
[FacultyStaff] Message from President Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., November 22, 2024

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To: Faculty/Staff group <facultystaff@fredonia.edu>

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

November 22, 2024

Dear Faculty and Staff,

On November 4, 2024, I provided an update to the University Senate pertaining to the following topics: (1) Financial plan to eliminate the deficit; (2) Continuation of the conversation on the relative size of the administration; (3) My participation in the presidents' meeting in Albany on October 30 and; (4) Search for the Vice President for Finance and Administration. Below is a brief summary of what I shared and information on other items.

Financial Plan

In my last summary after the October senate meeting, I mentioned three priorities regarding our financial deficit plan - 1) Complete the financial plan and gain approval from SUNY; 2) Secure the release of \$1.25 million in operational funds that were allocated to our campus as part of the 2024-2025 budget and; 3) Secure support in covering any gaps in operational expenses over the next few years as we implement our financial plan.

I am very pleased to share with you that we have secured the \$1.25 million in operational funds that were allocated to our campus in the 2024-2025 budget.

This will be reflected in our operation budget in the spring of 2025. I will continue to focus on efforts to ensure that our plan can move forward and that any gaps in operational expenses over the next few years will be covered.

SUNY Presidents' Meeting

I attended a SUNY Presidents' Meeting in Albany on October 30, 2024, and shared a few key items from the meeting with the members of the senate. These included the desire of SUNY to expand the ASAP (Advancing Success in Associate Pathways) and ACE (Advancing Completion through Engagement) programs. These are programs that help students succeed by providing various retention services to ensure persistence and on-time completion. Let me note that we are an ACE campus with about 150 students participating in the program, which will soon expand to up to 165 students. We received approximately \$960,000 in transformation funds from SUNY to operate the program over the course of three years.

Another big topic we discussed was the smooth transfer of students between and among SUNY institutions. A task force is working on this initiative and has made recommendations. [Their report can be found here.](#)

Closely related to the transfer of students was the topic of prior learning assessment for credit. The approach that SUNY will take consists of the following:

1. "Awarding credit for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exam passage;
2. Recognizing the knowledge and skills of veterans through widespread and consistent adoption of the ACE Guide for Military Training and Occupations; and
3. Providing credit for the attainment of industry-recognized career certificates in high-demand fields".
4. Regarding budget priorities, evolving targets include obtaining full coverage for negotiated and well-deserved raises. Given its impact on our operating budget, my hope is that this item will remain a top priority. Also, ensuring that we do not lose ground in the level of funding that SUNY received during the last two years and expanding the ASAP and ACE programs, which I mentioned above, were also indicated as priorities.

Size of the Administration

I continued the conversation on the relative size of the SUNY Fredonia administration. Thus far, my emphasis has been on Management Confidential

(M/C) positions. You may recall from my communication of October 11, 2024, that my goal of having this conversation is to provide facts and increase understanding of the variables at play regarding the size of the administration.

At the meeting, I provided additional data that showed the relative changes in the number of positions within various representative groups at the university over the last 10 years. For example, 10 years ago, we had 26 M/C positions occupied. In 2020, we had 13 M/C positions occupied. At this time, however, five vacant M/C positions were occupied by UUP persons on a temporary basis. We filled those positions over the last four years and added a VP for Enrollment Management and Services. That brought the number of M/C positions currently occupied to 19. Let me note that the new VP for Enrollment Management and Services position was established after we reached a consensus as a campus that we desperately needed the position, and we obtained some financial assistance from the Foundation to make the position possible. When I spoke with the senate in October, I indicated that SUNY Fredonia had a total of 21 M/C positions accounting for two vacant positions: (1) Vice President for Finance and Administration and (2) Title IX Coordinator. While I will be studying every M/C position to determine the need going forward, as I indicated in October, at 21 M/C positions, SUNY Fredonia still has the second lowest number of M/C positions among the comprehensive regional universities.

Search for VP for Finance and Administration

I anticipate a successful conclusion to the search for the VP F&A by the December holiday period. By now, you may have heard from the search committee co-chairs regarding on-campus interviews. I encourage you to attend the open sessions for the finalists' presentations and to send feedback to the committee regarding the finalists.

Visits to Schools and Colleges

I have had the opportunity and very special pleasure of visiting with faculty in the School of Music (on October 31, 2024), the School of Business (November 6, 2024), and the College of Education, Health Sciences and Human Services (on November 20, 2024). These visits have been cordial and very helpful. I have enjoyed them immensely as they have given me the direct opportunity to hear from faculty about how I could be more helpful regarding things that matter to them. I am very appreciative of the opportunity and the manner in which these conversations were held. I am planning a visit to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as soon as it can be arranged.

Approval of Tenure Track Position

The cabinet also recently approved 13 tenure track positions (UUP) in high-need areas. Given our financial situation, these decisions are not made lightly and without substantial demonstration of the need. We study every position to determine whether or not it can be moved forward. You will hear about the specific positions from your Deans or Chairs.

Let me conclude this update with my best wishes to you and your families for a safe Thanksgiving. Thank you for all your efforts on behalf of our students and this university.

Very truly yours,

Dr. K

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

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