

Millersville University

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Nov.  
2023

As daylight grows shorter and the air a little colder, I am reminded that finals week and Winter Commencement are upon us. I often ponder how the fall semester can defy the calendar and seemingly pass us by in the blink of an eye. It feels like just a moment ago that we welcomed our students to campus during EPPIIC weekend in the warmth of the summer sun.

Judith and I were excited to kick off the festive season at the Glorious Sounds of the Season concert this past weekend at the Winter Center. This is one of our signature Millersville events and reaches so many members of our community who come back to the show each December. Our students were sensational, and our faculty designed a wonderful show from the opening number to the final sing-along. It's a pleasure to see our students and faculty create an unparalleled musical experience for the entire family. Thank you to all those individuals who played a part in the production on stage and behind the curtain.

I am equally excited to celebrate the success of our December graduates at the Winter Commencement on Saturday, December 9. Our commencement exercises are the culmination of years of hard work and sacrifice by our students and their families. Our graduates have diligently completed their degree requirements and earned their special moment walking the graduation stage. I extend my hearty congratulations to the graduates and their families and offer my thanks to the faculty and staff who helped prepare them for bright futures ahead.

In this edition of my monthly updates, you can learn more about two recent grant awards that move the University forward in STEM education and teacher preparation. Enhancing the STEM workforce and preparing the next generation of highly qualified teachers are important goals for Millersville University. You can also read more about the renovation of the Boyer Building, as well as our students' engagement in the Conestoga Club and the ice hockey program. Finally, I offer my congratulations to Dr. Cheryl Desmond on receiving the PASSHE "Keepers of the Flame" award.

## **\$3.4 MILLION NSF GRANT HELPS UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS IN STEM**

Thanks to a grant from the National Science Foundation, Millersville University will be the lead institution working to increase the recruitment, graduation, and post-baccalaureate success of students from underrepresented groups in STEM graduate school and/or the STEM workforce.



The five-year \$3,448,451 grant from [NSF's Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation program](#) is a joint effort of Millersville, East Stroudsburg University, Slippery Rock University and West Chester University. Dr. Gail Gasparich, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Millersville, is the primary investigator.

The goal of the Keystone LSAMP program is to increase the number of students graduating with a STEM bachelor's degree by at least 20%, from 70 graduates a year to 84 or more. "To meet this goal, we will increase the recruitment and retention of STEM majors from underrepresented groups and build a strong culture of STEM identity, community and practice with our Keystone scholars," explains Gasparich.

The program will provide tuition scholarships, summer stipends, travel support, and a slew of co-curricular supports and opportunities for the students involved.

"Our plan will leverage the existing strengths of our alliance through sharing best practices, innovations and lessons learned and creating cross-institutional programming to serve STEM students from underrepresented groups better," says Gasparich.

The main components of the grant are recruitment efforts, retention efforts, first-year programs, mentorship and faculty development. "We'll be able to provide students with access to funding, enhanced support, training in research and preparation and guidance towards graduate school," says Gasparich.

For more information on the grant and program, please contact Dr. Gail E. Gasparich ([gail.gasparich@millersville.edu](mailto:gail.gasparich@millersville.edu)).

## NEW \$1M GRANT TO HELP POST-BACCALAUREATE EDUCATION SCHOLARS



Thanks to a \$974,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education, scholars who are dually enrolled in the [Special Education Post-Baccalaureate K-12 Certification](#) and the [Early Childhood, M.Ed.](#) programs will have access to much-needed financial assistance.

Millersville University received one of just 13 national awards made by the U.S. Department of Education and is the only regional public school funded.

Dr. Elizabeth Powers-Costello, associate professor, was instrumental in securing this grant as project director. Dr. Deborah Tamakloe, associate professor and special education graduate coordinator, was also instrumental as co-project director.

"This distinction means a lot, considering that MU was up against research-intensive universities. It sets us

apart as a regional public university and places us on the national map,” says Tamakloe.

Tamakloe explains why this grant is so important, especially for those studying special education. “Special education has always been a national area of need, and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this problem,” she says. “We need to train personnel with the knowledge and skillset to implement evidence-based practices that improve outcomes for all students and their families, particularly students with disabilities.”

“Recruiting and supporting more students in the field of special education means addressing the national shortage and improving outcomes for the vulnerable population we serve,” she adds.

These funds will be available to scholars beginning next fall. In addition to providing financial assistance to ease any challenges associated with program costs, the funds will also be available to pay honorariums for mentors, offer professional development and support scholars during field placement and student teaching.

“This award is a win for both the early childhood graduate programs and special education programs. It is a win for the College of Education and MU as a whole. This shows the hard work MU professors and administrators working within graduate programs put in to support our students and strengthen our programs,” she concludes.

Get more information about [post-baccalaureate education programs at Millersville](#).

## NEW AND IMPROVED BOYER BUILDING

The Boyer building on campus underwent multiple renovations over the past year to make room for the Millersville University Police Department and redo the space for IT. MUPD moved to Boyer from Lebanon House and IT temporarily moved to Bard Hall, while the work was being completed.



The renovations were completed over fall break, helping to improve the building overall and move the MUPD closer to students. During renovations, a police station, a new HVAC system, ceilings, lighting and ADA-compliant accessible bathrooms were added in addition to the new offices that replaced the cubicle setting.

Howard Bauman, deputy chief of the MUPD, explains the renovations that were made to fit the police station into Boyer. “MUPD moved into a section of Boyer that was mostly unoccupied and under-utilized. The structure of the building allowed a complete change to the floor plan, providing many options for needed functions.”

Each renovation made the station more accessible. Bauman explains the reasoning behind each upgrade:

- The reception area allows visitors to contact the police department in a safe, welcoming environment.
- The conference room adjacent to the reception area allows students and visitors to meet with officers in a semiprivate location.
- A copy and records room near the parking office increases the security of confidential material and streamlined workflow.
- The department added an interview room which is a safe environment for trauma informed interviews or discussing sensitive topics, including sexual assault, stalking, and dating or domestic violence situations. The furniture and colors of the room were designed to provide warmth and care to survivors and advocates.
- The patrol area of the station provides officers, supervisor and management with a work area that also streamlines workflow. CCTV monitors provide an easy ability for officers to review reported concerns.
- A climate controlled, evidence processing and secure storage area was added that meets accredited law enforcement standards for police evidence.
- The locker room facilities allow for separate male and female locker and restroom space for the officers. A shower and separate restroom for detainees is also available.
- A secure section of the building that features an interview room and a soft detention room.
- There is a processing area for fingerprinting and photographs of detainees.
- There is a storage room for police bicycles and a K-9 rest area for Brooks. Bauman notes the importance of the police station being closer to the students on campus.

Bauman notes the importance of the police station being closer to the students on campus. "MUPD was housed in a 100+ year old building that exceeded its service life. The location was also at the edge of campus and was a standalone location. Moving to Boyer has the department in the middle of campus, reducing response time to most areas of the campus. Additionally, being housed in a building where other student activities take place improves the engagement between officers and the student community we serve."

## **IT Renovations**

The renovations also have a positive impact on the IT department too. Josh Hartranft, executive director of technical solutions at MU, notes how the renovations improved the space the department works in. "IT was displaced for a little over a year while the renovations occurred. New windows and lighting were added to improve the visibility in the spaces. The proximity also improves collaboration between the departments. Not only do the renovations impact the IT department and the MUPD, but students also get to make use of the improved space. Students taking IT classes have the opportunity to tour the new building and learn all about the network systems that are housed there.

Hartranft explains how the renovations will positively impact the campus. "The renovations have helped improve the department. The Help Desk location is in the center of the building right by reception, so students will not need to wander the halls for help."

Overall, Hartranft notes that the renovations have improved the work life of the IT department. "The updated space is designed to work more efficiently for the IT team and our customers. Having updated space also helps to improve the team's morale and improve employee recruitment and retention."

With their new and improved space, the MUPD thanks the leaders of the project for providing them with a closer location to the campus community. "The new station should allow MUPD to serve the Millersville University community for many years to come. This could not have happened without the support of many in the community. We would especially like to thank President Wubah and former vice president for finance Gilbert Brown in spearheading the effort to complete this project," Bauman said.

## CONESTOGA CLUB CLEANS CAMPUS

The Conestoga Outdoors Club at Millersville University was quite busy beautifying campus by cleaning up trash recently – over 460 pounds of it, in fact. Thanks to the club's efforts and the help of volunteers from other organizations, Millersville University is maintaining its goals for sustainable development.



Dominick DeLorenzo, a senior business major with a minor in occupational safety and environmental health, is vice president of the club. He explains that the trash collection helped clean up both the University's grounds and the surrounding community. "Our volunteers collected trash from all around our campus and from the surrounding community. We had volunteers collecting trash on Student Lodging property, Penn Manor property and from private property around the parking garage and Sugar Bowl."

He continues, "We also had members from our club in the University's biological preserve and members of the Angler's Club in the Conestoga River collecting trash."

The club had over 100 volunteers helping out, including many from other clubs and organizations on campus, such as the MU Honors College, the Sustainability Club, the Student Business Association, several club sports and teams, the American Society of Safety Professionals and even the current 'Perspectives in Environmental Awareness' class, just to name a few.

After the COVID-19 epidemic, the club restructured and now offers a wider variety of activities like hiking, rock climbing, caving, backpacking, camping, kayaking and canoeing, as well as its community service projects. The club also hosts about one social event a week, using the time to educate members on topics like outdoor safety, hunting and trapping safety, backpacking and more.

"We have a ton of activities planned for the upcoming semester and next," says DeLorenzo. "Our members just completed a two-day, one-night 14-mile backpacking trip on the Appalachian Trail this past weekend, a camping trip to Hickory Run State Park over fall break and will be continuing to host at least one social event and/or hike a week. We will be doing more camping, backpacking and hiking trips next semester; last spring break our members camped at Shannondoah State Park for four days."

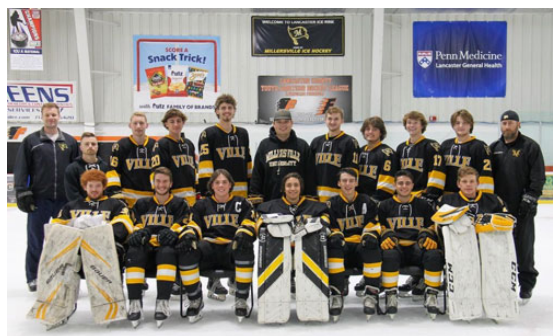
DeLorenzo acknowledges the help the club received not just from students but from outside organizations as well. "We would like to give a very special thanks to all our volunteers from every club and organization that sent their members, but a very special thank you to our two sponsors, the Lancaster

County Solid Waste Management Authority and Sahd Metal Recycling. Sahd donated to allow us to purchase pizza and shirts for our volunteers, and the LCSWMA gave us a free waiver to dump all of our collected trash. We received bags, gloves and litter pickers from the LCSWMA as well.”

For more information about the Conestoga Outdoors Club, visit the organization’s [Get Involved](#) page or follow the club’s Instagram page [@muville\\_coc](#).

## DROP THE PUCK: INSIGHT ON MILLERSVILLE’S DIVISION 3 ICE HOCKEY TEAM

The Millersville University D3 Ice Hockey team is currently in its third year of play. So far this season, the team is off to their best start in program history. Through the first 10 games played, the team boasts a record of 3-6-1 and has accumulated 8 total points.



Millersville University features two ice hockey teams that compete at different levels. The Division II team competes within the [American Collegiate Hockey Association](#) in the [Colonial States Hockey Conference](#), while the Division III team competes in the [Atlantic Coast Collegiate Hockey League](#). The ACCHL is a non-NCAA collegiate ice hockey league in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions of the United States.

Millersville opened their season with an offensive explosion against Shippensburg, as they rolled to a 15-0 victory. Junior goaltender and team president Marek Jorgenson faced 19 shots against Shippensburg and was able to shut down all scoring chances.

“Sometimes it’s tough during those games when you’re not facing a lot of shots, and there are a lot of breaks in between shots,” says Jorgenson. “That’s where the mental part of goaltending comes in, as you always have to be focused.”

Jorgenson has played 243 total minutes so far this season and leads all Millersville D3 goaltenders in total saves with 130. Jorgenson has a save percentage of 0.884% and has posted a goals-against average of 4.20.

Through 10 games played, Captain Tyler Keenan leads the team in total goals scored with 11. Keenan is also tied for second place in total points this season with 15. Keenan is a versatile player, as he’s often tasked to play on both offense and defense.

“I usually play forward, and then I’ll play defense on the powerplay here and there,” says Keenan. “Upon my arrival at Millersville, I started to transition straight into defense, so now that I’m moving back to forward, it’s not a difficult transition because that’s what I grew up playing.”

On Nov. 3, Millersville hit the road yet again, but this time, the Marauders faced off against the University of Maryland Baltimore County. The Marauders rallied behind freshman forward Jadon Sensenig, who showcased his scoring abilities as he notched 4 total points in the 7-3 victory over UMBC.



The freshman has been red hot this season for the Marauders. In 10 games played, Sensenig leads Millersville in total points with 18. So far this season, Sensenig scored 11 goals while posting 7 assists.

Millersville looks to rally back from their six losses. One of which they just came up short against a team that was projected to dominate them in every aspect of the game. On Nov. 4, Millersville squared off against Montgomery, where they fell 4-3 in overtime. Freshman forward Zach Henry did score a clutch goal in a big-time moment.

Millersville hopes to build off their momentum and establish themselves as a playoff contender this season. Assistant captains Michael Safko and Tom Hartenstein have high hopes for this year's team.

"I think the ultimate goal is making playoffs," says Safko. "Obviously we were playing for nothing last year, and we never really had a shot my freshman year, so playoffs would be nice."

As Millersville continues to roll along, you can follow the team on Instagram ([@villeicehockey3](#))

## **DR. CHERYL DESMOND HONORED – KEEPERS OF THE FLAME**

Retired professor Dr. Cheryl Desmond is Millersville University's recipient of the second annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Keepers of the Flame Award from Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education.



The award recognizes an individual from each of the 14 State System university campuses for their contributions to creating and promoting diverse, equitable and inclusive environments that cultivate a sense of belonging. The award recipients were announced during [PASSHE's annual DEI Summit](#) held at Shippensburg University.

"Each recipient of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education's "Keepers of the Flame" award embodies the best in humanity – demonstrating a commitment to raising awareness about important issues and advocating for 'doing the right thing,'" said Dr. Denise Pearson, vice chancellor and chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion officer at the Office of the Chancellor. "PASSHE university communities have long understood the intersection between academic excellence, DEI and student success. This year, we are truly pleased to celebrate the contributions of Dr. Desmond and the other recipients, and we lift them up as role models to emulate. It is a privilege to honor them."

An educator, researcher and advocate for public education, Dr. Desmond became a tenured professor at Millersville in the Department of Educational Foundations and Educational Leadership in 1990 and retired as professor emerita in 2013. Desmond began her career in education as a teacher and principal in Kentucky, New York and Pennsylvania. After earning a Ph.D. from Syracuse University in cultural foundations of education and educational leadership, she taught at Dartmouth College, Stevens College and Dickinson College before arriving at Millersville.

A noted scholar, Desmond's research in international education and the culture of schooling has been published in books and more than 30 articles. Along with Dr. Laurie Hanich, a Millersville professor in the Education Foundations department, she recently completed "Wellness Works in Schools: The practice and research of a mindfulness program in urban middle schools," a chapter in the "Handbook of Mindfulness-Based Programs."

Additionally, Desmond served as a program chair for the American Educational Research Association biennial conference and chair of the Biographical and Documentary Research Special Interest Group.

Desmond shares her commitment to DEI in the Lancaster community, serving as an elected member of the School District of Lancaster school board and on its equity committee.