

Millersville University

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Dec.
2020

The brief snow flurry that rolled across campus last week signaled the end of fall and the beginning of winter. Watching the snow fall, I couldn't help but think of the flurry of activities in which our community has been engaged these past months. Partly due to the hard work and innovative thinking of our faculty and staff and responsible behaviors by our students, we've made it to the end of the fall semester without any catastrophic impacts of COVID-19. I know that we all share a deep sense of relief and gratitude for this achievement. Thank you for the personal sacrifices that everyone made to support the well-being of our community.

Despite the unusual nature of this year, the last month of every calendar year brings reasons for celebration. I hope you have all enjoyed the [Glorious Virtual Sounds of the Season](#), and I extend my thanks to the faculty, staff and students within the Tell School of Music for their resourceful adaptation of this annual signature event. We should also celebrate the superb achievement of Dr. Richard Clark, who has been [named the president-elect of the American Meteorological Society](#). We also celebrate the success of our students this semester, especially our graduating students, who have persevered through these unique and challenging times to earn their degrees.

In this issue of the monthly newsletter, I highlight the academic resilience of our students from Dr. Margaret Mbindyo and share the excitement surrounding a new degree in Media Arts Production. Also included in this issue of the newsletter is how to apply our skills as team players in a virtual environment and an update on the Divine Nine Unity Plots. The support services provided to our students through the counseling center and community faith-based organizations have been key in helping our students during these trying times, and I hope you find all the stories inspiring and informational.

As we close the curtain on this eventful year, I encourage you to take time to care for yourself and those around you, to enjoy the warmth of the holiday season and to recharge by celebrating the joys of life.

Be kind, be safe and stay healthy. Afrihia pa! (Happy holidays in Fanti)

UPDATE ON ACADEMIC ADVISING

Dr. Margaret Mbindyo, an assistant professor at Millersville, serves as advisement coordinator, Center for Advisement and Student Support for the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and the Lombardo College of Business. She recently shared her thoughts on the role of academic resilience in promoting student success.

What makes Millersville an exceptional learning environment for students?

It is the hard work of our faculty and staff to teach and support our students. They are willing to go the extra mile to help our students. The Marauder family feel gives a sense of belonging to the students and makes the university a very special place to be.

How did the idea for the Academic Resilience Series come about?

I am very passionate about academic resilience. It was the topic of my dissertation for my Ph.D. many years ago. As a result of that, I researched what academic resilience is and how it impacts students. It doesn't matter what kind of student you are. Your success will be measured by how resilient you are. I got together with a faculty member in education foundations, Dr. Ann Gaudino, and we collaborated on the initiative.

Why should students discuss academic resilience?

No matter what you do for a living, resilience is key. Whether it's personal, professional, whether it is academic, resilience is something that you will need at some point. The reality is that somewhere along the line things are going to go wrong, and for Millersville students, we want them to excel academically. We want them to be successful.

What are the goals of the Academic Resilience Series?

We hope to empower students with renewed focus on what is important in their academic journeys. We also provide easily applied tools that enable students to increase a sense of inner capacity and drive for academic success. We encourage students to remain connected with their close family, peers and staff. A lot of times students do not realize that they have something in themselves that is so powerful. When a student realizes that there is something in them that is really powerful that can catapult them to greater heights, they will use it.

What encouragement or advice do you have for students during COVID-19?

Students need to know that it's important to give themselves the support and compassion they give others. We also need to encourage students to acknowledge their emotions. Doing the best you can at this time is going to be so empowering. Students need to remember that showing loving kindness to other people helps you to feel better, especially during burnout times and times when you feel low and discouraged.

To learn more about Millersville's Academic Resilience Initiative, visit <https://www.millersville.edu/advisement/academic-resilience-initiative/>.

NEW DEGREE IN MEDIA ARTS PRODUCTION

Millersville University launched a new degree in [media arts production](#) this fall. This degree will allow students to get hands-on experience in broadcasting and media production. The new Bachelor of Science degree features a curriculum focused on content creation and production processes, including pre-production, production and post-production work.

To stay connected to the surrounding community, a specialized industry advisory expert group was formed. The group, made up of MU alumni and other industry leaders employed at companies like FOX 43, WGAL8, CBS21, Aurora Films, TCMotion and Glass Entertainment, will provide our University with feedback on the program's curriculum and industry trends. It includes media experts Andrea Campbell, Lauren Flowers, Josh Ford, Bryan Gracia, Jon Haile, Kyle Djavan Johnson, Brad Kenyon, Bart Makatche, Tanisha Slater and Vance Spicer. We are grateful that these professionals are willing to use their time and talents to help shape and prepare the next generation of leaders in the media.

Students in the program will be able to take advantage of upgraded broadcasting equipment and facilities. Our University recently invested in new equipment and software to enhance student learning and better prepare students for the workforce.

LEARNING TO BE A TEAM PLAYER, VIRTUALLY

With so many people working remotely, the University is now offering a workshop called "[Becoming a Great Virtual Team Player.](#)" The program is designed to be completed in one day and can host individuals or groups of 10. Participants complete a brief online pre-assessment which generates an individualized report with actionable feedback about their behavioral tendencies within teams.

This innovative workshop is offered through our new [Office of Community Engagement, Governmental and Economic Development](#) as part of Millersville University's commitment to strengthening our regional workforce. Hope Schmids, Director of Continuing Education and Workforce Development at Millersville, works to build relationships with local workforce, economic development and nonprofit organizations. Schmids oversees the non-credit programs offered through Millersville's Corporate University, Certified Public Manager® Program and Nonprofit Resource Network.

During this new three-hour online workshop participants will focus on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by virtual teams as they:

- Learn a new model of teamwork built on trust among team members.
- Find out how unique behavioral style helps or hinders teamwork and steps you can take to become a better virtual team player.
- Discover the power of productive conflict that focuses not on personality differences but on solving problems and dealing with real issues.
- Understand how, when teams practice commitment they can become unstoppable.
- Recognize the importance of team members holding each other accountable for their actions.
- Learn how to harness the talent of each team member to achieve organizational results

We are excited about this program and hope many can take advantage of our professional development opportunities. For more information, contact Hope Schmids at (717) 871-7642 or email at Hope.Schmids@millersville.edu.

COUNSELING CENTER UPDATE

This year Millersville's Counseling Center became an important anchor for our students during a difficult time. The abrupt transition to remote learning was challenging for some as many of our students were uprooted from their second home, Millersville University.

The hardworking team at the Counseling Center made sure they stayed connected with students who in turn made use of their incredible resources. From March 30 to October 27 the Center provided 298 students with 1,455 individual appointments, all online, with a faculty and staff of just eight.

We are so grateful for their tireless efforts to care for our students. The Counseling Center, like all our departments, had to pivot quickly last spring to move their operations online. They found creative ways to bring some of their services into the online space, including virtual pet therapy and virtual yoga, which are available through [the center's Instagram account](#).

The Counseling Center's services will continue to be offered virtually during the spring 2021 semester. Students who are interested in making an appointment should call (717) 871-7821.

UNITY PLOTS

Millersville University became the first predominantly white institution in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education to construct 12 plots on campus representing the traditional Black Greek-lettered organizations and other Latinx fraternities and sororities this fall semester. Millersville joins Cheyney University, which was not only the first in PASSHE, but also one of the first in the nation to dedicate such plots.

This project was funded from private gifts and donations totaling about \$170,000 by almost 200 alumni, friends and students. Signage for each of the organizations and a plaque describing the purpose of the walkway are being added as the final steps in the project. The signage will also honor the 75 leadership gifts from donors. When completed, the walkway will serve as another step towards connecting our students to our alumni in a meaningful way. It will symbolize leadership, service and social justice.

This project honors our EPPIIC value of inclusion. We are proud to add the plots as a permanent fixture to our campus. The plots will serve as both a walkway and gathering place for members of the organizations represented. Construction is projected to conclude during the spring 2021 semester. It will be a testament to these organizations' long-established history and service, many of which are represented with active chapters at Millersville. Pending COVID-19 restrictions, a formal dedication will take place around the Millersville Founders Day in April.

MILLERSVILLE FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDE SUPPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought hardships to so many across our campus and community. We are thankful for Millersville University's spiritual groups and leaders who bring assurance and faith to our students, faculty, staff and community.

Our [campus ministry leaders](#) demonstrate a commitment to spiritual development and work in fellowship with our campus community to promote the health and well-being of our students.

Our University is fortunate to have a campus that welcomes people from different religious backgrounds. Our faith-based organizations include Catholic Campus Ministries, College Bible Fellowship, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Reformed University Fellowship, United Campus Ministry, Young Life and Navigators. On top of that, we have even more [campus clubs](#), including Bible Campus Ministries, College Bible Fellowship/Athletes Bible Fellowship, Gospel Choir, Hillel and the John Newman Association.

Many of our faith-based organizations and leaders can be reached via email. Many of their emails can be found here: <https://www.millersville.edu/campusministries/campus-ministries.php>.