

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
2023 Institutional Performance Accountability Report
September 2023

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.

In line with the *2022 Maryland State Plan for Higher Education (MSP)*, Frostburg State University provides engaging student opportunities that help to meet regional and local workforce needs as well as promote its successes and contributions at the state and national levels (**MSP Priority 4**). The university's initiatives and programs in the STEM disciplines and teacher education, as well as regional engagement activities, continue to reinforce statewide strategies.

STEM Initiatives and Programs

The number of undergraduates enrolled in STEM programs decreased over the reporting period (from 535 in 2022 to 472 in 2023), as did the number of STEM-program graduates (from 131 in 2022 to 111 in 2023). This decline continues to be in line with the overall enrollment trend experienced in part because of the pandemic. Frostburg expects these performance measures to increase significantly in the future as several new STEM programs attract more students.

Frostburg State University and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) began to offer an innovative joint Master in Environmental Management in Sustainability in the fall of 2023. This degree leverages the environmental studies expertise of UMCES and FSU's diverse student body to prepare leaders who can address 21st century sustainability challenges in the academic, government, non-profit, and private sectors. The program was developed to meet an increased need for professionals working in environmental management and sustainability by developing a cadre of diverse environmental professionals with teamwork skills, practical experience, and training in environmental management and environmental justice.

In August 2023, FSU's departments of Biology and Geography established an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science program to replace the environmental science concentrations previously offered within the Biology and Earth Sciences majors. The

Environmental Science major provides students an academic degree program that addresses several current challenges facing society, while also producing graduates with the environmental skills and knowledge to meet workforce demands.

Although the RN to BSN program experienced a decrease in enrollment (from 384 students in 2022 to 325 in 2023) and a decline in the number of nursing program graduates (from 139 in 2022 to 107 in 2023 - **MFR Objective 1.3**), enrollments in the Master of Science in Nursing program continued to grow over the reporting period (from 93 in 2022 to 96 in 2023).

In June 2023, FSU's Department of Nursing was awarded a grant of \$1.5 million by the Maryland Higher Education Commission's Nurse Support Program II. These funds will be utilized to expand the capacity of pre-licensure nursing programs within the state, specifically in Western Maryland, where there is a lack of traditional four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs.

In the fall 2023 semester, FSU began offering a traditional pre-licensure BSN in addition to an online LPN to BSN program. The on-campus BSN degree, which enrolled an initial cohort of 22 students, reduces the distance regional students need to travel to receive a BSN degree at a residential four-year campus setting. Additionally, the LPN to BSN program, which enrolled an initial cohort of 25 students, complements FSU's successful RN to BSN program for working adults. The implementation of this comprehensive four-year BSN program at Frostburg was made possible by the delayed opening of the Education and Health Sciences Center, allowing students to pursue their nursing degree locally.

Education

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 Priority 4**). Over the reporting period, the number of students enrolled in undergraduate teacher education and Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) post-baccalaureate programs increased slightly, from 229 in 2022 to 242 in 2023. There was also a significant increase in the number of candidates who successfully complete teacher training (from 73 in 2022 to 110 in 2023, **MFR Objective 1.2**). The pass rates for undergraduate and MAT post-baccalaureate students on the PRAXIS II remained steady at 66% in 2023.

Frostburg State University will offer a Post-Master's Certificate in Advanced School Counseling beginning in January 2024. The coursework, which is designed for professionals working in school districts and social service agencies, is flexible in nature and can be taken virtually using both synchronous and asynchronous learning platforms during the winter and summer terms.

Targeted to current M.Ed. School Counseling students or previous graduates who earned a degree with fewer than 60 credits, this certificate will supply the knowledge and skills necessary to serve children and young adults as a certified school counselor at the elementary and secondary levels. The degree also offers flexibility for employees in other careers, including admissions counselors, behavioral specialists, and others in social service and education. Additionally, upon successful completion of this program, graduates will be eligible to apply for the National Certified School Counselor credential, giving school counselors the opportunity to

complete elective requirements for the Maryland State Department of Education's recertification as a school counselor and the National Board for Certified Counselors' renewal requirements.

In March 2023, Frostburg was awarded a five-year, \$3.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education for Rural Educators for Appalachian Children (REACH), a teacher quality partnership project. Under REACH, FSU will implement a dual certification special education and elementary teacher preparation program. Partnering with schools in Allegany, Mineral, Morgan, and Pendleton Counties and Turkeyfoot Valley Area School District, REACH will utilize focused strategies to increase the number of highly effective and culturally responsive educators for special education in rural America, specifically in Appalachia.

In addition to the dual certification offering at FSU, the REACH program will also feature a two-year induction period to focus on targeted professional learning for graduates teaching in partner schools; a teacher-leader pathway for those educators interested in pursuing National Board Certification; and will leverage the expertise and resources of more than 20 organizations dedicated to improving student achievement and long-term outcomes.

Regional Engagement

In January 2023, FSU received \$750,000 through direct federal funding for the FSU Regional Science Center, which will provide hands-on space exploration simulations through the Challenger Learning Center, as well as robotics and coding programs for primarily middle-school-aged children in Allegany County and other regional school systems. The center will provide a unique opportunity for students to experience STEM learning and provide an early look at STEM careers.

Through additional direct federal funding, Frostburg received \$500,000 for its Maryland Accelerates Program, which allows future teachers to develop relationships in the community and encourages retention of teachers in the area, while supporting school staffing needs. Since its launch in 2019, 35 students have been enrolled in three cohorts, representing Garrett, Washington, and Frederick County Public Schools. The federal funds will help to expand the program for additional cohorts and allow FSU to engage with other school systems for teacher resident placement.

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. Over the reporting period, the university experienced a decrease in the percentage of African-American and minority undergraduates enrolled: 23.6% of the total undergraduate population for African Americans (**MFR Objective 2.2**) and 36.1% for minorities (**MFR Objective 2.3**).

Retention and Graduation Rates

Frostburg's second-year retention rate for all three undergraduate performance measure groups increased significantly over the reporting period: from 73.6% to 77.5% for all students (**MFR Objective 2.1**), from 70.3% to 75.0% for African-American students (**MFR Objective 2.4**), and from 69.8% to 75.2% for all minorities (**MFR Objective 2.6**).

Over the same time period, the six-year graduation rate of undergraduates declined: from 60.7% to 59.9% (**MFR Objective 2.1**) for all students, from 58.9% to 55.1% for African-Americans (**MFR Objective 2.5**), and from 57.9% to 53.6% for all minorities (**MFR Objective 2.7**).

Student Persistence and Success Initiatives

Beginning in the fall of 2023, Frostburg partnered with Allegany County Public Schools to offer the Bobcat Academy - a dual enrollment pilot program to give motivated high school seniors an immersive college experience and an opportunity to earn college credits while simultaneously completing high school. All classes for the Bobcat Academy are offered on the FSU campus, which allows for a true college experience. These academically gifted students are also challenged with exposure to early higher education, and upon high school graduation, will gain acceptance into FSU where they can complete their pursuit of a bachelor's degree and beyond.

The Bobcat Academy provides students with the ability to be part of a university campus while still in high school and serves as a mutually beneficial partnership for ACPS students, parents, and the university. Students will be on track to complete college in just three years, or they may choose to take advantage of this extra time to pursue a double major. Additionally, they will be able to begin the transition to a more independent college life while still having support at home. Course selection for an appropriate educational pathway occurs in collaboration with high school counselors and dedicated FSU program advisors and includes four options for the 2023-2024 school year: Exercise and Sports Science, Psychology, Environmental Science, and Recreation and Parks Management.

In July 2023, Frostburg hired an Associate Provost for Student Success and Graduate Education. This individual assists the Provost in the implementation of student success initiatives to align educational experiences with purposeful academic programming work and career success. Additionally, the Associate Provost has been charged with ensuring that student success initiatives are free from any implicit or structural bias that contributes to racial and ethnic equity gaps in retention and graduation rates. Other duties include managing the curriculum review and approval process, supporting effective policy, securing and deploying appropriate instructional resources, assisting with faculty development, and furthering the institution's mission of providing high-quality academic and cultural experiences for all students.

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 (**MSP Priority 5**). Over the reporting period, Frostburg's percentage of full-time female faculty (48.0%) and percentage of full-time African-American faculty (4.0%) both remained steady, the former meeting benchmarked goals and the latter slightly below the benchmark (**MFR Objective 3.1**). Additionally, the percentage of full-time Asian faculty (12.3%) continues to increase.

In an effort to promote more student involvement and engagement, FSU began piloting the Bobcat Passport Program in September 2023. This program provides support for co-curricular opportunities for students as a complement to FSU's strong traditional curriculum, which will help to introduce students to culturally diverse thoughts, ideas, and expressions in order to better prepare them to become engaged global citizens.

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 modern modalities of instruction and applied learning experiences that promote an environment for high quality teaching, learning, scholarship, and co-curricular programming. The amount of funding spent on facilities increased significantly over the reporting period, from 1.3% in 2022 to 5.4% in 2023 (**MFR Objective 4.1**). While the university also expects to meet its goal in FY 2023 of maintaining a 2% rate of operating budget reallocation (**MFR Objective 4.1**), it cannot confirm these data until the USM Effectiveness and Efficiency reporting is completed in late October 2023.

In August 2023, the Education and Health Sciences Center opened to faculty and students for the beginning of the fall semester. Frostburg's student health center and counseling center are located on the first floor, classrooms and labs occupy floors one through three, the Children's Literature Centre is located on the second floor, and faculty offices for Education, Nursing, and most of the Kinesiology and Recreation and Parks Management faculty are on the fourth floor. Over the reporting period, interior renovations for the Adams-Wyche Multicultural Center were completed and work continued on the new roof for the Pealer Performing Arts Center. Work on heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning in some older buildings, along with utility upgrades, also continued.

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

Expanding outreach and engagement with the surrounding region has historically been a key goal for Frostburg. Under the direction of the Vice President for Regional Development and Engagement (RDE), the number of economic development initiatives at FSU (**MFR Objective 5.3**) increased from 11 (2022) to 24 (2023). The Office of RDE integrates university resources

with regional partners to help communities and companies remain competitive and meet the challenges of economic and community development (**MSP Priority 4**).

Economic Development Initiatives

In April 2023, FSU's Office of RDE was awarded a grant for \$250,000 from the Economic Development Administration and the Maryland Department of Commerce's Office of Tourism to support a regional approach to growing Western Maryland's outdoor recreation economy by funding initiatives in workforce development, training, and certification in Allegany and Garrett Counties. The projects will be a collaborative effort between Frostburg, Allegany College of Maryland, Garrett College, and local outdoor recreation businesses. Supporting partners include the Maryland Office of Outdoor Recreation, tourism teams in both Allegany and Garrett counties, and Allegany and Garrett County governments.

In August 2023, the Maryland Innovation Initiative (MII) invested \$150,000 toward conducting a feasibility study for establishing a Regional Cyber Security Operations Center (RSOC), an entity that would provide continuous operational IT security by monitoring, assessing, preventing, and responding to threats to protected IT systems. In partnership with Deloitte, FSU seeks to study the feasibility of establishing a RSOC for Western Maryland, which will serve to protect the region's businesses, non-profit organizations, and local government entities from the threat of cyber breaches. The study will explore the resources needed for the launch and the potential educational workforce and economic impact of an RSOC, which will strengthen the university's role as an anchor institution for the region. Results will be used to further develop a pilot program for Western Maryland that could be replicated in other parts of the State.

Also in August 2023, Frostburg received additional funding from the MII to help establish the Bobcat Innovation Launch Pad. Managed by FSU in partnership with Deloitte, this entrepreneurial initiative encouraged student teams from multiple disciplines to develop commercially viable technology-based solutions to vexing societal challenges, with a focus on climate change and renewable energy. Structured as a three-day event that blends elements of a traditional hackathon with that of a business pitch competition, the program attracted approximately 50 students in September 2023 with a small cash prize to foster development of the winning ideas.

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

College and Department Realignment

Throughout the fall 2022 semester, the Provost undertook an extensive process of soliciting campus input through numerous open discussions regarding the realignment of departments within colleges. A December 2022 campus-wide session, which focused on the findings from 11 previous sessions, revealed strong consensus for the realignment of the majority of academic departments into three reconstituted colleges. The discussion then focused on the six remaining departments that were not frequently connected with other departments on the many models submitted.

Based on that feedback, the Provost and President met with chairs from those six departments in January 2023 to solicit further information and feedback. In February 2023, the Provost, President, and the three college deans met to review the penultimate draft of the realignment. The realigned colleges achieve several important outcomes:

- Based on fall 2019 (pre-pandemic) and fall 2022 (most recent) data, the distribution of student credit hours results in a more equal balance across the three colleges, ranging from 32% to 36%
- The distribution of departments also is more balanced with one college of ten departments and two colleges of eight departments each
- The realignment of colleges brings together departments with similar disciplinary interests and career outcomes
- Each college has the opportunity to contribute significantly to the general education program
- The realignment of colleges, while not preventing collaboration across colleges, provides the opportunity for new synergies within colleges to address student interests and workforce needs in Maryland
- The realignment of colleges provides for a more similar span of control for deans and more similar budgets and resourcing across colleges
- There is no disruption to the majority of departments' operations, except for the Physics faculty moving from Engineering and Physics to a newly constituted Chemistry and Physics department.

The administration is committed to reviewing this new structure on a regular basis in the future to make adjustments, if warranted. A campus-wide open discussion was held in February 2023 to answer campus community questions. The realigned colleges – 1) Business, Engineering, and Computational and Mathematical Sciences; 2) Education and Health and Natural Sciences; and 3) Arts, Humanities, and Social and Behavioral Sciences – assumed operations beginning in July 2023.

Other Educational Distinction Activities

Frostburg's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs was recently recognized for being among The Daily Record's 2023 Top 100 Women in Maryland for her outstanding achievements and accomplishments. Additionally, the FSU president was appointed in August 2023 to serve as a new commissioner on the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).

Frostburg is currently participating in a self-study in preparation for a 2025 visit from MSCHE. In preparation for this upcoming self-study and visit, FSU's MSCHE liaison was on campus in April 2023 to meet with the self-study co-chairs, the steering committee, and the executive team and to chair an open session for faculty, staff, and students. Based on the visit and the final report

on the self-study design, the liaison stated that Frostburg appears well organized for the upcoming self-study. The university is periodically required to complete this in-depth self-study in order to remain accredited. The self-study also demonstrates Frostburg's commitment to continuous improvement, strengthening and sustaining the institution, and striving to meet institutional priorities and create a welcoming campus culture.

In 2016, Frostburg began a comprehensive campaign with an initial goal of \$25 million to support annual initiatives, increase scholarships available for students, support classroom and experiential student experiences, create regional partnerships to help drive economic and educational development, and help fund capital projects that improve the campus and enhance students' lives. The goal was to complete the campaign in 2023, in conjunction with the University's 125th anniversary. With the support of alumni, faculty and staff, parents of students, and members of the community who recognize the transformational opportunity FSU provides to students and the economic impact it has in the region, the campaign goal of \$25 million was met.

In August 2023, Frostburg was selected as one of the top five colleges or universities in the Education category for Best Graduate Programs to advance to the voting round of the Daily Record's 2023 Reader Rankings. Reader Rankings is a unique event that celebrates and recognizes the best in the community through a nomination round, voting round, and ultimately the revelation of the winners.

In its annual College Guide and Rankings, *Washington Monthly* once again gave FSU high marks, specifically in the category of community engagement. Frostburg ranked 17th in the country for community service in its Master's Level Colleges and Universities category. The College Guide is included in the September/October 2023 issue of *Washington Monthly*, a bimonthly nonprofit magazine that covers U.S. politics and government.

Response to MHEC Questions

1) *Identifying Long-Term Equity Gaps:*

- a. *What are the largest long-term equity gaps that exist in student access, success, and innovation in your institution? Please note the long-term equity gaps refers to the inequities that existed long before the COVID-19 pandemic and persisted over the years.*

The most persistent equity gap at FSU is black male student retention and subsequent graduation rates, when compared to overall and other cohort groups. However, the past seven cohorts of first-year students show an overall persistence gap for all black students compared to white students, reversing the trend from the prior decade where black student persistence was nearly equal to or exceeded white student second-year retention.

- b. *How are these equity gaps uncovered/discovered/identified at your institution and how are they shared with your community?*

Equity gaps are identified from two primary sources, both of which are made available to campus stakeholders: 1) the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research, which produces yearly reports and 2) Frostburg's analytics platform (*HelioCampus*), which provides current student success trends at the course, program, and college levels. Campus stakeholders include college deans, academic department chairs, student support services staff members, and relevant committees (e.g., the Student Success Committee and the Strategic Enrollment Committee). Other sources are also employed when available, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement, NCADA's Advising Assessment Survey, and the Campus Climate Survey.

- c. *What interventions have been implemented to eliminate these gaps?*

Frostburg has recognized and developed interventions for over a half century. One of the first formal programs, the TRIO-funded Student Support Services, celebrated their 50th anniversary at FSU in September 2023. Programs Advancing Student Success (recently renamed to the Office of Accessibility and Learning) was created in the late 1970s to engage students with an assortment of programs and services that enable them to graduate. Both of these programs were prompted by institutional and State efforts to reduce the achievement gap.

In addition to the programs and services mentioned above, Frostburg has made curricular revisions that serve to improve student persistence and success. As an example, FSU's English department redesigned their introductory composition course in 2021 to, among other objectives, ensure the curriculum aligns with the department's anti-racism goals and objectives. In the fall of 2023, the mathematics department developed the ACHIEVE program to accommodate students admitted with lower mathematics proficiency skills. Distinctive ACHIEVE course sections serve cohorts of non-business, non-STEM students taking either Introduction to Mathematical Problem Solving or Elements of Applied Probability and Statistics courses, and mathematics level 1 business and STEM cohorts in

Applied Mathematics of Business and College Algebra courses. These course sections deliver identical learning outcomes to their counterparts, but through five contact hours per week instead of three. This design offers underprepared students more time with the instructor for concept comprehension and the same just-in-time review otherwise offered in the three-hour versions of the course, while shortening time to graduation compared to the previous developmental mathematics pathway. Mathematics level 0 students are placed into either Introduction to Mathematical Problem Solving or Elements of Applied Probability and Statistics ACHIEVE sections per their major, and likewise for mathematics level 1 students placed into either Applied Mathematics of Business or College Algebra. However, any student desiring the additional support of an ACHIEVE course may enroll with the instructor's permission. These course sections, which award four credits toward graduation upon successful completion to compensate for the five-hour in-class requirement and additional learning load on the student, serve to significantly support academic maturity and retention.

A recent non-academic initiative is the University Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion's (UCDEI) development and implementation of a ten-goal plan. Approved by the President's Executive Cabinet in 2021, this plan builds upon previously existing initiatives and provides suggestions for additional initiatives to continue to improve cultural diversity on campus. The UCDEI has been tasked with selecting five action priorities to address each year to meet these annually reviewed and updated goals by AY 2024-2025.

Additionally, the Adams/Wyche Multicultural Center (AWMC) at Lincoln School opened in the fall of 2023. The AWMC will serve as a centrally located facility for the development and expansion of innovative and meaningful life experiences for all students at Frostburg State University. Its programs are intended to enhance cultural diversity on campus, in the community, and in the region.

2) *Measuring Equity Gaps:*

- a. *How has your institution used disaggregated data to identify equity gaps in students' educational opportunities and outcomes?*

Principally, Frostburg has used the Predictive Analytics Report (PAR) and its *HelioCampus* analytics platform to explore course- and program-level student success matrixes using several variables including DFW, course retake, and program movement and completion rates.

- b. *What stakeholder engagement (students, faculty, staff, etc.) is used to collect and review this data?*

Consisting of a membership of faculty, staff, and students, the Student Success Committee annually reviews disaggregated student success metrics. The committee makes recommendations to the Provost regarding policy, procedures, and curricular changes that have the highest probability of improving student achievement. A recent

initiative that evolved from the Committee's recommendations was joining the Excellence in Academic Advising project, co-sponsored and coordinated by the Gardner Institute and NACADA. This multi-year project involving over 100 campus stakeholders led to FSU's adoption of a new academic advising model, where all students have dual advisors – one professional staff and one faculty member. Implementation of EAB Navigate has centralized advising and student success information, as well as allowed for a more robust communication platform.

- c. Does your institution set goals/benchmarks in regard to the elimination of equity gaps?*

Benchmarks and goals are incorporated into metrics established in annual unit assessment reporting to the Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Council (see 2d. below).

- d. If so, what steps does your institution take to ensure accountability in meeting the established goals/benchmarks of equity?*

Both academic and non-academic units are held accountable for contributing to the achievement of institutional goals as part of the review of annual reports submitted to the Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Council. Each unit's submission must include their goals and action priorities (which connect to FSU's strategic plan), an analysis of the results of actions taken, and a statement of planning for the next assessment cycle. Through this process, campus stakeholders review and revise persistence and success initiatives to be more innovative, timely, and/or effective for the future.