

Dear Bobcats,

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who had a hand in making this year's Homecoming and Family Weekend a truly amazing success. Your school spirit and Bobcat pride was on full display for everyone to see!

Homecoming proved to be a joyful celebration of our University and our community.

From the moment the festivities began, I was inspired by the energy, creativity and dedication shown by our students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of FSU. I had the pleasure of attending several wonderful events throughout the week, and each one was a reminder of what makes Frostburg State University so special.

I want to begin with the Frostburg Homecoming Parade. All I can say is WOW! When Frostburg's Mayor and I got the crazy idea to revive the parade with only two short months to spare, I wasn't sure what to expect. We just knew this community *needed* it to happen. Under the leadership of our assistant athletic director for engagement, Nicole Lewis, Frostburg put on one of the most pride-filled events I've ever had the privilege of being a part of. It was a wonderful opportunity for our area and our University to showcase our strong and collective community partnerships. I truly hope that this parade remains a Frostburg tradition for years to come as I know it will bring joy, unity and a true sense of pride to everyone who attends!

Also, congratulations to the winners in our "A Community of Treasures" parade contests. First prize was awarded to FSU's Roundabout Children's Theatre Tour. Second place was earned by FSU Cheer. And third place was given to the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences. These campus groups will receive \$500, \$300 and \$200, respectively.

Some of the other weekend events that I had the honor of attending included:

- The Retired Employee and Employee Service Awards Luncheon on Thursday afternoon celebrated and honored an engaged group of FSU retirees and alumni who have given so much of themselves in service to the University. We also celebrated several current employees for achieving milestone years of service to FSU. Their years of dedication and countless hours of mentorship, leadership and support to our Bobcats is immeasurable.
- The Golden Anniversary Luncheon on Friday was an opportunity to recognize FSU's graduating classes of 1975, 1970 and 1965 and earlier. It was a joy to welcome them

back to campus to celebrate their golden anniversary milestones ranging between 50 and 60 years since their graduation.

- Later that evening I had the pleasure of attending the Bobcat Hall of Fame dinner and was able to offer welcoming remarks to the seven distinguished inductees and their families, friends, teammates, coaches and former HOF inductees. This year also marked the 55th anniversary of Frostburg State's first-ever field hockey team, and we were proud to honor this trailblazing group that took the field in 1970. It was a night to celebrate athletic excellence and the discipline, dedication and passion that defines the FSU athletic program.
- The enthusiasm on display at Saturday morning's Jim Anderson Memorial Breakfast was contagious. It was exciting to see so many past and present Bobcat baseball players, coaches and supporters gathered to honor Jim's legacy and the impact he had on Frostburg State University. During the event we also recognized several very deserving Bobcats with awards for their impressive athletic achievements as well as their remarkable academic successes.
- Finally, I had the honor of offering brief remarks at the room dedication in memory of one of our alums, **Matthew G. Allen '85**. Matthew was an accounting student when he was at Frostburg, so his family thought it would be a fitting tribute for a room in Framptom to bear his name and honor his legacy. We are grateful for their support and for the very meaningful way to remember Matthew and benefit our students for years to come.

No Homecoming weekend would be complete without engaging with other Bobcats, both past and present, at our tailgate and then cheering on our Bobcat football team to a 33-7 victory over Concord! The powerful stories I heard from our alumni as they reminisced about their time at Frostburg brought a smile to my face as I enjoyed all the laughter and connections.

Our student-athletes in several other sports, including field hockey, men's and women's soccer, women's rugby, tennis and volleyball did us proud as well and should be commended for their performances in last week's contests. Go Bobcats!

Thank you once again to everyone who planned, participated in, and supported these Homecoming and Family Weekend events. Whether you volunteered your time behind the scenes, performed, attended or just cheered from the sidelines, you **ALL** played a big role in making this Homecoming unforgettable. I want to give a special shoutout to our Director of Alumni and Donor Relations Shannon Gribble. Without her and her team, Homecoming and Family Weekend would not have been possible. Thank you!

As we return to our regular daily routines this week, I truly hope that the community spirit and Bobcat pride that we felt last week continues to inspire us in our shared goals of teaching and learning. I cannot express how proud I am to be part of Frostburg State University!

With FSU pride,

Darlene Brannigan Smith, PhD
Interim President