

**AVERETT UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT DR. TIFFANY M. FRANKS’
REMARKS TO FACULTY & STAFF IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY
DECEMBER 11, 2024**

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you all for joining us, in person and virtually. I know how busy this time of year is, and I truly appreciate your stepping away to be here. I promise to be brief.

I have something very personal to share, and it was important to me that you be the first to hear it. You are the heart and soul of Averett, and I wanted to share this news directly with you before it is communicated more broadly.

I want you to know that I shared with the Board of Trustees earlier this fall, my decision to retire from Averett.

Joe and I have been thinking about our retirement for a while, and we are both excited for what is to come. And I am convinced that it is an equally exciting step for Averett University.

We know that any time anyone leaves any organization, it is an opportunity. It opens up new avenues, new ways of tackling challenges. It brings new perspectives, new energy and it brings a new and different kind of commitment. In a word, “Fresh”. It opens the way for a fresh approach. And that is what Averett needs as it heads into 2025 and beyond.

Averett, and all of our people, have absolutely meant the world to me, to Joe, and will always have a very special place in our hearts.

Serving alongside all of you has been the greatest honor of my professional life. The people of Averett have made the past almost 17 years the most fulfilling years of my life, both professionally and personally.

We have achieved so much “together” for our students, this incredible University, and our surrounding community. I will always be deeply grateful for the dedication, passion and resilience you bring to Averett every day.

Back in 2008, Joe and I fell in love with Averett when we first visited; kind of like so many of our students, who claim a deep feeling of “I’ve arrived home” when they visit. When we first set foot on the campus, we were drawn to the promise of Averett’s mission and most of all, her people. What we failed even to imagine then was just how profoundly this place and its purpose would shape our lives.

But that is exactly what happened, serving Averett has been the most meaningful and gratifying work we’ve done and those experiences are now woven into the fabric of who we are. This community, this purpose, and the people we’ve had the privilege to work alongside have enriched our lives beyond measure.

I feel fortunate that the board has selected who they have to lead the University forward. And I'm going to work until my very last day as hard as ever to continue the important work that needs to be done and help ensure a smooth transition. This has been an amazing 16.5 years, and it is now time to turn the page, develop new horizons, and welcome a new season of growth for Averett. One that will be shaped by your continued talents and dedication and guided by fresh perspectives and enthusiasm of new leadership.

Before I close, I want to take a moment to thank someone who has been my rock, my partner and truly the best presidential spouse I could have ever imagined. Over these years at Averett, Joe has not only stood by my side but has wrapped his arms around our beloved University, poured his heart into this community and made every challenge lighter with his unwavering support and love.

Joe, thank you for being the greatest partner in this journey and again, to all of you, we are both so deeply grateful for all the love and kindness our Averett family has shown us.

We thank you, all of you, from the bottom of our hearts for making our lives so gratifying over the past almost 17 years.