
[FacultyStaff] Message from Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., March 17, 2025

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

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 17, 2025

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I hope this message finds you well and that this spring break is providing many of you opportunities to get a breather and recharge for the rest of the semester. Please allow me a few moments of your time to connect with some updates.

President's Update at March 3, 2025 Senate Meeting

At the most recent University Senate meeting, I informed all in attendance that we had been seeking approval for a voluntary separation program. Since then, we have secured approval, and I announced the program on March 11, 2025. For individuals interested, please pay attention to the timeline announced by Human Resources.

I also spoke about the leadership transition in Academic Affairs and indicated I would have more information during the week. I believe that you have all seen my announcement of the appointment of Dr. Judith M. Horowitz as Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Former Provost and Executive Vice President Dr. David Starrett has joined the biology faculty as a professor.

At the meeting, I was asked a question related to the outlook for student recruitment for the Fall of 2025. We plan to provide an update on our recruiting efforts at the next senate meeting. Also, an observation was made that there was a time when the computer science major and the web programming minor had many students enrolled compared to now. My comments regarding that observation centered around what higher education in the US Northeast and Midwest is experiencing regarding enrollment. In May 2022, I invited Lori Mapps and Hannah Whistler of the Education Advisory Board (EAB) to make a presentation on the “National Landscape” for enrollment, which they delivered to the College Council, Department Chairs, Deans, and interested members of our campus community. Their presentation, [linked here](#), provides some insights into factors impacting enrollment generally and some things that institutions can do in such a challenging environment. Please take a look at the presentation and note specifically the chart on page 8.

New York State Budget Advocacy

As I wrote to you on February 26 and discussed in the Fredonia University Senate on February 3, Governor Hochul’s Executive Budget, as it pertains to SUNY, was very favorable. Based on the report that I have received, preliminary discussions among the Executive Branch, House, and Senate appear to be promising. I see many reasons to be cautiously optimistic about what might be passed into law. You can view a summary of the latest proposed budget, [linked here](#). Please keep up the good and appropriate advocacy efforts on behalf of our SUNY institutions.

Migration to Microsoft

You may recall that I requested faculty and staff to send me any suggestions or questions regarding our plan to migrate from Google to the enterprise version of Microsoft. Several of you responded. I appreciate that greatly and I want to thank you for your time and interest. Some of the submissions can and will be addressed via a web-based FAQ, which will be sent out by ITS soon. Other comments or concerns will be addressed in person at meetings that are being scheduled. We will work with Vice Presidents and Deans in scheduling these meetings, and I hope your schedule will permit you to attend.

Visits with Faculty

I am continuing to enjoy my visits with faculty in the various schools and colleges. On March 12, 2025, I visited with the faculty of the School of Business. I appreciated the time they spent with me and the conversation we had, and I am following up on the items that were discussed.

I am looking forward to my visit with the faculty of the School of Music. That will conclude my visits for this semester.

Some Shoutouts

Let me share with you some of the events, including those I attended, that occurred on and off campus that I found to be impactful. I will share others that are more student-focused when I connect with the students next week. I want to acknowledge the people involved in such events with shoutouts.

***La traviata*, Student Performance at Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo**

On March 2, 2025, I was a guest of Distinguished Teaching Professor of Music, Julie Newell, Distinguished Teaching Professor of Theater and Dance, Paul Mockovak, and Assistant Professor Don Marrazzo, Director of Opera Studies, at the performance of Giuseppe Verdi's operatic masterpiece *La traviata*. This performance was a very special collaboration between SUNY Fredonia Opera Program students and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Grammy award-winning conductor Maestro JoAnn Falletta. What a performance!! I was accompanied by Valeria, my wife, and Samuel, my youngest son. I was very proud of our students and appreciative of the opportunity they had to be a part of this performance. Valeria and I had the chance to meet and chat with Maestro JoAnn Falletta. Many thanks to all our faculty who were involved in getting our students prepared for such a high-level performance. Indeed, it was a memorable event, and I greatly appreciated the invitation.

Literacy Suite Workshop

I want to give a shoutout to the School of Business and the College of Education, Health Sciences, and Human Services for collaborating to host a workshop for Chautauqua County teachers. The workshop was held on campus on March 7, 2025 and brought to the campus about 250 K-12 teachers that were joined by more than 50 SUNY Fredonia faculty and students. The workshop featured three distinct segments: AI Literacy; The Science of Reading and; Financial Literacy. As you know, it takes a lot of work and planning to hold this magnitude of event successfully. Many thanks to everyone who helped to

make this happen. I want to extend special thanks to Dean Misra and Dean Rey for their leadership in this effort.

Shark Tank

I attended the School of Business Shark Tank competition on March 13, 2025. This event brought together six high schools and involved 70 students. The high school students participated in a hands-on entrepreneurship and business development experience. In teams, the high school students worked with Fredonia students and faculty to develop and present "Shark Tank"-style pitches to a panel of regional business professionals. Prizes were presented to the top three teams, who were given the opportunity to collaborate with Fredonia's Center for Innovation and Economic Development (CIED) to further develop their business ideas. Judges included Mr. Daniel Heitzenrater, President & CEO of the CHQ Chamber; Ms. Gina Paradis, Executive Director of the Chautauqua County Land Bank Corporation; and Ms. Alexis Tofil, Youth & Recreation Coordinator for the City of Dunkirk. I thank them for their assistance in this endeavor. I have learned that last year's Shark Tank competition led directly to the enrollment at SUNY Fredonia of two students for Lakeshore High School. It is great to see such an impact. Again, these kinds of events do not come about without dedicated faculty, staff, and students. Shoutout to the leadership, faculty, students and staff in the School of Business and staff in Admission for working together to offer this event.



Pictured above: Student participants at Shark Tank, March 13, 2025

Pi Day Championship

The Annual Pi Day at Fredonia celebrated 25 consecutive years of competition on March 12, 2025. I was very pleased to be in attendance with Interim Provost Horowitz and Dean Karafa. It was an enjoyable evening with the faculty of the Math Department, Fredonia students, and students from UB who participated in the event. I appreciated being asked to roll the dice to set the stage for a round of competition.



Pictured above: Professor and Coordinator of Math Education, Dr. Keary Howard, Dr. K, and Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus, Dr. Bob Rogers

I am sure you will agree with me that it takes real commitment to organize and hold an event consistently for a quarter of a century! So, shoutout to the faculty and staff of the Math Department for holding this event for 25 consecutive years. Congratulations and thank you!

That was it for today's update. Thank you for your time. I will be back in touch with you in May. I wish you the very best for the remainder of the semester.

Very truly yours,

Dr. K

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

Office of the President | 138 Fenton Hall | 280 Central Avenue | State University of New York at
Fredonia | Fredonia, NY 14063