

Welcome back, Bobcats! I hope that you had a chance to relax and recharge over spring break and that you're ready to finish the second half of the year strong.

For those of you who may not know me yet, let me introduce myself. My name is Darlene Brannigan Smith, PhD, and I have been asked by Chancellor Perman of the University System of Maryland to step into the role of your interim president until a permanent leader is in place, and I couldn't be more honored to serve you.

While my title may say "interim", please know that I plan to have an active presidency at FSU to ensure stability during the transition in leadership roles while looking forward towards ways to ensure Frostburg's successful future.

In my short time being immersed in the FSU community, I have witnessed firsthand the pride you have for this University – pride that has transformed me into a Bobcat through and through. I am more committed now than ever to work alongside you to strengthen FSU, rebuild trust, raise our institutional self-esteem and help the campus heal from the difficulties of the past year.

We just concluded our Middle States peer evaluation team visit, and I am proud to say that the team's preliminary findings addressed many facets of FSU, provided a holistic acknowledgement of the great things we are doing here and will help us steer a sustainable path forward.

With that said, I am ready to get to work on my priorities during my time at Frostburg. We need to work together to make enhancements to our strategic plan using the collegiate advice we received from the Middle States team as a blueprint.

I plan to collaborate with constituents across the campus on strategies to increase enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; examine options to refine our administrative and academic structure to maximize effectiveness; and identify efficiencies to strengthen FSU's budget model.

All higher education is amid transformative change, and adapting to change today is fundamental to being relevant tomorrow. FSU's leaders that came before me recognized the need for change to ensure the University's success, and I applaud them for their courage and foresight. I plan to continue this forward momentum as I help FSU navigate its bright future.

With FSU pride,

Darlene Smith