
[FacultyStaff] Message to Faculty/Staff from President Stephen H. Kolison, Jr. December 19, 2024

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

Thu, Dec 19, 2024 at 6:26 PM



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 19, 2024

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we head into the winter break period and holiday season, I want to take a few minutes to update you.

I attended the University Senate meeting on December 8, 2024, and the update that I provided focused on the following:

1. Given the predictions of extreme weather conditions that we can expect going forward as precipitated by climate change, I challenged the senate to think about how we can provide crisis-proof or weather-proof instruction to minimize the impact of canceling classes. I also encourage the senate to rethink the period for instruction after the Thanksgiving break through the end of the fall semester (usually three to four weeks long). I requested all important variables to be considered in this conversation including culture, athletics, labs, theater and musical performances, and costs and opportunities to students and parents. The senate will be forming a working group to explore this further. My hope is that we arrive at recommendations and/or a set of ideas that will ensure that we are true to our mission and, at the same time, being realistic about weather-related challenges and the evolving higher education landscape. I look forward to the recommendations from this working group.

2. I recognized the many groups and individuals for their role in ensuring our campus was as safe as possible despite the winter storm and the extraordinarily heavy snowfall post-Thanksgiving this year. I want to especially recognize the SUNY Fredonia Facilities Team, including the grounds, automotive, carpentry, electrical, and custodial services staff, for their hard work in preparing the campus for classes. I also want to acknowledge Governor Hochul for her assistance in declaring a state of emergency and our SUNY partners, who ensured that we received additional resources, including the Department of Transportation team from Batavia, New York, who assisted us with the removal of the snow. Thank you to the various campus leaders for ensuring our response to the heavy snowfall was swift, organized, and effective and kept our campus safe.
3. During my presentation to the senate, I took the opportunity to offer insight on what presidents nationwide are considering in the context of the changing national landscape in higher education. Among the focus areas are: intensifying efforts to enhance student success; offering more flexibility for earning degrees and other credentials; digital transformations as applied to learning and business processes, including AI; engaging non-traditional student populations and providing paths for the completion of their degree goals and; cultivating more options for financial support realizing the budget realities of states. These were all based on a presentation made at the last AASCU meeting by Dr. Brian O. Hemphill, President of Old Dominion University.
4. As you saw in my other messages to you, I also offered updates about the SUNY Print Initiatives as well as some of our most recent searches including the Title IX Coordinator, Director of Facilities Services, and the Vice President for Finance and Administration search.

I want to extend my thanks to the chairs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences when I dropped by their meeting on December 4. I appreciate what was shared with me, and I look forward to meeting with the entire faculty of the college in the spring semester. I have appreciated the opportunity to visit with the faculty in the other colleges and schools this semester. The conversations have been helpful to me and I am glad to say that some actions have been initiated as a result of what I learned during those visits.

As I mentioned in my message to the students, I also want to encourage you to attend the various activities planned for the second Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Presidential Commission celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. King. Programming is scheduled throughout the week of January 27-31, 2025, and [additional details are listed online](#). Thank you to the members of the Commission who have worked very hard to make these events possible.

Looking forward to next year, the SUNY Board of Trustees and SUNY Administration have now reached some decisions about their key priorities for state operating and capital budget advocacy for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. I am very pleased with their recommendations. In our next senate meeting, I will be glad to share those with you to help align our own advocacy work.

Faculty and staff, I want to express my sincere thanks to you for your work on behalf of the students and your commitment to this university. I am very grateful for all that you do to keep this university fulfilling its mission. I wish you and your families the very best for the Holidays and the new year.

Very truly yours,

Dr. K

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

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