanisms the university uses to collect and share feedback and assessment of academic community partnerships include: the CCE Community Partner Survey, the pressing matters survey, community partner breakfasts, Alternative Spring Break surveys of community sponsors, and the Community Advisory Board. Community engagement is incorporated into most campus-wide surveys, which gather data on student satisfaction, student participation, student learning, student outcomes, community impact, community partner feedback, and/or community participant response. Informal assessment mechanisms include community perceptions that are shared at community partner breakfasts and CCE summer networking opportunities, among the staff of the President's Office, Center for Civic Engagement, Civic Engagement Committee, Community Advisory Board, related student organization leaders, and respective community partners. These perceptions serve as a critical feedback loop as part of the on-going cycle of continuous improvement toward ensuring reciprocity, mutual benefit and respect between the university and the communities it serves.

4. What actions have you taken since the last classification to deepen and improve partnership practices and relationships—in initiating, sustaining, and assessing partnerships? How did these practices encourage authentic collaboration and reciprocity with community partners?(Maximum word count: 500)

During our last Carnegie classification process, faculty and administrators at SSU, in collaboration with community partners, began to develop a revised approach to community engagement through the development of an equity-based framework: Critically Engaged Civic Learning (CECL). CECL shifts service-learning from a student-centered pedagogy to an equity-based framework that views all constituent stakeholders (students, community members, community organizations, universities) as invested partners in the co-design, implementation, and evaluation of CECL initiatives, and is founded on redistributed power and authority to promote civic learning and social change. Professional development activities were created in support of educating SSU faculty and staff on approaches to more equitable community engagement.

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One demonstrable outcome of this professional development and shift in approaches to community partnerships was the creation of the Center for Interprofessional Education and Collaboration (CIPEC) in August 2023. This Center was created in direct response to critical accreditation requirements for healthcare professions and the pressing recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, whose guidelines advocate for interprofessional education and collaborative practice as essential strategies to dismantling professional silos, enhancing teamwork, and ultimately improving healthcare quality. In its first year, CIPEC established new community partnerships, including Spaulding Adaptive Sports North and Lynn and Salem Housing Authority, Community of Inclusive Scholars, New England College of Optometry Clinical Network, Massachusetts Gerontology Association, and The Pontifical University of Campinas in Brazil. They also collaborated with the CCE, CJL, Center for Childhood and Youth studies, the Center for International Education, and two Massachusetts community colleges to offer advocacy events and provide continuing education for healthcare professionals. Assessment of learning outcomes using the BASIC/L tool showed statistically significant improvements in attitudes towards collaboration, roles and responsibilities, and team functioning. All participants reported increased knowledge about each other's professional roles, ethics, and communication skills, with 95% expressing interest in additional IPE events.

In 2019, faculty and administrators at SSU received a Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) grant, which led to the creation of a multi-institution consortium, entitled the New England Equity and Engagement Consortium (N3EC), focused on improving community-university relationships through anti-racist and equitable community engagement practices and approaches. In 2021, this team received a second HEIF grant focused on understanding the effects of community-engaged teaching on minoritized students and ensuring community-engaged teaching moves beyond “service-learning” frameworks that reify racist practices and have negative impacts on students of color and communities of color. As part of this grant and as a member of N3EC, SSU helped establish local, regional, and national professional development programs to educate faculty, staff, and administrators on how to implement anti-racist community engaged principles and practices. Workshops offered at SSU have shown an improvement in anti-racist, equitable community relationships that promote reciprocity and mutual benefit.

SECTION 5: Faculty and Staff

1. As evidence provided for your earlier classification, you described the ways the institution offers resources and support services for faculty in any employment status (tenured/tenure track, adjunct/clinical/non-tenure track, and part/full time) and/or staff who seek to develop or deepen community engaged approaches and methods. For Re-Classification, describe what currently is in place and what has changed, if anything, with resources and support services for community engagement. Include which offices and/or unit(s) assume responsibility for these services, how often programs are offered and how many faculty and staff participate. How have the content, program, approaches, or audience for support services changed since the last classification? What have been the results? (Maximum word count: 500)

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The CCE continues to have a Faculty Fellow for Civic Engagement, who is a community-engaged scholar that provides direct support to any faculty and staff interested in community-engaged teaching, research, or other engagement. This position is filled by a full-time faculty member who dedicates 8-10 hours/week of their work week to these tasks in exchange for one course release. All full-time and adjunct faculty have access to instructional designers from SSU's Center for Teaching Innovation who work collaboratively with the Faculty Fellow and interested faculty to construct community-engaged curricular projects. The Faculty Fellow hosts multiple trainings and one extended community of practice per academic year. These training opportunities are open to any SSU faculty or staff member. Faculty and staff get a small stipend for completion of a community of practice. Additionally, the CCE, in partnership with the MSCA Union, offers T&P workshops for all faculty every year focused on the new community-engagement language in T&P evaluation. About 40 faculty a year are supported by these efforts. While the level of support needed and provided to each faculty member varies, faculty come away from these interactions with at minimum a foundational understanding of what their role is in reciprocal community engagement, a deeper understanding of the community in which they are working, and a plan for how they can leverage their skills to meet a community need.

In AY 23-24, SSU provided ten \$5,000 grants to SSU faculty for teaching and scholarship projects that aligned with the strategic plan. As community-engagement is a cornerstone of the strategic plan, many of the grants were allocated to civic learning and community-engaged scholarly projects including a Hip Hop Dance Symposium that brought together artists from the North Shore and Boston, funding a student researcher to work on inventorying trees for the Greening the Gateway City Program, and civic dinners to bring students together to share their experiences and learn about mental health community advocacy.

One specific professional development initiative that has been developed in recent years is focused on anti-racist community engagement (which is described in more detail in the next question). As part of this initiative, SSU hosted a two-day institute facilitated by the Faculty Fellow for Civic Engagement and Dr. Roopika Risam (Dartmouth). Participants from six other colleges and universities in Northeast Massachusetts attended the institute. Lastly, the Center for Civic Engagement and the Center for Inclusive Excellence have collaborated to provide professional development opportunities about anti-racist community engagement for SSU's internal Teaching and Learning Conference and at the First Annual HSI/MSI conference. Through this work, each participant has gained a solid foundation for this type of community engagement and participants who engaged in long-term deep work in the communities of practices internalized these principles and used their newly gained knowledge and skills to make changes in the field work aspects of the degree programs offered in their departments.

2. Check all of the community engaged professional development programs for faculty and staff that are provided. These programs provide educational training to improve community engagement across faculty and staff roles.

Topics may include but are not limited to the following: In addition, describe three of the topics that have been checked off above in the text box underneath the selected topic and include the purpose, audience, activities, and results. Include which offices and/or unit(s) assume responsibility for these services, how often programs are offered and how many faculty and staff participate. **(Maximum word count 750 per topic)**

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In addition, describe three of the topics that have been checked off above in the text box underneath the selected topic and include the purpose, audience, activities, and results. Include which offices and/or unit(s) assume responsibility for these services, how often programs are offered and how many faculty and staff participate. (Maximum word count 750 per topic)

Syllabus development and implementation planning
Partnership initiation, development, management, assessment planning
Remote/on-line community engagement (curricular or co-curricular)
Participation on learning communities, writing retreats, engaged learning institutes related to community engagement
Training to understand ethical engagement practices that ensure equitable access and opportunity related to community engagement
Documenting and evaluating promotion, tenure, and/or reappointment dossiers for faculty candidates and reviewers
Global and intercultural community engagement
Climate and Sustainable Development Goals connected to community engagement
Social innovation, entrepreneurship and economic engagement
Engaged learning webinars and workshops

5.2.1. Syllabus development and implementation planning

-- empty or did not respond --

5.2.2. Partnership initiation, development, management, assessment planning

Support for partnership initiation, development, and management support is a major strength of SSU's CCE. We begin this support as soon as new faculty members are hired by extending personal invitations to all formal professional development offerings, including a civic identity workshop that is structured to help new faculty identify ways their personal identity and values intersect with their professional expertise and skills to determine the type of community engaged teaching and/or research that may be the best fit for them. This kind of workshop is key in partnership development, because we are able to help faculty be honest with themselves about their community engagement goals, the skills they have to offer, and the values they are bringing with them to potential partnerships.

The Faculty Fellow reaches out to each new faculty member during the fall semester to invite them to lunch or coffee to learn more about their work and community engagement goals. There are usually about 30 new faculty members per year. During these meetings, the Faculty Fellow learns more about each individual faculty member's community engagement and research interests, the tools of their discipline, and their individual interests and skills. This allows for the Faculty Fellow to be thoughtful about what community partners may be interested in working with that faculty member, what kinds of projects we may want to approach existing community partners with, and what kinds of professional development and community engagement support interested faculty members may need. While there are multiple opportunities for faculty to participate in formal professional development about working with community partners, a lot of additional learning and growth happens within one-on-one conversations between faculty members and the Faculty Fellow.

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In addition to providing targeted support to new faculty members in the Fall semester, these opportunities occur consistently throughout the academic year for all types of faculty. The Assistant Director for the Center for Civic Engagement and the Faculty Fellow share the responsibility of this work. Now that the CCE is an established and trusted entity, it is common for community organizations to contact either the Assistant Director or Faculty Fellow and ask to be matched with SSU faculty that can help them meet an organizational need. As the CCE has close relationships with community-engaged faculty and staff, we are often immediately aware of which faculty have the knowledge and skills to engage in these collaborations. The Assistant Director or Faculty Fellow will set up a three way meeting between the CCE, community organization, and potential faculty partner to assist in hammering out details of the project and creating an MOU. One example of this was a recent request from the North Shore Alliance of LGBTQ Youth (NAGLY), a long time SSU partner. NAGLY received a small grant to begin performing arts programming for LGBTQ teens. The NAGLY staff do not have performing arts experience and were interested in partnering with a professor who could help them build and sustain this programming. NAGLY leaders shared that they wanted to ensure that any interested faculty also understood how to work with adolescents, especially those who are neurodiverse. NAGLY initially thought that the faculty person should come from one of the performing arts disciplines. While we do have many community engaged theatre and performing arts faculty, the Faculty Fellow had learned through her one-on-one conversations with new faculty that there was a member of the education faculty with extensive interest and personal experience in competitive dance and musical theatre and experience teaching neurodiverse teens and was able to successfully connect the faculty member with the community organization in a partnership to meet the community-identified need.

There are some instances, such as the Sergeant Arboretum Project that require a high level of support from the CCE to maintain long-term partnerships. For the Arboretum project, this occurred several times over the last five years when leadership was hired by the city and when the project scope expanded. While all parties involved valued the partnership, there were communication challenges. The CCE Faculty Fellow met with the whole group to listen to each party's concerns and priorities, identify commonalities, and revise the MOU. In these cases, it's often beneficial for both the community partner and the faculty member to have the CCE available as a mediator to ensure the partnership remains reciprocal.

5.2.3. Remote/on-line community engagement (curricular or co-curricular)

-- empty or did not respond --

5.2.4. Inclusion of community engagement in evaluation criteria of student learning outcomes

-- empty or did not respond --

5.2.5. Participation on learning communities, writing retreats, engaged learning institutes related to community engagement

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Salem State recognizes that although one-off training sessions are excellent ways to introduce timely topics and excite faculty and staff about community engaged approaches, meaningful learning most often takes place during sustained study done in and with the community. This is why SSU and the CCE sponsor yearly communities of practice, book studies, and multi-day learning institutes. During the review period, the CCE hosted a two-year learning community targeted at faculty and staff that were in positions to influence the ways in which their departments engaged with communities for student field experiences. Six participants engaged in this community of practice from Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Education, and Social Work. This group used the Principles for Anti-Racist Community Engagement created by the work done by SSU and three other Massachusetts state universities as part of the “Building on the Cultural Wealth of Minoritized Students: Anti-racist Community-Engaged Programming, Pedagogies, and Practices” initiative. Participants met twice a month for two years to engage in deep and transformative learning that resulted in structural program changes. Each member of this community of practice happened to identify as white (non-Hispanic). During year one, the group explored how their white identity impacted their interactions with community members and organizations. In year two, group members made changes to the systems and structures in place in their respective department to decenter higher education goals and create a more equal partnership, operationalized a more community centered and trauma informed approach to internships and field-based work, and provided community specific education for students before they entered communities for their field work. The participants used critical reflection informed by the Principles to informally assess programmatic structures that governed field work in their departments. Participants worked together to reconcile how to meet the licensing requirements set forth by the regulatory bodies in their fields that often center the student needs over the community with the best practices recommended in the Principles. While each participant was able to make some structural changes to their programs, they each recognized that work is continuous. Although the CCE no longer gives stipends to the participants, they continue to meet with each other informally at least once a semester and to seek each other out as critical colleagues with whom to continue their learning and programmatic improvement.

Salem State also hosted workshops open to the community and faculty and staff from any university to introduce the Principles for Anti-Racist Community Engagement. These workshops were offered online and attended by almost 100 people across Eastern Massachusetts. In response to the interest generated by this workshop, the Faculty Fellow hosted a year long book study open to members of the community and faculty and staff from any college or university. The book study participants read two chapters per meeting and engaged in critical reflection about how the principles highlighted in the chapters were or were not being applied in their institutions. Each session ended with participants making a commitment to a short-term achievable goal that furthered their personal and institutional commitment to integrating the Principles for Anti-Racist Community Engagement into their work.

Lastly, each year SSU’s CCE provides a summer institute open to our faculty and staff and those from other local colleges and universities that focuses on equitable community engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic occurred during this review period. During this time, the CCE provided extended online workshops aimed at helping faculty and community members understand and begin to internalize the Principles for Anti-racist Community Engagement. In AY22-23, we returned to in person events and hosted a two-day intensive learning institute centered on the Principles and supported by the Anti-Racist Community Engagement: Principles and Practices edited volume. In AY 23-24, SSU secured a grant to host the first New England Hispanic and

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Minority Serving Institution Conference. While not solely focused on community engagement, this conference was an act of community engagement meant to bolster the capacity of New England colleges and universities to meet the needs of their student populations.

5.2.6. Training to understand ethical engagement practices that ensure equitable access and opportunity related to community engagement

-- empty or did not respond --

5.2.7. Documenting and evaluating promotion, tenure, and/or reappointment dossiers for faculty candidates and reviewers

In 2018, the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE) agreed to new language in the faculty contract that overtly recognizes community engaged teaching, service, and scholarship within the criteria for tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review. In support of operationalizing this language, the CCE, in collaboration with the MSCA Union Salem State Chapter, created professional development opportunities for full-time faculty and evaluation stakeholders at state universities across the Commonwealth. In support of this effort, representatives from Salem State (CCE and faculty), Worcester State, and Fitchburg State applied for and received a Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) grant leveraging innovative strategies to diversify the professoriate by promoting awareness and support for the more inclusive criteria for tenure and promotion.

The major activities that comprised the grant work were designed to create campus environments that allow diverse faculty members who increasingly identify as community-engaged scholars to thrive as scholars, teachers, and leaders. The activities included creating resources to support community-engaged faculty; sharing those materials with evaluation stakeholders; creating marketing and recruitment materials that reflect commitment to equity and community engagement; and serving as a model for the other colleges and universities across the state university system.

The faculty professional development workshops leverage “A Tool Kit for Crafting Community Engagement: A Companion Guide for Professional Development” by Marshall Welch and Star Plaxton-Moore and focus on helping faculty find their civic identity, frame a community-engaged narrative, and advocate and self-advocate for community-engaged scholarship for faculty of color and minoritized faculty members. Faculty of color and minoritized faculty members play an essential role within academic institutions. Research suggests that faculty of color and minoritized faculty members demonstrate greater engagement in the community through scholarship and service activities, including community-engaged research (Miller et al., 2018). This translates into stronger ties between institutions and their communities as well as positive outcomes for students (Henson-Drake and Caouette, 2018).

This workshop helps attendees familiarize themselves with the MSCA Collective Bargaining Agreement language and additional documentation articulating the value and importance of community-engaged work, and connect with faculty undertaking community-engaged work who can help them understand and navigate the difference between formal written tenure and promotion policies and procedures and the unwritten informal practices that may more

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accurately reflect the culture and norms of the university. The workshop also helps faculty seek out colleagues who can help them understand the institutional culture as it relates to community-engaged activities, from teaching to scholarship to service; prepare to meet with their department chair and dean to discuss their community-engaged priorities; and how to get involved with the Center for Civic Engagement to build formal and informal relationships with others undertaking community-engaged work at the university. Another activity in the workshop helps faculty develop an elevator pitch to articulate why community-engaged scholarship is the preferred method for their research by being able to address how community-engaged scholarship answers a question that other methods of research do not address, as well as address how their community-engaged research is academically rigorous and publicly disseminated. Lastly, this workshop helps faculty create a plan to document their community-engaged work and the impact of their research, identifying the types of outputs that would demonstrate the value of their work and connecting their research to the language for community-engaged work in the MSCA Collective Bargaining Agreement. This workshop has been offered to full-time faculty every semester for the last 4 years, initially attended by 30 faculty and continuing to be attended by 5-7 faculty each semester.

The evaluator workshops focus on informing evaluation stakeholders about the need to diversify the professoriate in higher education, the link between diverse professors and community-engaged teaching and research, the new language change to the MSCA contract, and examples of community engagement in teaching and research. These workshops have resulted in more faculty and administrators being mindful of the language change to the T&P process, more faculty being able to create narratives that amplify their community-engaged teaching and research, and evaluators having an understanding of how to assess the new categories when reviewing community-engaged teaching, research, and service.

5.2.8. Global and intercultural community engagement

-- empty or did not respond --

5.2.9. Climate and Sustainable Development Goals connected to community engagement

-- empty or did not respond --

5.2.10. Social innovation, entrepreneurship and economic engagement

-- empty or did not respond --

5.2.11. Engaged learning webinars and workshops

-- empty or did not respond --

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5.2.12. Other: please describe

-- empty or did not respond --

3. Describe the formal recognitions provided by your institution through campus wide awards and/or celebrations for faculty/staff that partake in academic community engagement. (Maximum word count: 500)

SSU has many community-engagement awards, including:

Alumni Rising Star Award: Established in 2013 by the Salem State University Alumni Association, the Rising Star Award recognizes alumni who have received their degrees within the last 15 years and who are already making significant contributions to greater society through professional and philanthropic work.

Civic Engagement Hall of Fame: The Hall of Fame induction ceremony began in 2010 and recognizes outstanding service provided to the external community by faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Inductees are given the opportunity to select a community partner to receive a \$250 gift from the university to support a cause that is of importance to them. Additionally, in 2024, a community partner award was added to the Community Partner Breakfast to recognize and celebrate exceptional community partnerships.

Criminal Justice Department Civic Engagement Award: The Department of Criminal Justice annually recognizes two undergraduate students in the department who demonstrate exemplary service in support of community agencies, social justice, and civic engagement.

Friend of the Earth Award: Each year, two to three Friend of the Earth Awards are presented during Earth Days Week, and in 2024, the committee added a new category for Student Friend of the Earth. The recipient(s), which include local and national environmental leaders, are determined by the Earth Days Steering Committee, which is made up of interested faculty, staff, students, and Healthlink, a local environmental organization.

The Kenneth J. McIlraith Awards: These awards are given to student organizations who best exemplify extraordinary leadership and social awareness in community and cultural activities. These awards are intended to reflect and signify the outstanding contributions that former Interim President McIlraith made to SSU.

MLK Leadership Awards: These are presented annually to honor one student, faculty, alumni, and staff member for their outstanding and significant contributions to the causes of freedom, justice, peace and equality as exemplified by Dr. King.

Senior Awards: Each year, graduating seniors apply for one of two types of awards. These awards are highly competitive, representing the culmination of academic and co-curricular achievement. Demonstrated involvement in co-curricular activities is required of applicants for both of these awards. Many of the award recipients selected describe their active involvement in the community, such as participating in food drives, Special Olympics, internships with civic organizations, fundraising in support of local non-profits, and alternative spring break trips.

Student Awards Luncheon: Each year, student organization leaders and advisors nominate

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peers to be recognized for demonstrating a variety of leadership values. Specifically, student leaders are recognized with individual awards for exhibiting outstanding citizenship, social consciousness, and for promoting social change. In addition, student organizations are honored for their collective achievement in demonstrating community and social awareness.

The Alumni Office honors an alumnus every year with their 40 Under 40 award for remarkable individuals whose achievements positively contribute to the Salem State difference, either in their professions or communities.

The Center for International Education each year honors a faculty or staff member who has made exemplary contributions to global engagement on campus.

4. Provide five to 10 examples of staff scholarship (conference presentation, publication, consulting, awards, etc.) that have taken place since your last classification. A title may not convey how the example is about community engagement, so please provide a short description of how the activity is related to community engagement. (Maximum word count 1,000. Web links can be provided as part of the description.)

Anti-racist Community Engagement: Principles and Practices: Cynthia Lynch (AVP, Civic Engagement), Cindy Vincent (Assoc. Prof, Media and Communication), Roopika Risam (former Assoc. Prof, Secondary Education) published an edited volume, Anti-racist Community Engagement: Principles and Practices in Fall 2023. As part of this scholarly collaboration with Campus Compact/Stylus, they also offered national webinars, talks, and workshops on the subject matter and received the IARSLCE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion award in 2023.

Holocaust and Genocide Studies: The Salem State University Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (CHGS) worked closely with curriculum directors from several school districts in a professional learning community and delivered several onsite tailored programs for teachers and students during the 2023-24 academic year. For instance, in November and December, CHGS staff installed the traveling exhibit, "Evidence and Artifact: Documenting the Holocaust Through Images" at the Masconomet Regional High School and provided two days of onsite instruction for students around the exhibit. This impactful program received significant praise from parents and teachers alike and was later profiled in the Boston Globe. In May, CHGS staff provided an onsite workshop at Lynn Classical High School attended by 40 teachers and another onsite professional development workshop in Gloucester at the end of June.

Global Engagement: In 2023, Julie Whitlow, Vice-Provost for Faculty and Global Engagement, provided the Keynote address, "Building and Sustaining International Partnerships" at the Shaanxi Province Educational Forum in Xi'an, China. This talk was given to U.S. and Chinese university representatives and focused on what it takes to sustain global community partnerships with universities in China. For 22 years, Salem State has been part of a consortium of universities in the U.S. and China that grant dual degrees. This consortium is known as the CHEP-D China 1+2+1 program. On the U.S. side it is organized by AASCU. This program is key to our internationalization and global engagement efforts by helping us actualize our mission to prepare global citizens. Each year, Salem State administrators and staff travel to the conference and graduation for program completers.

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Future of Workforce: In May 2024, Eliza Bobek, Director of the Center for Teaching Innovation, was an invited speaker on The Future of Education Leadership Panel for the Tri-town School District of Middleton, Boxford, and Topsfield, MA. On this panel, Bobek discussed with community members the future of the workforce and how school districts can collectively build the knowledge, skills, and dispositions in their students for success in the future.

Community-Engaged HSI Work: Assistant Vice President for HSI-MSI Initiatives Elisa Castillo's work at the intersection of community engagement and HSI's engages community and cultural wealth in centering today's diverse college student population to better serve students, leading to increased academic outcomes, closing equity gaps, and liberatory outcomes. This work has resulted in some of the following recent presentations and publications: "Cultivating an inclusive campus roadmap to servingness: The emergence of a Hispanic-minority serving institution in the Northeastern United States," in J. A. Gutierrez, J. T. Lujan, R. M. Banda, A. M. Flowers, III, & N. Grafnetterova (Eds.), Student success and intersectionality at Hispanic-serving institutions: Policy and practice (in press); and the Salem State University Roadmap to Servingness: Preparing to become a Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution (2023).

Reproductive Health Access: Kalei Ensminger, Director of Counseling and Health Services, has provided several presentations over the past year with a focus on sexual and reproductive health access that looks to identify shared processes among campus constituents; identify school, community, and other advocacy group resources to support processes of evaluating and augmenting reproductive health care services on campus; and identify specific action steps towards implementing reproductive health care services on campus.

Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Shawn Newton, Dean of Students and AVP, has been recognized several times for his work in justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. Dean Newton was recognized by former Mayor of Salem and current Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll and the Salem City Council for his work as Chairperson of the Race Equity Task Force (2022); issued an Official Citation by State Senator Joan Lovely, on behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Senate, for his contributions to the Race Equity Task Force (2023); honored as a recipient of Black Excellence on the Hill by the State Senate for his community leadership (2022); recognized by Elevation Learning Center for "dedicated service, hard work, and for being an advocate for justice and equity in education" (2024). He has also provided several presentations in this area on various topics: the stigma around mental health and getting support; understanding racism and the journey of the race equity task force; black and brown male educators; justice, equity, diversity and inclusion; and entrepreneurial development and success.

5. Provide five to 10 examples of faculty scholarship from as many different disciplines as possible that have taken place since your last classification - a title may not convey how the example is about community engagement, so please provide a short description of how the activity is related to community engagement (Maximum word count: 1000). Web links can be provided as part of the description.

Critically-Engaged Civic Learning: Cindy Vincent (Assoc. Professor, Media and Communication) and Sara Moore (Assoc. Professor, Sociology) working with Cynthia Lynch (AVP, Civic Engagement) and Jacob Lefker (North Shore Community Development Coalition) published their

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article proposing a critically engaged civic learning (CECL) framework, which shifts service-learning from a student-centered pedagogical approach to an equity-based model that views all constituent stakeholders as equal partners in the co-design, implementation, and evaluation of CECL initiatives. This article was published in the Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning in 2021.

Marine Mammal and Shark Conservation: Jennifer Jackman (Professor, Politics, Policy and International Relations) is co-editor of a research topic for *Frontiers on Conservation Science on Rebounding Marine Mammal Species and Conservation Recovery Challenges* and PI for *Human Dimensions of Rebounding Populations of Seals and Sharks on Cape Cod*, a community-based research partnership including Northwest Atlantic Seal Research Consortium, Center for Coastal Studies, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, and Atlantic White Shark Conservancy, which surveyed residents, tourists and commercial fishers on attitudes towards seals and sharks on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Findings have been published in *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, *Biological Conservation*, *Ocean & Coastal Management* and *Frontiers in Conservation Science*; presented to natural resource managers, non-governmental organizations, and academic conferences; and received media coverage.

Public Safety: Gina Curcio and Joseph Gustafson (Professors, Criminal Justice) worked on three multi-year grants funded through the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security of Massachusetts. These grants include the 2020-2023 Uniform Citation Data Analysis Grants (Traffic Stops 3-Year Grant), the 2022 Shannon Community Safety Initiative (CSI) Local Action Research Partner Grant for the City of Springfield, and the 2022 Shannon Community Safety Initiative (CSI) Local Action Research Partner Grant for the City of Lynn. These initiatives contributed Curcio and Gustafson's expertise and scholarship in public safety to local cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

Teacher Professional Development: James Noonan (Asst. Professor, Secondary and Higher Education) published his scholarship on "Using deliberative democratic theory to reframe and improve teacher professional development" in H. Haste and J. Bempechat's (Eds.), *New Civics, New Citizens: Critical, Competent, and Responsible Agents* in 2023. Drawing on a broad survey of empirical and theoretical literature, Noonan applies the lens of political theory to propose an alternative deliberative framework that is more compatible with principles of effective learning and thus more likely to improve learning across contexts. He further examines exemplars of deliberative-style professional development at both the school-and system-level, and concludes that reframing the puzzle of professional development as relational (rather than procedural) offers new opportunities for improvement.

Teaching Hard History: American Slavery. Bethany Jay (Professor, History) continues her research on the insufficiencies in teaching the history of American slavery and how teachers can more effectively integrate a study of American slavery into their classroom. In 2022 and 2023, Jay provided talks and presentations on "The 'Why' and 'How' of Incorporating Slavery into the Public School Curriculum" (Difficult Subjects K-12 Teaching Institute, The Ohio State University, May 6, 2023), "Slavery Across the Curriculum: Family and Culture as a Way to Scaffold Hard History in K-12 Schools" (professional development presentation for Vancouver Public Schools, Vancouver, WA March 16, 2023), and "A History We Can All See: Using Archaeology in the Secondary Classroom," (Society for Historical Archaeology Annual Conference, Lisbon, Portugal, January 3-6, 2023).

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Advocacy for Immigrant Workers' Rights: Avi Chomsky (Professor, History) is a public scholar who has been active in Latin American solidarity and immigrants' rights issues for decades. She is a book author and regular columnist for TheNation.com, TomDispatch.com and CommonDreams.org. In 2022, Chomsky published several manuscripts on this topic, including: "The Many Workers of Capitalism" in Sharryn Kasmir and Lesley Gill's (eds.) The Routledge Handbook of the Anthropology of Labor and "The Two Colombias" in Catalyst 6(2). She also gave several talks, including: "The Many Workers of Capitalism" at the American Anthropological Association in Seattle in November 2022; the LASA/Oxfam America Martin Diskin Memorial Lecture on "Colonialismoy crisis climática" at the Latin American Studies Association in May 2022; and "Gringas, Ghouls, and Guatemalans Reconsidered" at the Latin American Studies Association in May 2022.

Climate Change: Noel Healey (Professor, Geography and Sustainability) is a researcher and activist who focuses on responses to the climate crisis and normative dimensions of rapid climate change mitigation. His core work revolves around climate change politics, global climate governance, energy transformations, restrictive supply-side climate policy, energy justice, and the link between academic knowledge, political activism, and policymaking. In 2022 and 2023, Healey co-published several manuscripts, including: "Fossil Fuel Racism in the United States" in Energy Research & Social Science; "Fossil Fuel Influence Within Higher Education" in WIRE-Climate Change; "How Inequalities Fuel Climate Change: The Climate Case for a Green New Deal" in One Earth; "Climate Policy Conflict in the United States: A Critical Review and Way Forward" in Climatic Change; and "Inequality Fuels the Climate Crisis" in The Hill.

University Debt: Joanna Gonsalves (Professor, Psychology) is part of a coalition of faculty and student organizers at public colleges and universities, entitled The Massachusetts Campus Debt Reveal Project, along with Richard Levy (Professor Emeritus, Politics, Policy and International Relations). In 2022, the team published a comprehensive statewide report on institutional debt and Gonsalves provided several talks and workshops with other scholars to include: "Activating Our Public Campuses: Organizing With Students to Improve Their Learning Conditions and Our Working Conditions" (Workshop provided to Massachusetts Teachers Association Summer Conference, Amherst, MA, with Dan Mulcare [Professor, Politics, Policy and International Relations] and Santiago, C.); "Campus Debt: Pushing Back and Reclaiming Our Colleges and Universities" (Presentation at 2022 Labor Notes Conference, Chicago, IL); and "University Debt Reveal: Organizing Against University Capital Debt" (Podcast for The International Journal of Equity and Social Justice in Higher Education).

6. Provide five to 10 examples of student scholarship from as many different disciplines as possible. A title may not convey how the example is about community engagement, so please provide a short description of how the activity is related to community engagement. Please clarify if the work highlighted is undergraduate or graduate student scholarship. (Maximum word count: 1000). Web links can be provided as part of the description.

Universal Preschool: Undergraduate honors student, Allison Smith, completed an honors thesis on "A Case Study of Universal Preschool in Salem, Massachusetts." For this research, Allison completed qualitative interviews with Salem School Committee members, the mayor, the superintendent and the deputy superintendent of the Salem Public School District, local childcare providers, a preschool parent, an early childhood cost modeler, and an early childhood

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lobbyist to get a complete case study of preschool (with the goal of universal preschool) in Salem. This was the first time anyone had compiled this historical knowledge into one place and paired it with academic research. The Superintendent and School Committee asked that Allison present her work to them so that her thesis would be entered as a record into their minutes. After the completion of this work, Allison achieved a paid position as a teaching fellow at one of the Salem public schools and is committed to working in the Salem Public School District.

Arboretum Project: A community-based participatory research project that includes student researchers and faculty from Salem State and members of the Friends of Greenlawn Cemetery non-profit and City of Salem Cemetery Commission. Salem State followed the lead of the Friends of Greenlawn and City of Salem to rediscover a collection of woody plants in a 55-acre municipal cemetery. The goal of the collaboration was to inventory trees and shrubs, and map, tag, and measure specimens. The inventory has grown to over 800 species and public education programs share the results in real-time. Research was presented at the American Public Gardens Association annual conference, "An Historic Arboretum in Salem, MA, Rediscovered Through A Collaboration Between A City, Its Community, and A University."

Athletic Civic Engagement: Undergraduate student, Miah Reyes, presented her research, "Fostering Civic Engagement among SSU Athlete Students" at Salem State's annual research day in May 2024. This presentation highlights a campus initiative that sought to bridge the gap between student athletes and civic engagement. By conducting research, including in the form of opinion polls, the student gathered data on Salem State student athletes and created a 10-year plan to encourage their civic engagement. This project was endorsed and supported by the Center for Civic Engagement, the Institute of Politics, and The Team and can be used as a template and example to implement in all NCAA institutions.

Governance Transparency: Undergraduate honors student, Elden J. Hubisz, completed an honors thesis on "The Importance of Transparency in Municipal Governance: A Case Study of North Shore Massachusetts" in May 2024. This research explores the factors influencing citizen engagement: What are the factors influencing citizen participation in local government, and what municipalities encourage these interactions? An incident in Massachusetts where a private citizen was denied their civil rights at a ZBA meeting, provided the context to explore the limits of public interactions and government transparency. Using a grounded theory approach, survey data was collected and analyzed along with socioeconomic and geographic factors to create a GIS (Geographic Information System) product that could be useful in examining citizens' participation in local government. The student tested the limits of public interactions and governmental transparency in a survey open to Salem State students and North Shore townspeople. The data showed a correlation between interactions, location, and several different factors such as race, income, social status, employment, business ownership, and utilization of governmental services. Using the grounded theory approach, the collected data was used to create a GIS product. Conclusions and suggestions drawn from pairing the GIS product with survey data are offered to strengthen interactions in both urban and regional planning as well as civic engagement across geographies.

Water Advocacy: Undergraduate honors student, Bailey McCaul, completed an honors thesis on "Water Advocacy in Massachusetts: A Guide for Curious and Concerned Citizens" in May 2024. This paper addresses the need for citizen engagement and action in the face of the ongoing human-made climate crisis that is rapidly depleting Earth's finite freshwater resources. Focusing on the Ipswich River in Essex County, Massachusetts, identified as the 8th most endangered

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river in America, the research done explores the interconnected challenges of excessive withdrawals, rising temperatures, droughts, floods, pollution, and invasive species paired with the multifaceted challenges surrounding water politics, highlighting the complexities of collaborative governance across multiple jurisdictions. The solution proposed is the creation of a climate action toolkit specifically tailored to freshwater bodies in Massachusetts, aiming to bridge the information gap between governing bodies, local organizations, and the average citizen to foster grassroots action. Existing water conservation toolkits, guides, and websites often target governing bodies and corporations, or provide low-effort, generic, and vague recommendations that are well-known in the current year. In contrast, this toolkit seeks to empower citizens with knowledge about their role in water management and inspire community and political mobilization through advocacy and lobbying education. Drawing on extensive research from scientific studies, environmental reports, and scholarly insights, this thesis advocates for the pivotal role of citizens in driving effective change. It emphasizes the need for accessible, localized tools that empower individuals to become informed decision-makers and proactive contributors to environmental conservation efforts.

7. Describe how the institution regularly measures and assesses faculty community engagement, particularly as it relates to outputs and outcomes relative to teaching, research/creative activity, and/or service. How is data used to improve programs and outcomes? How have the results changed since your last classification? Provide relevant links. (Maximum word count: 500)

For faculty outcomes and impacts, SSU uses several campus-wide assessment mechanisms, including department annual reports, First Year Day of Service surveys, a Pressing Matters survey, and university strategic plan tracking for civic engagement. Department reports are collected annually and ask departments to discuss faculty activities and updates, which are assessed as they relate to each of the strategic plan goals, particularly community and civic engagement in teaching, research, and service. First Year Day of Service surveys annually collect faculty feedback regarding their experience and participation in the Day of Service. This feedback is then assessed by the CCE to identify ways in which the event can be improved and made more reciprocal. Civic dinners also provide opportunities for faculty to provide feedback to the CCE on additional advocacy efforts that can be integrated into the student learning experience.

The CCE recently distributed a Pressing Matters survey, a survey of community members' priorities, to develop a foundational understanding of the social issues that our community finds most pressing. The survey was available in English and Spanish, posted on university social media, in weekly announcements, department newsletters, shared during campus events including the community partner breakfast, and available on paper via in-person tabling across campus locations. In addition to asking respondents to choose the three issues they find most pressing from a list, the CCE also collected basic demographic data including relationship to the university and provided an option for respondents to give additional feedback. Responses were collected November 2023 through February 2024, where approximately 17% of the respondents identified as faculty members (n=69). The results of this data have been used to plan and implement CCE and IOP programming that support how faculty are addressing pressing matters in their teaching and research.

As an individual goal and a through line of the 2023-2028 strategic plan, data results on civic

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and community engagement are shaping the professional development being offered to faculty. The Office of Inclusive Excellence and the Center for Civic Engagement collaborated on a series of workshops during AY 23/24 on Anti-Racist Community Engagement that included a book group with faculty and community partners utilizing the newly published edited volume. Additionally, a traditional faculty workshop on Anti-Racist Community Engagement, a session at Salem State's annual spring faculty research day, and a session at the two-day HSI summer conference were also offered to help support faculty development in these areas.

8. Indicate the campus approach to faculty tenure and promotion: (Check all that apply)

My campus has a contract or tenure track structure rather than a tenure and promotions structure.

9. Describe policies and practices that support faculty community engagement at your institution, such as search and recruitment, annual review, reappointment, , bonuses, and/or merit pay. Do NOT include promotion and/or tenure policies in this response. Specify if these policies are different for faculty of different employment statuses (tenured/tenure track, adjunct/clinical/full time non-tenure track, and part/full time.) (Maximum word count: 500)

Salem State seeks to recruit and retain faculty and staff who are civically minded and want to contribute to a culture of community engagement. When jobs are posted there is always a statement that indicates to jobseekers that SSU values community engagement. For instructors (full- and part-time) the recruitment language in each job posting reads: "Salem State University offers an environment where academic excellence and student success are paramount. We seek faculty who are passionate about educating a diverse student body of learners and leaders and who thrive in a collegial and collaborative setting. As an institution dedicated to civic engagement and the success of first-generation college students, we value initiative, continuous improvement and accountability. Join our community, where your scholarship and teaching will have a lasting impact on both the university and the greater world."

Once the faculty have been recruited and hired, all Salem State faculty regardless of full/part time or tenure track status have access to one-on-one support from the Faculty Fellow for Civic Engagement. It is regular practice for the Faculty Fellow to reach out to each newly hired faculty member in the fall of a new academic year to welcome them to the institution and orient them to resources. Examples include, connecting new faculty with the Faculty Fellow for the Institutional Review Board (IRB), should they need assistance submitting community-based research to the IRB, and connecting new faculty with the Center for Teaching Innovation's instructional designers who are well-versed in community-engaged pedagogies.

At SSU, annual review, reappointment, and pay structures are linked to tenure and promotion and dictated by the union contract.

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10. Describe the policies for faculty promotion (at tenure-granting campuses) from all levels of the institution (campus, college or school, department) that specifically reward faculty community-engaged scholarship. If there are separate policies for tenured/tenure track, full time non-tenure track, part time, research, and/or clinical faculty, please describe those as well. Describe the pervasiveness of the policies outlined in question. For example, are they practiced across the institution? By most departments? By a few? (Maximum word count: 500)

Salem State is part of a nine-university system that is governed through a collective bargaining agreement negotiation process between the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education for all full-time faculty members. This contract is applied equally to all state university campuses within this system at the institution level (i.e., not college or department). In 2018, the Salem State Chapter of the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) developed edits to the faculty contract for the recognition and evaluation of community engagement for tenure and promotion that were then adopted by unit members and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (ratified May 9, 2018). These changes include the following:

MSCA (2023-2024) Collective Bargaining Contract, Article VIII A (1), "The following criteria shall be used in the evaluation of all full-time members of the faculty:"

"a. i. teaching effectiveness, including pedagogical experimentation and community-engaged teaching methods, as exhibited in lecture, seminars, internships, independent studies and other instructional settings.; ii. academic advising, as prescribed in Section A (3) of Article XII;"

"b. i. continuing scholarship, including (A) contributions to the content of the discipline; (B) participation in or contributions to professional societies and organizations; (C) research as demonstrated by published or unpublished work (or, where applicable, artistic or other creative activities); (D) work toward the terminal degree or relevant postgraduate study or (E) scholarship that includes community-engaged approaches and methods of dissemination."

"b. ii. other professional activities, which by way of example shall include such matters as public service, community engaged service, and contributions to the professional growth and development of the university community."

These criteria for tenure and promotion apply to all full-time faculty and librarians at Massachusetts public state universities and across all campus units. As such, those who engage in community-engaged pedagogy, scholarship, and/or service can be evaluated on this work and possibly receive tenure and/or promotion.

11. In the period since your last classification, if you made revisions to faculty community engagement reward policies to promotion and tenure (at tenure granting campuses) please address the following where applicable:

a. Describe how policies reward faculty for community engaged teaching and learning, research, creative activity, and service. Provide examples of policy descriptions that support community engagement in each of the faculty roles below:

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(i) Community engaged teaching and learning (Maximum word count: 500)

As stated above, this has been included for evaluation in the awarding of tenure and/or promotion for full-time faculty and librarians since 2018.

(ii) Community engaged research and creative activity (Maximum word count: 500)

As stated above, this has been included for evaluation in the awarding of tenure and/or promotion for full-time faculty and librarians since 2018.

(iii) Community engagement as a form of service (Maximum word count: 500)

As stated above, this has been included for evaluation in the awarding of tenure and/or promotion for full-time faculty and librarians since 2018.

b. Cite three examples of college/school and/or department-level policies, with text taken directly from policy documents, that specifically reward faculty for community engagement across teaching, research, creative activity, and service. Describe the pervasiveness of the policies. (Maximum word count: 500)

All personnel action policies are developed at the state level in negotiation with the MSCA union and executed at the university-level, not the college/school or department levels. Revising the MSCA collective bargaining agreement was an important step in prioritizing community and civic engagement on the campus and beyond. The contract specifically prohibits the development of departmental/school-level policy that conflicts with the statewide contract, thus laying the groundwork for a more pervasive acceptance of community-engaged work.

c. If your campus has revised its policies specifically to incorporate community engagement, describe when the revisions occurred and the process that resulted in the revisions. (If policies have not been revised, skip to "d"). (Maximum word count: 500)

Policies have not been revised since 2018 with the inclusion of community engagement.

d. Describe the involvement of the president/chancellor, provost, deans, chairs, faculty leaders, chief diversity officer, human resources, community engagement center director, or other key leaders in revising promotion and tenure guidelines to reward faculty scholarly work that uses community engaged approaches and methods. (Maximum word count: 500)

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In 2016, with a grant from the National Education Association, Salem State's Center for Civic Engagement hosted a day-long conference in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Education to engage faculty and staff across public Massachusetts colleges and universities in system-wide conversations about how to operationalize civic learning on their campuses and how to promote new curricula that embed civic learning in courses across disciplines. A group of state university faculty, energized by an address by John Saltmarsh about public scholarship, agreed to lobby their campus leaders to elevate the work of community-engaged faculty, including overt recognition in the hiring, tenure and promotion process. After the conference, the Salem State Chapter of the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) developed edits to the faculty contract that were then adopted by unit members and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (ratified May 9, 2018). Even prior to these edits, Salem State's leadership was, and continues to be, supportive of community engaged faculty in personnel actions. Annually, a tenure and promotion (T&P) workshop is held by the Office of Academic Affairs and the MSCA chapter, which includes advice on how faculty can frame their community-engaged teaching, scholarship and service in a manner consistent with the language of the contract.

e. Describe any products resulting from the revision process; i.e., internal papers, public documents, reports, policy recommendations, etc. (Maximum word count: 500)

In 2019, Salem State was part of a multi-institution Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) grant from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education to build a consortium of faculty leaders and administrators across Massachusetts state university campuses and create resources to support community engaged faculty work and support a commitment to building and maintaining diversity in the faculty. This \$100,000 grant built the foundation for the New England Equity and Engagement Consortium (N3EC), and used an innovative strategy to diversify the professoriate by promoting awareness and support for the more inclusive community engagement criteria for tenure and promotion in the Massachusetts State College Association union contract. As part of this grant work, consortium members researched best practices on how to systematically evaluate and reward community engagement practices through the T&P process. These were then turned into resources that were shared across the consortium and via a statewide symposium. A symposium, "Advancing Equity Through Public Engaged Scholarship: Transforming Faculty Reward Policy and Practice", was successfully planned and held as a virtual symposium with approximately 200 attendees. Additionally, each campus held various workshops. At Salem State, we held three workshops for 30 faculty members that helped them frame their community-engaged work for review by T&P committees. Our team also held a T&P evaluator workshop for deans, department chairs, and T&P committee members. A major institutional milestone occurred during President Keenan's State of the University address in 2021 in which he recognized that valuing community-engaged teaching and scholarship in the T&P process is one of the top strategies SSU is using to diversify and support faculty. This recognition highlighted the institutionalization of this grant work. The Center for Civic Engagement continues to provide these workshops every year at Salem State.

12. If revisions have not taken place but there is work in progress to revise promotion and tenure (at tenure granting institutions) guidelines to reward faculty scholarly work that uses community engaged approaches and methods, describe the current work in progress, including a description of the

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process and who is involved. Describe how the president/chancellor, vice presidents/chancellors, provost, vice provosts, deans, chairs, faculty leaders, chief diversity officer, community engagement center director, or other key leaders are involved. Also describe any products resulting from the process; i.e., internal papers, public documents, reports, policy recommendations, etc. Specify if these policies are different for faculty of different employment statuses (e.g., adjunct, full-time contract, tenure track, tenured, etc.). (Maximum word count: 300)

As stated above, community engagement has been included in evaluation criteria for awarding tenure and/or promotion for full-time faculty and librarians since 2018. The Center for Civic Engagement continues to provide professional development for union members to understand the contract language and develop their review portfolios successfully.

SECTION 6: Curricular Engagement

The questions in this section use the term “community engaged courses” to denote academically based community engaged courses. Your campus may use another term such as service-learning, community-based learning, public service courses, etc.

1. Provide a summary narrative describing overall changes and trends that have taken place related to curricular engagement on campus since the last classification. In your narrative, address the trajectory of curricular engagement on your campus -where have you been, where are you now, where are you strategically planning on going? (Maximum word count: 500) Web links can be provided as part of the description.

The data and information in this section will show that curricular community engagement at Salem State has definitely ebbed and flowed since our last application. Primarily this can be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic, Salem State saw a decline in student enrollment during this review period, which can be due to a few different factors: shift in MA student enrollments from public state universities during the pandemic, decline in community college enrollments during the pandemic (which feeds our university enrollments), decline in regional high school graduates, and the introduction of free community college in MA last year that may be attracting undergraduates who may typically complete their general education at Salem State. Additionally, during the pandemic, Salem State, like many publicly-funded universities, endured a financial hardship that led to a voluntary separation incentive program, as well as an institution-wide focus on reducing part-time adjunct faculty support. These situations combined have created our current climate of fewer students, fewer faculty, and therefore fewer overall quantities of curricular community-engaged opportunities.

That being said, as this entire application is showing, Salem State, institutionally, has double-downed on our commitment to community engagement through the institutionalization of policies and infrastructures that allow these opportunities to exist, continue, and thrive. Additionally, campus-wide, we continue to see this commitment across all our academic

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departments and most of our co-curricular student support offices (as will be explained in the next section). Due to our commitment to sustainable, reciprocal community relationships, the opportunities we do have are built on a strong foundation that provides robust experiences for our students and community partners. While the enrollment future for the university is still stabilizing and fall 2024 saw the first increase since 2012, we are certain that our commitment to curricular community engagement has not and will not falter as we continue to bolster the strong foundation we've already laid.

2. As evidence provided for your earlier classification, you described an institution-wide definition of community engaged courses used on campus. For Re-Classification, describe the institutional-wide definition and standards used for community engaged courses and provide examples of: (Maximum word count: 500)

- 1. Institutional, departmental, and/or programmatic definitions, learning outcomes, standards, and/or required components.*
- 2. Process for ensuring that the standards for community engagement are part of the course design) e.g., course designation, curriculum review); and*
- 3. Explain any changes to coursework that occurred as a result of assessment activities since your last classification.*

1. At Salem State, we define civic learning and community engagement as leveraging and building on student, faculty, and staff knowledge and experience to equitably collaborate with community partners, address pressing public issues, and align curriculum, scholarship, research, and creative activities with the public good.

2. A class section tag "civic learning" was recently approved through the university governance process and will be used to designate individual class sections that include a civic learning component as well as those that also include engagement with the community. To be tagged as "civic learning" a class section must: 1) Have class goals and objectives that aid students in the "acquisition of the knowledge, intellectual skills, and applied competencies that citizens need for informed and effective participation in civic and democratic life" (BHE, 2014, pp 2-3). 2) Include learning experiences that focus on building knowledge and communication skills that will help students engage in advocacy, activism, and/or collective action and/or building knowledge and skills related to contemporary political issues and institutions and or public policy, or on understanding various types of social inequalities with the goal of promoting meaningful social change, or engaging in research with or for a community partner. 3) Indicate the "civic learning" course tag on the syllabus. Section tagging will be implemented through the Student Information System by placing these designations among the options for class section instructions to select. Once a faculty member has designated their section with the civic learning tag, it will be included in searchable class attributes. Students will then be able to see section tags when they register for classes and be able to search for class sections that are tagged as civic learning. Faculty will designate their civic learning sections each semester recognizing that class content changes over time.

3. The university has multiple assessment mechanisms in place to gather data about student learning outcomes, including: Student Learning Outcome Scorecards; external accreditation/regularly scheduled program reviews; and the Multi-State Collaborative (MSC), which assesses student artifacts across institutions and states by applying the LEAP VALUE rubrics. Academic departments engage in program reviews on a five-year cycle coordinated

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through academic affairs. Some reviews are conducted by national accreditation bodies, while others are conducted by independent academic peers. For example, for the majors pursuing teacher licensure, the McKeown School of Education assesses in the following ways: (1) Three standardized programmatic assessments prior to student teaching. (2) State licensure exams across various curricula. (3) Assessment of Professional Dispositions at multiple points in studies. (4) At least two field visits and a feedback session from the Field Supervisor. Schoolwide, during the culminating demonstration stage of the program, practicum students receive co-supervision from a Faculty Program Supervisor in the Supervising Practitioner's classroom/setting while developing competency relevant to their discipline/content area. Lesson plans and/or summative assessments are collected and reviewed throughout their practicum/capstone experiences. Finally, all "lead program faculty" are responsible for annually reporting evidenced-based programmatic changes for continuous improvement.

3. Describe how community engagement is integrated into traditional curricular structures. Structures may include, core courses, capstone/senior-level project, first-year course/sequence, general education, in the majors/departments, minors, graduate courses, or medical education, training or residencies. Provide two to three examples. (Maximum word count: 500 per example)

As part of the general education curriculum, all incoming freshman and transfer students who have completed fewer than 15 course credits are required to complete a first-year seminar (FYS). Some examples of FYS courses that included a community engagement component during this review period are:

Healthcare Studies FYHC 100: It's a Dogs' Life.... Exploring the Power of Pet Persuasion. Over the course of the semester, students learned about the impact dogs have on human social, physical, emotional, spiritual, and occupational well-being. The service-learning project incorporated a fundraiser for the Northeast Animal Shelter, which was an on-going component of the course. Since first offered, students have raised thousands of dollars for the shelter. This course was part of a first-year Learning Community (Immersed in Wellness) for Healthcare Studies majors that provided students an opportunity to discover the meaning of well-being and its impact on the healthcare industry through readings, guest speakers, discussions, and collaborative projects.

Interdisciplinary Studies FYID 100: Peace and Peacebuilding. This course has collaborated with colleagues in Mykolaiv, Ukraine at Petro Mohyla Black Sea State University since February 2022, where students enrolled in this FYS communicate and work with students from the Department of English Philology on a range of projects from common interests, to each country's conflict histories. This past year, this collaboration was formalized as a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project.

Politics, Policy, and International Relations Department FYPO 100: Poverty and Charitable Giving. This course focuses on how each of us can make a difference through philanthropy and active citizenship. In the course, students discuss what it means to be poor today, explore how much progress has been accomplished in recent decades to alleviate poverty around the world, and analyze the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic eroded this progress. As part of this course, students engage in crowdfunding to raise money for the Salem Food Pantry/Emergency Fund.

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Community engagement can also be seen throughout majors in areas like major core courses, concentration tracks, and overall curricular programming. Examples include:

In Nursing, NUR 415B Public Health Nursing is required for students majoring in the Nursing Program. This course explores theoretical concepts of public health nursing that provide the framework to analyze the relationships between individual, community, and environment as they impact the promotion and maintenance of optimum health. Students provide health education and nursing care to individuals, families, communities, and populations through a variety of clinical placements.

In Sport Movement Science, the Recreation Management concentration fully encompasses civic engagement, including SMS 271 Programming in Recreation. This course provides a comprehensive approach to recreation programming including its principles, theories, and methodologies. An emphasis is placed on elements of recreation's role in society, understanding diverse populations, program planning and organization, leadership, and supervision. Students apply techniques in professional settings via service learning. For example, in 2022, students ran one program for Salem families, one for veterans, and two for students/faculty and staff during the course of this class.

In Media and Communications, the MCO 390 Public Relations Campaigns course helps students expand and apply their understanding of the PR campaign development, management and evaluation process. Working in teams, students collaborate with a community client to develop a PR campaign that best addresses a communication issue facing their client. Students examine public relations theories, case studies, best practices and contemporary strategies and converge them with knowledge gained from previous courses as they research client situations, organizations and key publics; develop campaign goals, objectives and strategies; implement their campaign; and use contemporary methodological strategies to evaluate its effectiveness. In spring 2023, the students partnered with The Northeast Arc, a local non-profit that helps people with disabilities become full participants in the community; choosing for themselves how to live, learn, work, socialize and play. In this class, students conducted research and designed a public outreach campaign for the Northeast Arc to better publicize their services to their target audiences.

In Healthcare Studies, BHS 302 Health Policy provides an introduction to contemporary issues in American and global healthcare policy. Students gain an understanding of the public policy process and the role of various stakeholders in shaping policy. The impact of healthcare policy at the local, state, national, and global level is examined and strategies to engage in healthcare advocacy are presented. In 2022, students in the class engaged with an existing healthcare organization to assist them in creating a good policy in some aspect of healthcare.

As part of the North Shore Policy Lab, the Politics, Policy, and International Relations Department created two new courses, POL 390 Applied Policy Research and POL 419 North Shore Policy Lab Practicum. This course sequence provides students with "hands-on" learning opportunities to conduct policy research on behalf of state and local government offices and/or non-profit organizations. Working in small groups to conduct applied policy research, students investigate policy issues that affect communities on the North Shore.

In addition to majors, community engagement is also embedded throughout a variety of minors. Here are a few examples of how SSU integrates community engagement in the minors:

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In Marketing Decision Sciences, MKT 347 Guerrilla Marketing is a contemporary approach to marketing and promotion that can be used as an elective course for the Marketing minor. Course learning activities include writing assignments and class exercises designed to integrate with students' service-learning experiences. The course focuses on the practical application of key concepts, leading to the development of a Guerrilla Marketing Campaign. Students are required to complete a team-based, self-selected service project. Working as a team, they choose a local non-profit organization as the host and then complete a series of service activities within that organization. During classroom time, students frequently share progress being made on individual projects with the instructor and classmates. Individual reflections are shared via three blog postings on Canvas. Toward the end of the semester, students write and present a formal marketing plan for their service organization, which includes discussions of the marketing issue, idea generation, strategic marketing decision-making, and a group presentation of the plan. In 2022, students in Guerilla Marketing developed guerilla marketing campaigns for ten local for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

The Politics, Policy, and International Relations Department offers a civic engagement minor that is administered through the Bates Center for Public and Global Affairs. This minor includes CIV 101 Introduction to Civic Engagement and a capstone experience, either CIV 501 Directed Field Experience in Civic Engagement or CIV 502 Directed Study in Civic Engagement. The minor also requires students to choose from three categories of electives: Politics/Policy, Communication/Advocacy Skills, and Social Justice/Social Change.

Through the Teacher Education minor offered through the McKeown School of Education, students are provided opportunities to take courses like EDC 461 and EDC 462 Fieldwork Seminars on Critical Issues and Effective Practices for Secondary and Specialist Teachers that provide an introduction to critical issues and effective practices in secondary and specialist education and a forum for students in a cohort-based program to process what they are seeing in their field placements and includes weekly field experiences in student content area settings.

As part of the Social Work minor, SWK 200 Social Services Volunteer Practice provides students with a real-life exposure to social work and helps students test their own interest in working in the helping professions. Through structured volunteer and course work, students acquire knowledge and skills related to social work professionalism, communication, practice, agencies, and values.

4. Describe how community engagement is integrated into the following academic activities offered for credit and/or required by a curricular program. These may include, but are not limited to: Student Research, Student Leadership, Internships, Co-ops, Career exploration, Study Abroad/Study Away, Alternative Break tied to a course or a Campus Scholarship Program. Provide one but not more than two examples. (Maximum word count: 500 per example)

Every department at SSU offers a career exploration opportunity through internships, community placements, and/or field experiences. SSU offers academic internship/field experience opportunities in 80% (24) of departments, which include: Accounting & Finance, Art + Design, Biology, Childhood Education and Care, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Economics, English, Geography, Geological Sciences, Healthcare Studies, History,

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Interdisciplinary Studies, Management, Marketing Decision Sciences, Mathematics, Media and Communication, Music and Dance, Philosophy, Politics Policy and International Relations, Psychology, Sociology, Sport Movement Science, and World Languages and Cultures. In addition to traditional internships, the university also offers career exploration to students through fieldwork, and pre-practicum and practicum experiences at the undergraduate and graduate levels in 13% (4) of departments which include: Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Secondary and Higher Education, and Social Work. Lastly, departments like Chemistry and Physics and Theatre and Speech Communication offer career exploration opportunities through courses like special projects, acting recitals, and advanced-level research projects in these fields. Some examples of community-engaged career exploration opportunities include:

In World Languages and Culture, students in SPN 385 Community Placements and SPN450 Spanish Translation were placed in and engaged with city governmental offices, educational outreach programs, and public service agencies including Children's Friend and Family Services; A Division of Justice Resource Institute, Lynn MA; the City of Salem's Board of Health; the City of Salem's Public Schools System; Leap4 Education; Wellspring House; and the SSU Office of Inclusive Excellence, Hispanic and Minority Serving Initiatives. Services provided by students included: in-person translation and interpretation services for agency clientele (Children's Friend and Family Services); multi-lingual interns in the Salem College Success Program mentoring and providing language support for high school and middle school students (Leap4 Education); translation of documents (English to Spanish/Spanish to English) for publication and distribution by city agencies (Board of Health, Public School District); translated educational materials, interpreted when necessary and assisted in teaching adult education ELL courses (Wellspring House); and translated documents and orientation materials and served as bilingual event guides and group leaders (SSU Office of Inclusive Excellence, Hispanic and Minority Serving Initiatives).

In the Bertolon Business School, more than 60 students completed internships during summer 2022, fall 2022 and spring 2023 at various organizations in the region and beyond including Boston Marriott, Finer Wealth Management, Kernwood Country Club, Leap for Education, MIT Lincoln Lab, North Shore Chamber of Commerce, Triumvirate Environmental, and Walt Disney. Furthermore, Bertolon also adopted a robust teaching tool, Riipen, a global, online platform where faculty match with industry professionals who are seeking students to work on their consulting projects. This tool levels the competitive employment field for students, enabling students to gain real world, work-based experience.

In 2022, History Department students secured internships at Essex Heritage, Essex Shipbuilding Museum, Forbes Museum, Gloucester Writers' Center, Massachusetts History Alliance, Minuteman National Historic Park, Salem Maritime National Historic Site, Voices Against Injustice, West End Museum, and Welcome Immigrant Network. The department also continued to build new contacts and sustainable relationships with Falmouth Public Library, Woburn Public Library Archives, and Special Collections, NPS Lowell, Historic Boston Tours, Shirley Historical Society, Billerica Historical Society, Revolutionary Spaces, Massachusetts Historical Society, Colonial Society, and Museum of Old Newbury.

To support internship interest and opportunities, the Berry IOP offers Public Service Internship Scholarships to create entry points and break down barriers for all students interested in pursuing careers in politics and public service. Previous recipients have completed internships locally and nationally in the areas of sustainability, public safety, immigration, journalism, law,

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healthcare, politics, and other areas of public service. So far, we have awarded over \$180,000 in scholarships to over 50 students since inception.

SSU oversees and provides access to a wide variety of study abroad programs that fit into any major. Students can study abroad for an entire year, a semester, during winter or spring break, or over the summer. Faculty-led study travel are trips abroad that are tied to course credit in the major department of the faculty member and provide students with valuable insights into course content and the global context. Students can conduct field experiences with faculty members abroad and earn course credit through directed study. Students can also choose to complete an internship while they're abroad.

Community engagement is also integrated into study abroad opportunities in a variety of ways, and SSU offers a range of opportunities for students to engage with communities around the world: living and studying alongside local students at the University of Auckland, participating in service-learning courses to teach English in community centers in Buenos Aires, and researching marine biology alongside international researchers at the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences, to name a few. One recent impactful experience included three students studying in Valencia, a city impacted by deadly flooding, sharing this devastating experience with their host families. In other circumstances, students annually travel to Rwanda where they stay in a local primary boarding school with at-risk youth. Our students engage with the local students, who are often displaced due to either familial instability or seeking refuge from surrounding countries of Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Our students share these experiences with one another, but also with the local communities.

Another example of community-engaged study abroad opportunities include a collaboration with the Universidad de Guanajuato (UGTO) in México to successfully implement a two-way global exchange program between SSU and the Universidad de Guanajuato as part of the Partners of America 100,000 Strong in the Americas grant program (2021-2022). For this opportunity, a group of six McKeown School of Education (SOE) students across education contexts (early childhood, elementary, secondary English, and TESOL) conducted classroom field work in various schools in the state of Guanajuato. Outcomes involved gaining firsthand experience of Pk-20 teaching in a non-U.S. setting, learning about effective language teaching techniques, and practicing classroom ethnography research. Also, three UGTO students visited Salem, where students also conducted classroom field work in various schools in Salem. We set the same learning outcomes for the UGTO students as our SOE students to maintain parity.

5. Describe how your campus tracks and assess curricular engagement, and how students gain access to and participate in community engaged courses. (Maximum word count: 750)

- 1. How is community engaged course data gathered, by whom, with what frequency, and for what purpose? How is it shared/reported, particularly in student transcripts?*
- 2. Since your last application, describe how your campus has designed new curricular programs and initiatives, or re-designed existing ones, to increase students' access to and participation in community engaged activities (particularly students who are not currently engaged) so that a relatively larger portion of students have the opportunity to develop the cultural competencies, asset-based approaches, and values of reciprocity for engaging with communities.*
- 3. Reflect on how the data indicates the levels of pervasiveness and depth infused in the curriculum and traditional curricular structures*

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1. At the time of our last classification, Salem State was piloting GivePulse as a tracking tool for faculty to use within their courses. The pilot lasted several years; however, it did not gain traction with our faculty. With the arrival of the pandemic, we stopped using it. To replace GivePulse and ensure that we are tracking the civic engagement activities and their impact, we have implemented several different institutionalized accountability measures:

a) Goal two of SSU's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan is Civic Engagement and Public Good. To assess the progress of the strategic plan in Academic Affairs the provost requires each department in their annual report to answer two specific civic engagement-related questions and write one to two pages describing how their department is contributing to the success of the university as related to the seven goals of the 2023-2028 strategic plan.

b) As described above, a class section tag "civic learning" will be used to designate individual class sections that include a civic learning component as well as those that also include engagement with the community. Section tagging was approved in governance in 2024 and will be implemented in 2025 through the Student Information System by placing these designations among the options for class section instructions to select.

c) Public engagement seal: Academic seals are administered by an established university center like the CCE and affixed by the registrar to the bottom of a student's academic transcript to recognize a student milestone of the completion of specified curricular courses and co-curricular activities in a specific subject area. Students working to earn the public engagement seal must complete a minimum of two courses that help them to build knowledge and skills related to understanding inequity and social and political issues, communicating about these inequities and issues, and engaging in advocacy and activism to address them. We encourage students to take courses from multiple disciplines. These courses are tracked through SIS and the Registrar's office.

The data collected is shared with the campus community through the president's annual address and at additional forums. It is shared with the community through community partners meetings, the annual community partner breakfast, and the advisory board. The above data is used for campuswide annual reports and is sent to the DHE for Strategic Plan reporting and required civic learning and civic engagement reporting. The data is also shared with the Board of Trustees through an annual presentation by the AVP for Civic Engagement and Academic Strategic Support. Finally, this data is used as a source of information for those on campus who are leading accreditations, and grant-related and fundraising initiatives.

2. Since our last application, the university has not only maintained excellent community-engaged programs like field education opportunities in Social Work and the community education program in our McKeown School of Education (SOE), we have also created a new Community Initiatives Office in the SOE to support community-engaged initiatives; initiated a brand new certificate in community wellness in our Sport and Movement Science department; created a new Policy Lab and Writing for Civic Engagement course through our Politics, Policy, and International Relations department; and developed a new community-engaged Ethnic Studies Minor in our Interdisciplinary Studies department and a new Hip-Hop course as part of that in collaboration with the Music and Dance department, which also received a new hire to support this focus. Lastly, a Geo-Forensic Science minor was created a year ago that is a collaboration between the Criminal Justice and Geological Sciences departments, which is all community-based.

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3. Our community-engaged course tracking data continue to show that curricular community engagement is embedded in every discipline across the campus and pathways are developed and followed throughout student’s college careers that afford opportunities for community engagement from first year through graduate school. In addition to the examples provided in this section, community-engaged curriculum at Salem State can also be seen in capstone/senior-level projects, across the general education program, within graduate courses, in undergraduate and graduate student research, in student leadership programs and opportunities, and via alternative break opportunities tied to courses.

6. Complete the table below. Data should be drawn from undergraduate and graduate for-credit courses and be indicated accordingly. Please also indicate what academic year the data represents:

6. What academic year does this data represent?

2023-24

a.1. Number of for-credit undergraduate community engaged designated courses (UG)

159

a.1.1. Change in number of for-credit undergraduate community engaged designated courses since last Application (UG)

+1

a.2. Number of for-credit graduate community engaged designated courses (G)

292

a.2.1. Change in number of for-credit graduate community engaged designated courses since last Application (G)

+192

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b.1. Percentage of undergraduate community engaged designated courses as part of all for-credit courses (UG)

+11%

b.1.1. Percent change of undergraduate community engaged designated courses as part of all for-credit courses since last Application (UG)

+1%

b.2. Percentage of graduate community engaged designated courses as part of all for-credit courses (G)

+67%

b.2.1. Percent change of graduate community engaged designated courses as part of all for-credit courses since last Application (G)

+61%

c. Number of faculty teaching for-credit community engaged designated courses

214

c.1. Change in the number of faculty since the last Application

-25

d. Percentage of faculty teaching for-credit community engaged designated courses as part of all faculty

30%

d.1. Percent change of faculty teaching for-credit community engaged designated courses as part of all faculty since last Application

+1%

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e. Number of tenured and tenure-track faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses

92

e.1. Change in number of tenured and tenure-track faculty since the last application

-12

f. Percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses of all faculty

32%

f.1. Percent change of tenured and tenure-track faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses of all faculty since last Application

-11%

g. Number of full-time, non tenure-track faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses

7

g.1. Change in number of full-time, non tenure-track faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses since last Application

+5

h. Percentage of full-time, non tenure-track faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses of all faculty

87%

h.1. Percent change of full-time, non tenure-track faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses of all faculty since last Application

+62%

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i. Number of part-time faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses

115

i.1. Change in number of part-time faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses since the last Application

-18

j. Percentage of part-time faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses of all faculty

27%

j.1. Percent change of part-time faculty who taught for-credit community engaged courses of all faculty since the last Application

-29%

k. Number of departments represented by community engaged courses

27

k.1. Change in number of departments represented by community engaged courses since last Application

-1

l. Percentage of total departments

90%

l.1. Percent change in departments since last Application

-3%

m.1. Number of undergraduate students enrolled in for-credit courses community engaged designated courses (UG)

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878

m.1.1. Change in number of undergraduate students enrolled in for-credit courses community engaged designated courses (UG) since the last Application

-2296

m.2. Number of graduate students enrolled in for-credit courses community engaged designated courses (G)

1601

m.2.1. Change in number of graduate students enrolled in for-credit courses community engaged designated courses (G) since the last Application

+266

n.1. Percentage of undergraduate students enrolled in for-credit courses community engaged designated courses as part of all students (UG)

18%

n.1.1. Percent change of undergraduate students enrolled in for-credit courses community engaged designated courses as part of all students (UG) since the last Application

-27%

n.2. Percentage of graduate students enrolled in for-credit courses community engaged designated courses as part of all students (G)

84%

n.2.1 Percent change of graduate students enrolled in for-credit courses community engaged designated courses as part of all students (G) since the last Application

+25%

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SECTION 7: Co-Curricular Engagement

1. Describe how community engagement is integrated into institutional co-curricular practices by providing at least two to four examples from the following categories. For each example, describe what has changed since the last classification (Maximum word count: 1000):

- *Social Innovation/entrepreneurship*
- *Civic engagement, electoral engagement*
- *Dialogues*
- *Community service projects - outside of the campus*
- *Community service projects - within the campus*
- *Alternative break - domestic*
- *Alternative break - international*
- *Student leadership*
- *Student internships/co-ops/career exploration*
- *Student research*
- *Work-study placements*
- *Opportunities to meet with employers who demonstrate Corporate Social Responsibility*
- *Living-learning communities/residence hall/floor*
- *Student teaching assistants (provided the TAs are not receiving credit)*
- *Campus Scholarship Program*
- *Athletics*
- *Greek Life*
- *Other: (please describe)*

Community engagement at Salem State is embedded in nearly all the examples of institutional co-curricular practices listed here. Although COVID temporarily disrupted some of these, we were able to successfully pivot, continue, and/or grow our community engagement co-curricular opportunities. Here are just a few co-curricular opportunities we continue to offer at Salem State:

Through Salem State's Career Services office, students and alumni are provided multiple opportunities to engage with employers who demonstrate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) via career fairs, class presentations, career panels, mock interviewing, networking events, online job postings, resume reviews, site visits, and information tables. For example, Enterprise Mobility demonstrates Corporate Social Responsibility and has been a strong partner to Career Services and Salem State University for many years. Enterprise has recruited at the career fairs, hosted resume reviews for the Black Student Union, and offered informational sessions. Enterprise supported the 2023 Career Closet event by running a donation collection drive for our community. During the Career Closet event Enterprise coached students on how to navigate the Job and Internship Fair, their search process, and the interview process with confidence. Additionally, Healthcare Studies students are required to complete projects and engage with employer partners throughout their academic program. Many of these organizations demonstrate CSR. Some examples include: Beth Israel Lahey, Department of Health and Human Services, Healing Abuse Working for Change (HAWC), YMCA, Thermo Fisher Scientific, IBM Watson Health, The Salem Pantry, Lynn Community Health Center, and the Salem Council on Aging. Each of these organizations has participated in the Healthcare Studies Preprofessional Day as guest speakers, internship site supervisors and/or mock interviewers. Healthcare Studies also partners with Career Services to host annual career panels and biannual pre-professional

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days, which are networking and informational events that allow students to make career connections and offer poster presentations that highlight their internship and research experiences. Each spring, Healthcare Studies presents a Recognition Award to an employer who demonstrated exceptional support for our students. The award recipients are as follows: Supportive Living (2021), Bridgewell (2022), Northeast Arc (2023) and Recovery Centers for America (2024). These organizations demonstrate Corporate Social Responsibility and have hired many Salem State interns over the years to advance their work in their communities.

For non-credit student teaching assistant opportunities, the McKeown School of Education continues to provide extensive co-curricular programming to prepare students to become student teaching assistants. During their junior and senior years in the combined bachelor's/master's program, students spend three to ten hours a week participating in observation, classroom assistance, and other structured experiences in schools. These activities are connected to academic knowledge through related course sequences to complement their experiential learning. All candidates for field placements in pre-K – 12 teacher licensure programs and early education and care programs are strongly encouraged to access Career Services programs before they apply for the culminating practicum experience. Career Services trains students in interviewing skills, providing mock interview experiences using sample questions drawn from regional school principals. In addition, prior to being placed as student teachers in the practicum, the McKeown School of Education requires all student teachers to complete training with the Essex County District Attorney's Office to prepare them for their roles as mandated reporters of any child abuse and neglect. Once placed, student teachers participate in professional development activities offered by their host school district, gaining additional skills and knowledge.

Lastly, our Athletics programs continue to be very active in promoting community engagement. In 2023, a student athlete, Miah Reyes, was selected to be one of the 28 student athletes across the country named an Engaged Athletic Fellow with the national organization The Team. This fellowship focuses on increasing civic engagement among student athletes within their teams, campuses, and broader communities. To do so, Reyes created a proposal that requires all student-athletes to attend one civic event a semester, encourages coaches to take the Coaches Pledge, and enforces All Vote No Play Day. This proposal will be implemented and is going to be used by the NCAA as a model for other campuses to promote civic engagement among student-athletes. Athletics teams continue to organize and implement both qualifying Special Olympics of Massachusetts (SOMA) and unified events each year. In 2023, teams hosted a unified cornhole event which included 35 SOMA athletes partnered with a Viking teammate. Another example is Team IMPACT, which matches children facing serious illness and disability with college sports teams, creating a long-term, life-changing experience for everyone. Since 2015, Salem State teams that have been involved in this program include men's and women's soccer, field hockey, men's and women's basketball, women's lacrosse, and men's ice hockey. Lastly, the Salem State Student-Athlete Advisory Committee is involved in organizing and implementing civic engagement events on campus and in collaboration with the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference partners each year.

2. Describe any co-curricular engagement tracking system used by your institution that can provide a co-curricular transcript or record of community engagement. (Maximum word count: 500)

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The Student Involvement and Operations (SIO) Office oversees an online program called Involve. The software is used to promote student organizations and programming offices; to advertise their respective events; and to track attendance at individual events. While initially offered as a voluntary service, the app has been required by Student Government for all funded organizations, in order to better track engagement. Involve can generate data to report the number of events, events by sponsors, categorize types of events, total attendees, and participants by student demographics. The SIO Office reports Involve trends to colleagues periodically and overall Involve results in their annual reports.

The CJL Event Evaluation Form collects information about which CJL events students are attending, and their feedback on those events. This can include CJL-sponsored events and student-led events that fall under the CJL office. Respondents leave a satisfaction rating of 1-5 (1 being the lowest, 5 being the highest) and can provide comments about the event. Respondents can also provide suggestions for future programs.

Additionally, various offices across the university also employ tracking systems to record community engagement within their realms. For example, the Department of Campus Life and Recreation utilizes an app called the Modern Campus events app to track attendance at events. Prior to each offering, the department collects data on how the offering impacts wellbeing and/or a sense of connection and belonging. Also, the intramural department uses the IM Leagues website for all intramural scheduling, which in turn provides data points for participation, attendance, and records season over season.

Lastly, SSU initiated three new academic seals approved by university governance as of Fall 2023. Academic seals were established for Public Engagement, Global Engagement, and Diversity, Power Dynamics, and Social Justice (DPDS). Academic seals are innovative micro-credentials that allow students to focus on an area of interest and document engagement via curricular and co-curricular accomplishments. A seal is affixed to a student's transcript after approval by a Faculty Fellow for each seal. In the first year, seven students earned the DPDS seal; four students earned the Global Engagement seal; and 11 students earned the Public Engagement seal. SEALS are tracked by the Faculty Fellow in each of the three SEAL areas. The CCE Faculty Fellow tracks the Public Engagement SEAL. That information is then sent to the Registrar's Office, who confirms and affixes seals to transcripts.

3. Provide an example of a systematic, campus-wide, mechanism for assessing student learning and development outcomes as they relate to co-curricular community engagement. What has changed in the results of student achievement of co-curricular community engagement outcomes since your last classification? Describe how the institution uses and disseminates data from the mechanisms described. (Maximum word count: 500) Web links can be provided as part of the description.

CJL uses data points from their evaluation form and Involve to create monthly programming reports. The reports break down which organizations programmed during the last month, their event attendance, the response rate from the evaluation form, and any notes/feedback from attendees. We share this data with our student leaders and their advisors so they can implement any changes and get better insight into their impact on campus. Student leaders are also required to keep track of their treasury and expenses. CJL and SIO staff also monitor their

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expenses through a master budget spreadsheet. In order to reapply for funding through the Student Government Association, student-led organizations are required to report back on their expenditures and earnings from the previous academic year. They also must provide information about their programs and campus impact, to justify the requested amount of funds. This further speaks to the importance of the CJL Monthly Programming Reports; the reports provide valuable information to our student-led organizations that support them in securing funds for the following academic year. These tracking systems and assessment procedures include all student group co-curricular events and programs, to include community-engaged events and programming offered by student groups.

SECTION 8: Civic Learning and Agency

1. According to the Carnegie definition of community engagement one of the purposes of community engagement is to prepare educated, engaged citizens and strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility. Describe at least two examples of practical experiences in the table below, of how your campus prepares students, faculty, staff and community to understand and engage in ways that address critical community issues and contribute to community/public good by providing practical experience with community. Be sure to share how these activities are community engaged. (Maximum word count: 750)

Examples of practical experience may include activities such as the following below, but not limited to:

- *Electoral education and participation (such as voter information, education, registration, polling site(s); meetings with elected officials; Constitution Day)*
- *Meetings with community members, elders, and community leaders to learn about community issues; land-based learning;*
- *Issue awareness and advocacy training (such as Advocacy Days)*
- *Civic-focused student organizations (Voter engagement, Model UN, Model OAS, Peace Corps Prep, or similar programs)*
- *Civic Fellows/Scholars*
- *Debate Team*
- *Civic awards to students, faculty and staff, or the community*

Campus Questions for each practical experience response above:

- 1. Civic engagement experience overview and purpose*
- 2. Campus partner(s) that provide support for mentioned experience (person, program, department, center, etc.)*
- 3. Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the practical experience*
- 4. Number of faculty involved*
- 5. Number of staff involved*
- 6. Number of students involved*
- 7. Community partners involved, if relevant*
- 8. Grant funding, if relevant*
- 9. Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant*
- 10. Impact on the campus*

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11. Impact on the community

Salem State prepares students, faculty, staff and partners to understand and engage in ways that address critical community issues and contribute to the public good by providing a variety of practical experiences. While primarily spearheaded through our Center for Civic Engagement, these opportunities are also afforded across the curriculum and other co-curricular offices like the Office of Inclusive Excellence, Student Life, and Career Services (as will be further explicated below). Through the Center for Civic Engagement, we have a few signature initiatives that align with our university's strategic plan and the Center's strategic plan, that embody the key values and goals of the university: the Berry Institute of Politics Fellowship Program, the Vikings Vote initiative, the Civic Fellowship program, and the Advocacy Month programming.

For the Berry Institute of Politics (IOP) Fellowship Program, Salem State invites two prominent public servants to campus to share their knowledge, skills, and experiences with students who are exploring and pursuing careers in politics and public service. While on campus, IOP Fellows visit classes, host meals with students, coordinate speaker and workshop events, and meet one-on-one with students. The IOP Fellows collaborate with faculty from multiple disciplines and numerous Salem State academic centers and co-curricular departments. The Fellowship program is a wonderful opportunity for community members to come to campus and learn from political and public service leaders. The program has been active for three years and the involvement from the community has grown from just a few attendees at each event to more significant numbers, especially at events connected with timely political and social justice topics.

Vikings Vote is a nonpartisan, campus-wide initiative that helps students navigate the voting process, including registering to vote, learning what's on the ballot, and getting out to vote. Every year Salem State hires Student Vote Ambassadors to support this work who table on campus every week, lead class announcements, and support events like National Voter Registration Day, Debate Watch Parties, and Candidate Debates, among other things. The Vote Ambassadors work intentionally with campus partners in academic affairs, including faculty members, and student affairs to inspire a culture of voting across campus. Most Student Vote Ambassadors are liaisons within a department including athletics, academic advising, first year seminars, Greek life, Center for Justice and Liberation, residence life, and student organizations to collaboratively embed voter registration, education, and turnout across the university. Voting events are open to the community, which has seen a fluctuating increase in community attendance over time, and IOP staff and students serve as a resource for community members' voting questions.

The Civic Fellowship is a unique cohort program that provides students with the opportunity to explore their strengths, values and passions in order to form their civic identity and role in social change. The program was launched in the Fall of 2019 and consists of between 8 - 12 students that go through an application and interview process. The Fellows meet twice a month for meetings, service projects, advocacy opportunities, leadership training, and a chance to build a sense of community amongst the cohort. Through the program, students learn about the North Shore community through tours and meetings with local leaders, volunteering in the community, gaining knowledge in advocacy and government, campaign development, relational organizing, understanding power, coalition building, and understanding one's CliftonStrengths and how to use them in the advocacy process. They then spend the semester engaged in a campus-wide advocacy campaign for issues of interest to students and the community, for which approximately a dozen faculty members have supported over the years.

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Lastly, Salem State’s Annual Advocacy Month is a full month of programming during March where students learn about social justice issues and gain activist skills. The month includes workshops and opportunities to engage in advocacy and learn about and network with local advocates. Social justice issues addressed in previous years have been student selected and include: immigration, voting rights, women’s rights, economic and housing justice, racial justice, and LGBTQ+ rights, among others. This program was developed in Fall 2016 in response to student interest in engaging in the democratic process outside of elections. Between 15-20 faculty members also participate in the planning and execution of the events, in addition to a larger number of faculty attending the events. Along with the campus community, many of the events are open to external community members to engage in advocacy work, learn from experts, gain concrete advocacy skills, network with local advocates, and increase exposure to community organizations and resources.

Practicle Experience #1

Civic engagement experience overview and purpose	The Civic Fellowship, launched in Fall 2019, is a year-long program for 8-12 students. Through leadership meetings, service and training, they explore their strengths, values and passions, gaining skills in advocacy, social change and building community.
Campus partner(s) that provide support for mentioned experience (person, program, department, center, etc.)	Kate Adams in the Center for Civic Engagement is the founding Director of the program and leads it yearly. Departments that serve as resources in student advocacy work include The Care Team (basic needs advocacy), Counseling and Health Services (mental health, reproductive justice, and LGBTQ+ advocacy), and Career Services. Kate has also been meeting with Inclusive Excellence to incorporate DEI into the curriculum.
Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the practical experience	All student advocacy campaigns are determined by needs assessments on campus or in the community. One example of this is a frequent partnership with the North Shore Alliance for GLBTQ Youth (NAGLY). Through this partnership, the Civic Fellows have collaborated with NAGLY to promote their resources and services to students on campus, benefitting the GLBTQ+ students enrolled at Salem State as well as serving the mission of the organization. Additionally, through these collaborations, the Civic Fellows have helped fundraise for NAGLY to improve and extend the resources and support they’re able to provide the North Shore community.
Number of faculty involved	Around a dozen faculty members have supported student advocacy campaigns.
Number of staff involved	10 - 12

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Number of students involved annually	8-12 students a year are in the program. Their campaigns involve close to 50 students campus-wide.
Community partners involved, if relevant	7
Grant funding, if relevant	Last year the Center for Civic Engagement received a \$15,000 donation to support student civic leadership. The donation is helping to stipend Civic Fellows for two academic years and enhance civic dinner programming.
Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	The “Dear Professor, I Am More” Spring 2024 campaign engaged our campus community in conversations about mental health, supported students in finding hope for overcoming mental health challenges, and ending stigma through a creative arts exhibit and dialogue session. The Civic Fellows hosted three makerspace sessions for students to share openly about their mental health by creating self-portraits and statements. The Civic Fellows also collected 30 pieces of 2-dimensional art that included paintings, photographs, poetry, and a quilt constructed by students in the Social Work program. All the art shared a message of hope and that the students are “more” than their mental health challenges. This campus-wide initiative called for student submissions from both undergraduate and graduate students. The art exhibit was displayed at the Salem State University Research Day. Once our community had the opportunity to view the art, students shared their stories, and engaged in a dialogue with faculty, staff, and the administration on how our campus community can support student wellness. This event had about 50 attendees including the President, Vice Presidents, the Provost, Deans, faculty, staff, and students. Many ideas were generated at the session on Research Day and the Civic Fellows plan to continue to engage our campus community in mental health advocacy. The student artwork that was presented at the exhibit was then displayed in North Shore artist Amy Kerr’s exhibit in the North Shore Mall during the month of July 2024.

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Impact on the campus	Impact on the Salem State campus can be seen through the increase in access to basic needs, the destigmatization of food insecurity on our campus, the increase in community support for LGBTQ+ students, the increase in awareness of the challenges students face regarding mental health, and the increase in access to reproductive health resources. Specific examples include the Fall 22 / Spring 23 Civic Fellow Advocacy Campaigns, where the Civic Fellows engaged in multiple advocacy initiatives that focused on campus hunger, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and reproductive justice. The food insecurity advocacy work was accomplished through their leadership in the SSU Hunger Free Campus Coalition, which included successfully hosting a Mobile Market launch party, SSU pantry open house, and advocating for the Hunger Free Campus Bill. Their advocacy efforts led to \$1 million dollars being allocated in the FY24 state budget for campus hunger. The LGBTQ+ Committee created, distributed, and analyzed a survey about LGBTQ+ students' experience at Salem State. They also educated the community on Bill S.2207, which sought to codify the non-binary option on driver's licenses into law, which was passed. The Reproductive Justice Committee created, distributed, and analyzed a survey to determine if Salem State students were aware of the reproductive and personal health resources that are available through Health Services. They then provided recommendations of reproductive health resources the department could highlight as well as effective avenues for communicating with students.
Impact on the community	Impact on the community can be seen through an increase in state funding for colleges and universities in Massachusetts for basic needs, and fundraising for NAGLY and increasing promotion of their resources to the community. Salem State also financially compensates all community organizations that provide tours, training, or serve as other resources to Civic Fellows.

Practicle Experience #2

Civic engagement experience overview and purpose	Advocacy Month offers workshops and networking opportunities, teaching students advocacy skills and addressing issues like immigration, voting rights, racial justice, and LGBTQ+ rights. It evolved from Advocacy Day (2017) to Advocacy Month (2022).
Campus partner(s) that provide support for mentioned experience (person, program, department, center, etc.)	Academic Affairs; Intersectional Feminist Collective; Asian Student Association; Alliance (LGBTQ club); Counseling and Health Services; The CARE team; The First Year Experience Office; Civic Engagement Fellows; MASSPIRG; Education Club; Earth Days Planning Committee; PEAR Program (Prevention, Education, Advocacy, and Response); Healthcare Studies Department; School of Nursing; Alumni Association; Athletics; Berry Institute of Politics; School of Social Work; Disability Services; Honors Program Chair; Library; Psychology Department; Politics, Policy, and International Relations Department; Center for Childhood and Youth Studies; Center for Teaching Innovation; Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies; and the Center for Justice and Liberation.

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Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the practical experience	All programs are connected to faculty course content and student interests. Students are surveyed annually regarding the social issues they wish to learn about and advocacy skills they need to develop. For example, for Advocacy Month 2023, we celebrated the 7th annual Advocacy Conference reimagined to Advocacy Month for the 2nd year. The theme of the month was Youth to Power: Watch Us Rise. The month included workshops and events hosted by departments across the university bringing campus and community members to learn important activist skills and explore social justice topics. MA State Auditor Diana DiZoglio kicked off the month as our keynote speaker, and throughout the month, we explored issues such as reproductive justice, homelessness, food insecurity, mental health, LGBTQ+ advocacy, fast fashion, climate justice, racial justice, community organizing and understanding power. The month ended with an advocacy day at the State House for the Hunger Free Campus Bill. The month included over 20 different events and programs.
Number of faculty involved	15 - 20 faculty members annually.
Number of staff involved	Around 15 annually.
Number of students involved annually	200 - 450 annually.
Community partners involved, if relevant	20+
Grant funding, if relevant	Campus Compact ERCC Mini Grant for \$1,000.
Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	N/A
Impact on the campus	The campus community is provided with opportunities to engage in advocacy work, learn from experts, gain concrete advocacy skills, network with local advocates, and increase exposure to community organizations and resources. For example, Advocacy Month 2022 saw roughly 245 students participate in CCE-hosted events. Advocacy Month has become a campus staple and the ways in which it is referenced demonstrates that advocacy is a priority and part of our identity as a university. Through this opportunity, students not only learn advocacy skills but also have the opportunity to engage in advocacy on campus and at the State House. As a result, some of our students have received internship opportunities through their participation in Advocacy Month events.

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Impact on the community	Along with the campus community, many of the events are open to external community members to engage in advocacy work, learn from experts, gain concrete advocacy skills, network with local advocates, and increase exposure to community organizations and resources. All community experts are compensated for their time educating our campus community on social issues and skill building. Additionally, students' outreach to legislators to move the policies important to them forward through Advocacy Month impacts the Commonwealth overall, and students have had significant success working with legislators.

Practicle Experience #3

Civic engagement experience overview and purpose	Vikings Vote is a nonpartisan initiative helping students with voter registration, education, and turnout. Student Vote Ambassadors lead events, collaborate with campus partners, and promote civic engagement across the university community.
Campus partner(s) that provide support for mentioned experience (person, program, department, center, etc.)	A campus-wide voting coalition was established in August 2022. The mission is to collaboratively work towards Salem State University's commitment to 100% student voter participation through equitable, intentional, and nonpartisan initiatives that promote voter registration, education, and turnout. This is led by the Berry IOP and includes staff from Residence Life, First Year Experience, Athletics, Campus Life and Recreation, Alumni Relations, Public Relations, Center for Justice and Liberation, External Relations, and several faculty and students.
Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the practical experience	Our voting programming is designed to be mutually beneficial as it is free and open to students and community members alike. Some of our events are held in community locations for ease of access for community members. During the Fall 2022 election season, there were eight distinct events that occurred as part of our Vikings Vote initiative. All Vikings Vote events are public and advertised to the community through press releases, website announcements, and social media. Several of the events are planned in collaboration with community members and groups, and we often ask our community for suggestions for potential speakers and guests. Community members are particularly interested in attending candidate forums and panels on ballot initiatives.
Number of faculty involved	20
Number of staff involved	40
Number of students involved annually	600 at the events; 450 students registered to vote, and 3,500 students talked to about voting for the Fall 2022 election season.

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Community partners involved, if relevant	30
Grant funding, if relevant	\$4,500 in grants from Ask Every Student and Campus Takeover, which are national initiatives to mobilize students around elections and achieve full student voter participation.
Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	N/A
Impact on the campus	In addition to the Vikings Vote initiative energizing the entire campus during the fall semester, students gain many specific skills, including: public speaking, knowledge about local politics and voting, community organizing, how to make informed decisions, and leadership and management skills. Additionally, Salem State University received several awards, including a Bronze Seal from the All-In Challenge; the 2022 Investing in Institutionalization Award from Students Learn, Students Vote Coalition; and a recognition by the All-in Democracy Challenge in the inaugural cohort of the Most Engaged Campuses for College Students Voting. A student was also recognized by the All-in Democracy Challenge's Student Voting Honor Roll for his nonpartisan democratic engagement on campus.
Impact on the community	The Berry IOP serves as a resource for community members' voting and election questions. Because voting programming is open to the community, community members equally gain knowledge about social issues, voting processes and procedures, and how to make informed decisions. By providing these educational opportunities to the community, Salem State is contributing to a more civically engaged City of Salem.

Practicle Experience #4

Civic engagement experience overview and purpose	The Berry IOP Fellows program brings public servants to campus each spring, offering students insights into politics and public service through classes, events, workshops, and one-on-one mentoring sessions.
Campus partner(s) that provide support for mentioned experience (person, program, department, center, etc.)	The Berry IOP Fellowship program collaborates with faculty from multiple disciplines, including Social Work, Interdisciplinary Studies, Media and Communication, Education, Political Science, Center for Justice and Liberation, HSI/MSI Initiatives, and the Library to name a few. The Berry IOP leads the programming, and during each visit the Fellow is assigned a student to accompany them for the day, so they feel welcomed and connected with the campus.

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Provide one example as to how reciprocity and mutual benefit are enacted through the practical experience	There is a strong sense of reciprocity between the IOP Fellows and Salem State students. Through intentional relationship building, administrative support, and shared learning, the students gain a variety of civic knowledge, skills and networking techniques, while receiving valuable mentoring opportunities. The IOP Fellows get an opportunity to engage with diverse students, experience academia, hear from youth on social justice topics, and network with institutional and local leaders.
Number of faculty involved	25
Number of staff involved	15
Number of students involved annually	520
Community partners involved, if relevant	Most IOP fellow events are public and therefore open to all our community partners and community members. There are often 5-7 community members at medium-large events.
Grant funding, if relevant	N/A
Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant	N/A
Impact on the campus	The IOP Fellow program impacts student success by providing inspiration, mentorship, and practical knowledge to students with shared identities or interest in similar careers. The programming associated with the IOP Fellows have become some of the most well-attended events on campus.
Impact on the community	This is a wonderful opportunity for community members to come to campus and learn from political and public service leaders. The program has been active for three years, and the involvement from the community has grown from just a few attendees at each event to more significant numbers each year, especially at events connected with timely political and social justice topics.

2. Are civic skills incorporated into curricular and/or co-curricular community-engaged activities? If so, describe how civic skills are integrated and how student learning outcomes are applied and assessed. (Maximum word count: 500)

Examples of civic skills may include the following, but are not limited to:

- Critical thinking and evidence-based reasoning
- Development of digital data, and media literacy

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- *Conveys ideas across difference - orally and in writing*
- *Seek out and engage with multiple perspectives*
- *Listen attentively and with patience*
- *Reflexive thinking*
- *Understanding of intersectionality, privilege, and bias*
- *Development of cultural humility, empathy, compassion, and courage to act in service of the greater good*
- *Opportunity to collaborate and participate with multiple forms of culturally-based leadership models prevalent in communities of color*

At SSU, civic skills are incorporated into a variety of curricular and/or co-curricular community-engaged activities across the university. For example, the Center for Justice and Liberation (CJL) is the home to culturally-based student clubs and organizations, which include students who can connect on a shared cultural identity, gender, sexuality, race, and religious beliefs as well as across intersectional identities and differences. CJL offers students in these groups 2-Day Affinity Group Workshop Trainings, leadership values workshops, conflict resolution trainings, and monthly leadership meetings that help them hone their civic identities as they practice to convey ideas across difference, engage with multiple perspectives, and understand intersectionality, privilege and bias. Students in these groups are required to engage in a community service component, offer programs for heritage months, and partner with many different departments. Many of the organizations host events that offer the campus community the opportunity to learn about the groups' cultural identities and the challenges they face, and create a space for community belonging and connection.

Another example includes Advocacy Class Visits, where the CCE offers over a dozen advocacy education workshops a semester (Advocacy 101) to courses across disciplines. These workshops introduce students to identifying important social issues that they care about, recognizing their personal skills and strengths, their role in the social change ecosystem model (Deepa Iyer), and campaign development resources. Students also gain a physical toolkit that includes a variety of tactics to use in the advocacy process, including how to identify elected officials and how to effectively utilize the tools in the advocacy process to engender long-term change. The workshop concludes with the opportunity for students to work in groups and apply what they learned by taking a real-life scenario and developing an advocacy campaign based on that social issue.

Career Services is also proud to have Gallup certified CliftonStrengths coaches on staff who facilitate strengths-based coaching for students, faculty and staff. Individuals who engage with CliftonStrengths gain self-understanding to guide their personal, academic, and professional goals, improved confidence to empower their academic performance, well-being and career readiness, encouragement to appreciate the diversity of a team and improve team effectiveness and communication skills, identification of personal values and how they relate to workplace fit, and leadership development based on their unique talents.

Lastly, across the curriculum, students are provided a variety of opportunities to hone their civic skills. A few of these examples include: IDS 275 Love and Compassion Across the World Religions, where students explore how love and compassion transform the self, interpersonal relations, and social action and are given the opportunity to practice and examine techniques developed by world religions to nurture love and compassion. In SWK 270 Understanding Privilege, Oppression and Cultural Competence in Social Work, students explore the history and impact of multisystemic privilege and oppression on individuals, groups, communities, and

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institutions. Students are encouraged to reflect on their multiple social identities and engage in intergroup dialogue to assist students in developing culturally competent social work values and techniques.

3. Civic identity involves the formation and negotiation of personal and group identities as they relate to presence, role, and participation in public life. Civic identity is particularly important and a factor in civic engagement and participation.

What are the pathways and opportunities available to students at your institution to develop their civic identity? How are community partnerships incorporated into these pathways? What kind of institutional support is in place to encourage civic identity development? (Maximum word count: 500)

Examples of civic identity formation may include the following, but are not limited to:

- *Understanding the variety of ways to make change within a community (community organizing, going to the media, activism, etc.)*
- *Coalition building to engage in relationships where trust is formed while recognizing barriers*
- *Examining one's positionality in relation to self and society*
- *Articulating a vision of a just and equitable society*
- *Leveraging passion for social change into actions that benefit the community*
- *Understanding the power of voice to make change and what limits voice for many*
- *Creating a sense of belonging to community and responsibility for the greater good*

SSU was part of a state-wide initiative to update the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Policy on Civic Learning. This update aimed to rethink civic learning outcomes — and the work of faculty and staff to guide students to those outcomes — using a lens of racial equity and justice. This framework articulates what students need to learn for full and effective participation in civic life and public problem-solving for social change in a multiracial democracy. It is intended to serve as a guided pathway through students' entire curricular (including first year, general education, majors, minors, and capstones) and co-curricular educational experience to prepare them to be productive change makers in their public and private lives. Toward this goal, the framework recognizes the importance of community-engaged pedagogies, which effectively support the necessary knowledge, skills and practical experiences. The framework and its content was developed with best practice research, interviews and focus groups with administrators, faculty, students, and staff led by a subcommittee of the New England Equity and Engagement Consortium (of which Salem State is a member).

Over the course of their careers at Salem State, students engage in developmental pathways in which they can develop their civic identity through increasingly complex forms of community engagement and this revised framework helps guide and shape these pathways. These pathways are offered through a holistic approach to community engagement that involves co-curricular as well as curricular programs that intersect and build off of one another. Prior to their first day on campus, prospective students are introduced to the culture of civic engagement through prospective student tours and new student orientations. On their first day at Salem State, students are offered the opportunity to get to know their new community better and begin to formulate a civic identity through the annual First Year Day of Service event. This pathway continues through the general education curriculum (with required Personal Growth

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and Responsibility (PGR) and Diversity, Power Dynamics, and Social Justice (DPDS) components) and individual major and minor programs. For example, within coursework, students can develop their civic identity through courses like Introduction to Civic Engagement, American Identities, and Understanding Diversity and Cultural Competence in Human Services. Outside of the classroom, students can engage with the community via student clubs like the Philanthropy Club and activities like clothing and supply drives for local non-profits. Student athletes continue this trajectory through their collaboration with the Special Olympics, which was nationally awarded by the National Association of Division III Athletic Administrators (NADIII AA)/Jostens Community Service Awards. As they near the end of their career at Salem State, students prepare for life after college as they engage with socially responsible corporations through networking events coordinated by Career Services. After graduation, alumni continue their commitment to civic engagement through their participation in the alumni civic engagement committee. If they return for graduate school, graduate students are offered a wide variety of opportunities to apply their learning in community contexts through fieldwork and practicums that reinforce their professional and civic identities.

4. Indicate where civic knowledge development for a diverse democracy is part of the community engaged student learning outcomes inside and outside of the curriculum. (Maximum word count: 500)

Examples of civic knowledge may include the following, but are not limited to:

- *Community-based participatory research on democracy and civic engagement*
- *Collaborative problem solving*
- *Knowledge of systems (governance and community networks)*
- *Ethical reasoning, critical inquiry*
- *Information literacy, empathy*
- *How to use policy for social change*
- *Compassion and communicating across differences, etc.*

Within the curriculum, courses exist across a variety of disciplines that help students gain civic knowledge and knowledge of systems, and engage in collaborative problem solving, ethical reasoning, critical inquiry, and information literacy. For example, in Media Literacy (a Media and Communication course), students critically examine democratic systems like media institutions to understand how the political economy of the media influences the news and information citizens and community members receive as they prepare to engage in democratic processes like voting. Another example is Global Climate Change: Causes and Consequences (a Geography and Sustainability course), where students engage in ethical reasoning and critical inquiry to study how the earth's warming has already altered many ecosystems with marked results, their likely effects, and future scenarios, and consider the changes in the natural world and their impacts on societies around the world. A third example is Health and Disability Across the Lifespan (a Healthcare Studies course) where students engage in collaborative problem solving and ethical reasoning to understand how different challenges affect a person's abilities throughout their lifetime.

Outside of the curriculum, students are offered opportunities to engage in various types of research on democracy and civic engagement. One example is the Democracy Re-Designed research project led by Cindy Vincent (Assoc. Professor, Media and Communication) and Cynthia Lynch (AVP, Civic Engagement) in collaboration with the Institute for Democracy in Higher Education (IDHE) and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and seven

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other campuses across the country. In this research, students engage in focus groups and are asked to share their opinions, lived experiences, and ideas on the state of our current democracy and their ideas for how we can collectively build a “re-designed” democracy that is just, equitable, and inclusive. Another example is a participatory action research study on food justice in Salem that engaged SOC 250 Public Sociology students (Assoc. Professor, Sara Moore). This project collaborated with community health researchers (i.e., community members) to examine food justice issues in Salem, including the sustainability and resilience of local food systems and to build on the food justice work that has gained momentum in Salem through the work of the Salem Food Policy Council.

The establishment of the North Shore Policy Lab in 2023, also offers civic knowledge opportunities to mobilize faculty and students to complete applied public policy research in collaboration with local and state public officials and agencies and community-based organizations that informs a range of urgent public and social issues affecting the communities in our region.

Lastly, through our Office of Inclusive Excellence, the Center for Equity, Education, and Belonging is the hub for education, training, and professional development programs in justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion for Salem State faculty and staff. It supports curricular and community engagements that nurture our diverse student body and initiatives positioned to positively impact marginalized faculty and staff communities. These programs help support faculty to bring civic knowledge development opportunities into the classroom through compassion and communicating across differences.

5. How is free speech showing up on your campus? What is your institutional policy on free speech and free expression? What kind of programming, partnerships and policies for staff, faculty, students and/or community do you offer or participate in that foster critical thinking, space to engage in deliberative dialogue, civil discourse and communication across differences and exchange of ideas around contentious issues? Is there training offered to faculty, staff and/or the community to incorporate these skills into courses and programming? (Maximum word count: 500)

As a publicly-funded university, free speech shows up on our campus in a variety of ways, some positive and some negative. For example, in 2021-2022, a non-affiliated demonstrator continually created a presence for himself on campus outside of classrooms and in campus gathering areas to espouse hateful anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-women rhetoric. In response, students organized peaceful protests, denouncing his hateful rhetoric. While considered hateful and offensive to many, his speech was allowed and protected in accordance with the Constitution. These students also organized meetings with the President’s Executive Council and the SSU Board of Trustees, and collaborated with the City of Salem’s No Place for Hate Committee. As a result, SSU revised its free speech policy in 2022 in consultation with the IOP Civic Fellow at the time.

The 2023-24 academic year reminded us that we needed to create an environment that allowed all people to have their free speech rights supported and that institutions of higher education have an obligation to ensure that the campus is a place that supports free expression of ideas. With the Hamas attack in October of 2023 and subsequent faculty programming on the war,

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many people questioned the right of faculty and students to speak on this topic. In addition, a Students for Justice in Palestine group was established on campus. Unlike other institutions that banned the group, we supported students' right to assemble. At the same time, Hillel-our Jewish student group-was deeply concerned about antisemitism that could arise on campus. Our President, as a lawyer and former city solicitor, was quite vocal that all people have a right to free speech and expression, and a college campus is an appropriate place for civil discourse and respectful dialogue around topics of contention. Our free speech policy appropriately protected both groups' speech.

Additionally, through Inclusive Excellence, the Center for Equity, Education, and Belonging provides education, training, and professional development programs that foster critical thinking, space to engage in deliberative dialogue, civil discourse and communication across differences and exchange of ideas around contentious issues. For example, Building Inclusive Academic Communities (BIAC) is an inclusive pedagogy co-mentoring program for senior and junior faculty, and graduate and undergraduate students to build community as they examine their own social identities, share their understandings of what makes an inclusive classroom, develop knowledge of the theory and practice of inclusive pedagogy, and design teaching and learning practices that foster greater student and community engagement and academic achievement. SSU's National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) team educates employees and students about issues of discrimination, harassment, prejudice, and diversity. Our Racial Equity and Justice Institute (REJI) is a collaboration of institutions, including SSU, committed to racial educational equity that identify data-informed strategies intended to close racial educational equity gaps on our campuses and across higher education. The Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) initiative combines course-by-course curricular transformation with the recognition of teacher-scholars and the development of a JEDI consultant group to bring Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion across the curriculum.

6. Describe how your campus tracks and assesses civic engagement. Explain how your campus uses the data to inform programming and enhance student learning. (Maximum word count: 500)

Civic Engagement is tracked, assessed, and informs programming and student learning through multiple mechanisms. Upon completion of our 2020 Carnegie application, the Salem State University Civic Engagement Committee spent a year developing a Civic Engagement Strategic Plan for the University. This plan is used as a roadmap for civic engagement at Salem State. Twice a year the Center for Civic Engagement holds a half day retreat to discuss how we are meeting the goals and strategies of the Civic Engagement Strategic Plan, and then individual units set their goals for the upcoming semester. The Civic Engagement Strategic Plan was an important planning document for the university's 2023-2028 Strategic plan resulting in civic engagement being its own goal; being woven throughout all the goals; and having the university's Strategic Plan Committee endorse Salem State as the Commonwealth's Civic Engagement University. The university's Civic Engagement Committee also reflects on how the goals of the Civic Engagement Strategic Plan are being met and what role they can serve in furthering its objectives.

Civic Engagement events, such as First Year Day of Service, Advocacy Month, and Civic Dinners are assessed through post event surveys that ask participants a series of questions, which are analyzed and used in post-event reviews and to inform future events. Salem State also collects

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data at advisory board meetings and the annual community partner breakfast. As the advisory board is designed to help inform the Center for Civic Engagement's work, data is often shared with the group and they are asked for their input. Annually, in November, Salem State hosts a Community Partner Breakfast that invites community partners, faculty, and staff to spend a morning together and network and strategize together. There are always breakout groups with planned discussion topics that are used to gather input and integrate into our civic engagement planning.

Each year, the Berry Institute of Politics (IOP) submits a Salem State University Action Plan to the All in Challenge and then outlines all the electoral engagement goals and methods of assessment. The Berry IOP also utilizes the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) data to determine what areas of the university need extra support and shares the results of the survey with all department chairs with strategies for how to use the data to improve student voting.

In support of the Salem State 2023-2028 strategic plan and to develop a foundational understanding of the social issues that our community finds most pressing, Salem State conducted a survey of our community members' priorities. The survey was available in English and Spanish, posted on university social media, in weekly announcements, department newsletters, shared during campus events, including the community partner breakfast, and available on paper via in-person tabling across campus locations. Data from this survey is being used in a variety of ways, including informing some of the updates to the general education program, as an additional question for departments to address on annual reports, and as topics for workshops, panels, and forums.

SECTION 9: Community Engagement and Other Institutional Initiatives

1. Indicate if community engagement is intentionally and explicitly aligned with or directly contributes to any of the following additional institutional priorities: (In Table- Check all that apply and describe two of the checked examples in the table, in the text box below in question 2).

Anchor institution mission or initiative(s)

Campus diversity, inclusion, and equity goals (for students and faculty)

Efforts aimed at student retention and success

Encouraging and measuring student voter registration and voting

Development of skills and competencies to engage in dialogue about controversial social, political, or ethical issues across the curriculum and in co-curricular programming

Social innovation or social entrepreneurship that reflects the principles and practices of community engagement

The campus institutional review board (IRB) provides specific guidance for researchers regarding human subject protections for community engaged research

Efforts that support federally funded grants for Broader Impacts of Research activities of faculty and students

Outreach activities

Community and economic development

Lifelong learning (non-credit)

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Campus food security programs (internal and external)

2. Describe at least two examples from question 1, including (including how the priority is aligned with community engagement; how it is communicated internally and externally; and lessons learned and improvements made over the past two years.) (Maximum word count: 1000)

As mentioned in our previous application, we continue to tether our community engagement opportunities with efforts aimed at student retention and success. While COVID interrupted our ability to offer our annual Moving Forward, Giving Back (MFGB) First Year Day of Service event for one year, we were quickly able to bring it back in 2021 and have continued to offer it every year. SSU's First Year Day of Service is co-led by the CCE and the First Year Experience office and is designed to positively impact retention and student success by assembling diverse MFGB teams with a structure and support system to help students feel engaged, accepted, active, and accomplished. As a result of MFGB, first-year students developed meaningful and lasting connections with classmates, faculty, staff and the greater community, making their transition into college more enjoyable and successful. All incoming first-year students are invited to participate, and the program fills annually with up to 200 students. Community partners are invited to welcome volunteers for projects through outreach and sustainable relationship building. This event has been reported in the local news and is shared across university social media outlets and the website. Lessons learned have caused improvements to be made to this program over time. At earlier events, students didn't feel fully prepared to work in community and navigate difficult scenarios. In response, we have developed trainings focused on fostering trust and belonging with new students and educating them on our community partners' work to reduce and eliminate potential harm to the community partner from misunderstandings or miscommunications.

Additionally, as part of our campus diversity, inclusion, and equity goals, we continue to provide community engaged lifelong learning opportunities through the Community of Inclusive Scholars Program. This program is designed to support post-secondary access for adults with severe intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and autism. We are part of a network of colleges and universities under the Massachusetts Inclusive Post Secondary Education (MAIPSE) umbrella. Funding for the MAIPSE program is through the MA Department of Higher Education. Opening its doors in the spring of 2017, our first students enrolled with a current IEP through a partnership (CIS Partnership) with local school districts. In 2022, MAIPSE was expanded to include students 22 and older who had not passed MCAS and were no longer eligible for special education in their districts (CIS Horizons). These new regulations now provide for agency funding and private pay. In Fall 2022, our first cohort of CIS students moved into on-campus housing. Students became fully immersed in SSU's college life by living in the residence halls, which allow for personal growth and for students to become more involved in campus clubs, activities, events, and organizations. It provides a unique opportunity to learn independent living skills in a safe and supported environment, empowering them for their futures. Eligible CIS students live on campus full-time in the Salem State University residence halls alongside their peers. Students in the program are from towns all over the North Shore and Merrimack Valley and develop life and career readiness skills through classes and by working in on campus or at local nonprofits. SSU's current school district partners on this initiative include: Seem Collaborative, Winchester, Swampscott, Danvers, Masconomet, Melrose, Wilmington, Reading, Rockport, and Nahant. The program's internship/externship partnerships include: CVS, District

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Attorney Paul Tucker’s Office, The Salem Pantry, North Shore Consortium Soar/Embark, the Lynch Van Otterloo YMCA, and SSU’s Admissions, Enrollment Management, Center for Civic Engagement, University Police, Frederick E. Berry Library, Starbucks, Gassett Fitness Center, and Music Department.

In collaboration with the Enterprise Center, SSU offers lifelong non-credit programs and certificates. These courses are open to members of the community, who pay a fee to attend. While there are no scholarships, a discounted rate is offered to local chamber members. For example, the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce members or employees pay discounted rates for a course. In addition, the Explorers Lifelong Learning Institute is a member-directed learning group launched in 1992 by “non-traditional programs” staff at SSU, retired SSU faculty, and other individuals excited about the adventure of learning. Since its first year, the program has grown to a typical enrollment of 300+ with 45-50 classes offered per semester. Members participate in active peer learning to share their knowledge, experience, and research with each other by creating, coordinating, and participating in courses. These courses are given on a voluntary basis and vary in length from a day to a semester. The courses range in format from lectures and discussions to hands-on workshops and field trips and address general topics from the arts and sciences to current events and foreign affairs. Classes range from small groups to auditorium-capacity. Courses designated as “study groups” require active participation of attendees, such as preparing information to share with the class, or actively engaging in course discussion. Explorers offer two academic terms a year beginning in September and March. Classes meet for two hours Monday through Thursday in three morning or evening time periods. On select Friday mornings, a “Coffee Hour” is held featuring a guest lecturer. Non-members are welcome to attend the coffees. During winter and summer intersessions, there are special presentations, usually two mornings a week.

In addition, our American Language and Culture Institute (ALCI) provides English language classes in the evenings for community members and was also selected to offer English language classes for employees at Salem Hospital. The ALCI also has a comprehensive language curriculum with multiple levels which is offered to students who are developing English proficiency for university matriculation or for life goals. The ALCI is part of the Division of Continuing Education and works closely with the Center for International Education.

SECTION 10: Reflection and Additional Information

1. (Optional) Use this space to elaborate on any question(s) for which you need more space. Please specify the corresponding section and item number(s).

N/A

2. (Optional) Is there any information that was not requested that you consider significant evidence of your institution’s community engagement? If so, please provide the information in this space.

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The questions reflected a deep commitment to equitable community engagement, and we discussed how we at Salem State engage in such efforts and how it has deepened since the last classification. The one piece that was not requested was how community partners are compensated for their time and knowledge. Faculty are always compensated for their time and knowledge and there has been a slow movement to compensate students for those areas, however often the community's labor is often not valued. Over the last five years the Center for Civic Engagement at Salem State has committed to providing small honorariums/stipends to our community partners/members that lead discussions, sit on panels, run workshops, serve as mentors, etc. Our goal is to grow this program so that all work with community partners is compensated at the same level that we compensate faculty.

3. (Optional) Reflect on who was around the table, who was missing, and how the voices of community members who were missing might have improved this report.

When Salem State began the 15-month Carnegie Process we discussed who should be on the Carnegie Executive Committee, the larger Carnegie Committee and who we needed to make sure their voices were reflected in the report. The 8-person Executive Committee operated as planned, with each person having specific responsibilities and following through to ensure broad participation. The larger Carnegie Committee turned into, as it did during our initial application process, to be a large group of faculty, staff, and a few community members who knew about the process and were available to help and offer input when needed. Two members of the executive committee also met with about 15 community partners to have detailed conversations about their experiences working with Salem State on all facets of community and civic engagement. These conversations are reflected within the report. We had planned to send the second draft, which was finished mid-February, to the Center for Civic Engagement's Community Advisory board for their comments and suggestions. However, during that time this year, our community partners were all struggling to figure out how the new federal executive orders applied to them and how to support their communities. We spoke with a few who recommended that now was not a great time to put another action item on the plates of community organizations. While we knew we would get some response if we asked for their input on this draft, a piece of being equitable partners is knowing when not to ask and thanking them for their continued work in our communities. We recognize that their voices would have changed some pieces, but we feel comfortable that their stories and work is evident in the pages of this report.

4. (Optional) What is a question you would like us to ask that was not included in the application?

N/A

5. In order to better understand the institutionalization of community engagement in higher education, we would like to make the responses in the applications available for research and training purposes for the Carnegie Foundation, their administrative partners, and other higher education

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researchers. Only applications from campuses that agree to the use of their application data will be made available for research purposes. No identifiable application information related to campuses that are unsuccessful in the application process will be released. We encourage you to indicate your consent below to advance research on community engagement.

Please respond to A, B, or C below:

A. I consent to having the information provided in the application used for the purposes of research and training. In providing this consent, the identity of my campus will not be disclosed.

6. Before you submit your final application, please provide a list of community partners that should receive the partnership survey. Include the partners described in Section 4, question 2, but you may include additional partners up to a total of 15 ([see guide for partnership survey information](#)).

Surveys will be sent to community partners when emails are inputted in this section. Please do not add partner contacts until your campus is ready for emails to be sent.

- a. Partner Organization Name
- b. Partner Organization Contact Full Name
- c. Partner Organization Contact Email Address

Partner #1

Community Partner Name	National Heritage Area
Community Partner Contact	Beth Berringer, Director of Education Programs
Email	Info@EssexHeritage.org

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Partner #2

Community Partner Name	Salem Council on Aging (COA)
Community Partner Contact	Teresa Arnold, Salem Council on Aging Director
Email	tarnold@salem.com

Partner #3

Community Partner Name	Lynn Housing Authority (LHA)
Community Partner Contact	Jose Fernandez Castillo, Lynn Housing Authority
Email	jcastillo@lhand.org

Partner #4

Community Partner Name	Northshore Alliance for Economic Development
Community Partner Contact	Laura Swanson
Email	lswanson@enterprisectr.org

Partner #5

Community Partner Name	North Shore Community Development Coalition
Community Partner Contact	Shantel Alix Fernandez
Email	shantel@northshorecdc.org

Partner #6

Community Partner Name	LEO, Inc.
Community Partner Contact	Lisa Mcfadden
Email	lisam@leoinc.org

Re-Classification: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Submitted by Salem State University on 5/20/2024. Last modified on 4/5/2025.

Partner #7

Community Partner Name	Collins Middle School
Community Partner Contact	Chelsea Banks, Dean of Innovation
Email	Cbanks@salemk12.org

Partner #8

Community Partner Name	Salem Food Pantry
Community Partner Contact	Mike Lilley
Email	mikelilley@thesalempantry.org

Partner #9

Community Partner Name	Sergeant Arboretum, Greenlawn Cemetery, City of Salem
Community Partner Contact	Christine Lutts
Email	friendsofgreenlawn@gmail.com

Partner #10

Community Partner Name	Salem Sound Coastwatch
Community Partner Contact	Barbara Warren
Email	barbara.warren@salemsound.org

Partner #11

Community Partner Name	North Shore Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Youth (NAGLY)
Community Partner Contact	James Giessler
Email	james@nagly.org

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Partner #12

Community Partner Name	The NAN Project
Community Partner Contact	Donna Kausek
Email	dkausek@eliotchs.org

Partner #13

Community Partner Name	MACIE
Community Partner Contact	Rachel Connary
Email	rconnary@salemstate.edu

Partner #14

Community Partner Name	City of Salem
Community Partner Contact	Julio Mota
Email	jmota@Salem.com

Partner #15

Community Partner Name	Northeast ARC
Community Partner Contact	Suzanne Ryan
Email	SRyan@ne-arc.org