

## **UMW Releases Regional Commuter Study**

Nearly 40 percent of the Fredericksburg area's workers commute to jobs outside the region, according to a comprehensive study conducted by the University of Mary Washington. The report called "Fredericksburg Region Commuter Workforce Skills Study" was released at a May 11 meeting of the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance, the Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce and the University.

Lance Gentry, associate professor in UMW's College of Business, presented the findings, which are based on year-long research conducted by Professor Brad Hansen. The study focuses on individuals who live in the Fredericksburg region (the city of Fredericksburg and Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford counties) and commute out of the region for employment.

"This compelling study helps us better understand our current population's job trends and capabilities so we can create even better local employment opportunities, said Susan Spears, Chamber president and CEO.

The study used data collected by the U.S. Census bureau through the American Community Survey (ACS). According to the data, the estimated number of area commuters is 61,639, the majority of whom commute to Prince William County, Fairfax County and Washington, D.C. More than half of all commuters estimate that it takes at least one hour to get to work each day.

Survey data confirm that commuters typically earn higher salaries than non-commuters at every level of education. The survey also found that area commuters are more likely to have military experience (active duty or National Guard) than non-commuters (28 percent versus 12 percent), and that commuters with military experience earn more than commuters without military experience.

"Quality and availability of labor is still the number one location factor for a company moving or expanding to any area," said Curry Roberts, president of the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance. "The high skill level of our commuting and non-commuting population now being quantified will be a great boost to our marketing efforts to attract more companies to our region. "

UMW President Richard V. Hurley said the research further underscores how the University can partner with regional stakeholders.

Said Hurley: "This is just the kind of important research that benefits the region in understanding economic growth and development."