

Good morning, Bobcats.

I would like to begin by thanking Dr. Mathias for his update last week during National Transfer Student Week. He used it as the perfect opportunity to speak about Frostburg's ongoing commitment to transfer students and our investment in high-growth transfer programs. We truly value all the experiences and fresh perspectives that our transfer students bring with them to FSU.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share some recent highlights and good news that reflect the creativity and dedication of our faculty, staff and students. Over the past few weeks, we've celebrated several exciting accomplishments - from accreditations to partnerships to grant awards. Frostburg has much to be proud of.

We were recently awarded a 3-year, \$400,000 federal research grant from the National Science Foundation, which represents one of the largest NSF research investments in FSU's history and the first of its kind in more than 20 years. Frostburg is among a cohort of four other higher education institutions working to support groundbreaking research to help satisfy regional needs. Many thanks and congratulations go out to Dr. Xunyu Pan and Dr. Sudhir Singh, who are serving as the grant's principal and co-principal investigators, for their hard work and vision in bringing this opportunity to FSU.

Next up in the good news category is accreditations!

- Our Graduate Athletic Training Program was recently granted 10 years of continuing accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education! Congratulations to Dr. Yum Nguyen and Dr. Jackie Durst for their tireless leadership necessary to reach this milestone and for their commitment to preparing students for successful careers in athletic training and allied health professions.
- The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. has granted Accreditation-Continued status to our Physician Assistant Program. I am especially proud of this year's Class of 2025 cohort, who was successful in achieving a 100% pass rate on the PA National Certifying Exam, significantly exceeding the national exam pass rate. Thank you to Dr. Laurarose Dunn-O'Farrell and the entire program staff for their unwavering commitment to excellence in PA education to meet the needs of our community.

Over the past few weeks, we held ribbon cutting ceremonies to "officially" welcome the Firehouse Sub shop, located in Sowers Hall, to campus, and to celebrate the newly designed Chesapeake Dining Hall, which boasts a fresh look, new menu options and a special station for diners with allergies. Thank you to Bobcat Dining and Elior Collegiate Dining for their efforts in bringing these new dining experiences to life.

Moving on, our athletic teams are showing incredible determination this season, and the school spirit on campus has been truly inspiring. To our student-athletes and coaches – your hard work and dedication this season have not gone unnoticed. May you finish your fall sports seasons on a high note. Go Bobcats!

I'm also thrilled to highlight the vibrant work happening in our Department of Music, Theatre and Dance. Faculty, staff and students have been hard at work preparing for several upcoming musical performances, all of which are free and open to the public:

- Our Vocal Studios will perform in a recital of art songs and selections from opera, oratorio and musical theatre on October 30 at 7:30 p.m. in the Pealer Recital Hall.
- Saxophonist Dr. Brent Weber will perform in a Faculty Artist Series on October 31 at 7:30 p.m. in the Pealer Recital Hall. He will be accompanied by pianist Dr. Joseph Yungen.
- Our Chamber Singers, conducted by Scott Reiker, will perform in a concert titled "Sacred Service," in the B'er Chayim Synagogue in Cumberland on November 1 at 7:30 p.m.
- Our Percussion Ensemble, conducted by Dr. Mackenzie Jacob LaMont, will be held on November 6 at 7:30 p.m. in the Pealer Recital Hall.
- Our 11-member Saxophone Orchestra will present a birthday celebration recital in honor of Adolphe Sax on November 9 at 3 p.m. in the Pealer Recital Hall.

The talent, passion and heart poured into these productions are a testament to the creative excellence we value at FSU. If you haven't already made plans to attend a performance, I strongly encourage you to come out and support our performers. I promise you'll walk away uplifted by what our faculty and students have accomplished together. Be sure to check our calendar of events online for more shows throughout the remainder of the semester.

In closing, please take time to appreciate autumn at FSU with cooler weather and changing and falling leaves on campus. It is such a beautiful, transformational time of year.

Thank you again for all you do to make Frostburg such a dynamic community. Let's continue to celebrate the successes around us!

With FSU pride,

Darlene Brannigan Smith, PhD
Interim President