
SALEM ACADEMY AND COLLEGE
VISION, VALUES AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
JUNE 2018

Salem Academy and College is the oldest educational institution for girls and women in the United States. Inspired by Moravian principles, Salem was founded in 1772. Growing out of the Academy, the College conferred its first degrees in 1890, sharing the mission of providing an exceptional education to girls and women.

Nearly 250 years later Salem continues to demonstrate its commitment to the pursuit of excellence, development of responsibility to self and the world, and embracing a diverse community. The results are evident in the dedication of our faculty and staff, the enthusiasm and commitment of our students, and the academic and professional success of our alumnae. Across America and around the world, Salem's more than 15,000 alumnae are serving as teachers, physicians, researchers, artists, musicians, inventors, community volunteers, and business executives.¹

As at other times in its history, Salem is called upon to be a pioneer once more to ensure that young women in the present and the future will have access to an exceptional educational experience setting them on the path to lifelong opportunity. As the educational landscape in the United States shifts with rising costs, changing demographics, flat or decreasing enrollment levels, increasing incorporation of technology, and the need to demonstrate the return on a college education, we are committed to reaffirming our mission and revitalizing key components of our program.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the faculty and staff of both the Academy and College undertook efforts to understand better the collective institution's strengths, challenges and, most importantly, areas of opportunity. Building on this work, the Board of Trustees formally launched an accelerated strategic planning process in January 2018. From January to May 2018, a Strategic Planning Steering Committee oversaw a structured and focused process that engaged almost two hundred stakeholders representing students, faculty, administrators, staff, trustees, and alumnae and solicited the perspectives of a number of external thought leaders.

Informed by the wealth of knowledge and experience of this extraordinary and diverse community, in June 2018 the Steering Committee articulated and the Board of Trustees approved a revised vision statement and three key strategic directions. These will be used to develop a more detailed strategic plan for Salem by the fall of 2018 that will guide the institution into its 250th anniversary and beyond. The Steering Committee recognizes that changes in programs and policies must be made in accordance with the procedures established by the Board of Trustees, the faculty, and administration of the Academy and College.

¹ Taken in part from Salem's History from website

To build on our remarkable history of preparing women who are powerfully educated, uncommonly compassionate, and courageously competent leaders², Salem must assess and align its resources to meet the challenges and embrace the opportunities facing students in the 21st century. Moving forward, experiential learning will be a transformational component of the educational experience preparing students for college, graduate programs, and careers of their choice. In the context of a diverse community, all Salem students will achieve success in their own right with unwavering support from faculty, staff, and alumnae. In support of these ambitions, we must skillfully generate, invest, and manage our resources.

VISION

To educate compassionate, creative, and innovative thinkers who lead with integrity and are prepared with the knowledge, skills, and experience to effect change.

VALUES

Community

Salem Academy and College fosters a community that makes each of its members better and that collectively has the power to do astonishing and essential work. We continue to be inspired by the Moravian motto: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, love."

Inclusion

Salem Academy and College cherishes and celebrates diversity in all its beautiful manifestations. As a community, we are committed to creating and maintaining an ethos where differing perspectives are sought and valued and where no voice is marginalized or ignored.

Integrity

The Honor Code is a vital and unifying aspect of the Salem community. It encourages each student to make a commitment to learning grounded in the pursuit of excellence, in community, and in responsibility to self and the world.

Innovation

Building on our legacy as innovators in women's education, we seek to unleash the Salem community's inherent capacity for innovation in increasingly consequential ways -- in our academic programming, in our pedagogy, in the partnerships we form, and in the way we engage the wider world.

² "powerfully educated, uncommonly compassionate... leaders" taken from fall 2017 work by Generation

Courage

Inspired by the courage of its founders, Salem Academy and College is a women's institution that shapes scholars who are self-confident, pursue their passions boldly and fearlessly, and are equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century with uncommon creativity, optimism, poise, and tenacity.

Respect

Salem has a profound respect for the incalculable dignity of every individual. That respect impels us to be courteous with one another, to be open-minded, and to see the good in each other. Members of the Salem community know that in expressing themselves with confidence and candor their ideas may be challenged, but they themselves will be accepted. At Salem we respect each other, we listen to each other, we enjoy each other. We feel privileged to live and work in a community that brings out the best in each of us.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Experiential Learning

With an eye toward the 21st century workplace and a focus on preparing students for success beyond their time at Salem Academy and at Salem College, we will incorporate experiential learning into both academic programs in a way that is intentional and wide-ranging. Incorporating real-world experiences, students will develop skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making in contexts that are personally relevant to them.

To support experiential learning at Salem, the academic program will shift towards an interdisciplinary approach to student learning. Students will gain deeper understandings of subject matter, become adept at integrating ideas from multiple disciplines, and develop creative solutions to some of today's most challenging problems. Students will be well prepared for college, graduate programs, and careers of their choice.

Outcomes

- A *commitment across all disciplines* to incorporate more project-based, problem-based, and co-taught classes throughout the curriculum with intentional alignment to postgraduate opportunities for both Academy and College students.
- Each year, engagement by all students in *experiential learning opportunities*, including internships, projects within the local community, study abroad, faculty-student research projects, or some form of personalized academic experience that increases their problem-solving skills and ability to work with others and broadens their perspectives before leaving Salem.
- A redesigned advising process, using *developmental sequences supported by the curriculum*, to support students' individual paths for achieving their post-graduation goals.
- *Significant expansion of partnerships* with other educational institutions, non-profits, government agencies, and corporations to develop a broader range of experiential learning opportunities and placements for students.
- *Engagement of alumnae, the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Visitors* to serve as resources, advisors, mentors, and ambassadors for Salem students' experiential learning.

Student Success

With experiential learning at the core, Salem will seek students from a diversity of experiences and backgrounds, who are prepared for a challenging academic program, committed to engaging in community life, and energized by an innovative curriculum that emphasizes diversity of perspectives. Through collaborative efforts across both campuses, Salem will fulfill the promise of its mission by examining, valuing, and supporting the full student experience. As advocates for student success, faculty and staff will continue to develop the knowledge, expertise, and skills required to foster, support, and measure student progress to degree completion.

Outcomes

- At the College, the *creation of or re-imagination of a program* in which all students must participate that *prepares students for a successful life and career*, including topics such as financial literacy, professionalism, decision-making, and overall life-management.
- At the Academy, *development of a holistic student program* to include leadership skills, an entrepreneurial mindset, and wellness.
- With input and support from faculty and staff from across programs and functions, development and implementation of a *long-term strategic enrollment and retention plan* that is informed by institutional data from across functions, market-based data, and educational trends.
- To achieve higher retention rates and post graduate placement results (for Academy students – acceptance and matriculation to first and second choice colleges; for College students – 90% employed or matriculate to graduate school within 6 months), establishment of a *student success team* for each student consisting of an academic advisor, a wellness coach, and a mentor who assist in mapping out their academic choices needed to achieve post graduate goals.
- *Integration of processes and services* across academic, student service, and administrative areas designed to support students' experience, retention, and success.
- Investment in initiatives that *promote and support physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social health and well-being*, and a program that guides all members of the community in developing resilience and the skills and habits needed to maintain their health and manage stress effectively.

Resource Development

Achieving excellence and innovation at Salem will require growing and stewarding the resources needed to support long-term aspirations. We will realign finances, operations, governance and administrative structures, campus layout, and facilities to support our renewed commitment to an outstanding student experience and successful educational outcomes. We will utilize a more transparent financial model to inform the allocation of resources, creatively leverage our assets, design more efficient administrative systems, and strengthen administrative structures needed to support student success.

Outcomes

- Establishment of a *balanced or surplus operating budget* to ensure the future financial sustainability of Salem.

- Implementation of a *debt restructuring/repayment program* to ensure that Salem's long-term debt is maintained at a manageable level.
- Development and implementation of *faculty and staff compensation and benefits* plans competitive with similar institutions, and implementation of a strategy to support the continued career development of faculty and staff.
- Successful implementation of a *comprehensive fundraising strategy* that secures support from individual donors, corporations, and foundations.
- Continued attention to *ensuring a healthy endowment*, including repayment of any loans from the endowment to the institution, continued growth of the endowment through future contributions and investment returns, and maintenance of an appropriate level for the annual draw from the endowment to support Salem's operating and capital needs.
- With a *transparent and adaptive financial model as the foundation*, implementation of a Salem dashboard that reports on all key performance indicators that are essential to assessing progress against institutional objectives.
- Development of a *prioritization matrix for Salem's comprehensive buildings and infrastructure master plan* that addresses the renovation or construction of campus facilities, academic and administrative technology needs, use of campus property, and opportunities for alternative revenue streams.
- Utilizing an evidence-based approach and incorporating data-driven decision-making, *implementation of changes within academic and non-academic programs and services* needed to further enhance the student experience and educational outcomes, improve efficiency, and maximize available resources.
- *Collaborative partnerships* with political, social, economic, educational, scientific, and cultural institutions that increase Salem's value and relevance within regional communities as well as attract additional and needed resources.