



Celebrate
Winston-Salem, N.C.
City of Arts & Innovation



BY IVY LAMB

A Tradition of Excellence

Salem Academy and College has been educating women of character for more than 240 years.



Clockwise from top left: Salem Academy campus; academy students in the science lab; graduates celebrate success

From humble beginnings in a Moravian congregation house in 1772, Salem Academy and College has grown from a girls' school of three students to a 64-acre campus with an enrollment exceeding 1,100.

But the school grew rapidly, largely thanks to the entrepreneurial efforts of the Sisters. The Moravians believed that girls deserved an education comparable to that of boys — a radical conviction for the time.

Yet, more than 240 years after its founding, the school stays true to its original mission of providing women with an exceptional education.

Located near downtown Winston-Salem, the school is the oldest continually operating educational institution for women in the U.S. It includes Salem Academy, a private college-preparatory boarding and day school, and Salem College, a four-year liberal arts college — all thanks to the tenacity and vision of the school's founders.

A Remarkable History

In 1766, four women and 12 girls ages 13 to 17 left their homes in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and traveled 500 miles on foot to join the new Moravian community of Salem in North Carolina. The Single Sisters, as unmarried women were called, helped establish the town, and along with it, a girls' school. Elisabeth Oesterlein, the first teacher, started with only three pupils.

The girls' lessons included math alongside "womanly arts" like knitting. In 1802, Salem became a boarding school run by the Sisters; it began granting college degrees in the 1890s. Despite times of hardship, including the Civil War, the school never closed its doors.

At a place like Salem, girls have the freedom to become exactly who they were created to be.

—Karl Sjolund, head of Salem Academy

"Some things never change," says the school's president, Dr. Susan Pauly. "That's one reason the school is still so vital today. We have an honor code that pledges all our girls and women to academic integrity and personal civility. The motto of the Moravian church is: 'in essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, love.' We hold to those founding

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SALEM ACADEMY AND COLLEGE



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—Dr. Susan Pauly, president

Salem Academy and College

To learn more about Salem Academy, call 336.721.2643 or visit salemacademy.com. To learn more about Salem College, call 336.721.2600 or visit saalem.edu.

values and encourage all girls to discover themselves in the framework of those values.”

The Academy

With an enrollment of roughly 200, Salem Academy offers a world-class education to girls in grades nine through 12. With a student-teacher ratio of 7 to 1, the school encourages academic excellence — students score above average on the SAT and pass Advanced Placement exams at a high rate. The academy also seeks to build character through extracurricular activities and boasts a growing athletic program and well-developed fine-arts offerings.

The unique three-week January term also offers students a chance to explore subjects not covered in the regular semester — such as photography, kitchen chemistry, creative writing, natural and organic health, and automotive essentials — or to take an internship off campus. The goal is to help girls discover their passions and gain confidence.

“Contemporary culture constantly puts pressure on teenagers and young women,” says Karl Sjolund, head of the academy. “It tells them that if they don’t look or act a certain way, then they are somehow flawed. At a place like Salem, girls have the freedom to become exactly who they were created to be.” Sjolund also notes that one look at the academy’s high math and science scores destroys many stereotypes about women and science.

And the girls, whether they pursue art, science, or both, have access to some top-notch facilities; the academy shares part of its idyllic, historic campus with Salem College.

The College

Recognized as one of the nation’s top schools, Salem College ranked 14th on *Forbes*’s list of America’s Best College Buys and was listed among *USA Today*’s 10 Groundbreaking Women’s Colleges. And while the college, like the academy, is steeped in tradition, it has adapted to meet the needs of students in a changing world.

The Salem Signature Program sets the college apart, focusing on interdisciplinary thinking and experiential learning. By requiring off-campus internships and community service, the program awakens students’ intellectual curiosity and helps them prepare for life after college.



“It’s so important to be innovative, creative, and global in our academics, because the career opportunities for women have just exploded,” says Dr. Pauly. “Our graduates are likely to have more than one career in their lifetime.”

Salem College also has a January term, which allows students to take innovative courses, engage in independent study, and travel abroad. The unique academic programming at Salem, along with its small class sizes and dedicated faculty, produces successful, motivated women who go on to excel in business, art, politics, and many other fields.

Outside the classroom, Salem College offers women the chance to participate in clubs, student government, sports, and wellness programs. The college enrolls 1,100 students, and it boasts a diverse community — 7 percent are international students and 25 percent are students of color. And despite the wide diversity

Why Women Only?

Research shows that **GIRLS AND WOMEN THRIVE IN AN ALL-FEMALE ENVIRONMENT. Graduates from these schools feel better prepared for college, and there’s also evidence that they are more likely to enter male-dominated fields like math and science. Alumnae from women’s colleges can be found in overwhelming numbers in business and politics, including 30 percent of *Business Week*’s list of rising stars in corporate America; 33 percent of female board members of *Fortune* 1000 companies; and 20 percent of women in Congress.**

Those numbers come as no surprise to Dr. Pauly. “At a women’s institution like Salem, every single leadership position is held by a woman,” she says. “They get so much practice that when they leave they are used to taking the lead.”

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SALEM ACADEMY AND COLLEGE

of students, a strong sense of community permeates life at Salem. “We teach our young women to hold strong opinions and to speak out, but to do so with civility,” says Dr. Pauly.

The first college in North Carolina to offer graduate degrees, Salem College enrolls men and women in its masters program, while adults seeking to continue their education can take classes through the F’ler Center for Adult Education, which just added new certificate programs that include Not-for-Profit Management, Injury Preventive Keyboard Technique, Accounting, and Historical Preservation.

Looking to the future, with enrollment at an all-time high, Salem College plans to expand with a new East Campus that will have residence halls, a state-of-the-art science center, athletic facilities, and more. This new chapter in Salem’s history exemplifies the school’s indomitable spirit and, most of all, its commitment to educating women of character.

Top left and right: Sports have always played a part in the curriculum. Below: The campus is also renowned for its beauty.