



From the Desk of the President

FSU Updates from President Darlene Brannigan Smith, PhD

Looking Back at an Extraordinary Year & Moving Together Toward Tomorrow

As we begin a new year under the theme "**Together Toward Tomorrow**," I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible progress we have made - both as a campus and as a broader community. While 2025 brought its share of challenges, it was a year that clearly revealed the strength, determination and generosity of spirit that define Frostburg State University. Together, we have advanced our mission to educate, inspire and support one another in ways that continue to shape a brighter future for our region and beyond.



The past year has also been filled with milestones that showcase our collective commitment to innovation, excellence and most importantly - student success. Some of our proudest accomplishments are highlighted below:

Celebrating Student Success!

Last year during our May and December 2025 Commencement ceremonies, 1,057 Bobcats joined a distinguished group of FSU alumni as they walked across the stage to receive their diplomas. We are so proud of these incredibly talented, smart, motivated and driven young adults. Graduating from college is an incredible milestone, and I applaud the hard work and dedication they demonstrated throughout their academic journeys. My hope for them is that they will continue to remain enthusiastic about their futures and carry with them the lessons they learned, the friendships they forged and the mentors that helped guide them during their time at FSU. I look forward to the incredible contributions they will make to society for years to come!





Accreditation Achievements

Several of FSU's programs and institutional areas were reaffirmed this year, including the [Middle States Commission on Higher Education](#), [Physician Assistant Program](#), [Social Work](#) and [Athletic Training](#). These accreditation achievements reflect FSU's continued commitment to excellence and play a vital role in strengthening the University while supporting student success. Go Bobcats!



Record-Breaking Campaign Ends

[Forging Futures: The Campaign for Frostburg State University](#) concluded on Dec. 31 with remarkable success, surpassing its original \$25 million goal by raising

an extraordinary \$36 million. This achievement was made possible by the generosity and commitment of FSU's alumni and friends, whose support has directly transformed the lives of FSU students. A substantial portion of these gifts were designated for scholarships, expanding access to education and helping students pursue their academic goals. We extend our deepest gratitude to the donors whose belief in *Forging Futures* made this historic campaign possible.

[Watch the Campaign Video](#)

Funding Secured for Reopening of the FSU Planetarium

The planned reopening of the [FSU Planetarium and Regional Science Center](#) this spring will provide new opportunities for learning, exploration and public engagement. This investment underscores our dedication not only to the sciences, but also to serving as a resource for the entire community. This milestone would not have been possible without the generous support of donors and partners whose contributions made the critical upgrades to the planetarium a reality, transforming vision into an accessible, state-of-the-art learning environment for students and the public. Thank you!



The CLC Gets a New Name

[The Children's Literature Centre](#) - the only one of its kind in the nation - continues to shine as a beacon of creativity and scholarship. We are proud to share with the campus community that the [Nowaczyk Family](#) has generously made a contribution to endow the Centre, which will include a naming opportunity. Consistent with established USM guidelines, the proposed name is subject to the approval of the Board of Regents.



FSU Joins Maryland Transfer Intensive

FSU joined the inaugural cohort of the new [Maryland Statewide Transfer Intensive](#), a project designed to significantly improve community college transfer outcomes. Over the next several years, FSU will work alongside Allegany College of Maryland and our other regional community college partners to develop a comprehensive transfer ecosystem to increase transfer enrollments; improve transfer advising support; develop new strategies and programs that make transferring simpler, more equitable and more effective; prioritize transfer student outcomes and graduation rates; and improve data tracking and institutional practices related to transfer student success.

New Partnerships, Expanded Programs

Two of FSU's newest partnerships include the [Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine \(LECOM\)](#) agreement to facilitate the admission of qualified students into one of LECOM's professional schools and the [Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine \(MSOM\)](#) agreement that guarantees a formal interview opportunity for eligible students upon the successful completion of academic requirements to create a structured pathway for them to pursue a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree. These partnerships not only affirm the exceptional preparation our students receive at FSU but also provides them with clear and supportive pathways to pursue their dreams.

Plan to Renovate Brownsville Approved by USM

Renovations to the [Brownsville residence hall](#) will begin soon, and we remain optimistic that our students returning in fall of 2026 will be able to enjoy this vibrant and modern environment. Equally important, these updates reflect our continued commitment to strengthening our campus infrastructure and enhancing the student experience. New furniture has been ordered, and existing furnishings are being carefully assessed for relocation to other areas across campus where they are most needed.



Launch of the FSU Strategic Investment Fund

FSU launched its new Strategic Investment Fund designed to support innovative, high-impact activities and projects that advance FSU's institutional mission, strategic priorities and long-term sustainability. This competitive internal funding opportunity aims to empower departments, faculty and staff to pursue bold ideas that promote academic excellence, student success, community engagement and financial stability. Ultimately, the launch of this fund will strengthen the University's foundation for future growth and academic innovation, positioning us to respond boldly to emerging needs and opportunities.

Sustained Commitment to Research and Innovation

FSU continues to demonstrate strong leadership through faculty scholarship and externally-funded research. External grant funding is a major funding source for driving innovation and high-impact research at FSU. In FY 25, members of the FSU community submitted a record number of 97 grant proposals secured over \$4.4 million in grant awards! One grant award in particular was a prestigious 3-year, \$400,000 **National Science Foundation (NSF) research grant**, which will support the launch of the Appalachian Innovation Institute.



I hope you have enjoyed reading our Top 10 List from last year. These highlights represent just a sampling - not an exhaustive account - of the meaningful progress made across the University. As you can see, each of these achievements is a testament to the resilience, dedication and vision of our faculty, staff, students, alumni and community partners. Together, we are building a future that reflects the very best of Frostburg State University. As we look ahead, let us turn this momentum into continued action and shared purpose,

because the future we envision begins with the steps we take **"Together Toward Tomorrow."**

With FSU pride,

Darlene Brannigan Smith, PhD
Interim President



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