
[FacultyStaff] Message from Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., February 26, 2025

President's Office <President.Office@fredonia.edu>
Reply-To: president.office@fredonia.edu
To: Faculty/Staff group <facultystaff@fredonia.edu>

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 3:30 PM



February 26, 2025

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we approach the next senate meeting, I want to be sure that I share with you the key highlights from my update to the University Senate on February 3, 2025. Here are some topics that I covered in the last Senate meeting and other information that is not senate-related that I want you to know about.

Special Recognitions

At the Senate, I recognized, congratulated, and thanked the following groups:

1. Members of the Presidential Commission for celebrating the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

The Commission planned a successful week-long series of programming and a Day of Service Program for Fredonia's observance of the MLK holiday. As a part of the observance, the Fredonia campus community contributed more than 260 total hours to Day of Service activities.

Congratulations to the Commission for organizing the second annual observance.

2. Students who planned and participated in the Activities Night event

I attended Activities Night on Wednesday, January 29, and was happy to stop by student organization tables. It was a big success!

3. Fredonia SEFA Committee

The Fredonia SEFA Committee established a \$25,000 goal for this year's fundraising effort. The goal was exceeded, and the funds raised will support various causes in our Chautauqua community. Many thanks to all the faculty and staff who contributed to achieving this outcome.

Thank you to the members of the committee.

4. ACE (Advancing Completion through Engagement) Team

The ACE program is intended to ensure degree completion for the most financially vulnerable students at SUNY Fredonia. Currently, we have about 157 students enrolled in the program, and our ACE program is succeeding in meeting the goals established by SUNY. As a result, SUNY has asked Fredonia to expand the program to 250 students and will receive additional funding to support the university for such an expansion. This is remarkable, and I thank the members of the ACE team at Fredonia for such an achievement!

Welcome, Wayne Lynch, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Please help me to welcome our new VP for Finance and Administration, Mr. Wayne Lynch, who joined us on February 18, 2025. I am very pleased to have Wayne on board with his extensive experience in both financial and operations management, and he has already taken leadership of our financial deficit plan. If you have not yet had a chance to meet with him, please take the opportunity to introduce yourself and extend a warm welcome to him.

Advocacy

I discussed with the Senate my work regarding advocating for SUNY and for SUNY Fredonia. Last week, I provided some details about that work in a

communication with our students. In summary, in regards to SUNY as a whole, I believe that the Executive budget proposed by Governor Hochul is exceptional especially when one takes into consideration that what she has proposed builds upon what we achieved last year. I am particularly pleased with the funding she has proposed to cover negotiated raises, to expand ACE/ASAP, critical maintenance upgrades and construction, and tuition assistance for students. I am joining SUNY leaders in advocating for the Governor's Executive Budget.

As I expressed to the Senate, when it comes to advocacy work that is specific to our campus, here are the things of priority for me:

1. Obtaining commitment from SUNY to cover annual all funds deficit until the deficit is eliminated in FY 2027-28 and;
2. Seeking special funding for sustaining excellence in higher cost programs given that we do not have a differential tuition structure.

While the advocacy items specific to Fredonia are challenging to achieve, I feel optimistic that we will succeed in our efforts. We have worked hard to strengthen or enhance support for Fredonia at SUNY. Our new enrollment management infrastructure, our efforts towards strengthening and optimizing our academic array, and our success in enhancing the retention of students are all helping with our negotiations with our partners at SUNY.

Shout-outs

Here are a few fun things that I did recently that I would like to give shout-outs to:

1) Lunch with the entire HR team

I had lunch with the entire Human Resources team on February 5, 2025. It was a great opportunity for me to express my thanks to them for the work they do on behalf of our 778 employees at the university. Again, thank you, HR, for all that you do for the university.

2) Visit with the AI Community of Practice

I enjoyed my visit with the AI Community of Practice on February 6, 2025. This group has a broad representation and collaboration from across the campus.

Their work is impressive. The group has achieved a lot in a short period of time, and they are playing a significant role in helping to shape SUNY-level policy on AI. The group is working on building “badges” for student learning and best practices that faculty and staff can use for adopting AI for teaching and business practices. **Bravo!** If you are interested in being involved, please contact the [Innovation Lab](#).

3) Meetings with Faculty

I am continuing to have meetings with faculty in each college and school. On February 19, 2025, I had the opportunity to visit with the faculty of the College of Education, Health Sciences, and Human Services. Also, I visited with the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences on February 20, 2025. My goals for all these meetings are twofold - to learn directly from faculty how I can be more helpful to them in their work, and to learn about things that we can celebrate or things happening in which we can all take pride. These meetings have been helpful to me in increasing my knowledge of wonderful things occurring in the academic departments as well as addressing some concerns that faculty have. I will continue to hold these meetings and many thanks to the faculty who are able to attend.

Intranet and Migration from Google to Microsoft

As has been mentioned previously, we intend to devote our website to meeting external goals and to build an intranet to be used for internal information sharing and business functions. Likewise, in an effort to save resources, we intend to migrate from the **paid enterprise version** of Google to Microsoft. **We will maintain the free version of Google for some teaching and other functions.** Currently, we are paying for both the enterprise versions of Google and Microsoft. This expense is difficult to sustain in the current financial climate. While many people understand this and have expressed support and even enthusiasm for this initiative, I am aware that others have legitimate concerns. This is expected with any change of this magnitude. Hence, I would like to hear from you directly regarding specific concerns or suggestions for success that you have. **Please do so by March 14, 2025** by writing to me at president.office@fredonia.edu, and please make every effort to be specific in

expressing your concerns so that we can do a good job in addressing them. For example, I have heard from some faculty in the College of Education, Health Sciences, and Human Services, and we are reviewing their concerns to ensure that we address them. While I cannot promise that we will be able to address 100% of all concerns, I assure you that we all make every effort to find solutions to the concerns expressed. Some concerns we have heard so far include whether training will be available for this transition and whether we are studying migrations from Google to Microsoft that occurred at other universities. ITS will be providing training campus-wide, and we are looking at past cases to ensure that we have solutions to common issues or do not encounter the issues that others faced.

Everyone, thank you for your continued support and dedication to our university. Thank you for taking the time to read this message. I anticipate sending you another message in March.

Very truly yours,

Dr. K

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

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