
[FacultyStaff] Message from Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., April 11, 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

April 11, 2025

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I wanted to share a few highlights from my [presentation](#) at the April 7, 2025, Fredonia University Senate meeting with you.

Financial Sustainability Plan

As a follow-up to my [March 21, 2025](#) communication regarding my trip to Albany, on March 25, I attended a meeting with Chancellor King and members of his senior leadership team along with Dr. Judy Horowitz, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Mr. Wayne Lynch, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Dr. Kathryn Kendall, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Services. I was pleased to report to the senate that we had a very successful meeting. Our main goal was to ensure that we have SUNY's support for the coming years as we implement our plan toward financial sustainability, and SUNY is comfortable with our plan and will support us, provided we do our part in meeting our yearly targets.

I believe I have devoted significant time to sharing our financial status and progress with the campus, and as the University Faculty Senate President noted, “On the whole, the faculty and staff at Fredonia have far more budget information than on many other SUNY campuses.” That is a clear reflection of our shared commitment to trust and transparency. Please save the date for our end-of-academic-year meeting on Monday, May 19, at 9:30 in the Williams Center S204ABCDE, when Wayne will be presenting an update on the financial sustainability plan.

Academic Master Plan/Intellectual Life

I acknowledged the members of the Academic Master Plan (AMP) committee for their work. The AMP will guide the intellectual life of our campus, upon which new academic programs will be developed. The AMP will also drive the university's facilities planning. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the development of the AMP.

As an approach to enhancing the university's profile, I discussed my vision of establishing certain areas as centers of excellence and described the attributes that will distinguish them as centers of excellence. I have also initiated a conversation about these ideas with Chancellor King. I will continue my conversations about the centers as soon as detailed proposals about them are developed.

UFS Consultation Report

The rest of my presentation was devoted to the Consultation Report, given the interest it has generated and the use of its recommendations to call for a vote of no confidence. As you may recall, I did share my perspective regarding the report with the Fredonia University Senate, and the Cabinet members and I responded in writing to the report, which you can access through the Fredonia University Senate materials.

The value of the report, in my view, is that it provides an opportunity for dialogue about perceptions and realities. I also think the report presents us with opportunities to build consensus around approaches for dealing with difficult financial matters and moving forward. On the other hand, I found many

things in the report to be inaccurate from my perspective. I emphasized that the lack of fact-checking as part of the consultation process was a significant weakness. For fairness, any report of this magnitude must fact-check. Opinions cannot be taken as facts, and the truth still matters. I provided some examples of where the report failed to uphold the basic expectations of truth and fairness. I also connected past efforts aimed at aligning degree programs with student demand to remind us all that the university has been in a similar place in the last six to seven years.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, regarding the report, I am interested in working with the senate and all interested persons to find a positive path forward. I have indicated that to the senate leadership and to Dr. Landa, President of UFS.

A Reflection on Our Work Together

At the senate, I provided information about the challenges we faced when I arrived here in August 2020. It is important to recognize how far we have come. For example, when I arrived in the middle of the global pandemic, SUNY Fredonia faced a \$17 million structural deficit (the delta between financial planning revenue and base expenditures), declining enrollment of 10% year-over-year, a retention rate below the national average, and instability in key leadership roles. Since then, we have reduced the deficit significantly, raised retention above the national average, experienced two consecutive years of first-year enrollment growth, and filled key leadership positions with experienced, forward-thinking professionals. We have added programs that are attracting students significantly. Our graduate enrollment has grown remarkably. Our students are doing well. Wonderful things are happening at our university. As I have done throughout my presidency, I will continue to be visible, accessible, and transparent. Even with the very high demands of my campus responsibilities, I continue to be directly involved in efforts aimed at enhancing the socio-economic and health care conditions in our county. I remain committed to open communication with our faculty, staff, students, and community. With your support, the continued support of the Chancellor and the College Council, I will lead through our financial challenge—not around it. And, I will continue to work with the campus to make SUNY Fredonia a destination

university with centers of excellence, making positive impacts in the region, state, nation, and world. I appreciate all that we have been able to accomplish together. Thank you.

Have a good weekend.

Very truly yours,

Dr. K

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

President and Professor

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