



**SALISBURY UNIVERSITY**

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**Closing the Achievement Gap Institutional  
2014 Report**

**February 2014**

## I. Defining Salisbury University's Achievement Gap

The *Achievement Gap* at Salisbury University (SU) is defined by the following goals:

1. Improve second-year retention rates for **Hispanic** and **African American** students; and
2. Continue to monitor and make progress toward improving six-year graduation rates of **Hispanic**, **African American**, **low-income**, and **all** SU students.

## II. Achievement Gap Plan

The table below demonstrates that gaps for low-income students have closed dramatically since implementation in academic year 2008-09. The six-year graduation rate gap for low-income students has closed 12 percentage points, from a 15 percentage point gap (2002 cohort) to a three percentage point gap (2007 cohort).

When comparing the six-year graduation rate gap between African American students and the overall population at SU, the most recent data(2007 cohort) indicates 13 percentage point gap between these cohorts at SU. The 2002 cohort was used to identify an original graduation rate gap of 12 percentage points between African American and overall student groups. While the 2005 and 2006 cohorts of African American students demonstrated substantial progress toward closing the 12 percentage point graduation rate gap, the rates of the 2007 cohort did not demonstrate further progress toward closing the gap. An examination of yearly retention rates for the 2007 cohort revealed that their retention rates dipped early on, second-year retention rates were 10 percentage points below the 2006 second-year retention rate, 76% vs. 86%, respectively. Efforts to close the achievement gap were piloted in fall 2008 and fully implemented in fall 2009. Retention and early graduation rates (four- and five-year) for subsequent African American cohorts appear to be more positive. Second-year retention rates for the 2008 cohort of African American students are three percentage points higher than the 2002 baseline cohort. The 2009 cohort of African American students, the first cohort following full implementation of achievement gap retention initiatives, has even stronger second-year retention rates that are seven percentage points higher than the 2002 baseline cohort.

While additional efforts continue to be made to close a growing gap for our Hispanic cohort, the large year-to-year variability in the rates for this group is likely due to its very small sample size. As the Hispanic cohort continues to grow, this rate will become more stable. The six-year graduation rate gap between the 2007 cohort of Hispanic students and overall rates decreased two percentage points this year. However, there is still a 22 percentage point gap between Hispanic students and the overall population of SU students. With a mere 29 Hispanic students in the cohort, the impact of any one student on retention and graduation rates is inflated. The graduation of seven more Hispanic students from the 2007 cohort would have decreased the gap to 0%. Rates for the 2008 and 2009 cohorts of Hispanic students continue to show positive gains in retaining these students at SU.

### III. Graph Showing Trend Data for Gap

**Table 1: Graduation and Retention Rate Trends**

| Salisbury University                          | Six-year Graduation and Retention Rates at Institutions of First-Entry |           |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---|--|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|   | Fall Cohort First-Time Full Time                                       | 2002      | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|   | FY Graduation Year   | 2008      | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| <b>Salisbury University Total</b>             | <b>6-Year Graduation Rate</b>  | 69%       | 66%  | 70%  | 67%  | 67%  | 67%  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Retention   | 80%       | 83%  | 83%  | 81%  | 81%  | 83%  | 80%  | 81%  | 83%  | 84%  | 81%  |      |
|   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Retention   | 73%       | 75%  | 74%  | 73%  | 74%  | 73%  | 73%  | 73%  | 74%  | 77%  |      |      |
|   | 4 <sup>th</sup> Year Retention   | 71%       | 70%  | 70%  | 69%  | 70%  | 69%  | 69%  | 69%  | 72%  |      |      |      |
|   | 5 <sup>th</sup> Year Retention   | 23%       | 23%  | 24%  | 22%  | 20%  | 21%  | 22%  | 20%  |      |      |      |      |
|   | Graduated in 5 Years or Less   | 65%       | 63%  | 66%  | 63%  | 64%  | 64%  | 63%  | 45%* |      |      |      |      |
|   | Cohort Size  | 899       | 947  | 981  | 952  | 1028 | 1142 | 1199 | 1275 | 1247 | 1246 | 1230 | 1241 |
| <b>Salisbury University African American</b>  | <b>6-Year Graduation Rate</b>  | 57%       | 62%  | 53%  | 60%  | 66%  | 54%  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|   | <b>The Gap</b>   | -12       | -4   | -17  | -7   | -1   | -13  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Retention   | 75%       | 83%  | 80%  | 83%  | 86%  | 76%  | 78%  | 82%  | 84%  | 81%  | 83%  |      |
|   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Retention   | 74%       | 75%  | 65%  | 66%  | 77%  | 64%  | 64%  | 69%  | 73%  | 70%  |      |      |
|   | 4 <sup>th</sup> Year Retention   | 64%       | 73%  | 57%  | 66%  | 74%  | 62%  | 60%  | 65%  | 74%  |      |      |      |
|   | 5 <sup>th</sup> Year Retention   | 37%       | 39%  | 31%  | 35%  | 34%  | 23%  | 23%  | 24%  |      |      |      |      |
|   | Graduated in 5 Years or Less   | 45%       | 57%  | 47%  | 51%  | 57%  | 49%  | 47%  | 34%* |      |      |      |      |
| Cohort Size                                   | 84   | 79        | 75   | 94   | 125  | 129  | 115  | 131  | 128  | 91   | 107  | 97   |      |
| <b>Salisbury University Hispanic</b>          | <b>6-Year Graduation Rate</b>  | 74%       | 64%  | 70%  | 60%  | 43%  | 45%  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|   | <b>The Gap</b>   | +5        | -2   | 0    | -7   | -24  | -22  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Retention   | 83%       | 82%  | 91%  | 80%  | 63%  | 72%  | 70%  | 80%  | 90%  | 85%  | 75%  |      |
|   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Retention   | 75%       | 82%  | 74%  | 72%  | 50%  | 62%  | 68%  | 65%  | 72%  | 67%  |      |      |
|   | 4 <sup>th</sup> Year Retention   | 75%       | 67%  | 78%  | 68%  | 50%  | 55%  | 60%  | 65%  | 79%  |      |      |      |
|   | 5 <sup>th</sup> Year Retention   | 46%       | 18%  | 30%  | 36%  | 17%  | 21%  | 25%  | 27%  |      |      |      |      |
|   | Graduated in 5 Years or Less   | 61%       | 64%  | 57%  | 60%  | 40%  | 41%  | 55%  | 33%* |      |      |      |      |
| Cohort Size                                   | 24   | 33        | 23   | 25   | 30   | 29   | 40   | 55   | 72   | 73   | 65   | 62   |      |
| <b>Salisbury University Low-Income (Pell)</b> | <b>6-Year Graduation Rate</b>  | 54%       | 59%  | 63%  | 62%  | 62%  | 64%  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|   | <b>The Gap</b>   | -15       | -7   | -7   | -5   | -5   | -3   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Retention   | 71%       | 81%  | 79%  | 85%  | 78%  | 82%  | 78%  | 81%  | 79%  | 77%  | 79%  |      |
|   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Retention   | NOT       | 69%  | 71%  | 70%  | 70%  | 71%  | 67%  | 74%  | 71%  | 69%  |      |      |
|   | 4 <sup>th</sup> Year Retention   | NOT       | 63%  | 65%  | 67%  | 67%  | 65%  | 64%  | 69%  | 67%  |      |      |      |
|   | 5 <sup>th</sup> Year Retention   | AVAILABLE | 33%  | 33%  | 30%  | 24%  | 24%  | 24%  | 28%  |      |      |      |      |
|   | Graduated in 5 Years or Less   | NOT       | 54%  | 56%  | 58%  | 56%  | 61%  | 54%  | 38%* |      |      |      |      |
| Cohort Size                                   | 134  | 129       | 110  | 112  | 126  | 152  | 140  | 220  | 263  | 229  | 202  | 221  |      |

\*For the 2009 cohort, the graduation rates reported represent the 4-year graduation rate as of spring 2013.

## IV. Summary of FY13 Initiatives and Participant Data

SU utilizes a number of initiatives to help narrow the achievement gap. These initiatives include:

### 1. Mid-semester reporting and advising

All first-year students receiving grades of “D” or “F” at mid-semester are contacted and provided with additional advising, mentoring, and tutoring assistance.

### 2. Living learning communities

Living learning communities (LLCs) are specialized living options offered to first-year students. They provide students with the opportunity to live with other first-year students with similar interests.

Students that participate in LLCs are enrolled in common courses with other students living on their residence hall floor and participate in outside-of-class activities with each other.

### 3. Supplemental instruction

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a peer tutoring program designed to organize and improve students’ outside-of-class course preparation. SI is offered for traditionally challenging courses. An SI leader, a student who has demonstrated proficiency in a targeted course and undergoes SI training, is assigned to each course. SI leaders attend the class and conduct study sessions for students three times a week.

## V. Assessment of Each Initiative

### Mid-Semester Reporting

All first-time, first-year students with a “D” or “F” at mid-semester are contacted by the Center for Student Achievement (CSA) in an attempt to offer some form of academic support or advising. During the 2012-13 academic year, 192 first-time, first-year students were identified as having a “D” or “F” in at least one course at mid-semester. This represents approximately 16% of the 2012 incoming student cohort. Almost 22% of first-time, first-year minority students were identified as having a “D” or “F” at mid-semester. Of the 192 first-time students receiving a mid-semester “D” or “F,” 78 (41%), attended the CSA for remediation.

Students that attended the CSA for academic support had higher grades at the end of their first year (2.41) than those that had a “D” or “F” at mid-semester but did not attend the CSA (2.30). Additionally, students that attended the CSA following poor mid-semester performance were retained into their second year at higher rates (72%) than students that did not seek out assistance at the CSA (64%). The positive results have led to an expansion of tutors at the CSA and the opening of two additional CSA sites in other campus buildings. The initiative appears to be working and proving to be more effective each year. When compared to the 2011-12 data, a larger percentage of students that were failing at mid-semester during academic year 2012-13 sought out assistance from the CSA (41%) than in the previous year (26%). With the expansion of CSA, more students are aware of the services that the center offers and are seeking out academic assistance when it is needed.

### Living Learning Communities

Approximately 320 freshmen, 26% of the first-time student cohort, participated in an LLC during academic year 2012-13. With the expansion of LLCs this year, SU was able to accommodate 52% more freshmen in these experiences. In addition, 24% of first-time minority students participated in one of the identified LLCs during 2012-13.

Students enrolled in an LLC had significantly higher first-year grades than those that were not in an LLC during their first year at SU (3.15 vs. 2.97). The data also showed that LLC participants were retained into their second year at significantly higher rates than non-LLC participants (85% vs. 81%).

With four consecutive years of positive results, participation and the number of LLCs available to students continue to grow. For fall 2013, the final renovations of SU’s residence halls were completed. As a result, the number of LLCs available has increased to 19, including three STEM-related LLCs, two performing arts LLCs, and the *Explorers* LLC for students trying to select a major.

**Supplemental Instruction**

Some 644 freshmen, 52% of the first-time student cohort, participated in SI during the 2012-2013 academic year. Approximately 51% of first-time minority students participated in a SI course during 2012-2013. To determine the impact of the SI program, SI participants that attended at least five of the outside-of-class SI sessions were compared to students that attended fewer than five sessions. Of the 644 first-time students that participated in SI, 191 (30%) attended at least five SI sessions.

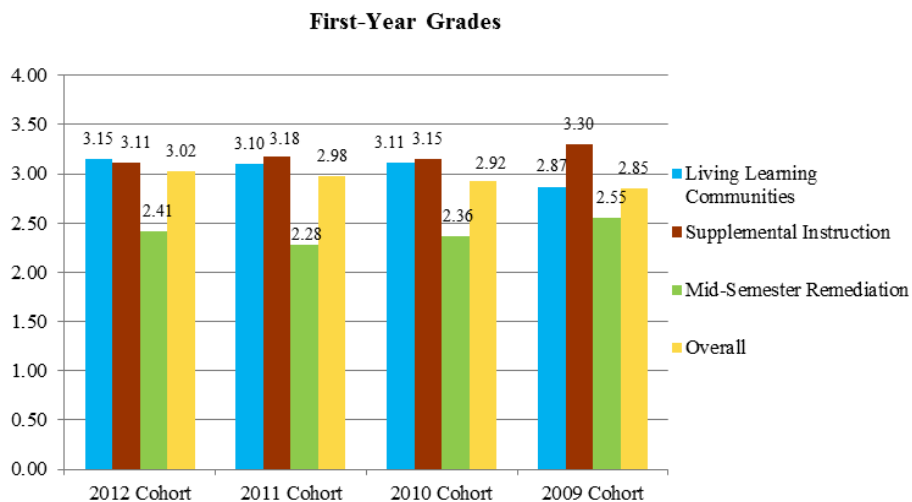
Students who attended five or more SI sessions had significantly higher first-year grades than students who attended less than five SI sessions (3.11 vs. 3.00). SI students who attended five or more sessions had higher second-year retention rates than those who attended less than five sessions and the overall population of first-time students (91% vs. 83% vs. 81%).

Based on positive results for the previous four academic years, SI was expanded from 16 to more than 60 SI sections during academic year 2012-13. During academic year 2013-14, over 100 sections of SI will be offered to more than 4,000 students. Since its implementation in 2009, the program has grown to include more than six times the original number of SI sections and to include courses across each of the four endowed schools. As SI courses are available to all SU students, this initiative allows the University to provide enhanced learning opportunities to students during their entire career at SU. Data on third-year retention rates reveals that students that participated in SI during their freshman year are retained into their third year at SU at higher rates as well.

**Summary of All Initiatives**

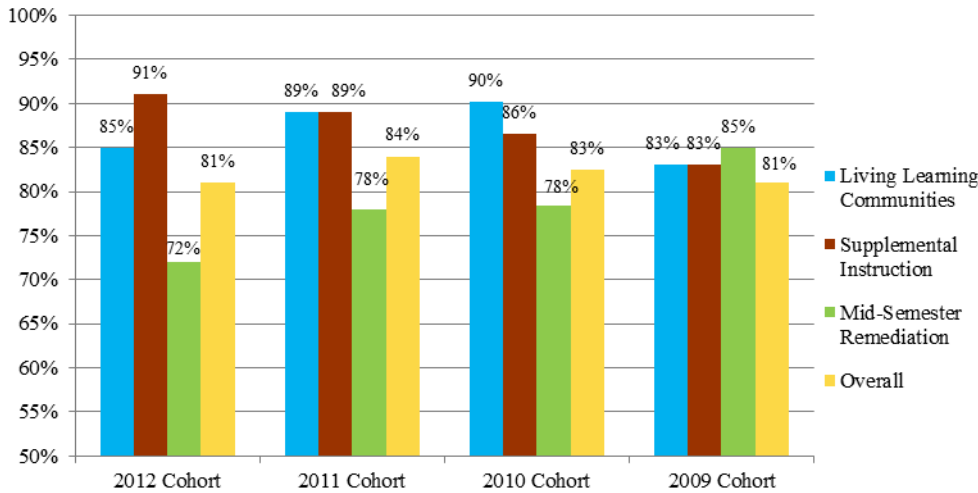
Overall, the impact of the four initiatives implemented to close the achievement gap has been positive. With respect to student grades and retention rates, Supplemental Instruction and LLCs have had the greatest impact on improving first-year student performance and success.

**Chart 1: Average GPA for Participants in the Closing the Achievement Gap Initiatives**



**Chart 2: Retention Rates for Participants in the Closing the Achievement Gap Initiatives**

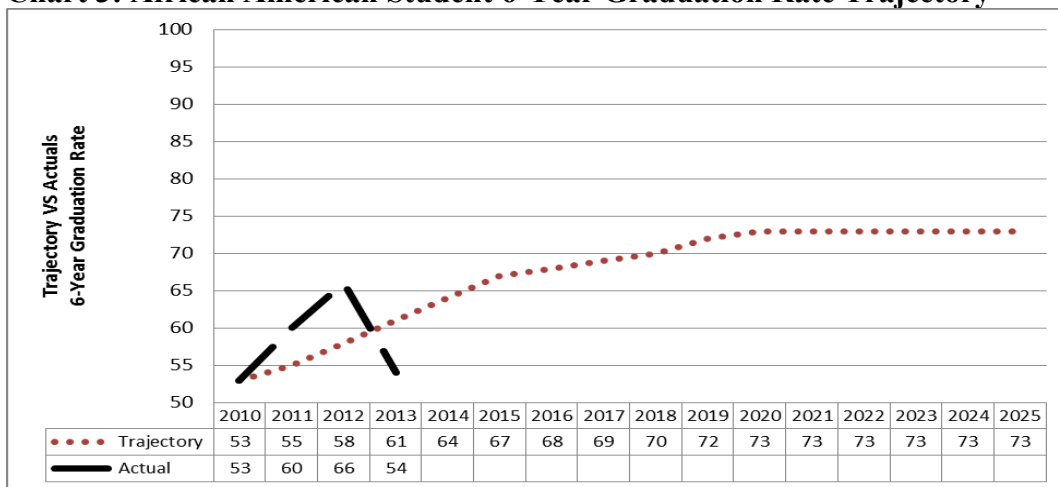
**Second-Year Retention Rates**



**VI. Trajectory Demonstrating Intermediate Achievement Gap Goals**

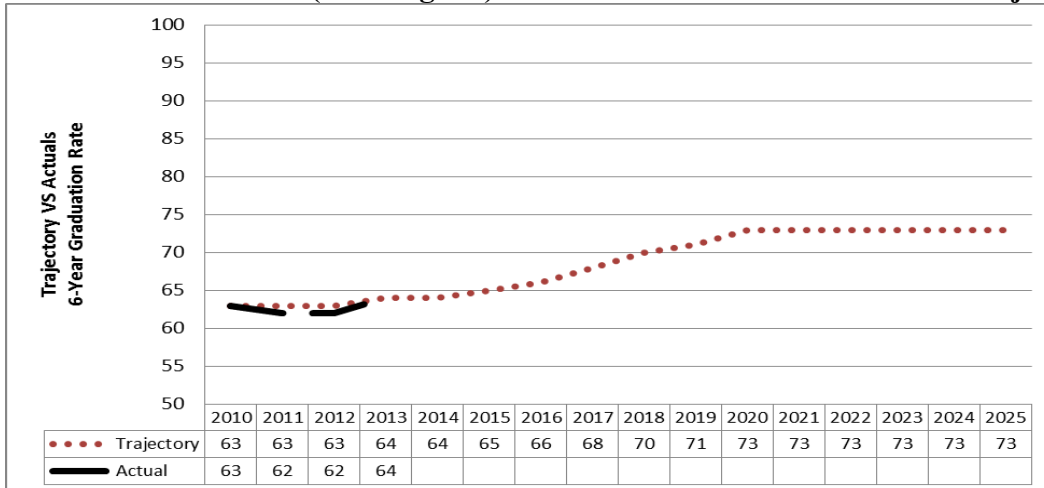
The following charts demonstrate the expected changes in six-year graduation rates for African American, low-income, and Hispanic students. The trajectories are based on closing the achievement gap between these subgroups and the University’s overall six-year graduation rates. Goals are set to cut the gap in half by 2015 (2009 cohort) and eliminate it by 2020 (2014 cohort). Based on the successful implementation and funding of the initiatives, a six-year graduation trajectory has been projected. Actual six-year graduation rates are charted against this projection to determine our progress towards closing the achievement gap.

**Chart 3: African American Student 6-Year Graduation Rate Trajectory**



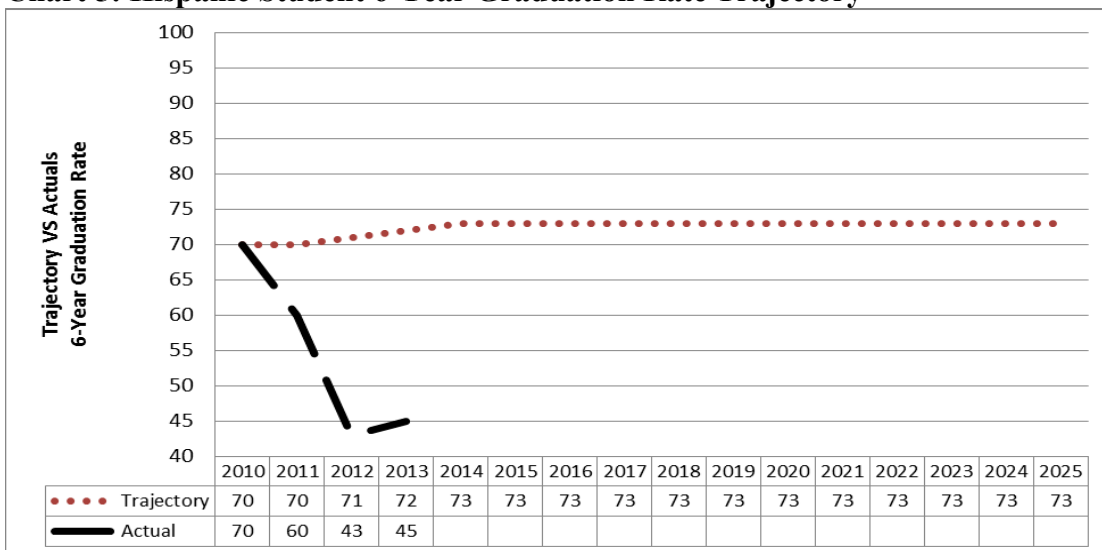
\*Note. The trajectory is based on closing a 12 percentage point gap (2002 cohort) between African American and overall six-year graduation rates.

**Chart 4: Low-Income (Pell Eligible) Student 6-Year Graduation Rate Trajectory**



*\*Note. The trajectory is based on closing a 15 percentage point gap (2002 cohort) between low-income and overall six-year graduation rates.*

**Chart 5: Hispanic Student 6-Year Graduation Rate Trajectory**



*\*Note. The trajectory is based maintaining the same six-year graduation rates for Hispanic and SU's overall cohort of first-time, first-year students.*