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September 25, 2007

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
Governor of Maryland
State House
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Pursuant to Education § 12-109(f)(1)

Dear Governor O'Malley:

As required by legislation, the Frostburg State University Board of Visitors gladly submits its annual report for the 2006–2007 academic year.

We have cited in previous reports the quality of FSU's academic programs, the commitment of its faculty, and the impact of its numerous co-curricular programs in volunteerism and experiential education. Last year, we stated our support for FSU's new president, Dr. Jonathan Gibraltar, and his efforts to aggressively tackle several challenges facing the University by expanding his cohort of vice-presidents. We are happy to report that the University now has a complete leadership team, and we look forward to the successes that this circle of seasoned professional administrators will engender.

After one year of visionary leadership by Dr. Gibraltar, Frostburg State University is entering an exciting new chapter in its history, as evidenced by several significant achievements:

1. This month, FSU officially confirmed its largest freshman class in institutional history: 1,074 freshmen. Add to this a record-breaking increase in transfer students of 32%, and you will see the results of the collaborative efforts of an institution-wide Enrollment Management Committee, formed last year after the University reported that its enrollment headcount had reached a 17-year low.
2. Since our last report, the FSU Foundation has posted gifts totaling \$3.1 million, one of the largest single-year gains in the history of the University's advancement and fund-raising efforts.
3. The first Research Building of the Allegany Business Center at Frostburg State University (ABC @ FSU) is now under construction and, when completed, will be fully occupied by InfoSpherix and several other technology and start-up ventures.

Dr. Gibraltar's emphasis on collaboration and "self-help" has led to the accomplishments cited above. However, significant challenges still face the University in the coming year.

1. We maintain as our first priority—as cited in our report last year—the funding of **faculty salary enhancements** in order to bring FSU's faculty to the targeted level of the 85th percentile of national salary rankings for comparable institutions. Last year, we reported that FSU hovered at the 60th percentile, making its faculty salaries the lowest in the University of Maryland System. This year, the differential is even worse: FSU faculty salaries are now at the 53rd percentile.

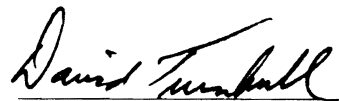
Ultimately, the quality of any college or university rests on the shoulders of its faculty. While Frostburg State University can celebrate the many achievements of its faculty, its current salary scale creates very real problems in both recruiting and maintaining faculty whose expertise in their particular disciplines would contribute significantly to the intellectual atmosphere of the University. One of the State's expectations of the University is that it contribute to workforce development initiatives—a mandate that is difficult to achieve if FSU cannot maintain its own workforce.

Frostburg State University is a constituent institution of the University System of Maryland.

2. Colleges and universities are in the unique position to effect meaningful action in response to **the global challenge of climate change**. Dr. Gibraltar, with his signing the College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, was the second Maryland president of an institution of higher education to publicly commit his university to climate neutrality. We endorse Dr. Gibraltar's effort to both decrease FSU's carbon footprint and to embark on an integrated program of academic and co-curricular initiatives to educate its students to take leadership roles in reversing the effect of climate change. Given that Governor O'Malley has also issued an Executive Order committing the State to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and creating the Maryland Commission on Climate Change, we encourage supplemental funding to support Dr. Gibraltar's efforts.
3. A key component of climate neutrality is the construction and/or retrofitting of buildings using "green" technology. Therefore, we continue to advocate for funding for the **construction of the Center for Communications and Information Technology** to replace Tawes Hall, the 1960's-era building that sits squarely in the middle of Frostburg State University's campus, and to assure that its construction meets, at a minimum, LEED silver standards for whole-building sustainability. We further encourage the revision of another capital project for FSU—the creation of a new facility for the College of Education by combining two existing historic buildings (Frost Residence Hall and Old Main)—to instead focus on new construction that adheres to LEED guidelines. Ideally, FSU's capital budget will continue to be supported so that the University can also engage in an aggressive retrofitting program to improve the energy efficiency of its existing buildings.
4. Frostburg State University has long been identified as an important partner in the economic development initiatives of Western Maryland. Therefore, we are in full support of the University's request for funding to **support programmatic enhancements** in three vital areas:
 - Regional engagement and workforce development, including collaboration with regional agencies, business leaders, and local officials to develop and offer degree programs in transportation, nursing, and general engineering;
 - Teacher preparation, through the expansion of undergraduate and graduate initial teacher certification programs in science, technology, mathematics, and early childhood education at both FSU's main campus and as part of program offerings at the University System of Maryland Center at Hagerstown;
 - Graduate education, through the expansion of programs specifically targeted to workforce development.
5. We are deeply concerned that significant budget cuts could permanently curtail the ability of the University to achieve its potential, because it still has not fully recovered from earlier cost-containment measures and the reduction of its base operating budget. Therefore, we ask that FSU be given the **flexibility to establish its own tuition scale** so that it can continue to be a vital component of Maryland's educational and economic initiatives.

The Board of Visitors stands firm in its continuing belief that Frostburg State University, an institution of outstanding merit serving many constituents, deserves the continued strong support of the State for its unique balancing of roles in education, economic development, and community outreach. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this report.

Sincerely,



Mr. David Turnbull, Chair

MEMBERS OF THE FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS

As of September 25, 2007

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bcc: Board of Visitors
Executive Committee