

Faculty Senate Meeting
President Dennis Assanis — as prepared for delivery
4 p.m. Monday, Feb. 3, 2025, 115 Purnell Hall

Over the past two weeks, I know there has been disruption and confusion regarding the interpretation of so many different EOs [*executive orders*] that have been introduced rapidly. This may cause temporary interruption of activities while funding and programs are screened for compliance with the EOs, as well as create anxiety for the future of such programs.

You have been asking many questions, and like you, we have questions and not as many answers, yet. I'm very grateful for everyone's resilience and patience as we work to understand the impact of the changes so far. Rest assured that we will be navigating all rapid changes together.

For starters, while many changes and proposed changes have been introduced, several of those may or may not become reality. In many cases, it's a matter of how federal agencies specifically interpret and implement an Executive Order. And also, the outcome will depend on legal challenges and injunctions as some of these EOs can be in conflict with laws/appropriations passed by the Congress and/or the Constitution. And this process can take time as temporary restraining orders are issued, and appeals are filed and processed.

We're closely monitoring all these developments and working with other universities and higher ed associations around the country, as well as the Governor, and our elected federal and state representatives who have been very engaged and supportive throughout this process.

We have been sharing information and guidance as soon as it's available, and we'll continue to do so.

To the extent possible, our goal is to ensure institutional continuity at UD and minimize disruptions to students, faculty and staff.

Our mission hasn't changed, and it won't change. We're going to stay focused on that mission. I am continually inspired by your commitment to teaching, research and service, and our collective commitment to student success is truly inspiring.

I also want to assure you that we will continue — as we always have — to advocate on behalf of UD's interests. We are always going to stay true to our values during this time. That means ...

- We each have the responsibility to foster an atmosphere that promotes the free exchange of ideas and opinions. Everyone has the right to benefit from this atmosphere.

- We welcome and value different backgrounds, perspectives and learning experiences; this is essential for educating global citizens, developing knowledge and advancing and enhancing our world.
- We encourage respect and civility toward everyone, knowing that mutual appreciation and dialogue leads to greater learning.

As a community, we should embrace these values now more than ever, in every interaction we have with each other and the worlds we are interacting with.

Our values remain fundamental to who we are. So, we will continue working to create a community that reflects the world around us, understanding that our methods for achieving this may need to evolve as we navigate legal and regulatory frameworks.

I know the Provost's Office is working closely with our Office of General Counsel, Campus Safety, and Division of Student Life to develop a toolkit providing guidance for scenario-based incidents that could potentially impact our campus activities. You will hear from the Provost directly after my remarks.

In addition, VP Miguel Garcia-Diaz has been keeping the UD research community informed with guidance and resources pertaining to grants and programs.

For now, we are not recommending any changes to your work or activity unless you receive specific guidance from us, or a specific stop-work order or modification order to your award issued directly by the funding agency. The terms and conditions of your executed award remain enforceable as long as the award is active. This includes the ability to invoice and receive reimbursement.

Our researchers should continue to submit proposals while navigating new policy requirements and consulting the resources made available on the UD webpage that the Research Office has shared.

We are not aware of anybody in a soft-funded position being affected, and we will prioritize working to ensure that graduate students can continue their studies.

As things continue to evolve, please continue to reach out to us with questions. We'll do our best to get an answer for you.

Again, thank you for everything you do for the University, and I want to assure you that we will do everything we can within the boundaries of the law to help our institution navigate this transition.

I want to wish everyone a successful spring semester.

###