

Millersville University

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

April
2020

Dear Marauder Family,

Greetings from Tanger House! I hope you and your loved ones are staying safe as we wade through these uncharted waters. For this week's update, my goal is to share a more detailed message because this would normally be the time for my monthly President's Newsletter. Combining the two communications allows me to offer the regular updates on our status while showcasing several stories in greater depth.

During the past week, our campus has moved quickly to comply with the Governor's recent directive for safe business operations. To enhance the safety and well-being of our students and essential employees who remain on campus, we are requiring the use of masks for employees, students and visitors while on campus. This new protocol is in addition to the disinfection and cleaning procedures and other measures announced previously. The Governor's existing Stay-at-Home order is extended through May 8 and plans are underway to establish protocols to ensure safe working conditions whenever the order is lifted. While the situation remains fluid, our dedicated team on campus are working hard to prepare for the next phase of this challenge.

In this edition of the President's Newsletter, I highlight the outstanding academic accomplishments of some of our talented students. Three of our Meteorology students were awarded the Hollings Scholarship, which is a top national prize in the sciences. This marks the second consecutive year that Millersville students have competed successfully for this prestigious award. Closer to home, our students will showcase their talent next week at the Made-in-Millersville conference. Our faculty and staff have worked tirelessly to transition this event to a virtual model this year so that our students will still have a platform to share their scholarly works and performances.

We recently welcomed two highly-regarded and dedicated alumni to our Council of Trustees. On the topic of dedicated alumni, I am pleased to report on the tremendous support for our mentorship program and the generous philanthropy to our EPPIIC Student Compassion Fund.

THREE METEOROLOGY STUDENTS AWARDED HOLLINGS SCHOLARSHIP

Meteorology is one of our strongest and most recognized programs and our alums serve in top positions across the globe. Three of our current meteorology students were awarded the [2020 Hollings Scholarship](#) for their advanced study in fields related to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) mission.

Three sophomores, Cameron Gonteski, Robert Commodari and Elijah Crisden, received the Hollings Scholarship, which provides undergraduate students academic assistance (up to \$9,500 per year) for two years of full-time study and a 10-week, full-time paid (\$700/week) internship at a NOAA facility during the summer. This outstanding recognition marks the second consecutive year that Millersville students have earned this prestigious award. Last year, two Marauders, Benjamin Fellman and Chad Wiley, received the award. Only about 120 students are chosen each year from across the country and 75% of Hollings scholar alumni have pursued a graduate degree.

Congratulations to Cameron, Robert and Elijah and I commend our faculty for preparing and encouraging them to apply to the Hollings Scholarship program. This accomplishment is a reflection of the Meteorology Program's commitment to our EPPIIC values, specifically encouraging exploration.

NEW TRUSTEES

Our Council of Trustees is a critical component of University governance that contributes to the health and well-being of our campus. We are honored to have two alumni join the council this year and play an active role in shaping the future of our institution. Dr. Amber M. Sessoms, NCSP '06 and M'08 and County Councilman Thomas Baker '02 were appointed as trustees earlier this year after being nominated by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf and confirmed by the State Senate.

Dr. Sessoms is a nationally certified school psychologist for Central Dauphin High School. She leads the Central Dauphin School District's Equity and Inclusion Committee and is the co-chair of the Psychology Department. She earned both her bachelor's in psychology and a minor in African-American Studies and her master's in psychology from Millersville University. She was a 2017 recipient of the Community Courage in Action Award and her district's Educator of the Year award in part for her work on creating student-led dialogue and culturally-competent education to make visible the ways in which every day micro aggressions reinforce difference.

County Councilman Tom Baker was elected in 2013 and re-elected in 2017 to represent District 1 in Allegheny County. He is the Chief Community Affairs Officer for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh and president of the BBBS Pennsylvania State Association. He is also the president of Baker Leadership, the author of three books, and the founder and chief program officer of Get Involved!, Inc., a public charity non-profit organization. Councilman Baker received the Distinguished Civic Leadership Award and the Young Alumni Achievement Award from Millersville University in 2009 and 2014, respectively.

MADE-IN-MILLERSVILLE: VIRTUALLY

Although our campus has moved to remote instruction, the Millersville community will still be able to celebrate our students' academic work. For this spring, the Made-in-Millersville event will take place through a virtual conference and the publication of an academic journal. The virtual conference will begin April 27 and will feature students sharing video presentations of their scholarly works and performances.

Although the venue for the conference has changed, it will feature an array of student works, ranging from scientific fields and laboratory research to projects from the visual and performing arts. Along with the videos, Made-in-Millersville's associated academic journal will also be released on April 27. The online journal allows students to fine-tune their work through a professional editing process and gain publishing experience.

This event provides students with a unique opportunity to share their work with the Millersville community and I encourage everyone to take a look at our students' projects. There is much to celebrate! You can access the presentations at <https://www.madeinmu.education/>. The online journal can be viewed at <https://www.mimjournal.com/>.

MENTORS AND MENTEES COME TOGETHER THROUGH VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Our new mentorship program at Millersville is off to a good start and provides much needed support to our students. I have always felt that it was important to connect our current students with our alumni to provide support during their academic journeys and help them in their transition to the workforce. During this time of great uncertainty, it has never been more important to access our support networks.

Approximately 70 Millersville alumni are currently providing career-focused mentoring and support to a group of 200 junior students through the online Mentor Collective partnership. Mentors and mentees connect online, via text or phone call; and we have seen an increase in

communication in the wake of COVID-19 and our new reality of remote learning. In the last month, more than 60 conversations and 1,300 text messages have been logged in the Mentor Collective app between mentors and mentees. I am proud of our students and alumni for coming together in this way. I am grateful to those faculty, staff and alumni who have been supporting our students through mentoring during this difficult time.

MILLERSVILLE RECOGNIZED FOR SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Our efforts to create a cleaner and more sustainable community continue to be recognized both nationally and internationally. In March, Vice President Guilbert Brown, Sustainability Director Chris Steuer and myself were scheduled to travel to Barcelona, Spain to present at the Second Annual GUNi International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals for Higher Education. While we could not make the trip because of coronavirus, we created a video presentation highlighting the Lombardo Welcome Center's energy savings, which led to the creation of the [Positive Energy Fund](#). Money from utility rebates are used to support faculty, staff and student-led projects that contribute positively to local and global communities.

All of these achievements have earned Millersville University numerous [awards](#) and underscore our commitment to sustainability as we joined the world this week in celebrating the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.

From installing new energy-efficient lighting at the Ware Center to managing a campus apiary, to sharing the success of the first zero energy certified building in Pennsylvania, our faculty, staff and students work every day to be good stewards of the Earth.

I invite you to join them in reflecting on all that our collective environmental consciousness has achieved these past 50 years and in sharing statements of hope for a sustainable future. You are encouraged to send your statement to sustainability@millersville.edu and see other statements at <https://www.millersville.edu/sustainability/events-and-activities/earth-day-2020.php>.

EPPIIC COMPASSION FUND SUPPORTS STUDENTS IN NEED

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has created unprecedented challenges for all members of our community—most important our students who had to transition to remote learning for the remainder of the semester. This change has created an immediate need to assist students with difficult personal circumstances. I am glad to report that the EPPIIC Student Compassion Fund was formed to fill this gap.

More than \$30,000 has already been donated by generous alumni, employees and other members of our campus community to support students who are experiencing temporary housing displacement, technology needs to complete their online courses and other essential needs including food and toiletries. Several students have received funds to help them purchase laptops and other devices to ensure that they don't fall behind in their classes.

I encourage students who are experiencing financial hardship as a result of the coronavirus pandemic to visit the "[Students in Need](#)" webpage, where they will find the application form. Applications are reviewed by a committee and the money is awarded as expeditiously as possible.

Let me conclude this week's message by once again expressing my gratitude to all Marauders for your perseverance and determination as we continue to confront the COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented impact on our lives. A special thank you to the Marauders who serve at the forefront of this crisis as health care providers, first responders and emergency personnel. Our Marauder spirit remains strong and unified.

To the Muslim members of our Marauder family, I offer you my warmest wishes for peace and joy as you observe Ramadan.

Be kind, be safe and stay healthy.

Daniel A. Wubah
University President