

Good afternoon.

I appreciate this opportunity to expand upon the article published in the Cumberland Times-News dated Sept. 11 titled "FSU Faculty Members Vote to Replace President" with the purpose of providing transparent communication. It is important that information provided is both accurate and transparent.

I have asked to meet with the Faculty Senate Steering Committee to learn more about its concerns and specific items that led to the actions of the Faculty Senate. I was surprised to learn of concerns about my leadership since the Faculty Senate has not formally brought any forward during my 8+ year tenure as President.

The change from Division III to Division II was cited as a "case in point" example of the lack of shared governance stating this was a "top-down decision apparently made without serious regard for input."

The request to consider moving to Division II **originated** with the Department of Athletics when it appeared our Division III conference would not survive. In fact, that conference no longer exists. Our fellow state institution, Salisbury University, and other public institutions from our old conference, now play in the Coast-to-Coast conference with members from across the nation rather than in the immediate region. As a result, we spend significantly less in travel expenses than if we stayed at DIII.

Throughout the Division II transition plan, the process was presented before all three branches of the University shared governance which includes the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and our Student Government Association. Specifically, the transition plan and continued oversight of the athletic program approved by the NCAA **requires** faculty representation and participation. None of the shared governance units spoke in opposition of the move.

At least five committees with faculty representation were involved in the transition to Division II during the multi-year process. The matter was discussed during Faculty Senate meetings and a University Assembly was held to discuss the possible transition. The Faculty Senate, itself, restructured its Faculty Athletic Advisory Council as part of the process. In no instance was any request for information from the Faculty Senate denied.

The changes have resulted in an increase in student-athlete enrollment, this occurring during a time of declining enrollments. The increase of 255 student-athletes with the

transition from DIII to DII can be viewed as saving 16 faculty teaching positions. Beyond the increase in students, the quality of academic performance, which is reported on a regular basis to the Faculty Senate by the Faculty Athletic Representative (a faculty member), continues to be impressive with an overall GPA, retention rate, and graduation rate above the overall student body data. We have also been able to meet one of our goals, which was to reduce the gender gap between male and female student-athletes. Alumni giving has also increased. As an example, we are in the process of opening an academic learning center in the Cordts PE Center thanks to a significant donor gift to support the academic performance of our student-athletes. All these metrics point to the move to Division II as a benefit to the Frostburg State University community and one in which faculty have been involved.

The Faculty Senate also seems to be unaware of the strides we have made with outside stakeholders. While I wish we would receive additional state funding, we receive over \$600,000 annually (beyond the funding when I arrived at FSU) to support our regional development activities in addition to our yearly operating budget. The state has also provided funding for additional faculty positions in the health sciences as we implemented the Physician Assistant and the 4-year BSN campus programs.

Federal and state grant/contract awards have more than tripled since FY17. As an example, a recent \$1.4 million grant by the Appalachian Regional Commission and Rural Maryland Council, along with other local and state matching funding, will support the creation of FSU's Outdoor Recreation Economy Institute, helping attract and retain talented individuals and prospective FSU students. We plan to make significant strides this year, again with significant outside support, in clean and sustainable energy.

Private support from individuals and businesses continues to grow significantly. The FSU Foundation recently recorded its third consecutive year of record fundraising and has already raised over \$2.1 million in FY25. The University's campaign, *Forging Futures: The Campaign for Forging Futures*, has now surpassed \$30.5 million, approaching double the amount raised in the last campaign, with most of the donations restricted to increasing the number and amount of scholarships for our students.

I have been and remain committed to providing transparent communication with our campus community as well as our shared governance units, both formally and informally. FSU administration regularly attends formal meetings with our governance units and with membership on the University Advisory Council to consult, collaborate and make recommendations on key institutional decisions to ensure that the perspective of those affected are taken into consideration and that decisions align with our mission as a public regional, student-centered and comprehensive institution in

Western Maryland. Now that I am back to work full-time, I will resume my regular updates to all faculty, staff and students. All of my future campus messages to faculty and staff will now be housed on our newest communication platform, [Town Square](#).

“Shared governance” is not “shared decision-making”. Faculty have an important role in the academic and curricular actions we take. The Board of Regents’ policies clearly place responsibility for decisions with campus presidents. I consider recommendations and advice from all three units of shared governance in shaping decisions. Three examples with governance implications during my tenure come to mind immediately:

1. The creation of the Staff Senate shortly after my arrival at the request of non-represented staff;
2. The creation of the university-wide Budget Advisory Council at the request of the Faculty Senate; and,
3. The strategic purchase of software including *Navigate* at the request of faculty.

There will be times, however, when recommended actions from shared governance units may not be implemented.

I value the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. I know that making difficult decisions is necessary to preserve FSU’s financial stability and viability. I am committed to serving our mission and engaging our campus community to support our strategic priorities regarding enrollment and the promotion of a welcoming campus climate and culture.