
The Understory - President Kolison's Update to Faculty and Staff, April 26, 2022

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State University of New York at Fredonia

The Understory



Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., Ph.D., President



The Understory is President Kolison's update to the faculty and staff at SUNY Fredonia. The term "understory" is used in forestry to refer to the undergrowth of a forest below the canopy. The understory of the forest, which consists of new growth and other matter, is, to a large extent, the future of the forest.

April 26, 2022
Fredonia, NY

I'm glad to provide you with another edition of The Understory. In this edition, you will find information regarding the New York State Budget, a new Chief Information Officer, a visit to the campus herbarium, and my appreciation to the faculty and staff. I hope you find this information valuable.

2022–2023 New York State Budget

I want to thank everyone who has engaged in advocacy efforts for SUNY. Over the course of the last few weeks, several people have touched base with my office to discuss their advocacy work regarding the fiscal year 2022–23 budget priorities. As you have likely seen, this work has made a tremendous impact as the New York State budget for the SUNY system was very favorable for all of our students and campuses. Thank you.

During the next few weeks, we will be determining the direct impact of the SUNY-appropriated budget on SUNY Fredonia. I am optimistic that the impact on our campus budget will be significant. While this news is welcome, we need to continue to work diligently towards increasing enrollment and retention and enhancing operational efficiency.

Also related to budgets, each of our Vice Presidents is currently working to propose a fiscal year 2022–23 budget for their respective division. Given our realities, I have encouraged them to utilize a modified zero-based budget approach in developing their proposals.

New Chief Information Officer

I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Jerry DeSanto as the Interim Chief Information Officer for SUNY Fredonia. This interim appointment, effective June 3, 2022, is intended to last up to two calendar years.

Dr. DeSanto comes to us from The Registry and is currently completing an appointment as Interim CIO for the Nebraska State College System. Dr. DeSanto has held other CIO appointments at Illinois Wesleyan University and The University of Scranton. He also previously served as Executive Vice President at John Carroll University with an extensive portfolio including Information Technology.

Dr. DeSanto received his undergraduate degree and M.B.A. in Management and Finance from The University of Scranton, and his Ed.D. in Higher Education Management from the University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation focused on the role of the higher education CIO amidst changing IT industry forces.

Among the things that Dr. DeSanto will help our institution to achieve during his tenure are the following:

1. Prioritizing IT institutional needs while addressing staffing requirements;
2. Enhancing a positive user experience;
3. Centralizing IT staff physically and organizationally;
4. Collaborating with various offices on campus to ensure streamlining of workflows and effective use of data for compliance and accreditation;
5. Optimizing the usage of non-paper processes in our business transactions;
6. Contributing toward the strategic planning process to ensure that IT is positioned as a foundational elements of our new strategic plan;
7. Expanding nontraditional students' access via IT to programs at the university;
8. Improving efficiency and effectiveness of business processes through increased employment of IT;
9. Transitioning from homegrown systems to appropriate enterprise systems; and
10. Assisting our efforts to conduct a national search for a long-term CIO.

I feel confident that Dr. DeSanto will bring the background and depth of experience necessary to make him successful in his new role. He will be a member of the President's Cabinet and will report directly to me. I hope you will join me in extending a warm welcome to Dr. DeSanto when he arrives in June.

Visits Across Campus

Early this month, I had the opportunity to visit Fredonia's herbarium in the Science Center and to learn about the outstanding service of a community volunteer, Pat Appelbe. The herbarium, as you may be aware, is a place where plant material is identified, preserved, and cataloged for research and other scientific purposes. Among their many uses, herbaria play an important role in studies pertaining to plant succession and the impacts of climate change on vegetation. Fredonia's herbarium has been a valuable resource to researchers worldwide.

For more than a decade, Pat has offered her service on a volunteer basis to ensure that the herbarium remains a vital part of the learning experience for our students at SUNY Fredonia. She continues to help build the collection and support students to achieve their learning goals.



Thank you, Pat, for your dedication to and support of our students!

Thanks to All Faculty and Staff

It is amazing how fast this academic year has gone. Soon enough, we will be celebrating this year's Commencement, our 195th, and graduating more than 800 undergraduate and graduate students. Given the impact of COVID-19 and other challenges, all that we have accomplished this year as an institution is especially remarkable. These achievements are possible only due to your commitment, dedication, and hard work. Thank you for everything you have done to support our students and to deliver on the mission of SUNY Fredonia. I hope to see many of you at Commencement and in the coming weeks before we head into the summer.



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