

May 20, 2020

Good morning,

Here's a quick update on a few items.

Grad Week. This is the week to celebrate and congratulate our May 2020 graduates. I've been able to sneak in a couple of photos with graduates who have been on campus and will be on the lookout for more opportunities! While we can't be in person yet, we are celebrating through social media. Use the **#FrostburgGrad2020** hashtag on social media to search for posts this week and post your own congratulatory messages! A sample of postings was sent this morning through FSU News, including greetings from our three student commencement speakers. The complete schedule is at [this link](#).

Summer & Fall Plans. We are moving forward with summer courses, and enrollments and consistent with what we have seen in the past several years. Summer enrollments have continued to increase as students take advantage of online opportunities while being away from campus. Interim Provost Mike Mathias, the academic deans, and faculty leadership are working on plans for the fall. We are coordinating our plans with the University System of Maryland and are looking at different scenarios as we monitor the virus projections from various models. Our intent is to be a residential campus in the fall – *if* we can implement the safety guidelines necessary. At the same time, our faculty are planning courses to ensure social distancing and effective use of technology where possible. I hope the USM will be providing an update sometime during the first half of June.

Academic Affairs. I was very pleased to announce that Dr. Mike Mathias would assume the position of Interim Provost. Dr. Mathias will be working closely with the Academic Deans, other leaders in the Division of Academic Affairs, and faculty leadership over the summer. I have also had an initial discussion with Dr. Ben Norris, Faculty Senate Chair, to discuss the process for a national search for the next Provost. We'll be working through those details over the next month. I hope that we can launch the search in August.

CARES Act Money. We stand ready to help students who had additional financial burdens because of the disruption this semester. Federal money is available to help. Students should apply at [this link](#). The process is straightforward, and applications are reviewed quickly.

End of the most unusual semester. In my 50 years of college, including time as a student, this has been the most unusual end to an academic year and one that everyone will remember. I want to thank everyone for their patience and efforts. It wasn't easy given the anxieties we were (and are still) experiencing. Staying focused and moving forward when we didn't know exactly what was going to happen next is a testament to the maturity and thoughtfulness on the part of everyone. The beginning of the fall semester is three months away, and we're going to have to continue in this mode of watching, monitoring, and planning – knowing that our decisions today may have to change tomorrow or in a week or month. I am committed to continuing to keep the channels of communication open. I will try to be as definitive as possible wherever I can, with the understanding that this may not always be the case considering the unknowns ahead.

I want to leave you with a message we received from the City of Frostburg to our students. I think it speaks to how important each of you as a faculty member, staff member, or student is to this community. Please continue to have a safe summer.

To FSU Students:

We just want to let you know that while you are away and unable to attend classes on campus, we here in the City of Frostburg are thinking of you and wishing you and your families well.

We regard the students of FSU as an important part of our community. The students of FSU add richness to the social fabric here and we miss having you here.

Please know that when things improve and you are once again able to come back to Frostburg, we will be here to welcome you. In the meantime, best of luck on your finals, and stay healthy and safe.

Sincere regards,

Bob Flanigan, Mayor

Donnie Carter, Commissioner of Finance

Nina Forsythe, Commissioner of Water, Parks & Recreation

Kevin Grove, Commissioner of Public Safety

Adam Ritchey, Commissioner of Public Works

Janice Keene, Evergreen Heritage Center

Lauren Pappas, owner of the Princess Diner

Fred Powell, owner of Main Street Books

Susan Keller, community organizer

And many, many Frostburg citizens

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