More options for artists to hone their craft
Liberal arts programs boost marketability of artists

By Megan Weeden, Contributing Writer

If you're a young artist, you might be wondering how to take your skills to the next level.

Liberal arts colleges, where undergraduates can pursue both humanities and sciences, are often overlooked as an option for young artists.

And while enrollments in the humanities in general are dropping nationally, Salisbury University's Fulton School of Liberal Arts is thriving – especially in the school's art department, where the number of art majors has grown from about 50 to more than 300 in the last decade or so.

"Students can earn a B.F.A., similar to a degree from an art school, but they can also minor in business," says Edward Brown, chair of the art department. "At Salisbury University, art classes are part of the general curriculum. So, a business student might fall in love with art, and even switch his or her major or minor."

Graphic design majors, one of the department's biggest draws, not only focus on graphic arts, but must also take art electives in other areas of the department.

The three-dimensional art programs – ceramics, sculpture and hot glass (the only one in the state) – have grown so much that they are getting a new home set to open in 2019.

Salisbury recently purchased the Tri-State Engineering, Inc. building, a former industrial site known for metalworking and bordering the campus, for $525,000. The 12,000-square-foot shop and 3,000-square-foot office building will be more than double the space currently available, allowing the 3-D artists to stay together.

"One of the things we are most excited about with the new property is the large multi-use open space behind the building," says Steve Durow, director of the hot glass program. "A number of our processes, including iron casting, ceramic raku firing, stone carving and large-scale wood carving, really need to be outdoors."

Future plans include initiating a master's program and bringing in the community for events.

"Facilities make an impression," Durow says. "They're important for recruiting, and it's going to be neat to see what we will be able to do."

At Towson University, working professionals can earn a master of arts in interdisciplinary arts infusion (MAIA).

This new program is designed for classroom teachers, art specialists, teaching artists, administrators and arts entrepreneurs looking to energize instruction and learning, as well as increase their professional satisfaction.

"One of the things that makes us distinct, in
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The arts and the economy

The National Endowment for the Arts says jobs for curators, architects, interior designers and multimedia artists are projected to grow at a rate faster than the overall labor force through 2018, which is great, because the arts are also good for the economy.

Arts and cultural organizations employ people locally, purchase goods and services from within the community, are members of their Chambers of Commerce and promote their regions.

According to a study conducted by Americans for the Arts, in 2015, these organizations – performing and visual arts organizations, festivals, public art programs, municipally owned museums and art centers – pumped an estimated $63.8 billion into the nation’s economy. Direct spending by nonprofit arts organizations alone supported 1.4 million jobs more than that of the legal or public safety sectors. For more information, visit AmericansForTheArts.org.

people with degrees in arts administration receive, these employers are seeking out candidates with a higher level of training for key staff positions.

Students accepted into the program attend three two-week summer residencies at Goucher. The other classes are taught live online.

“The fact that all of our faculty are working in the arts administration field themselves makes an enormous difference,” says Ramona Baker, program director. “There’s a great understanding of what’s going on in the field at this minute and is the difference between reading about something and doing it.”

The residency encourages networking.

“It’s a different conversation that happens when others are doing what you’re doing,” Baker says.