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**[FacultyStaff] Message from Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., May 15, 2025**

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

Thu, May 15, 2025 at 6:57 PM



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**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

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May 15, 2025

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I provided an update to the University Senate on May 5, 2025 regarding some of my efforts and engagements. Here are a few highlights from [my presentation](#) at the University Senate meeting that I would like to share with you.

I began my presentation to the senate with an update on the key items that I indicated in the fall of 2024 that I would be pursuing during this academic year. I was pleased to report that all of those items were successfully accomplished. When we return in the fall, I will share my key priorities for the 2025-26 Academic Year. Below are other items that I covered in my presentation, along with additional updates.

**Financial Sustainability Plan**

I provided additional details about the Financial Sustainability Plan (FSP), which is designed to eliminate our long-standing structural deficit at the end of FY 2027. The FSP has gained the approval of SUNY after a year of intensive

work and negotiations. As a part of the process, we will periodically report to SUNY on the progress we are making to eliminate the deficit.

I invite you to please make time to attend our end-of-academic-year meeting on **Monday, May 19, at 9:30 in the Williams Center S204ABCDE**. At this meeting, Vice President Wayne Lynch will be presenting an update on the FSP and there will be adequate time to answer questions that you might have.

### **Enhancing the Profile of SUNY Fredonia**

I discussed a vision for enhancing the profile of SUNY Fredonia by strengthening selective areas that currently exist and developing them into **SUNY-recognized** centers of excellence. I discussed what I envisioned to be the attributes that would characterize the centers of excellence. The attributes envisioned can be found in [my presentation](#). I will discuss those again on May 19, 2025 at our end-of -academic year meeting. Dean Andy Karafa will make a presentation on the Academic Master Plan, which will include some potential or preliminary areas for consideration to become SUNY-recognized centers of excellence.

### **Advocacy for Higher Education**

I reported on my visit with some members of the New York State Delegation in the US Congress. I was there to advocate for Pell Grants that support students from financially challenging backgrounds. About 40 percent of our students are eligible for Pell Grants. Hence, it is not difficult to imagine the impact a reduction in this program could have on our students and students throughout the country. During my visit, I also expressed support for the Upward Bound program and indicated serious concerns about “Risk-sharing” legislation for paying back student financial aid, which is under consideration.

Other items that I discussed at the University Senate can be found in my presentation. I concluded my presentation with my thanks to the senate for all its work, and I appreciate our work together on behalf of SUNY Fredonia.

### **Recognitions**

As we continue preparations to close out the academic year, please join me in taking a moment to celebrate your colleagues who have recently been

recognized at the SUNY level:



- Jason Bussman, Adjunct Instructor, Department of English, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Adjunct Teaching
- Rhonda Gominiak, Administrative Assistant for the Division of Finance and Administration, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Classified Service
- Erin Mroczka, Assistant Vice President for Retention and Academic Success, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service
- Reneta Barneva, Professor and Chair of the Department of Applied Professional Studies, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Faculty Service
- Christina Hilburger, Senior Assistant Librarian, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship

Dr. William (Bill) Brown, Department of Biology, has been confirmed by the SUNY Board of Trustees as the latest recipient of the promotion to Distinguished Teaching Faculty at SUNY Fredonia.



Congratulations to everyone on receiving these distinctions! We will formally announce these awards and promotion at the August 20, 2025, All-Fredonia Faculty and Staff Conference Plenary.

### **NYS Budget and SUNY**

By now, you may have heard that New York State has passed its 2025-26 budget. On May 13, 2025, Chancellor King met with System-wide presidents to discuss the budget enacted for SUNY. The good news is that SUNY (State Operating Campuses) received \$114 million in new funds to assist with operational costs. Based on the plan for this new funding, \$100 million will be directed to assisting with the cost of negotiated raises, \$10 million for research investments, \$3 million for graduate student worker fee mitigation, and \$1 million for enrollment and marketing. Based on the formula for allocating these operational funds to institutions, SUNY Fredonia will receive \$1.263 million.

I want to note that we will receive additional funds to continue supporting our ACE program (which is being funded to increase the number of students from 150 to 250) and critical maintenance and construction projects. The state also covers the cost of our fringe benefits, approximately \$29.7 million annually. As I observe what is happening in other states, New York State is moving in the right direction when it comes to funding public higher education. Hence, I thank Chancellor King and his team for their advocacy work on behalf of SUNY. I



extend my thanks to Governor Hochul and the New York State legislature for their support for SUNY.

As we have come to the close of this academic year, I am thinking about you and the many things you did to keep our university moving forward. I am grateful to each of you for your contributions this year to SUNY Fredonia. I know that we have had challenges, and I know firsthand the weight of these challenges. We all know that higher education is going through many changes. I am committed to enhancing my work with the campus community to ensure that we will come out of these unprecedented changes that higher education is encountering as an even stronger institution. I remain very optimistic about our future because of the many wonderful things that we continue to achieve, even as we weather these changes. Thank you.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the commencement exercises and at our end-of-year meeting. I wish you and your families a safe and healthy summer.

Very truly yours I remain,

Dr. K

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

President and Professor

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