

Good morning, Bobcats!

This week's message will be one of both warm welcomes and fond farewells.

I would like to start by “officially” welcoming Dave Garcia into his position as our new associate vice president of Admissions. Dave has done an outstanding job leading the department through a transitional period, and under his direction as interim Director of Admissions, FSU hosted several successful events on campus for prospective students and their families and has identified multiple new strategies and processes for increasing enrollment. I think I speak for the entire campus community when I say that we are glad to have him on our team permanently.

Next, I'm excited to announce that after full consultation with our library staff, I have offered Randy Lowe the position of Director of the Ort Library, dropping the interim title that he has held since assuming the position last December, and he has graciously accepted. I want to thank Randy for stepping into the interim role after the previous director's retirement and for creating a seamless transition in leadership for the library staff. I know he has their full support.

Now, on to the fond farewells.

It is difficult to find the right words that will do justice to the gratitude felt by this campus community for the exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication of Al Delia. Before Al became FSU's acting president, interim president or even Chief of Staff, he led our Division of Regional Development and Engagement since its implementation more than five years ago and helped create lasting partnerships that will make our region a more competitive and better place to call home.

Then, as you know, Al was called upon to steer the ship during a most difficult time at FSU. Al led with grace and resilience. We are deeply appreciative of the wisdom and experience he shared, which has helped shape our path forward. As Al embarks on this new chapter of his life called *retirement* in early June, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for his guidance and stability, especially during challenging transitions.

Finally, it is with both a heavy heart and an optimistic outlook that I announce that our interim provost and vice president for the Division of Student Success Dr. Larry Weill will be stepping down from his post at the end of June. Larry, like Al, assumed the interim role during a difficult time following the departure of the previous provost. In his short time at FSU, Larry has been a steadfast leader serving as the University's chief academic officer, overseeing our three colleges, the Academic Success Network, the library, and the admissions and financial aid departments. We wish Larry nothing but peace and happiness as he returns to his home in western Kentucky where he will no doubt spend his days writing and honing his craft as a visual artist.

While Larry's departure once again leaves a hole in FSU's leadership, I am confident that in collaboration with our Faculty and Staff Senates we will work together to find the best replacement and fit to help move our university forward.

So, again, please join me in welcoming Randy Lowe and Dave Garcia to the Bobcat family permanently. I am confident that their fresh perspectives and enthusiasm will bring new energy and ideas to our team.

And give another big shoutout to Al and Larry for their remarkable service. We wish them all the best in their retirement and hope it brings them joy, relaxation and fulfillment.

With FSU pride,

Darlene Brannigan Smith, PhD