

Dear Bobcat Community,

It is with a heavy heart that I write this message to inform the campus community that I will be stepping down as President of Frostburg State University effective at the close of business on Friday, January 31, 2025. While I regret having to take this action, as many of you know, I have been combating medical issues for some time. I had hoped I could successfully overcome my health difficulties and continue with my duties and responsibilities as President. Unfortunately, I have had some new medical challenges in recent months. During this time, I have reflected and discussed my circumstances and those of Frostburg State University with my family, my friend and my Chief of Staff, Al Delia, with Chancellor Perman, and a few close friends. As a result of my reflections and conversations, I have come to the decision that I must now focus on my health and spend more time with my wife, Maureen, our son, Jake, and close family and friends. I am grateful to the team of outstanding individuals who rallied and dedicated countless hours and immeasurable commitment to ensure that Frostburg State University remains devoted to serving our students.

Leading FSU for the past nine years has been the honor and privilege of my career. I believe that, together, we have made important progress, always in the best interest of and for the good of the University and its students. I know that we are experiencing some difficult times within our campus and community because of our budget challenges. However, the plan that we developed to place FSU back on solid financial footing is critical for the future of the University. And it is already working. Please know that I do understand and am sorry for how difficult, emotional and, particularly for the individuals that have been directly affected, how personally upsetting this process has been.

I have spent my professional lifetime in higher education. I have had the great fortune to be a part of several outstanding institutions of higher education, but my time at Frostburg has been the highlight of my life's work. Together we have accomplished much.

- FSU added two new nursing degrees to the already established nursing department. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program and an online Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) to BSN program.
- FSU and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) now offers an innovative joint Master in Environmental Management in Sustainability.
- FSU offers eight online certificates designed for working adults with an associate's degree or equivalent credits and some relevant work experience.
- FSU established a streamlined pathway for undergraduate students to advance from a Bachelor of Science in Health Science directly into the FSU Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies program.

- Our collaboration with University of Maryland College Park allows students to spend four years in Frostburg while earning a Mechanical Engineering degree from College Park.
- Our 3 + 3 partnership with University of Maryland Eastern Shore allows students to become a pharmacist in six years by completing their undergraduate and doctoral studies seamlessly to reduce instruction time and costs.
- FSU and the West Virginia School of Pharmacy (WVUSoP) entered a partnership that will allow students to earn their Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from FSU and their Doctor of Pharmacy degree from WVUSoP in just seven years.
- Through FSU's partnership with the University of Baltimore School of Law our students can combine a bachelor's and juris doctor program in six years instead of the usual seven.
- In spring 2023, we opened a new Education and Health Sciences Center which houses the FSU College of Education and Health & Natural Sciences. The EHSC is also home to the Student Health Center and Student Counseling Center and the Children's Literature Centre.
- In fall 2020, Frostburg State University opened Brownsville Hall, our first new residence hall in more than 40 years. Unfortunately, in spring 2023, Brownsville had to be closed to students because of water leaks. The building remains closed as we continue to work with outside contractors to take the necessary steps to address and remediate the problems to ensure the safety of all future Brownsville residents.
- Extensive renovations began in 2020 to transform the Ort Library into a "study- learning-center".
- We opened a new public safety building in 2017, and the former public safety building was repurposed into The Adams/Wyche Multicultural Center at the Lincoln School. This building is now home to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and has meeting space for the use of community and student organizations.
- The Adams/Wyche Center for Academic Excellence located in the Cordts P.E. Center is designated for student-athletes to have a place to excel academically while also developing lifelong skills.
- The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) officially accepted FSU as a member of Division II on September 1, 2022, capping a 41-year run as a member of Division III. FSU is home to more than 700 student-athletes, and a GPA analysis from 2023 indicated a 3.11 student-athlete GPA compared to 3.04 for the remaining student population.

- For the third year in a row, FSU has set a new annual total fundraising record, raising over \$5.3 million during FY24. The campaign has now reached over \$31.5 million, far surpassing the \$16.7 million raised in the last campaign and our \$25 million goal. Money raised in the campaign is used to support several campus priorities, including \$17 million in scholarships for deserving students.
- The Endowment has grown from approximately \$20.6 million to \$46.9 million. During the same period, scholarship awards have increased from \$640,000 to nearly \$1.35 million.
- FSU received a grant from the Maryland Energy Administration to help cover the costs of installing a clean energy microgrid on campus, which will safeguard critical operations from energy disruptions, integrate an emergency shelter for the surrounding community and meet the University's sustainability goals.
- As part of an ongoing effort to create a sustainable, decarbonized campus, FSU received \$300,000 from the United States Department of Agriculture's Wood Innovations Grant program that will allow FSU to create an implementation-ready design for woody biomass heating on campus, replacing an aging set of oil-fired boilers.
- FSU was offered the opportunity to host a Challenger Center facility that would be part of a national network focused on improving middle school students' science education through NASA-developed hands-on science projects. The center will provide a unique opportunity for students to experience STEM learning and provide an early look at STEM careers.

As a result of these and numerous other accomplishments, we have changed and improved the lives of thousands of people forever. And, through them, in a small way, millions more will be touched by Frostburg State University and help create a brighter future and better world.

Notwithstanding our successes and our history, there is much work yet to do. Frostburg State University is in the final stages of our self-study. Our team has worked hard to review the document and provide all the information for the evidence inventory in preparation for the Middle States Commission of Higher Education team site visit in March. I want to thank the co-chairs, Sara-Beth Bittinger, Sudhir Singh, and Sara Wilhelm, for their leadership and devotion to this important work, the steering committee and the working groups for their dedication to Frostburg's self-study document in the vital self-study process. The goal of this process is to establish a path forward for the University based upon self-reflection and the guidance of peer evaluators' analysis, consistent with the Middle States standards of accreditation. This work is essential so that Frostburg State University can continue to provide the best educational

opportunities for our students. I plan to be available and involved as necessary in providing guidance and assistance as the University moves through the critical Middle States review.

As FSU's president, I have been proud to witness Frostburg fulfilling our mission of being a student-centered teaching and learning institution providing experiential opportunities to our students. I am confident that even in difficult times, our mission and core values will help us engage our campus community to support FSU's strategic priorities and to promote a welcoming campus climate and culture.

I have informed the Chancellor and the Board of Regents of my decision to step down from the presidency to focus on my health. I would like to express my gratitude to them for their support and to let you know that the Chancellor will soon be announcing his decisions about the future leadership of the University.

I also want to thank the Executive Cabinet, the deans, too many of you on the staff and faculty throughout the University to mention by name, and particularly the staff of the President's Office with whom I have worked so closely over the years. Most of all, I thank the students of FSU. I am confident that all of you will continue to do wonderful things and fully support the next President of the University, and each other – the remarkable students, faculty, staff and the larger community in our region. Most of all, I am proud of the hard work and accomplishments of our students. I will continue to watch you make your mark in the world as your successes have always been the highlight of my career.

In conclusion, I want to express my personal and heartfelt thanks to each of you who have come to see me, reached out to express your support, share your similar experiences, write me a note to lift my spirits, or simply tell me I am in your thoughts and prayers. The difficulties I have faced have been made infinitely easier because of your kindness. It is my hope that the generosity of spirit so many of you have shown me helps us all to never lose sight of why we are all here – to prepare our future leaders to meet the challenges of a complex and changing global society, to keep FSU on a sustainable path for the future, and in small and big ways, make the world in which we live a better place.

Frostburg State University is one of Maryland's finest institutions, with a proud and distinguished history. I am grateful for the opportunity I was afforded over the past nine years to work with the amazing people here. It has been my privilege to serve this community with you.

Sincerely,

Ron Nowaczyk

