Fall 2012 Convocation Address
Dr. Jonathan Gibralter
Monday, August 27, 2012
4 p.m., Pealer Recital Hall

Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to our annual Fall Convocation. I know that all of you have a lot going on this week: doing last-minute preparation for classes, working on developing programs and activities for the months ahead, and preparing for the arrival of our students—most of whom are already here. Some of you may have only recently arrived in Frostburg and are just getting your bearings—looking for a place to live and getting settled. It’s challenging moving to a new community and starting a new job all at the same time. I’d like to personally welcome all of you to our community, and to Frostburg State University and thank you for joining us. It is my sincerest hope that FSU will support you and make you feel at home in the years ahead.

I want to thank every person in this room for the commitment you’ve demonstrated, and continue to demonstrate every day, in supporting our students. Whether you’re new to Frostburg, a young professional who’s been at the university for a few years, or someone who has built your career here, you matter to us, and your contributions matter to how we will improve Frostburg and develop our greatest potential. Our forward momentum will be defined by each of your individual contributions to serve our students and our university. It will also be defined by each of us working individually to be a part of something really important—each of us defining our own legacy to this university—each of us understanding and appreciating that our Strategic Plan is about our future, and it provides us with a roadmap to get there.

Henry Ford realized this when he said, “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”

Over the past couple of years, we have witnessed the beginning of a transformation at Frostburg because we’ve come together to think about our future. We’ve identified some strategies to redefine FSU. We’ve remained focused, even during the most challenging moments for our campus community. And, now it’s time for us to really work together for the greater good of our university. It’s time for us all to seek out and form stronger collaborations, to make some compromises and sacrifices along the way and to support Frostburg’s most important priorities.

Thanks to our Strategic Plan, those priorities are already in our sights and well within our reach. For the past couple of convocations, I’ve stood up here and talked about our Strategic Plan. And for good reason – it’s a blueprint for the future that we’re building at Frostburg, and it wasn’t developed just by my administrative team and me. It was developed by a campuswide planning committee consisting of faculty, staff and students. It was vetted and approved by our Faculty Senate, Staff and Student Government Association, and the Foundation Board. Even people external to the university were invited to comment on it.

We also have an implementation committee, the President’s Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness, which is responsible for defining our metrics, implementing them and assessing our progress. Today, I’m not going to review the Strategic Plan in detail because it is on our website. I will share it with all of you electronically after this convocation address so you
can review it. Instead, I’m simply going to direct our focus to our top three priorities. I’m going to take the time to do this because these priorities represent the areas where we have the most promise and potential. Everyone at Frostburg should be familiar with these priorities, but if you’re not, they are:

- Increasing student quality and improving student persistence to graduation.
- Enhancing experiential and applied learning opportunities for students
- Improving our facilities

These strategic priorities are not only specific in their focus, but they also make good common sense. We want to improve our academic reputation and ensure our students make the most of their time here and successfully graduate in four years, so they don’t accrue more debt than they have to. Having them here longer than that exhausts our resources and their resources at a time when student loan debt in the United States is unbelievably over a trillion dollars. There may be a very good reason for an individual student to be at FSU for longer than four years, and we can all imagine what those reasons might be. However, as mentors and advisors, we should be encouraging our students to do well in college and graduate in a timely fashion. The world of work and graduate school awaits them and, although it sounds appealing, they can’t stay in college forever.

We also know that internships, undergraduate research, international education and other experiential opportunities help students apply what they learn outside the classroom. They lead to jobs and graduate programs. They inspire our students, and help them determine how they’ll be a part of our changing and complex society.

These opportunities also make it so that people external to the university get to know our students; these contacts often become mentors to our students who help them with their career development and personal growth.

And we know that to accomplish anything in the years ahead, we have to have facilities where we can do our best work, and where our students can live and learn in the best way possible. This means we have to keep looking at our older buildings on campus and figure out how to upgrade them, or even do away with them all together, and build better classrooms, studios, residence halls and other spaces. It means we celebrate the beauty of Frostburg’s campus, so that we all feel good about being here and so our visitors realize what a great place this is. It means we all have to invest in the appearance of our university—each of our contributions matters, whether it is the condition of our grounds, our walkways, our signage or our offices. The way we present these places should send a message to our students and the public that we are proud of Frostburg and want to set an example for them.

Our Strategic Plan’s priorities are also what we need to move forward as part of our rebranding. We’re working with a market research firm to gather data that will drive our branding efforts. Having a clearly defined brand will give us a strong sense of purpose, as we think about improving our reputation. It gives us a comprehensive way to lay the foundation that will reposition FSU at the national level as an institution of quality and excellence. At the present time, an enormous amount of data has been gathered from many constituencies to assess their perception of FSU. From that data, a series of positioning statements has been developed and these are now being tested in front of many people, including students, prospective students, guidance counselors, parents and many other groups. In the very near future you all will also
have an opportunity to provide your opinions about Frostburg and feedback on the positioning statements when the market research survey hits your email boxes. I encourage all of you to respond. Your opinions will make a difference.

It is time for each of us to ask ourselves how we can best align the projects and goals we have within our respective departments and divisions with the priorities of our Strategic Plan.

Frostburg has some great tools and resources in place that can help us figure out how we can make these priorities relevant to our work.

**Improving our student quality and persistence to graduation:**

Let’s begin talking about those tools and resources by looking at our first Strategic Planning priority, improving our student quality and persistence to graduation:

To put this into context, take note that we’re working on bringing bright and talented students to Frostburg now and in the future. Take a look at these long-term goals we’ve set for improving our admissions standards.

We are also actively seeking out funding to attract quality students to Frostburg. Since July 2010, 26 Presidential Merit Scholarships have been created, with commitments totaling over $318,000. Fifteen of these scholarships were awarded last year. These specifically focus on recruiting students who have demonstrated academic excellence, and the FSU Foundation’s goal is to secure $2.5 million in merit-based scholarships for high-academic achievers by July 2015.

The FSU Foundation Board set out to raise these funds above and beyond our successful campaign, where we raised $16.7 million and exceeded our campaign goal. Remember, that within that campaign, Staking Our Claim, we raised over $7 million in additional scholarship funds.

Frostburg has set our sights on improving our retention rate by 8 percentage points by 2016, to at least 80 percent. This will not only enhance our academic reputation, but it will give us the revenue we need to sustain our growth and support the many talented faculty and staff who are constantly seeking funds for their own development, and to expand their departments.

Some of you are probably familiar with the phrase “cost of attrition,” which refers to how we can measure the impact of the loss in student enrollment and the effect it has on our budget. I believe that the cost of attrition is more than financial—I believe the cost of attrition is reputational as well. Dr. Terri Massie-Burrell, our Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention, will be talking more with faculty and staff at various meetings throughout this year, so that we can all have a better understanding of the relationship between our retention rates and our budget. Additionally, although our enrollment numbers are not yet available, when they are, I will be sure to send them out to our campus community, so you all have an idea of how we’re doing with enrollment. Preliminary enrollment figures suggest that we are going to be very close to our targeted enrollment for the semester.

Let me take a moment to talk about some of the strategies, tools and resources at our disposal to retain students and improve our retention rate.
Course redesign:

Some of you may be aware that several years ago we embraced the University System of Maryland’s course redesign initiative. Course redesign refers to restructuring our bottleneck courses – those introductory courses that tend to weed out freshmen early on – by making teaching more student-centered. While instructional technology can support and enhance this, it is not the most important part of course redesign.

So far, General Psychology and Developmental Math have seen promising results with course redesign; Math 102, Math 106, Communication Studies’ CMST 102 and the Department of English’s Freshman Composition are in the pilot stages of their course redesign efforts. Behind me are some of the positive results we’ve seen through course redesign.

I realize some of you have misgivings about course redesign, but I am asking those of you who are skeptical to seriously think about what has been achieved with it so far. It is a nationally proven strategy that can work for you and your department, and it’s not just a one-size-fits-all approach to improving courses. There are a variety of models out there you can use to customize your course content while at the same time preserving the incredibly important and creative autonomy you bring to your teaching. The Department of English’s redesign of Freshman Composition is a great example. Their online database of teaching materials was compiled by six educators within their department. This database provides a variety of resources that can be individually selected by faculty members, in accordance with their own teaching goals and practices for their classes.

Course redesign can also help you make your course content relevant to how students learn, and free up more time for you to focus on the important face-to-face discussions and mentoring your students need. It’s not about making everything online … it’s about devoting your time and attention to your students in a strategic way, and making your students more responsible for their education. It has created leadership opportunities for students to mentor their peers, which can help them gain experience that will serve them well later on when they’re applying for jobs and graduate programs.

I’d like to ask every educator here to think about the progress that has been made through course redesign, its positive results and the ways you could selectively use it to meet the goals of your respective departments. Course redesign can play a critical role in improving our retention rates by helping students move into their major courses more successfully.

NCHIP

Frostburg’s success in reducing high-risk drinking is another factor that will improve our retention. If students are drinking heavily, they are more likely to neglect their classes and activities, and in the worst-case scenario, fail out of Frostburg altogether.

I’m very pleased to report that Frostburg has seen a drop in high-risk drinking from 57 percent in 2006 to 41 percent in 2012. We determined this through the CORE survey for alcohol and drug use, which is administered to our students every three years. Forty-one percent is below the national average, everyone, and considering that the national average of 43 percent has not changed for 30 years, that’s a big deal.
The progress that has been made has involved everyone from the President’s Alcohol Task Force to our CHILL Choices program to our faculty and community leaders. We are becoming a national model for reducing high-risk drinking through positive, proactive intervention strategies and community alliances, and it’s very exciting for our institution. We have a goal of reducing our high-risk drinking rate among students by 25 percent over the next three years. If we are able to do this—we will be the only university in the entire country to accomplish this.

As part of these efforts, we’ve been working with the National College Health Improvement Project, or NCHIP, another key building block in improving our retention and graduation rates. NCHIP is a learning collaborative facilitated by Dartmouth College that involves 32 colleges and universities across the United States. NCHIP uses a public health model to address high-risk drinking. Every initiative implemented by Frostburg has been structured around this model; it’s a model that really helps colleges and universities monitor and assess their progress with their respective initiatives they’re using to address high-risk drinking. In addition, I wanted to mention that I now am Co-Chair of the President’s Working Group for the National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. We will be releasing a matrix of intervention strategies in a few months for all colleges and universities.

Based upon some solid research, I want to highlight an opportunity where our educators can help us make an impact in reducing high-risk drinking among our students. Many of us are aware that our students sometimes start their weekends on Thursday nights—sometimes referred to nationally as “Thirsty Thursdays.” The College of Business found that by consistently and intentionally offering more Friday classes where assignments are due and quizzes are given, students reported they drank less—something I refer to as a BFO (a “blinding flash of the obvious”).

Something as specific as increasing the number of Friday classes can have a major impact on our ability to retain students who may leave Frostburg due to poor grades or other issues that are related to excessive alcohol consumption. In short, if more faculty would consider taking action on this, it could prove to be a powerful retention strategy for FSU, and enhance our overall educational experience. As you develop your courses, please consider how your class schedules can make a very positive difference in how our students learn and succeed at Frostburg. I know Dr. Ahmad Tootoonchi would be happy to share the College of Business’ progress in this area with anyone who is interested.

**Campus Labs**

We have seen that course redesign and addressing high-risk drinking can help us improve our student retention and graduation rates. Finding a better way to get a Big Picture of how our students are doing in their classes and how involved they are on campus is another area where we can improve.

As some of you know, Frostburg is increasingly turning to the best online resources available to help us better pinpoint what’s going on with our students. It’s clear that Map-Works, the software program we attempted to launch two years ago, was not the best fit for our campus community. It was time-consuming and overly complicated to log in, among other challenges. We listened to your feedback and decided to critically evaluate what we were doing and come up with a better solution. The President’s Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness reviewed other options that existed, so we could select a better tool. Based on what we found,
and with the feedback of other key constituents on campus, we decided to invest in a more user-friendly software program called Campus Labs.

For those of you who haven’t heard about Campus Labs yet, it consists of several components, including something called Beacon. Beacon will replace Map-Works as an early alert system for students who are struggling to reach their academic potential. This web-based solution focuses on a variety of factors that are the strongest predictors of student success. Beacon asks students questions about everything from their social skills and confidence levels to their attitude toward learning. Things like how much they value a college degree, their motivation, their resilience, and perseverance are all assessed through Beacon.

Beacon can help us evaluate each student’s probability for academic success, and produces reports for students and advisors. It even recommends campuswide resources for at-risk students.

It is also an early alert system for us to identify students who are at risk because of their progress in your classes. And here’s the other good news: Beacon is much more streamlined and easier to use than Map-Works was. You enter your FSU username and password, and you can even access Beacon through Blackboard. I realize our faculty are very, very busy and don’t need extra complications in how they report information. If you need to write an alert about a student, it’s all right there in one place online. And the important thing is that this information doesn’t just sit there; Beacon’s system is set up so that the alert is shared with the people on campus who can follow up with the student. I know faculty sometimes don’t know whom to call or what to do, when they are dealing with a student who needs help. If problems are reported, Beacon will ensure that information is shared campuswide confidentially only with those who need to know about it, and they will follow up appropriately.

Harriet Douglas in Programs Advancing Student Success has already provided select training sessions on Beacon with Student and Educational Services staff and with ORIE instructors. There will be more opportunities in the next few weeks to educate our campus on how to use this new retention tool effectively.

I can’t emphasize enough how important it is that our educators support our students by using Beacon; it is a critical tool in improving student retention because it will enhance how we’re sharing information. It also greatly expands our understanding of how our students are learning and how they’re engaged on campus.

**Enhancing experiential and applied learning opportunities for students inside and outside the classroom**

Let’s turn our attention to our second top Strategic Planning priority, enhancing experiential and applied learning opportunities.

As many of you already know, this past year, Dr. Simpson and I visited most of the academic departments at Frostburg. Many faculty reported this was the first time they can remember meeting with the President and Provost in this type of setting. We met with over 150 members of our faculty, and will continue these meetings this year. We are producing a white paper to present to Faculty Senate in a few days for their review and comment. One of the areas we discussed with departments is how they are engaging our students outside the
classroom. We were consistently impressed with how much our faculty encourage applied experiences for our students.

In recognition to how important this is, we have been working to deliberately increase resources and funding so you can create more educational experiences and projects for your students that support experiential learning. These funds include:

- FSU Foundation Opportunity Grants, which are awarded to projects developed by our students, faculty and staff that are aligned with our Strategic Planning priorities. This is a very unique program most colleges and universities don’t offer their campus communities; the FSU Foundation created it to support the Strategic Plan and your efforts to engage our students. These grants basically can help you take a sense of ownership in how our university is growing through the meaningful work you already do. We’ve gone from over $41,000 in support of 8 projects in 2009 to over $101,100 to fund 43 projects this year. We want to keep investing in the ideas and professional development of our students, faculty and staff, and this is one of the ways we’re trying to do that. We also have these other funds and awards that we’ve made available to our campus community.
  - the Al and Dale Boxley Faculty Award/Student Research Award
  - the Jonathan Gibralter Presidential Leadership Fund for Alcohol Awareness and Education
  - the Catherine R. Gira Campus to Community Awards and
  - the Stephen M. Spahr Student Activism Award

Thanks to Faculty Senate chair Mary Mumper and the President’s Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness, Frostburg also offers the President’s Experiential Learning Enhancement Fund. This fund was created to support faculty projects that specifically engage students in an experiential learning opportunity. We have awarded $35,000 two years in a row through this fund. Here’s how our Colleges have taken advantage of this support.

I also want to note that we have some truly fantastic campus programs that provide great experiential learning opportunities for students. FSU’s sustainability initiative, Learning Green Living Green, provides a great way for faculty, staff and students to work together to ensure our students enjoy hands-on learning and leadership development. Through the work of LGLG, FSU recently was included in the list of top 96 cool schools in U.S. in the Sierra Club’s Sierra Magazine—cool because of our sustainability efforts. Not to brag too much, but we even beat College Park.

FSU Athletics also continues to prove that sports teams are an important part of our experiential learning, and that there can be a correlation between excelling on the field as well as in the classroom. The NCAA Division III is all about academic excellence paving the way for athletic excellence. We do not give out athletic scholarships because we aren’t permitted to do so, and the academic performance of our athletic teams is exceptional. Let me give you a few examples. During the 2011-12 athletic year, the Frostburg women’s soccer team earned the National Soccer Coaches Association of America Team Academic Award for the fifth-straight year after achieving a team GPA of 3.53. During the spring 2012 semester, six women’s soccer players earned perfect 4.0 GPAs and the team earned a 3.57 GPA, their highest ever.
Collectively, over 120 student-athletes earned all-academic honors through both the Capital Athletic Conference and the Empire 8 Athletic Conference last year.

International education is also growing at FSU and is instrumental in preparing our students to live and work in a global society. This fall we will have over 80 students from 20 countries. This is just over a 12 percent increase in international student enrollment over fall 2011. This year we have two visiting scholars from China’s Hunan University of Commerce who are both English language professors, and we expect a third visiting scholar, a professor of art, to arrive from Beijing Normal University as well. Additionally, we sent 70 FSU students abroad to over 26 countries last year, an increase of almost 80 percent from academic year 2010 - 2011. I just met with our group of international students last week; they are so happy to be here and looking forward to experiencing Frostburg. In addition, our relationship with The Language Company will commence this year. They are seeking accreditation of their program in Frostburg, and they hope to be fully operational by January. Their focus is on English as a Second Language, and they will recruit the students who will then hopefully enroll at Frostburg State.

And I’m truly proud of the ways our faculty are creating some wonderful programming through study abroad. For example, this past summer our students got to study international business in China because of the efforts of several of our College of Business faculty. I had an opportunity to hear about their trips to China and was incredibly impressed that each and every student who spoke recounted that this was an experience that forever changed their lives.

Improving facilities so that students live and learn in a modern and technologically sophisticated environment.

If we’re going to provide a quality educational experience for our students inside and outside the classroom, we absolutely need the best facilities possible for teaching, learning, living and working on this campus. I’d like to briefly mention a few of the many projects going on.

- First of all, I’m pleased to tell all of you that our much-anticipated Center for Communications and Information Technology is on schedule for completion by spring 2014. Each and every day I watch this new building taking shape outside my window and am incredibly impressed with the progress. You will see steel going up during the month of September. It’s going to be a great building for this campus and a very visible reminder of how Frostburg supports innovation, technology and state-of-the-art educational experiences. For those of you still mourning the loss of Tawes Hall, take a look at this time-lapse video of the construction site by Micheal McAlexander, assistant professor in the Department of Mass Communication.

- We’re always trying to figure out how many needs we can serve and problems we can solve with how we approach our renovations. When we tore down Tawes, we created the need for more classroom space. We were going to build a new temporary building between the gym and Bobcat Stadium. However, we decided instead to add a second floor to where the climbing wall used to be in P.E. Center and built three new smart classrooms. Instead of adding a new facility, we realized it was more economical to add these classrooms to the P.E. Center instead. A new climbing wall will be placed in the former squash court.

- We will be relocating the athletic training room to the lower level of where the climbing wall used to be, which will not only serve our student-athletes but also our athletic training academic program. They have needed a new training facility for quite
some time. This in turn will free up space where we will eventually build new women’s locker rooms, just in time for the 40th anniversary of Title 9. It’s very important and long overdue for us to bring our women’s sports teams and resources up to par with that of our men’s teams.

- SERF is also coming together beautifully, and we are planning a ribbon cutting for the end of October. SERF will help FSU continue to position itself as a national leader in renewable energy research and provide our students, faculty, staff and local community members with some fantastic hands-on learning opportunities.

- Our much-anticipated Education Professions & Health Sciences Center is still in the Governor’s budget, and the hope is that we can get it moved up on the schedule so design and construction can begin sooner.

- If you noticed construction at Bobcat Stadium, it is because our bleachers had outlived their useful life and had become a hazard. We simply had to demolish them and purchase new bleachers. These will be ready for our second home football game.

- You will also notice that we are redoing the doors to the Cords Center—the old doors had rusted through and needed to be replaced. We are upgrading the entire entryway to this facility as it is used by our Athletic Department and is a home to several important academic programs.

- Also, if you haven’t yet seen the Hall of Fame room as you enter the gym, I hope you will walk over, especially if you were a colleague of Harold Cords. His family commissioned an exceptionally beautiful portrait of him that now hangs in that room.

- If you teach at USMH, we’ve worked with City of Hagerstown and they’ve renovated the former CVS building and added three state-of-the-art classrooms and offices for the Educational Professions faculty.

- As we work on improving Frostburg’s appearance through renovations and facility upgrades, we have to think about the first impressions we’re making on parents, prospective students, alumni and other visitors when they visit Frostburg. This has caused us to look for simple ways to make select areas and features around campus look and feel better.

- We’ve added two beautiful campus signs this past year that have gotten a lot of positive feedback. We’re replacing broken sidewalks and rusty handrails, details that really affect how our campus looks and feels. These changes not only affect how visitors perceive us, but how we perceive ourselves and our daily work here. It gives everyone a sense of purpose and well-being when they feel proud and appreciative of their surroundings. These changes take time and cost money but we cannot afford to defer maintenance, which causes our beautiful campus to look run down.

Pride and well-being are also what we experience when we get the positive feedback we need to keep going. I want everyone to know how proud I am of all our hard-working, talented, dedicated faculty, staff and students. We’ve grown and changed a lot as an institution, and sometimes it’s like we haven’t had time to stop and really think about all the great things we’ve built together. One of the things that we are intentionally doing is taking the time to recognize people who are doing exceptional work. It meant so much to me and to everyone who knows and loves Dr. Barbara Ornstein to present her with the President’s Distinguished Faculty Award this past spring. We will award this again next spring at Commencement, and continue to look
for more ways to let our faculty and staff know how much their efforts matter to our future, through recognitions like these. Keep your eyes open for the request for nominations for the President’s Distinguished Faculty Award which includes not only a medallion presented at Commencement along with a framed certificate, but also $2,500 made available by our Foundation Board in recognition of your efforts.

I also want to congratulate the College of Education for successfully creating and implementing our new Ed.D. program. They did a great job of getting the necessary approvals, and I’m appreciative of all of the faculty who are contributing to the Ed.D.’s interdisciplinary focus through their expertise. Twenty-five students are already enrolled this fall. I had an opportunity to join the faculty and our first cohort for dinner last week and these working individuals are from primary and secondary school districts, Allegany College of Maryland, Garrett College and Frostburg State University. This applied doctoral degree is the first opportunity for individuals to advance in their respective fields in western Maryland. We will accept the second cohort in the fall of 2013 at USMH and will alternate each year beyond that.

I also wish to thank Dr. Tootoonchi and the College of Business for looking into possibly creating an applied doctorate in business administration in the near future. They had a discussion about creating a doctorate at their faculty retreat last week, and are planning to follow up on this discussion during the College of Business Graduate Policy Committee’s meeting early on in the fall semester.

And here’s another incentive to feel inspired about what we’re accomplishing together: I’m so glad we will all be getting a 2 percent cost of living increase in January 2013. I know it’s not a lot, but it is something. I’m also very pleased to share that at this time, merit raises are in the budget for fiscal year 2014—I cannot promise it will remain in the budget but it is a very good sign that we are starting the year with it in the budget. I realize it’s been really difficult for everyone to go without raises these past couple of years, especially when many of you have worked so incredibly hard to bring new projects and ideas to fruition. I can’t say enough how much I appreciate the amazing things you’re doing here, despite our limited resources and the challenges we’ve faced together.

In the year ahead, I hope you will take the time to find out what you personally can do to be involved with our Strategic Plan. I know we can work together and collectively continue to strengthen our university. As I attend national meetings and read about higher education in general, I am affected by the fact that the economic decline of our nation has forever altered the face of public higher education. There has even been a discussion that the large, doctorate-granting, research universities will continue to flourish and that small, rural, comprehensive universities might suffer. This could be especially true if concepts like Massive On-Line Course Content programs such as Coursera and others take hold.

You are an exceptionally talented, creative group, and I know how much you care. If we all focus our efforts on those things that are most strategic for our future, Frostburg will take its place as a nationally known, premiere regional comprehensive institution with a secure future and enormous promise. I ask you to join me on that journey.

Thank you.
I now have the pleasure of doing something we probably should have done years ago, something that is long overdue. I’d like us all to take a moment to recognize the newly tenured and promoted faculty at Frostburg. Please stand when I call your name.

**Tenured Faculty:**

Dr. Erica Kennedy – Psychology  
Dr. Minerva Ladores – Educational Professions  
Dr. Michael Mathias – Philosophy  
Dr. Martha Mattare – Management  
Dr. Emily Milleson – Educational Professions  
Dr. Michael Monahan – Management  
Dr. Eric Moore – Physics and Engineering  
Dr. Matthew Ramspott – Geography  
Dr. Lisa Simpson – Health and Physical Education

**Promoted Faculty:**

Dr. Amy Branam – Associate Professor  
Dr. Erica Kennedy – Associate Professor  
Dr. Michael Mathias – Associate Professor  
Dr. Martha Mattare – Associate Professor  
Dr. Michael Monahan – Associate Professor  
Dr. Elesha Ruminski – Associate Professor  
Dr. Kara Rogers-Thomas – Associate Professor  
Dr. William Anderson – Professor  
Dr. Catherine Ashley-Cotleur – Professor  
Dr. Susan Gray – Professor
Dr. Scott Johnson – Professor

2012 FSU Staff Awards for Excellence

I now have the honor of presenting the 2012 FSU Staff Awards for Excellence, which are supported by the FSU Foundation.

Each winner receives a plaque and certificate at Convocation, plus $500 funded by the FSU Foundation.

I think it’s really neat that this year’s award winners have a combined 107 years of service to FSU.

In the category of Exempt Employee:

Patrick Deasy

Employed by FSU for the past 41 years, Pat currently serves as a clinical counselor in the Counseling & Psychological Services Department as well as the Coordinator of Veterans Affairs.

As a clinical counselor, he provides counseling, crisis intervention and many other psychological services that contribute to the academic success and personal development of students. As Coordinator of Veterans Affairs he serves as FSU’s certifying official in dealings with the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Beyond his job responsibilities, Pat can be found volunteering at Commencement ceremonies, serving as a student judicial board member or helping the Allegany County Combined Crisis Response Team in times of local or regional disaster.

Congratulations, Pat!

In the category of Nonexempt Employee:

Linda Brumage

Linda began her employment at FSU 43 years ago. During that time she has held the title of Stenographer, Office Secretary I, II and III and for the past 19 years, Executive Administrative Assistant to four Deans of the College of Education. Beyond her commitment to FSU, Linda has given back to the community. She is involved with the Western Maryland Health System Auxiliary, the Allegany County Commission for Woman and the Cumberland Business and Professional Women, to name just a few activities.

Congratulations, Linda!
In the category of Nonexempt Employee/Facilities/Maintenance:

Gary Robinette

Gary has been employed at FSU for 23 years. Although his official title is “carpenter,” the Department of Theatre and Dance has always referred to him as their “Scene Shop Supervisor.” Despite titles, he has taken on a supervisory role for some 30 students per semester, mentoring them in set construction, safety and other aspects of scene construction. Over the years he has worked side by side with students on over 130 theatre productions and music operettas. Gary is a devoted member of the Little Meadows Baptist Church, where he is a deacon and also volunteers as the church custodian. Gary’s generosity was no surprise, to those who know him, when one year he realized that a local childcare facility could not afford a Christmas tree, so he built one for them.

Congratulations, Gary.

Thank you so much to everyone for being here today. Have a wonderful year!