

Jan. 19, 2022

Good afternoon,

Here is some information on a few topics as we approach the start of the spring 2022 semester:

COVID Information. We continue to have weekly meetings with USM, and our Response and Recovery team meets several times each week. The data and scientific evidence continue to show that individuals who have been vaccinated and those who have received the booster shot are showing milder effects from the Omicron variant. We hope that the peak of infections is near or has already occurred and that we will see a decline in infections.

Other information:

- We will continue to expect individuals on campus with an authorized vaccine exemption to test biweekly; others on campus may also test. After the semester begins, the schedule will be the same as in the fall.
- The government is offering four tests per household; you can register for these tests at special.usps.com/testkits.
- KN95 masks have been received and will be distributed in the coming days. Residence Hall students, including Edgewood Commons, will receive a mask from building staff. Off-campus students can pick up a mask from the Lane Center Information Desk. Faculty and staff masks are being sent in the campus mail to be distributed by a designee in your buildings. Additional KN95 masks will be for sale in the University Store as well.
- Our most recent information and FAQs regarding campus policies can be found at www.frostburg.edu/COVID19/faq.php. For other questions about FSU's COVID response or testing, email COVIDtesting@frostburg.edu.

Meetings with Department Chairs. For over a week now, I have been meeting with academic department chairs (along with the Provost, Academic Affairs staff, Deans, Admissions and Marketing staff) to discuss academic program enrollment trends and learn more about departmental initiatives. These meetings are in response to a request from the Board of Regents for a strategic enrollment management plan from FSU due later this semester. I've met with all the chairs in the Colleges of Business and Education and am about a quarter of the way through meeting with CLAS chairs. We have taken some actions already from these meetings. One is hiring a videographer to produce brief videos of faculty, students and alums talking about academic programs and experiences at FSU. These videos will be posted on departmental websites as well as social media. Another is the re-examination of foundation scholarships and our awarding process to use them strategically for recruiting top students and retaining students who might otherwise leave. I have also heard of several multidisciplinary initiatives to help distinguish FSU from other schools. Lastly, you will continue to see changes to our website. For example, we have replaced the December commencement banner with one aimed at prospective students and life on campus. We continue to work with Ologie on updating our brand and

message to prospective students and their families. I'll be providing a more detailed report to our governance bodies in February.

Pay Raises. USM has just provided us with guidance regarding pay increases authorized by the governor. We are reviewing the details and which employees will be eligible. While I cannot provide exact information at this time, here are the highlights:

- A one-time \$1,500 bonus.
- A 1% COLA.
- A 2.5% average merit pool to be distributed among employees who were evaluated in the spring of 2021 and received at least "Meets Standards." More details on merit will come from HR at a later date.

These increases (COLA and Merit) will be retroactive to the first full pay period in January 2022. The media is indicating that the governor's budget for FY2023 may include additional pay increases that will be subject to approval by the Maryland General Assembly.

Academic Affairs. I am meeting virtually every other week with Dr. Traki Taylor, who will be joining us as Provost in July. She is also in contact with Interim Provost Mike Mathias and the Academic Affairs staff to make the transition as smooth as possible. I once again thank Mike for stepping up and providing his leadership in Academic Affairs. The staff and deans have also been great to work with during this transition period under difficult environmental conditions.

Athletics. The Department of Athletics recently promoted Eric Wagoner to Head Coach of the FSU football team. Eric joined FSU as defensive coordinator. I am pleased that Eric will bring his style of coaching and leadership to our football program with an appreciation for the culture here at FSU. Along with Athletic Director Troy Dell, I emphasized the importance of academic success and community involvement of student-athletes as well as competitiveness on the playing field. Eric's philosophy and approach make me confident we will continue to achieve success in all these areas. We are in our final probationary year in the transition from DIII to DII. The NCAA convention is being held this week in Indianapolis, which is one of the ultimate milestones in the transition; a final decision from the NCAA being made by July of this year.

Please continue to be safe, and I hope we have a successful spring 2022 semester and can look toward the end of this pandemic.

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