

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
2018 Institutional Performance Accountability Report
September 2018

MISSION

Frostburg State University is a student-centered teaching and learning institution featuring experiential opportunities. The University offers students a distinctive and distinguished baccalaureate education along with a select set of applied master's and doctoral programs. Frostburg serves regional and statewide economic and workforce development; promotes cultural enrichment, civic responsibility, and sustainability; and prepares future leaders to meet the challenges of a complex and changing global society.

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Goal 1: Address State-wide and regional workforce needs by preparing a changing student population for an era of complexity and globalization.

The *2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education (MSP)*, notes that “employers (have) become increasingly dependent upon a highly skilled workforce” (**MSP Strategy 7**) and that “Maryland’s economy depends on high-skill jobs requiring experience and advanced education” (**MSP Strategy 8**). An action item of Frostburg State University’s (FSU) 2018-2023 Strategic Plan that supports this statewide strategy is the university’s efforts to “foster regional development through increased: 1) number of graduates employed in the region; 2) number of businesses created by faculty, staff, or graduates; and 3) number of collaborative regional development projects.” Frostburg’s initiatives and programs in STEM disciplines, teacher education, and business serve as a means to achieve this action item and reinforce statewide strategies.

Although the number of FSU undergraduates enrolled in STEM programs decreased by 13.1% over the reporting period (from 925 in 2017 to 804 in 2018), FSU continues to exceed its MFR-established goal for the number of STEM program graduates it produced (169 in 2018 - a 12.7% increase from 2017).

STEM Initiatives and Programs

Frostburg continues to address statewide and regional qualified worker shortages in STEM-related occupations through its new and existing programs in advanced health sciences; such as its accredited R.N. to B.S.N. completion program, which produces the third largest number of graduates in the University System of Maryland. Over the reporting period, the R.N. completion program experienced a 5.2% growth in enrollment (from 445 students in 2017 to 468 in 2018) as well as a slight decrease in the number of nursing program graduates (from 155 in 2017 to 147 in 2018 - **MFR Objective 1.3**).

In August 2017, FSU received approval from the University System of Maryland (USM) and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to offer two additional concentrations within its Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP). Beginning in fall 2018, these concentrations will help to fill the primary care provider shortage (especially in rural, underserved areas) and provide a pipeline of health care professionals who can treat addictions. The MSN nurse practitioner programs are particularly ideal for students living in rural southwestern Pennsylvania, the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia, and Western Maryland.

Approval has also been obtained from both USM and MHEC for Frostburg to develop a Master of Science in Physician Assistant (PA) Studies that will focus on educating PAs dedicated to practicing medicine in rural and medically underserved communities (**MSP Strategies 4 and 6**). Pending a successful accreditation site visit in October 2018, FSU will be admitting its first PA cohort in the summer of 2019.

Education

Also in response to evolving workforce demands, Frostburg embraces its responsibility to strengthen public schools through the preparation of certified teacher education graduates and pre-K to 20 partnerships (**MSP Strategy 1**). For 2018, 274 students enrolled in undergraduate teacher education and Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) post-baccalaureate programs. While enrollments in these programs declined from 2017, the number of candidates who successfully completing their teacher training (**MFR Objective 1.2**) remained stable (from 95 in 2017 to 96 in 2018), and the pass rates for undergraduate and MAT post-baccalaureate students on the PRAXIS II exam rose (from 96% in 2017 to 98% in 2018).

During the spring of 2018, the College of Education's Pathways to Professions (P2P) team created MicroCredentials for implementation and training for a two-year induction program for new teachers with high-quality professional development, strategic mentoring, and competency credentialing to improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Teacher Induction Modules focused on areas of workforce needs as identified through ongoing research relating to the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act, including: Culturally Responsive Practices, Social Emotional Development, Behavior Support to Increase Academic Engagement, Critical Thinking, Personalized Competency-Based Learning, and Educational Technology.

Business

In January 2018, FSU received approval from MHEC to offer new concentrations in its online Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. In addition to the current MBA concentration, approval was been granted to offer concentrations in health care management and business analytics, which are both designed to better meet the needs of the business community. Frostburg consulted two primary regional employers - one in data analytics and another in health care - to gain deeper insights into the employment market and seek curricular input. Both employers agreed these specialized skill sets will enhance the marketability of FSU's MBA graduates and keep pace with the growing demand for graduates with deep analytical skills,

given policy changes in the health care field and the dynamic environment of management overall.

Goal 2: Promote an institutional image of academic distinction and ensure stable institutional enrollment through admission of students prepared to succeed in college and persist to graduation.

Frostburg State University critically reviews and strengthens its efforts to attract quality students to the campus and increase student retention and graduation rates. Several of these efforts are summarized below as well as in the response to MHEC at the end of this report. Over the reporting period, FSU continued to exceed its benchmarked goal for the percentage of African-American and minority undergraduates enrolled at the university. These performance measures remained stable in 2018 at 31.4% of the total undergraduate population for African Americans (**MFR Objective 2.2**) and 43.7% for minorities (**MFR Objective 2.3**).

Frostburg's second-year retention rate for undergraduates declined from 76.7% in 2017 to 73.7% in 2018 (**MFR Objective 2.1**). The second-year retention rate for African-American students also decreased (from 78.2% in 2017 to 71.3% in 2018, **MFR Objective 2.4**), as did the rate for all minorities (from 76.8% to 69.4%, **MFR Objective 2.6**). During the same time period, the six-year graduation rate of undergraduates rose from 55.2% for 2017 to 57.3% for 2018 (**MFR Objective 2.1**). The University also experienced an increase in the six-year graduation rate for African-Americans (from 48.8% in 2017 to 59.2% in 2018, **MFR Objective 2.5**) and all minorities (from 51.3% in 2017 to 56.2% in 2018, **MFR Objective 2.7**). For all three of the graduation rates referenced above, it is important to note that these performance measures include students who started at Frostburg, but were successfully able to transfer and graduate from another public four-year institution in Maryland.

An essential part of persistence efforts at FSU is academic advising. In the spring of 2018, an advising task force comprised of faculty and staff was created to assess current advising procedures and explore best practices (**MSP Strategy 7**). This task force agreed that Frostburg should participate in the Excellence in Academic Advising (EAA) process, co-sponsored by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and the Gardner Institute. Frostburg is one of 12 charter institutions selected nationally to work with NACADA and the Gardner Institute to refine, validate, and establish the aspirational standards for colleges and universities and to evaluate and improve academic advising.

In the summer of 2017, FSU began offering Intermediate Algebra (a gateway course for students who are required to take an algebra-based mathematics course) online to first-year students. The summer 2017 pass rate (92.3%) exceeded that of the regular term and remained high (90.4%) again in summer 2018, allowing for more students to progress to mathematics courses appropriate for their majors. This effort will be expanded in summer 2019 when an additional section will be made available to all returning students.

The university also revamped its approach to working with academic probation students by using protocols developed by the Stanford University College Transition Collaborative; an initiative that has led to increased numbers of probation students transitioning to good standing. Revised

communications emphasize probation as a process rather than a label and assure students that they are not alone in the probation process.

Frostburg received USM enhancement funding in FY 2017 to become an early adopter of *HelioCampus*, an analytics software platform that provides the university with real-time data to better analyze enrollment trends, academic programs, and other metrics. Access to this information has greatly improved academic departments' ability to make data-informed decisions to improve student outcomes and success. The information provided by *HelioCampus* is also critical across divisions to address questions about student recruitment, persistence, and graduation.

Utilizing *HelioCampus*, the university conducted a review of summer-term courses to better assess data on course demand, enrollment, section size, and success rates as well as to determine the most appropriate course offerings to help students progress efficiently to graduation. Based upon this analysis, 15 courses were added to the summer 2018 schedule, including many obstacle courses that were identified through *HelioCampus*. This contributed to a significant increase in overall student headcount and credit hours earned in that term.

In January 2018, Frostburg State University was chosen by the University System of Maryland to participate in the ALT-Placement Project to explore alternatives to the high-stakes exam for placing entering students in mathematics courses. As part of this initiative, FSU is working on the implementation of an alternative placement process using the ALEKs adaptive learning tool to provide an individualized experience for each student based on their unique strengths and weaknesses. It is expected that the ability to assist students at all levels will result in significant improvements to retention, success, and confidence.

Frostburg has helped to address low-credit accumulation by encouraging students to take at least 15 credits per semester, beginning in their first term. As a result, the average credits attempted for first-year students at FSU increased from 15.1 in fall 2016 to 15.6 credits in fall 2018.

Goal 3: Recruit and retain diverse and talented faculty and staff committed to student learning and University goals.

Cultural Diversity of Faculty and Staff

One of FSU's fundamental goals is to increase the diversity of its faculty and staff through the initiatives and strategies contained in its Cultural Diversity Program. In addition, the Office of the Provost, college deans, and the Faculty Development Subcommittee provide financial reimbursement to faculty who engage in conference presentations, workshops, and other development opportunities (**MSP Strategies 9 and 11**). Over the reporting period, the percentage of African-American faculty increased slightly (from 3.9% in 2017 to 4.0% in 2018), while the percentage of female faculty rose significantly (from 42.1% for 2017 to 43.8% in 2018). The latter performance measure continues to meet the benchmarked goal (**MFR Objective 3.1**).

Over the last year, Frostburg has made several new minority administrative hires, including the newly created Vice President for Enrollment Management (August 2018), the Vice President for Administration and Finance (May 2018), the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (June 2018), and the Interim Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (December 2017).

The number of professionally accredited programs at FSU (10) remained the same over the reporting period (**MFR Objective 3.2**). In November 2017, the university's College of Education received accreditation for an additional seven years, based on the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards.

Goal 4: Enhance facilities and the campus environment in order to support and reinforce student learning.

Frostburg recognizes its responsibility to provide the infrastructure necessary for 21st century modalities of instruction and applied learning experiences (**MHEC Strategy 6**) in order to promote an environment for high quality teaching, learning, scholarship, and co-curricular programming. Over the reporting period, the percent of funding spent on facilities renewal increased from 1.6% in 2017 to 2.3% in 2018. The university also expects to meet its goal in FY 2018 of maintaining a 2% rate of operating budget reallocation (**MFR Objective 4.1**), but cannot confirm these data until the USM Effectiveness and Efficiency reporting is completed in late October 2018.

Over the last year, FSU began several facility renovation projects, including a number of upgrades and renovations to athletic facilities (most notably the installation of a large, state-of-the-art video scoreboard in Bobcat Stadium, resurfacing of the field, and updates to the tennis courts) and renovations to and relocation of several students services to Pullen Hall.

In the spring of 2018, Frostburg began demolition to clear the way for its first new residence hall since 1976. Construction began in the summer of 2018, with completion scheduled for 2020. The university expects this new facility and improvements to current residence halls will help to attract students to the university and integrate effectively with on-campus housing requirements for incoming first-year students in an effort to better promote academic success.

The construction of the Education and Health Sciences building at FSU will provide state-of-the-art, technologically-based classrooms and learning environments for nurses, health professionals, teacher educators, and the growing fields of exercise and sports science and athletic training. This new facility will build upon Frostburg's commitment to graduating highly qualified teachers and will provide a new and modern health facility to meet the needs of the university's student population (**MHEC Strategy 6**).

Goal 5: Promote economic development in Western Maryland and in the region.

Headcount Enrollment

Frostburg's overall headcount enrollment declined over the reporting period from 5,676 in 2017 to 5,396 in 2018. Additionally, the number of bachelor's degree graduates decreased by 3.3% over the same period (from 1,061 in 2017 to 1,026 in 2018).

Economic Development

Frostburg State University has a long history of serving as an important catalyst for regional economic development. While the number of economic development initiatives at FSU (**MFR Objective 5.3**) decreased from ten to eight over the reporting period, the university expects that a newly established administrative hire and office will further promote economic growth in the region for the future.

In August 2018, Frostburg State University hired a Vice President for Regional Development and Engagement (RDE). Through funding provided by Governor Hogan, FSU's Division of Regional Development and Engagement, which includes the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), will serve as a catalyst for economic development opportunities in the region through partnerships with various local, state, and federal economic development agencies and groups (**MSP Strategies 8, 10, and 11**).

The Office of RDE will work to integrate university resources with regional partners to help communities and companies remain competitive and meet the challenges of economic and community development. The new Vice President will also lead government relations for Frostburg.

Goal 6: Promote activities that demonstrate the University's educational distinction.

Educational Outreach

Frostburg State University is nationally recognized for the many opportunities it provides students to engage in effective and necessary educational outreach activities. For the reporting period, instances of student involvement in community outreach decreased from 4,610 in 2017 to 3,801 in 2018 (**MFR Objective 6.2**); however, this performance measure continues to meet the benchmarked MFR goal.

Accreditation

In November 2017, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education reaffirmed FSU's institutional accreditation, thereby reinforcing that the university – including all of its off-campus instructional sites – continues to meet the requirements put in place by the Commission in its

Characteristics of Excellence. The next evaluation visit from Middle States will occur in AY 2024-2025.

National Recognition

Frostburg State University takes pride in its commitment to student success and affordability. In addition to being named as a Best Value College by *Money* magazine, FSU was ranked 147th in the nation among public colleges and universities by *LendEDU* and recognized for having the lowest average student debt of all USM institutions. Based on federal government data, Frostburg was also ranked 100th in the country by *The Economist* in terms of value-added education (**MSP Strategy 2**). Additional national recognitions over the reporting period are summarized below:

- In January 2018, four of FSU's online degree programs (Master of Business Administration; Master of Science in Nursing; Master of Education, special education concentration; and Bachelor of Science in Nursing) appeared in the latest U.S. News and World Report Best Online Programs rankings.
- Also in January 2018, Frostburg was one of only two institutions in Maryland that has earned the designation of a "Voter Friendly Campus" and one of only seven colleges and universities in the country selected by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), to serve as a consulting institution for its Lead Initiative. In this role, FSU provides guidance and expertise to other institutions committed to enhancing civic engagement on their campuses.
- In September 2018, Frostburg's M.S. in Nursing program received recognition from *OnlineMasters.com*, an online service designed to encourage students to pursue higher education, which ranked the program as one of the best online MSN programs nationally, as well as one of the best for nurse administrators in the administration concentration. Additionally, *Great Value Colleges* ranked the MSN program ranked the third most affordable and the third top online degree in its June 2018 rankings.
- Also in September 2018, Frostburg's online Master of Science in Recreation and Parks Management was ranked second on *GetEducated.com*'s "Best Buy" list of the eight most affordable options in the United States. The national affordability ranking is the result of a comprehensive, data-driven review of 18 regionally accredited online schools offering a master's degree in hospitality management.
- Frostburg's online Master of Science in Applied Computer Science was ranked seventh on *GradSchoolHub.com*'s current listing of the 10 most affordable online Master of Computer Science degrees for 2018.

Campus Response to Questions Raised by the Commission

Objective 2.1: Increase the second-year retention rate of all undergraduates from 77 percent in 2014 to 78 percent in 2019 and the six-year graduation rate from 56.0 percent in 2014 to 61.7 percent in 2019.

Objective 2.4: Maintain the second-year retention rate of African-American students at a level equal to or greater than the 2014 level of 80 percent.

Objective 2.5: Attain and preserve a six-year graduation rate of African-American students at 54 percent through 2019.

Commission Assessment: In response to the 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the Commissioners expressed concern about the persistent statewide gaps in college success and completion when comparing African American students with their peers. To better understand the contributing factors and institutional responses to these persistent gaps, the Commission seeks additional insight from institutions tied to these indicators.

In its 2017 Performance Accountability Report, the University reported that its second-year retention rate for African American students (78.2%) exceeded that of the total student population (76.7%). Yet, the University also reported that its six-year graduation rate for African American students (48.8%) lagged behind the rate for the total student population (55.2%). This gap in graduation rates is the largest (6.4 percentage points) the University has seen over the past five years and reverses an upward trend in graduation rates for all.

Describe the factors the University has identified that affect both these trends: the success in retaining African American students at rates comparable to all students and the challenges faced in sustaining enrolled students to graduation. What strategies are in place to maintain success and reverse a growing gap?

Frostburg State University seeks to create a welcoming and safe environment that promotes the understanding of diversity, both domestically and internationally (**MHEC Strategy 4**). Its student population, being nearly 50% white and 50% underrepresented minority, is one of the most diverse in the University System of Maryland. In its Cultural Diversity Program, FSU includes strategies that focus on effective recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students from traditionally underrepresented groups. The university continues to explore possible reasons for lower persistence and graduation rates, particularly for its minority student population, and devise initiatives to address retention from sophomore year forward.

As mentioned previously in this report under Goal 3, Frostburg hired a Vice President for Enrollment Management in August 2018. This newly-created position was established to help the university recruit more students from Maryland and the region and, most importantly, to coordinate its services so that FSU students succeed and graduate on time.

Frostburg currently has several support programs and services in place to help enhance student success and increase African-American student persistence and graduation rates. These include a required course for first-year students (Introduction to Higher Education), the student success services available through the Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR), opportunities to participate in off-campus leadership and diversity retreats, intrusive advising, student early-warning systems (Beacon and the First-Year Student Progress survey), and utilization of the HelioCampus analytics platform.

The required Introduction to Higher Education course includes activities that help students to engage in extracurricular activities of the university and achieve academic success. Instructors act as official academic advisors, beginning in students' first semester and ending when students are ready to move to an academic department advisor. Course requirements include an introduction to a National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) workshop that covers living in a diverse community and respecting and celebrating others' differences. Overall participation in the workshop has increased to 90% in fall 2017 (up from 85% fall 2016).

The Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR) continues to support retention and intervention efforts for targeted student populations - first year, undeclared, academic recovery, students in transition between majors. The Student Success Peer Mentoring program was revised September 2017 with a new training regimen and evaluation process. The START academic probation program increased the number of students (from 71 students to 111 students) served by both its recovery seminar and individual meetings with academic counselors.

Student Support Services (SSS), a federal TRiO program, is an educational opportunity project that helps low-income students, first-generation college students and students with disabilities to achieve their academic and personal goals. As an advocate for qualified students, SSS provides programs and services that help students develop the academic, interpersonal, and social skills needed for success at Frostburg. Over the last five years, the grant-based TRiO Upward Bound Program has served 156 participants, and 18.6% of these self-identified as minorities.

Wider implementation and increased use of *HelioCampus*, an analytic software platform that provides the University decision makers with up to date information and visualizations to understand and manage enrollment and retention, academic program success and productivity, and other key metrics across the University to ensure institutional effectiveness continued in FY18. Access to this information also allows users across each division of the University to make data-informed decisions that will improve student outcomes and success. The information provided by *HelioCampus* is critical across divisions to address questions about the student lifecycle, from prospect to graduate.

As of September 2018, all vice presidents, academic deans, and faculty leadership have received presentations on the use of *HelioCampus*, conducted by the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research. Data validation, model building, and technical and analytical staff training represents the foundational efforts thus far completed with the implementation of each platform. The first dashboards utilized by functional users are focused on enrollment issues. Department chairs regularly use dashboard to manage the academic programs within their purview and make

decisions regarding section management, identify and address obstacle courses, and understand student flow from course to course or from entry program to other programs or graduation.

Because the university experiences a gender-based retention gap within the African-American student population and many African-American male students participate on athletic teams, and the Academic Success Network (ASN) and the Athletics Department collaborate on several initiatives. Athletics provides detailed playing and practice schedules for each sport to advisors working with first-year students to assist with academic planning. In addition, each sport sends a list of recruited athletes planning to register so advisors are aware of them. ASN, in turn, connects coaches to Beacon and provides the results of the First-Year Student Progress Survey to coaches so they know about any alerts their athletes receive through each of the early-alert systems.

Frostburg State University has identified a number of obstacles that may contribute to the gap between African-American and overall student graduation rates. These include finances, low velocity (number of credits earned per term compared to the ratio achieved by graduates), and low earned-credit ratios.

The university created a grant program for students experiencing financial hardship. The Unfinished Business grant is intended for students at the sophomore academic level and beyond who are having difficulty paying their student bill and exhausted their financial aid for the year.

Frostburg has also initiated a number projects to address low-credit accumulation. It encourages students to take at least 15 credits per semester, beginning their first term. In addition, the university has revamped its approach to working with students on academic probation, using protocols that Frostburg is piloting for the Stanford University College Transition Collaborative. The Tutoring Center has begun contacting students regarding the effectiveness of tutoring and working directly with departments that have courses with high DWF rates. Utilizing Starfish Course Explorer, the ASN staff is identifying courses that appear to have higher DFW rates for African-American students relative to other students and look for possible, unintentional barriers that could be eliminated (e.g. cost of materials, course policies, or access to support resources).

By working with each academic department, the Center for Academic Advising and Retention has established eight-semester plans for each major and concentration. Academic advisors extensively use these plans to help guide students as they select courses for the upcoming term and gauge their progress toward degree completion.