

Welcome back to the fall 2023 semester. It is wonderful to see everyone on campus. By all accounts, the move-in process that began last Thursday and extended through the weekend went well. Thank you to all who made it happen. We had faculty, staff and students welcoming our newest bobcats to campus. There are more new bobcats on campus than in the past couple of years, and their enthusiasm was evident and welcome. Here are a few updates.

Capital (Building & Campus Improvement) Projects. The Education and Health Sciences Center (EHSC) is open. Our student health center and counseling center are located on the first floor of EHSC. Classrooms and labs occupy Floors 1 through 3, with the Children's Literature Centre on the 2nd floor. Faculty offices for Education, Nursing and most of the Kinesiology and Recreation & Parks Management faculty are on the 4th floor. Interior renovations for the Adams-Wyche Multicultural Center have been completed, and the building was dedicated at the end of the last academic school year. Work continues on the new roof for the Pealer Performing Arts Center. Work on heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) in some of our older buildings, along with utility upgrades, will also continue for the next year or two. We hope to move to the next stages of our two "regional" projects – the FSU Regional Science Center in downtown Frostburg and the Western Maryland Regional Sports Complex. We are partnering with the Maryland Stadium Authority on the latter project.

Budget. We finished last year with a positive operating margin. Thanks to all who helped. VP Donoway and Provost Taylor held a meeting with the Budget Advisory Council last week, and there are plans to hold a town hall on the budget in September. The budget is tight this year for several reasons. Our tuition revenues haven't returned to pre-covid levels. We also had mandated salary increases for some employees that have not been funded by the state. Costs, including utilities, continue to rise. With all that happening, I believe we can bring our budget into line with the efforts of VPs, their direct reports and others on campus who can identify cost savings. We have begun a transition to a less centralized budgeting model.

State of the University Address. Our annual report on the State of the University will be held in the Pealer Recital Hall on Thursday, September 7, beginning at 2:30 p.m. The division VPs and I will be making brief presentations on the status of the University, their divisions and plans for this upcoming year. My focus will be on the next topic, strategic initiatives.

Strategic Plan 2018-23 and Future Strategic Initiatives. Our current strategic plan is scheduled to end in December 2023. We will be wrapping up that plan with a report on our progress toward the four goals and the 12 action initiatives related to those goals. During the month of October, we will hold several open sessions for the campus community. Those sessions will focus on one of three topics:

- Reaffirmation or modification of our mission and vision statements;
- Strategic Enrollment Management Plans for the next three years; and,
- Understanding and enhancing campus culture over the next three years.

Rather than a full-blown five-year plan, we will focus on two initiatives over the next three years because of the uncertainties and changing landscape nationally in higher education.

Innovation Launchpad Competition. FSU, in partnership with the TEDCO Maryland Innovation Initiative ([MI](#)) and the University System of Maryland (USM) Launch Fund, will host a regional Bobcat Innovation Launch Pad competition on campus from Friday, September 22 through Sunday, September 24, 2023. This event is a unique program that will provide multidisciplinary teams of 4-5 students with an opportunity to work quickly and collectively to develop business models and technology-based solutions to real-world problems. Visit <https://www.frostburg.edu/competitions/bobcat-innovation-launch-pad/2023.php> to learn more.

I hope everyone has an enjoyable Labor Day weekend. Go Bobcats!