

SPRING 2024

# Millersville

UNIVERSITY **REVIEW**

*Jake*  
**SPEERS '27**



**IRISH TOWN SENDS**  
*One Lucky Lad* **TO MU**



# Millersville

UNIVERSITY REVIEW

Spring 2024



DEAR MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY FRIENDS  
AND FAMILY,

I am pleased to welcome you to the first digital version of the Review Magazine. In addition to two printed versions each year, we have added two digital versions. The next print edition will be mailed in June.

The spring semester has been a whirlwind of exciting events and programs on campus and we're already preparing for commencement ceremonies on May 4.

In this issue, we feature one of our golfers who made the journey here from Ireland, how grants are helping our students and a new partnership program to recruit high school students interested in robotics. You can also read about recent awards for our students and faculty.

I hope you enjoy this inaugural digital edition of the Review Magazine. As always, thank you for your commitment to the 'Ville.

With warmest regards,

*Daniel A. Wubah*

Dr. Daniel A. Wubah  
President, Millersville University

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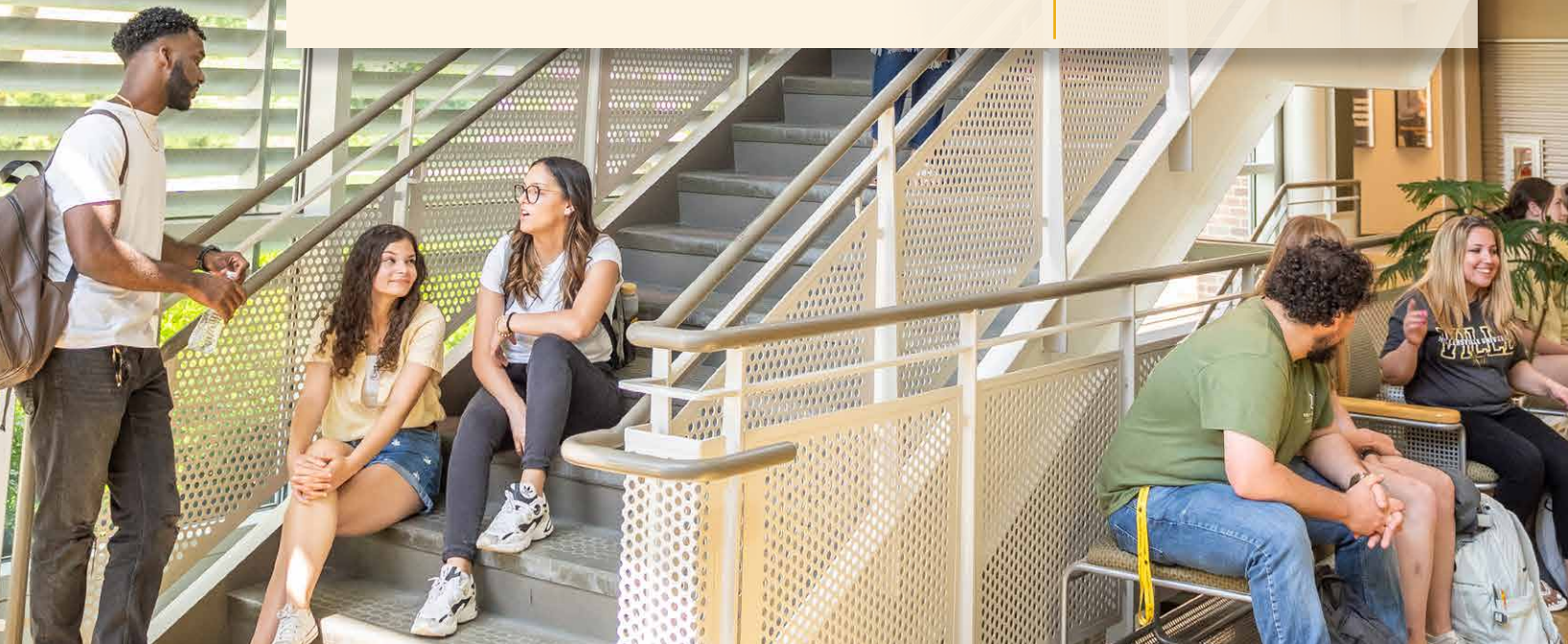
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# IRISH TOWN SENDS ONE LUCKY LAD TO MU

Some Marauders journey further than others to get to their home away from home on Millersville's campus. Take, for example, Jake Speers, who hails from Portstewart, Northern Ireland, a small coastal town with seaside views, a tight-knit community, lots of places to grab a pint and a historic golf club.

Speers didn't start playing golf until his early teens. "I didn't pick up a club until I was 13 years old and I fell in love with it. From that moment on, all I've ever wanted to

do was come to the States and play golf." He went on to make some impressive wins as a young golfer, including winning the Ulster Winter Series, placing second at the Portstewart Scratch Cup and club championship, and he was the youngest golfer to represent both Senior Cup and Junior Cup teams at Portstewart Golf Club.

Then, very suddenly in March 2019, Jake's mother, Evelyn, passed away. "I stopped playing for a year," he says. "On top of the loss of my mother, it brought a lot of financial



The view at the Portstewart Golf Club.

difficulty on me wanting to study in the United States. It just wasn't looking very likely, so I had said to my dad, 'If it's going to happen it will, but I'll not force it. All I can do is hope.'"

By chance, Speers met Jim Haus, general manager of Bent Creek Country Club in Lititz, Pennsylvania when he was on a golf trip around Ireland. "I wasn't even meant to be working that day and when Jim walked into the shop, I said instantly I would caddie for him," says Speers. "This group was different from so many others I had caddied for. On the second hole, they asked what my dream was, so I explained my dream of playing collegiate golf in the U.S." Haus took an interest in Speers who told him about Millersville. "Mr. Haus said to me, 'Look, there's a university 30 minutes away from where I live. You're more than welcome to come out and stay with me and come and visit and see if you like it,'" explains Speers.

That's just what he did. During his visit, Speers met with men's golf coach Scott Vandegrift, who he and the team affectionately call Pro. After watching him, Vandegrift called him a week later to say he wanted Speers on the team. "I'll never forget that phone call," says Speers excitedly, a smile on his face. "He said, 'I would love to offer you a spot on the team for the next four years,' and it was amazing. It was like a dream come true, right? I couldn't believe it was real."

Back in Ireland, Speers and his family had to come up with the funds to get here and focus on getting his swing back, after being out of practice for the better part of year. So, he went to the Portstewart Golf Club, his home club where he says everyone, "... is like a second family to me. Every member knows every member. Everybody knows everybody there. It's brilliant and it's a great atmosphere." Just like a family, they took care of Speers. "That's when the whole fundraising things kicked off," explains Speers. The club hosted several events to help Speers raise money to begin his collegiate athletic career in the United States.

But not just the club rallied behind Speers. So did the town, and even his [high school](#). "I can't thank all the people at home enough. They've done so much for me. Because Portstewart's such a small town, it's not only the golf club that gets behind you, it's almost the whole town."

Even with the town rallying behind him, Speers was still short on his financial goal. The Portstewart Golf Club came together to host an 18-hole tournament to raise funds on his behalf. "Maybe 200 people played and they

all gave a donation at the start," he shares. At the end of the tournament, they raised over £2000 – close to \$3,000 U.S. dollars. "It got us over the line to get my first year paid," says Jake with a smile. "Neil Morrison, captain of Portstewart Golf Club, has been the big kick in getting me here and the golf club just supported me the whole way."

There were many times when Speers says he wasn't sure it would work out. "So many times, I thought that we might not get this money. Neil would say, 'Look, just give it some time. It'll happen.' And then the golf club started the fund-raisers and said, 'If this is your dream and you really want to do this, then you know we're gonna support you.' It's been a crazy journey. To even be sitting here and saying to them that I'm here in the United States is amazing."



Jake and with his roommate and teammate, Timothy Peters.

Now, Speers has completed his first year at Millersville University as a psychology major and, of course, as a member of the men's golf team that's fresh off a [PSAC Championship](#) win, thanks in part to Speers pushing through a game-day injury. "There are three seniors on the team, and this was their last PSAC, and I didn't wanna let them down," he says, though he couldn't even pick up a club at the time. "Bob, our team captain, said, 'Look, it's fine. We'd rather you go back tonight, get the treatment and then come back tomorrow if you can play.' He did just that. "So, I went back the next day, I played, and I pushed out a good score for the team, and we ended up winning. I wanted to do it for them because they are some of my best friends and are all like bigger brothers to me. I also wanted to do it for Pro. He has always had my back and done so much to get me here, I'm just glad it all worked out because we had worked so hard all semester for it."

According to Speers, he's loved his experience and made lots of connections while on campus. He rooms with teammate Timothy Peters, whom he says is "Like the brother I never had – he's my best friend," and gave props to Millersville's International Programs and Services Office that made his transition as smooth as possible. "The documentation took a lot of time, but they made it completely



Coach Scott Vandegrift and Jake Speers have a chat on the course.

smooth, anything I needed to get done," he says. "The people have been so nice, so helpful, everyone just chats away."

The accent, he says, never gets past them, but it doesn't bother Speers. "It is funny when you start talking and people are like, 'You're not from here!' But I love telling people about where I'm from."

While Speers has adjusted well to his new home away from home, there are a few differences that took some getting used to. "The education systems here are much different to what it is at home, but it just took a couple of weeks to settle in and get comfortable," he explains. "And the roads are different. There's like six lanes and six traffic lights. It's so different from home because we would have two lanes and we have no traffic lights, and we drive on the left side of the road."

The pace of life, he's noted, is also different. "At home, it's very chilled out whereas here it's hustle and bustle," says Speers. He says he misses fresh seafood from home and being able to surf in his time off. "It's literally a real-life

movie. You grow up watching Christmas movies and places such as New York, and it's really like that. It's a different way of life, but it's fun. It's certainly a big change for a kid like me from a small town."

As Speers reflects on his journey to Millersville, he says he's overwhelmed with the support he received from his community. "It means everything to me," he explains. "I've said it so many times: it's such a small town where everybody knows everybody. At church, all the little kids come up and say, 'Jake, I wanna do what you're doing and play golf and in America.' People you see just when you're out walking the dog, they will stop and chat and say, 'Best of luck. If there's anything we can do, let us know.' There's been several occasions where people have said, 'The whole town wants you to do well and just live your dream.' It's just little things like that that mean the world."

For so long, Speers wasn't sure that he'd be able to get to Millersville. Now, he considers himself one lucky lad to be a Marauder. "I'm very, very grateful to be here because it was a dream, and now it's a dream come true."



# NEW GRANTS FOR MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY

## 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 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. Other faculty and staff who assisted with securing the grant include Josh Belice and Drs. Rich Mehrenberg and Susannah Boyle.

"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.

Students must be enrolled in both the Early Childhood, M.Ed. and the Special Education Post-Baccalaureate K-12 Certification programs to apply for this financial assistance.

"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.

A full list of schools can be found below:

Early Childhood			
Name	State	FFY 2023	5-Year Total
University of Alabama at Birmingham	AL	\$249,670	\$1,248,928
The University of Georgia Research Foundation, Inc.	GA	\$129,171	\$927,729
Georgia State University Research Foundation	GA	\$222,604	\$1,220,198
Idaho State University	ID	\$99,684	\$1,097,129
The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois	IL	\$77,605	\$1,011,563
University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc.	KS	\$100,000	\$1,100,000
University of Kentucky Research Foundation	KY	\$233,298	\$1,137,159
Bowie State University	MD	\$249,096	\$1,247,334
Washington University	MO	\$249,981	\$1,247,901
Teachers College, Columbia University	NY	\$250,000	\$1,250,000
Millersville University of Pennsylvania	PA	\$151,042	\$974,043
Coastal Carolina University	SC	\$249,864	\$1,249,419
Utah State University	UT	\$197,209	\$1,145,918
Total	13	\$2,459,224	\$14,857,322

The full list of schools to receive grant funding includes each school's yearly stipend (column 3) and total stipend over the course of five years (column 4).

More information about the grant can be found [here](#).

# New Robotics WorX Program

Want to learn more about the robotics world? High school and college students interested in robotics now have the opportunity to gain experience in an internship thanks to a \$75k grant awarded to [Precision Cobotics, Inc.](#) and Millersville University's [Applied Engineering, Safety & Technology](#) department.

The grant, provided by the Lancaster STEM Alliance, provides support for the Workforce Development & Career Exploration in Robotics Engineering (Robotics WorX) program – a partnership between Precision Cobotics and AEST. It will provide internships for students in local high schools and at Millersville.

Dr. John Haughery, assistant professor of Automation & Electric Technologies and the program coordinator of Automation & Robotics Engineering Technology at MU, explains what the program entails. “The Robotics WorX program brings together Lancaster area high school partners, workforce development agencies, the University and private industry partner Precision Cobotics for an innovative internship/mentorship program for high school and university students. Precision Cobotics will work with and guide student interns towards proof-of-concept solutions that will be realized in a newly outfitted robotics Solutions Lab at Millersville University.”

## The program aims to:

1. Provide high school and university students with hands-on experience solving real-world manufacturing problems via the application of state-of-the-art robotic and automated technologies.
2. Offer participants professional development, applied research & development, and mentorship opportunities.
3. Form strong partnerships across the robotics and automation pipeline to continue to develop a diverse, engaged, and competent workforce through continued program offerings.

The grant money will be used to ensure the program has all the materials needed for student success including lab supervision, robotic hardware/software like 2D & 3D vision system hardware/software, artificially intelligent image process software and material presentation hardware.

John Bridgen, director of Customer Satisfaction and Co-Worker Advancement at Precision Cobotics, understands the importance of the manufacturing industry and



\$75k grant awarded to Precision Cobotics, Inc. and Millersville University's AEST department.

sees how the grant for Robotics WorX will help advance the industry. “The opportunity for students in manufacturing has never been brighter. The recent onshoring trend to secure the U.S. supply chain combined with advancements in automation technology has made this an exciting and stable career path that many don’t consider.”

“To raise awareness and pave the way for success in this exciting industry, Millersville University, Precision Cobotics and the Lancaster STEM Alliance are excited for the Robotics WorX program to provide tangible, local-level impacts that are expected to support a stronger, more diverse, and technically skilled workforce ready to tackle the challenges of the manufacturing industry,” Bridgen says.

Haughery says the grant will support students and their careers after graduation. “With the U.S. manufacturing workforce shrinking, this grant will enable Millersville University and Precision Cobotics to provide experiences for a cohort of the next generation STEM workforce that will hone their technical skills, critical thinking and career aspirations. Additionally, the grant will provide post-secondary degree options and access to job opportunities with regional manufacturers and engineering firms.”

## While we are looking to expand this list, the current high school partners include:

- Pequea Valley
- Ephrata
- Garden Spot
- Conestoga Valley
- Manheim Township
- Columbia

## The workforce development agencies include:

- Workforce Development Board
- Careerlink
- Career Ready Lancaster!

MU students and area high schools with STEM students or teachers who are interested in joining the program can contact Precision Cobotics Human Resources.

## Grant Addresses Food Insecurity on Campus

Millersville University is the recipient of a \$40,000 Hunger-Free Campus Grant, as one of 30 institutions to receive support from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. These grants, originating under the Wolf Administration and continued by the Shapiro Administration, are awarded to help schools address food insecurity on campus and create initiatives to expand awareness of the issue.



With the 2022-23 grant, the University was able to renovate space at the HUB, which allowed it to expand its kitchen, the Campus Cupboard, and the facilities' restrooms for ADA compliance. The HUB provides four hot meals each week for free, along with free grab-and-go breakfast items and snacks daily. The Campus Cupboard allows students to "shop" for grocery items once a week at no charge, including fresh food and even personal hygiene items.

To build off the progress made by last year's grant, part of the funds this year will be used to create a "Sub-HUB Station" in the Student Memorial Center. Currently, unopened food items are collected in boxes by the Food Recovery Network near the Galley and the Anchor and then delivered to the HUB. The Sub-HUB Station would provide a more prominent space with refrigeration and shelving, so more students are aware of the resource.

Additionally, the funding will be used to further expand the HUB's outreach. Dr. Mary Beth Williams, vice president for student affairs, explains that more students are utilizing the HUB now. "The HUB currently serves around 350 students per week, and the student use of the Campus Cupboard continues to rise," she says. "With this grant, MU will provide funding to The HUB for expanded meal programming and funding for increased advertisement about HUB services throughout campus."

She continues, "Having a wonderful community partner like The HUB is essential to serving our food insecure students, and finding ways to communicate with students about the resources is vital to that success."

A third goal is to use the grant to provide students with hot meals and distribution of food items during the holiday break. "Many students, primarily our international students,

LGBTQ+ students and students who were raised in the foster care system, do not have another place to go during the break when the campus dining facilities are not regularly open," says Williams.

"These weekly meals and food distribution points would allow students who stay on campus to be fed, take food with them, and connect with faculty, staff and students on the Hunger Free Campus Task Force who want to support and help them during the long break," she continues. "During the meal, there will be fun programming for these students that will help them build trust with the faculty, staff and students on the Hunger Free Task Force. At the end of the meal, fresh and non-perishable food will be distributed to each student."

Ultimately, these initiatives are another way to showcase the University's commitment to its EPPIIC Values. "At its heart, this grant proposal is about sharing," says Williams. "Students want to share food they have with other students in need, and Millersville faculty, staff and the HUB all want to support students in any way they can. Together, with this funding, our community can come together and help feed students in need."

All grant recipients are members of the [Hunger-Free Campus Initiative](#), a coalition of Pennsylvania institutions of higher education focused on addressing hunger and other basic needs for their students, creating opportunities for connection among student hunger advocates, providing resources and strategies for campuses, and supporting opportunities to apply for grants related to addressing food insecurity.

You can see all of the 2023-2024 PA Hunger-Free Campus Grant Awardees [here](#).



Earlier this semester, faculty and staff donated food for Campus Cupboard.



## Grant Donation Brings New Equipment to the ‘Ville

Millersville students studying automation and robotics engineering technology have access to new equipment, thanks to a grant donation from Phoenix Contact.

The Automation and Controls Lab in Osburn Hall received new equipment. Phoenix Contact donated close to \$50,000 worth of hardware to Millersville as a part of their EduNet educational partnership. This includes industrial-grade computer systems used to digitize and control industrial processes. The equipment was recently installed and is now available to students.

The new equipment is an upgrade to previous equipment in the lab. “Our previous equipment was almost 15-20 years old, and while it’s still valid as industry grade, it is becoming technologically ‘old,’” says Dr. John Haughery, assistant professor in Applied Engineering, Safety & Technology at MU. This updated hardware will allow students to get hands-on practice with equipment that is relevant to their education and future careers.

The new technology will allow students opportunities to develop and work with Industrial Internet of Things for local and remote connectivity and control. Internet of Things

is an industry term that refers to collective networks of connected devices and the technology that facilitates communication among itself. It’s especially relevant to students looking to be automation engineers, controls engineers and manufacturing engineers. “Individuals in these careers are becoming more and more valuable to the industry, as they have the skill set to solve some of the toughest engineering problems facing the industry that supply essential and non-essential products,” says Haughery.

Phoenix Contact aims to prioritize sustainability through its business practices and with its equipment. Millersville’s own emphasis on sustainability is supported by the use of this new equipment. “This hardware provides students opportunities to gain experience using technologies necessary to control environmental and industrial systems efficiently with a mind to sustainability,” says Haughery. This includes consideration of lowering energy consumption, using less materials and tracking system health proactively.

Click [here](#) for more information on Millersville’s Automation and Robotics Technology degree.



L-R, Steve Newcomer '05, Project Sales Engineer, Phoenix Contact USA; Dr. John Haughery '06, Assistant Professor and AURO Program Coordinator; Dr. John Wright, Professor and AETM Program Coordinator; Jerry Wise, Technical Training Specialist, Phoenix Contact USA Not pictured, Jeff Pinegar, Sr. Product Manager, Phoenix Contact USA

# ALUMNI NEWS

## McNairy Library Receives \$50,000 Grant To Enhance Early Childhood and Elementary Education

In a significant development for Millersville University's academic resources, the McNairy Library and Learning Forum has secured a boost with over \$50,000 in grant funding from the Early Childhood Education Professional Development Opportunity. This funding, provided in the form of two generous contributions of \$25,000 each, will bolster resources for early childhood education students to enrich their experiences in the classroom.

The impact of this grant funding is poised to be far-reaching, as it enables the McNairy Library to expand its collection and services, ensuring that educators and students alike, breathing new life into a vital academic resource. Dr. Stephanie Thompson, who oversees the Curriculum Materials Center, reflects on the transformative effect of this grant, stating, "The collection has been in dire need of updating, and this grant has allowed us to begin that process."

From refreshing outdated textbooks to diversifying the collection with contemporary literature, the grant has empowered faculty to enhance the learning experience for students across all levels of education.

One of the key focus areas for this grant funding is the enhancement of resources that support early childhood and elementary education coursework. Thompson highlights the transformative effect of this funding, stating, "I was able to replace curriculum kits that contained overheads, VHS

tapes, and 20-year-old science experiment materials with coding kits of varying levels, research-based reading strategies, current science, health, and social studies information."

This update reflects a commitment to providing educators with the most relevant and up-to-date resources to support their teaching efforts.

In addition to updating and diversifying the collection, the grant funding also supports the development of specialized services and programs for early childhood and elementary education students. These initiatives include workshops, seminars, and other educational events designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of aspiring educators. By offering these resources and opportunities, the McNairy Library aims to support future educators' professional growth and development in the early childhood and elementary education fields.

The grants represent a significant investment in the future of Millersville's early childhood and elementary education programs. The resources, services and opportunities for students will play a crucial role in shaping the new generation of educators. With the support of the Early Childhood Education Professional Development Opportunity, Millersville University is well-positioned to continue its commitment to excellence in early childhood and elementary education, ensuring that students have access to the resources they need to thrive academically and professionally.



The funding will bolster resources for early childhood education students.



## Free Flights Transport Patients For Life Saving Treatments

When Millersville University alum, Jessica Ames '13 graduated she knew she wanted to work for a smaller grassroots nonprofit. Searching on Craigslist, she found a part-time listing at Angel Flight East becoming their first programs and events coordinator. Initially, she saw the opportunity as a stepping stone for a career change, but nine years later, Ames is now the outreach and events director and is taking flying lessons with ambitions of one day providing flights to patients in need.

Ames credits Dr. Jennifer Wood for teaching her everything she needed to know as her advisor. "As a public relations major, I had the opportunity to be an intern with various nonprofit organizations and that's how I discovered that is where I wanted my career path to take me."

Angel Flight East was founded in Pennsylvania by Harry Morales, a general aviation pilot, who wanted to help with relief efforts after Hurricane Andrew in 1992. He created AFE with the help of Jeff Kahn and Joe Staples, among others. Their vision and commitment to the "principles of public benefit flying" drove the dynamic force of what was

to become AFE. Immediately, the organization began to fill the gap between the need to access crucial medical care at a distance and the high cost of transportation to get there.

"We fly many patients for cancer care, rare disease treatments, clinical trials, etc.," says Ames.

AFE provides free flights for patients in need of medical treatment far from home. Volunteer pilots use their own airplanes and cover all costs of the flight. AFE covers a 14-state footprint that spans from Virginia to Ohio to Maine and for destinations outside that territory, they partner with other volunteer pilot organizations. AFE schedules close to 1,000 flights per year. Flight range is a minimum of 100 miles and a maximum of 1,000 miles. In addition to providing flights for patients, AFE also delivers supplies to disaster areas and helps reunite families during desperate times.

To volunteer or find out more information about Angel Flight East, visit [Angel Flight East Information](#).



Jessica Ames on a flight with Angel Flight East and one of the volunteer pilots.

## Alumni Networking Reception at the 2024 AMS Annual Meeting in Baltimore Highlights Success and Progress

The Millersville University community of alumni and friends came together to celebrate a special alumni networking reception event in conjunction with the 2024 American Meteorological Society 104th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, January 30, 2024, in Baltimore, Maryland, at the Hyatt Regency Baltimore Inner Harbor. With 85 guests in attendance, including 56 alumni, the 'Ville on the Road – Baltimore, Maryland, reception hosted by Millersville University was a well-attended evening of networking, reconnecting, alumni engagement, and a valuable opportunity to showcase Millersville University's impact on the fields of meteorology and earth sciences.

Generous alumni reception event sponsors included Climavision, AccuWeather, Weather Trends International, the Millersville University Alumni Association, the Millersville University College of Science and Technology and the

Department of Earth Sciences and the Center for Disaster Research and Education.

Millersville University President Dr. Daniel A. Wubah addressed the audience of alumni and friends and extended greetings from the University. The evening included a warm welcome from Dr. Rich Clark, Millersville University professor emeritus, who highlighted Millersville University's commitment to advancing research, education and outreach in the field of atmospheric and climate sciences, and the contributions of the University to the meteorological community. Millersville University senior leadership was also in attendance at the reception, including Dr. Marc Harris, dean of the College of Science and Technology, Dr. Gail Gasparich, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost, and Victor E. Ramos, vice president for advancement.



Millersville University hosted an alumni networking reception in Baltimore during the 2024 AMS Annual Meeting, with guests including Millersville University students, Millersville University President Dr. Daniel A. Wubah, Provost Dr. Gail Gasparich and Dr. Marc Harris, dean of the College of Science and Technology.



Event guests reconnected with former classmates and professors while enjoying refreshments and hors d'oeuvres during an evening filled with excitement, as alumni attendees from NASA, NOAA, and beyond reminisced about their time at Millersville and discussed professional industry trends.

"Over the last year, we've been honored to become a partner for Millersville through our on-campus gap-filling radar installation and then at the reception as a sponsor. While we were there, we were humbled and inspired by the rich tradition and credibility Millersville carries as a leader in atmospheric science – in the room full of experts and leaders in their field, it was clear during the reception and reinforced our excitement for continued partnership moving forward. The future is bright at Millersville and we're proud to be a part of it," says Chris Goode, Climavision founder and CEO.

Marshall Moss, senior director, strategic projects and graphics production at AccuWeather, states, "AccuWeather is a proud sponsor of the Millersville University AMS reception and has been for many years. AccuWeather and Millersville have a very strong history together, with many

students coming to AccuWeather as interns or after graduation for full-time meteorology opportunities and being very successful at helping to save lives, protect property and help people and businesses world-wide make the best weather-related decisions through a variety of different roles, including forecasting and IT/data science." Weather Trends International was also a generous sponsor of the reception and has a valued partnership with Millersville University. Two of their star employees are Millersville University alumni of the meteorology program who are now C-level executives at Weather Trends – Matt Alonso '03, chief technology officer, and Evan Lowery '05, chief science officer.

Through reflecting on the success of the alumni networking reception, Millersville University Interim Director of Alumni Engagement Joshua Belice states, "Overall, the Millersville University alumni reception at the AMS Annual Meeting provided a memorable and enriching experience for attendees, strengthening bonds within the meteorological community and highlighting the continued impact of Millersville University in the field of atmospheric sciences."

## JOIN US FOR 'VILLE ON THE ROAD



**Thursday, May 16, 2024 | 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

**John Wright Restaurant**

234 N. Front Street, Wrightsville, PA 17368

Join the Lombardo College of Business for an alumni networking reception in Wrightsville. Take advantage of the opportunity to network with fellow Millersville University graduates; enjoy hors d'oeuvres, an amazing view of the Susquehanna River, a cash bar and meet some of our current students who are excelling as leaders on campus. Enjoy yard games and a family-friendly location – with plenty of free onsite parking available.

For more information and to register, please visit the 'Ville on the Road [webpage](#).

Kindly register by May 10, 2024.

# CAMPUS NEWS

## Record Setting One Day Give

The final number is in for the 2024 One Day Give. In its 11th year, this fundraiser raised \$826,634 in just 24 hours from 2,276 gifts. With these donations, Millersville will support student scholarships, athletics, student experiences and much more. For the past several years, the University released an exclusive design of a pair of socks as an incentive to mark the occasion. This year's socks featured the University's beloved swans, Miller and S'Ville.

All funds will directly impact student experiences both now and in the future. "The ripples of generosity created by those who donated during the 2024 One Day Give online fundraising event will surely be felt by Marauders far into the future," says Dr. Daniel A Wubah, president of Millersville University. "There are not enough words to express my deepest gratitude to all who gave. We are thankful for the support to the community."

To learn more about One Day Give 2024, visit the [website](#).



This year's One Day Give socks were a hit!



Millersville University  
#VILLEONEDAYGIVE



The One Day Give Athletics Giving Leaderboards highlighted record-setting success for Millersville Athletics programs.



## Secretary Mumin Visits Millersville

On Feb. 9, 2024, Pennsylvania Department of Education Secretary Dr. Khalid N. Mumin and Deputy Secretary Dr. Kate Shaw joined Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Chancellor Dan Greenstein and Millersville University President Dr. Daniel A. Wubah at Millersville University. The visit highlighted Governor Shapiro's proposed investments in higher education and how Pennsylvania's public postsecondary system is preparing students to be workforce-ready upon graduation.

Governor Shapiro's blueprint for higher education says it will help Pennsylvania's public universities build on areas of strength and address the challenges caused by a 30-year disinvestment in higher education by the Commonwealth, such as competition between universities that results in higher costs and lower enrollment. Governor Shapiro says his blueprint will ensure better coordination across PASSHE universities and community colleges to expand access to affordable, workforce-ready credentials and degrees across Pennsylvania – including in areas that currently lack access.

"Our Commonwealth's institutions of higher education, like Millersville University, do an incredible job preparing students for the future and connecting them with future opportunities," said Secretary Khalid N. Mumin. "Governor Josh Shapiro's new blueprint for higher education will end the era of disinvestment in our higher education sector, make postsecondary education more accessible and affordable to more Pennsylvanians, and allow these schools to continue to do what they do best—educate learners."

During a tour of the [Weather Information Center](#), recycling plastics area, and robotics lab, state officials learned how Millersville students are leaving the university with an array of job opportunities in high-paying, high-demand careers. Millersville Meteorology is a nationally recognized flagship program of the university, with an innovative curriculum in space weather, air quality, water resources, data analytics, and emergency response and disaster preparedness. In 2020, Millersville became the seventh university in Pennsylvania to be designated as a StormReady University.

"We are grateful for Secretary Mumin's visit to Millersville University and the opportunity to showcase our premier programs in meteorology, life science, and applied engineering that focus on building career-ready skills," said Dr. Daniel A. Wubah, president of Millersville University. "We have industry partnerships in our region's growth sectors where students receive hands-on learning experiences and internships and have direct avenues to careers."

"Gov. Shapiro's proposed funding increase for a new public higher education system that includes PASSHE universities and Pennsylvania's community colleges as co-equals, presents a great opportunity for the state," said Chancellor Dan Greenstein. "Millersville works closely with HACC, Central Pennsylvania's Community College, as all PASSHE universities do with community colleges in their region, to expand access to a valuable education. The governor's proposal is an opportunity to build on the strengths of our PASSHE universities and the state's community college, and to do more together."

For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Education, please visit the [website](#) or follow PDE.



l-r, Weather Center Director Kyle Elliott, Secretary Mumin, Deputy Secretary Shaw, President Wubah, Chancellor Greenstein and Rep. Ismail Smith-Wade-El.

## MU Junior Receives National Science Foundation Award

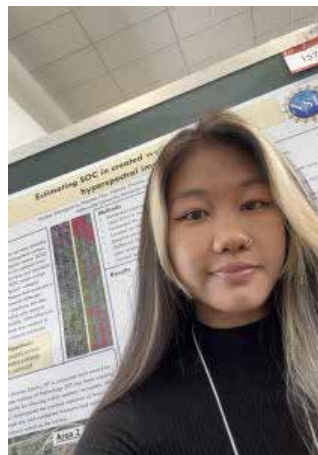
Annisa Saengdara spent most of her summer studying human-dominated wetlands. Saengdara, a Millersville University junior environmental and spatial sciences student, was one of 10 students awarded the [National Science Foundation Research for Undergraduates](#) award in Interdisciplinary Problem Solving. She looked at Human-Dominated Wetlands during the 10-week program at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

The REU program emphasizes engaging students in interdisciplinary earth systems research that builds collaboration and communication skills for solving complex environmental problems. The program uses wetland restoration as a lens through which participants will get hands-on experience in studying the interactions between science and society that shape ecosystem functions and services.

REU participants receive a stipend of \$6,000, free on-campus housing in RIT's Global Village, meal allowances, and a travel stipend. Additional funding is available after the summer session ends for some students to travel to conferences to present their research.

There are no qualifications to participate in the program, just an interest in wetlands.

Projects are grouped into interdisciplinary research clusters that include the following approaches: biogeochemistry and ecology, sociological feedback, and geospatial



Annisa Saengdara

patterns and scaling. The summer research experience centers around four key components: mentored research projects, interdisciplinary skill development, professional development workshops, and scientific communication and outreach. The program also offers weekly skills workshops and restoration activities in wetlands, public outreaches, and presenting in the undergraduate research symposium.

"Out of the 10 participants, I was the only one given the task of using remote sensing. I was part of the created wetlands cluster, and my project was titled 'Estimating SOC in created wetlands through hyperspectral imagery,' says Saengdara. Her project used this hyperspectral imagery to look at organic content in soil from RIT's managed wetlands in the High Acres Nature Area in Monroe County, New York using historical data from 2019 due to weather constraints.

The program is particularly well suited for students who will be completing their second or third year and who have limited access to earth science or environmental science research opportunities at their home institution. This is an interdisciplinary program that welcomes participants from all academic majors who are interested in environmental science questions.

Interested in studying environmental programs at Millersville University? Click [here](#) for more information.



Annisa Saengdara



## Four Students Win Print, Packaging Awards

For the past 15 years, Millersville University Graphics and Packaging Technology students have competed in various contests, often yielding successful results. Recently, students Sydney Hargrove, Reagan Steinberg, Kaylena Travitz and Ben Troyano, won awards in two different competitions.

"These awards are prestigious in our field because of the competition with other universities and the industry recognition that students receive," says Dr. Mark Snyder, professor of applied engineering, safety & technology at Millersville University. The University participates regularly and submits the best work from students within the program.

Neographics is one of the nation's largest regional graphic communication contests in which graphic arts, packaging, converting, design, and publishing excellence are selected and showcased. "Neographics is a regional competition for industry (companies compete against each other) but it also has a college division for the competition," says Snyder. This year, all winning entries were showcased at the Neographics Awards Ceremony and Exhibition on October 5th in Philadelphia.



Sydney Hargrove

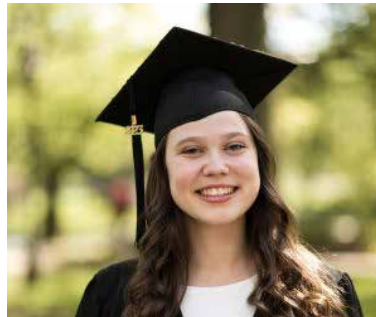
Hargrove and Steinberg were awarded for their submissions in the Neographics sponsored by the Print and Graphic Communications Association. Hargrove's screen-printed T-shirt "Posterization" earned a Franklin Award for Excellence in the Student/College category, and Steinberg's Digital "Variable

Data Postcard" earned a Franklin Award for Excellence and the Best of Category in the Student/College category. The two tiers of recognition for students are the Franklin Awards for Excellence, given to pieces selected on their own merits; and the Best of Category, in which Franklin Award winners compete against each other for a unanimous vote by the panel of judges.

About receiving her award, Hargrove said, "I am deeply honored and genuinely thankful for the Franklin Honorable Mention Award. It is a motivating factor to continue pushing the boundaries of creativity and innovation in the world of print manufacturing."

Travitz and Troyano's "Ville Hardware" design was selected by the Association of Independent Corrugated Converter's

Student Packaging Design Competition committee as the second-place winner in the structure category. The team will receive a cash award in the amount of \$250 which is divided among team members. In addition to the monetary award, both Travitz and Troyano will each receive an engraved plaque commemorating their win in the competition.



Kaylena Travitz

"I am beyond excited about receiving second place in the 2023 AICC Student Design Competition along with Ben Troyano," says Travitz. "One of my goals for my senior year was to place in the 2023 AICC Student Design Competition. An added benefit is that we also beat out Clemson University. Since Dr. Snyder used to teach there, it is even more of an honor to receive this award."



Ben Troyano

Troyano described the project that he and Travitz entered as follows: "The 2023 AICC Student Design Competition tasked us to come up with a package design for a 'hardware shipper' that contains a hammer, 4 lightbulbs, and a box of nails. Because this unique challenge was my first experience with package design, my partner designed most of the structure, while I made the graphics. Winning 2nd place as two students over much larger schools in the competition like Clemson was a big accomplishment and I hope to compete again next year."

Often, competitions like the one sponsored by AICC will present a technical design problem that student groups from all over the country have to solve in their own way. The timing of contests is often planned so the problems can be built into a course curriculum as a semester-long group project. Snyder stated, "We choose the best results from our program at the end of a semester and submit them to compete with other universities."

"AICC is a significant competition for college students at universities with packaging-related programs," says Snyder.

## Professor & First Responder Receives Exclusive Award

A national award that honors veterans and first responders has been given to Millersville University's Dr. Duane Hagelgans. The [Blanket of Honor](#) award has only been given to 332 individuals to acknowledge their accomplishments.

"I am honored and humbled to be selected for this award," says Hagelgans. "It was totally unexpected. To be chosen to be part of such a small and elite group is truly an honor."

The Blankets of Honor program honors veterans, veteran caregivers, Gold Star Families, veteran support members, or first responders.



"From what I was told, the group receives nominations and then takes into consideration all the work done by those who are nominated to see if they meet the criteria for being chosen and honored," says Hagelgans. "At the presentation ceremony, they stated that I am the first ever firefighter honored by the Blankets of Honor."



Blanket of Honor being wrapped around Dr. Duane Hagelgans.

Hagelgans was inspired at the age of 15 to pursue a career in firefighting and emergency management.

"A friend of mine's father became the chief of a volunteer fire company. He was a very dedicated volunteer. I joined the volunteer fire company because of him," says Hagelgans. "However, my service to people, which is truly what being in these professions is about, comes from my parents. They were both very hardworking, loyal people who would do anything for anyone, which is where I got my drive to help others."

Hagelgans shares that dealing with injuries and deaths is one of the hardest aspects of emergency management. "In this profession, we deal with people and their worst days. As a profession, we are learning that we must do

a better job to protect those in our profession from the emotional toll that dealing with disasters takes on our responders," says Hagelgans. "In today's world, the suicide rate for responders is higher than the rate of line-of-duty deaths, and this is not, and cannot be, acceptable. As a society and as professionals, we must take better care of our own, those who give their all to help their communities."

Hagelgans started teaching at Millersville in 2007 as an adjunct professor and became a full-time faculty member in 2012. He serves on various committees for the emergency management graduate program, the university and in the greater community. Currently, he is researching better methods to teach emergency preparedness to school-age children and methods for better leadership in the emergency services.

"The number one thing I hope to pass onto my students is to be prepared for whatever life may throw at you," says Hagelgans. "There is a statement I learned, and it's often stated, 'Predictable is Preventable!' As a society, we can never take the approach that we can be too prepared or that 'it won't happen to me.' Preparedness is the key, and that key is based upon never being complacent."

Hagelgans credits the emergency management programs at Millersville as a whole when he sees alumni take what they learn in the classroom and apply those skills in emergency situations. "There is nothing like the feeling of seeing our graduates go out and do great work all around the world, helping citizens when disasters strike," says Hagelgans.

Hagelgans has been involved in emergency services for over 40 years. In 2011, he retired from the Lancaster City Bureau of Fire, where he held numerous positions. In addition to an associate degree in fire science technology from Harrisburg Area Community College, Hagelgans attained a bachelor's in occupational safety from Millersville University and a Juris Doctorate from Widener University School of Law.

A video of Hagelgan's ceremony can be viewed [here](#).

To learn more about the Blankets of Honor Award, click [here](#). To nominate someone for a blanket, click [here](#).



# Millersville Prof Helps Solve 80-year Mystery

Biting insects have been the bane of many people's existence throughout the millennia, but they have allowed [Dr. John Wallace](#) to make a living through his research over the last three decades. As an expert medical entomologist, he taught students about the study of insects and researched them while he was a biology professor at Millersville University. Now, a collaborative research effort in Victoria, Australia, has been used to indict mosquitoes as vectors that spread the bacterium that causes the flesh-eating disease known as Buruli ulcer in Australia. "Buruli ulcer is one of the World Health Organization's 21 neglected tropical diseases – found in 32 countries around the world," Wallace stated.

In a major breakthrough published in "[Nature Microbiology](#)," researchers led by the University of Melbourne's [Professor Tim Stinear](#), Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Mycobacterium ulcerans at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, have solved the 80-year Mystery that has baffled scientists and public health experts and has been a central question that has perplexed scientists since the discovery of *M. ulcerans* in the 1940s," said Stinear.

A collaborative International research team brought together partners from the Doherty Institute at the Univer-

sity of Melbourne, Bio21 Institute, Agriculture Victoria, Austin Health, Victorian Department of Health, [Millersville University](#), the Mornington Peninsular Shire and others to focus their efforts on surveying more than 65,000 mosquitoes between 2016-2021, possum feces and human cases in the Mornington Peninsula in the southern state of Victoria, a region with an alarming surge in cases and one of the highest incidences of Buruli ulcer in the world. The findings of this study confirm mosquitoes are the primary vectors transmitting *M. ulcerans* from the environment to people in Australia.

Wallace has been collaborating with the Stinear lab since 2006 on field and mosquito transmission studies and elaborated on the global importance of these findings, "By linking field surveys with pathogen genomics, we have addressed the essential criteria that support a collection of evidence implicating mosquitoes as mechanical vectors of *M. ulcerans* from local wildlife reservoirs to humans, in other words, we have provided valuable support for a transmission chain among mosquitoes, possums and humans – a watershed moment of sorts in disease ecology. While the mode of transmission may be different in other countries, this breakthrough moment in Buruli ulcer research provides an extensive framework to address more precisely the mode of transmission of *M. ulcerans* to people in other parts of the world and augment the roadmap to intervene and control Buruli ulcer in these countries," explains Wallace.

To stem the tide of Buruli cases in Australia, Professor Paul Johnson, infectious diseases physician at Austin Health in Victoria, highlighted the role of managing mosquito populations to mitigate the risk of Buruli ulcer. "Taking steps to reduce the numbers of mosquitoes and prevent mosquito bites is likely to be an effective way to control the spread of the disease," said Johnson. "Simple actions, like applying insect repellent and removing stagnant water around the house, are a good start to protect the community and reduce the risk of Buruli ulcer."

For more information on mosquito protection, visit the [Victorian Department of Health website](#).



Dr. John Wallace collecting samples of possum feces to help research the spread of Buruli Ulcer.

## 'Ville Professor Wins Counselor Educator of the Year

Millersville Associate Professor of Psychology Dr. Richard Joseph "Joe" Behun was awarded Counselor Educator of the Year for 2023 by the Pennsylvania School Counselors Association.

Nominated by a former student, Behun was chosen for the award among over 50 other Pennsylvania school counselor educators. "I feel very honored and humbled to have won," says Behun. An awards ceremony was held on Dec. 7.

The Pennsylvania School Counselors Association recognizes winners for several categories relevant to school counseling every academic year. The association aims to educate and empower PA-based school counselors through professional development, support of programs and providing a voice to professional school counselors.



Associate Professor of Psychology  
Dr. Richard Joseph Behun

Behun didn't start out working toward the school counseling profession, nor was he expecting to end up there when he first began his higher education. During his undergraduate years at California University of Pennsylvania, he studied political science and criminal justice with the intent of attending law school

afterward. During his senior year, he volunteered to be a peer mentor for a first-year student, which changed the trajectory of his professional endeavors. "I was already accepted to law school, and I woke up on a Saturday morning and I just thought to myself, 'I think that I'd see more life satisfaction out of working as a school counselor,'" says Behun.

Behun says the school counseling profession has long been largely misunderstood, previously thought of as strictly an academic resource for students. On the contrary, school counselors are responsible for much more, including managing the mental health of students. Pro-

fessional school counselors are educated in therapy practices in order to appropriately handle issues that students may have. "There is no better person in the school system to deal with student mental health than the school counselor," says Behun.



As an ever-evolving profession, school counselors are facing and adapting to new challenges constantly. Notable adaptations have been alongside the ongoing change in schools due to COVID-19. While schools were closed, school counselors faced issues with having to navigate their profession digitally. "No one knew what Zoom was, and we certainly wouldn't ever counsel someone over the phone or through a computer," says Behun, regarding counseling prior to the pandemic. Nonverbal communication accounts for a large portion of what someone is saying, making counseling difficult through a call. As issues like poor mental health continue to rise in schools, education and training of future counselors are also adapting to appropriately handle future matters.

Behun believes himself to be a counselor first, and educator second in terms of his profession. He encourages his students to ponder this themselves. "I ask my students in the very beginning to think about when they're organizing their own philosophy— Are they a counselor who educates or an educator who counsels?" says Behun.



## Dr. Cheryl Desmond Receives “Keepers of the Flame” Award



Dr. Cheryl Desmond

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 Millers-

ville 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.

## Expert Knowledge on Tropical Storms

Millersville University has a new expert on campus who knows all about tropical storms and we recently sat down with Dr. Ellie Casas to ask her about the current news surrounding the weather throughout the oceans.

### Tell us about yourself

I am Dr. Ellie Casas, and I am the newest meteorology faculty member here at Millersville University in the Department of Earth Sciences. This is my first year here and I am thrilled to be here! I teach Tropical Meteorology plus a variety of other meteorology courses and hurricanes are my primary area of expertise.

### What is your experience before MU?

Before being here at Millersville, I studied several aspects of how hurricanes intensify during my graduate studies at Colorado State University. After graduating, I became a postdoctoral researcher at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, where I worked with a team of meteorologists and computer scientists to develop advanced machine-learning tools that may eventually be able to help improve our ability to “see” where the heaviest rain in hurricanes are when they are over the ocean and away from radars. This is important because being able to see the “organization” of rain in a hurricane is important for forecasting how the hurricane will intensify.

### What notable storms have occurred in the Atlantic and East Pacific basin and which states were affected?

The Atlantic and East Pacific saw some major hurricanes in 2023. In the Atlantic Basin, there were 19 named storms, and two additional unnamed storms. Surprisingly, one of the unnamed Atlantic storms occurred in January! This storm had a hurricane-like structure with high wind speeds circling around an eye-like feature, but it was classified as a “subtropical cyclone,” which means that it originated from outside of the tropics.

Out of the named storms in the Atlantic, seven reached at least hurricane status, and three out of those seven hurricanes reached “major” hurricane status of at least Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

In the Atlantic/Gulf coast, the states directly affected were Texas, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia.



Dr. Ellie Casas

In the East Pacific, there have been 16 named storms and an additional three unnamed storms. Of the named storms, 10 reached hurricane status, and 8 of those hurricanes reached “major” hurricane status.

### The National Hurricane Center issued its first-ever tropical storm warning for Southern California as Hurricane Hilary approached on Aug. 20. Why are hurricanes so rare in California?

In the ocean, there are very large circulations called “gyres” that span the entire ocean basin in each hemisphere. In the Northern Hemisphere, these gyres spin clockwise because of the direction in which the Earth spins. In the North Atlantic, the ocean gyre brings up warm, tropical ocean water along the U.S. Atlantic coast, and it is concentrated in the Gulf Stream. This warm water is generally warm enough to sustain hurricane intensification in the summer and fall.

On the U.S. Pacific coast, the ocean gyres bring down cold, arctic water from Alaska. This cold water makes it very difficult for hurricanes to maintain their intensity, and hurricanes typically dissipate and are very weak if they reach California.

What makes Hurricane Hilary so unusual is that it was able to move northward very quickly after it made landfall in Baja California, Mexico. Although Hurricane Hilary was in the process of weakening from the cold water, drier





Installation of the Climavision radar on Millersville University's water tower.

mid-level air, and increasing vertical wind shear, Hilary was still producing much more rain than Southern California typically receives when it arrived. Since Southern California has complex and fragile topography, flooding and landslides were of major concern.

#### **Will the Climavision radar on the MU water tower help with hurricane predictions in our area?**

With respect to hurricanes, the new MU radar will be most helpful for identifying imminent severe weather risks associated with storms (including decaying hurricanes) that track within the radar's line-of-sight, which covers the general Lancaster/Millersville/York region. The radar will also be helpful for our ability to conduct local weather research, such as increasing our understanding of rainfall characteristics of landfalling hurricanes that impact the Millersville area. The new radar will be a huge benefit for the entire region, and we are very fortunate and grateful to begin this partnership with Climavision.

#### **What is the hurricane outlook?**

The Southern Hemisphere hurricane season is starting to ramp up. Typically in the Southern Hemisphere, Northern Australia, Madagascar, and many smaller island nations like Fiji are particularly impacted by hurricanes from approximately December to April. Interestingly, South America is very rarely impacted by hurricanes; the environment is generally not conducive to hurricane intensification.

#### **Any additional thoughts?**

Hurricanes can actually impact Millersville! While the winds of a hurricane typically weaken before tropical cyclones reach Millersville, we can get rain, flooding, and sometimes even tornado impacts from the remnants of hurricanes. Some notable examples include Hurricanes Irene (2011), Sandy (2012), and Ida (2021). As I have gotten to know our wonderful meteorology students here at MU, I have learned that these specific storms were formative experiences that have led many of our Millersville meteorology students toward discovering their vocations. Many of our students are dedicated to saving lives by improving our meteorological understanding, forecast accuracy, and communication of extreme weather phenomena like hurricanes.

Ultimately, it only takes one hurricane landfall to make it an active season for all who are impacted. Here at Millersville, it is a good idea to keep a reserve of water, non-perishable food, and a first aid kit on hand in the summer and fall when hurricanes are most likely, and for the best hurricane forecasts, I always recommend listening to the friendly experts at the National Hurricane Center when they issue a watch or warning. They have devoted their lives to being the best hurricane forecasters they can be, and they are constantly monitoring the tropics for potential hurricane risks, even while I'm teaching!

## New Sustainability Manager Named

From having Pennsylvania's first certified zero energy building to hosting awards and events such as the Positive Energy Fund, Millersville University is committed to sustainability. To help guide the University's efforts, Kaitlynn Hamaty was recently hired as the new sustainability manager.

Hamaty has many years of experience in the sustainability field from studying it in college to her previous work experience. Hamaty studied psychology with minors in sustainability leadership and statistics at Penn State University. She then earned her master's degree in environmental psychology from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.

Previously, Hamaty worked as a Research and Information Specialist and as an Industrial Support Specialist at the Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center, a non-profit with connections to Penn State Harrisburg. She also worked as a Residence Life Coordinator at Penn State University Park where she was able to incorporate a Waste and Recycling Analyst internship with Penn State's Office of Physical Plant.

As the sustainability manager, Hamaty ensures the various sustainable operations around campus run smoothly. "My role is to focus on all aspects of sustainability in and around Millersville University. This includes helping with the daily operations of Millersville's Zero Energy building, the Lombardo Welcome Center, implementing Millersville's Climate Action Plan, and working with students, faculty and staff as well as other key stakeholders around the community. It also includes preparing yearly data reporting and recommendations," Hamaty explains.

"I'm very excited to be named the sustainability manager here at Millersville University," says Hamaty of her new role. "I have always had a passion for sustainability and environmentalism, often without realizing it. In my first month here, I have been able to engage with students, faculty and staff across campus and am excited for what we can accomplish together."

One of Hamaty's main tasks includes working towards the goals of MU's Climate Action Plan. The main goal of this plan is for MU to be carbon neutral by 2040 and to assist the City of Lancaster with climate change planning. Hamaty explains what she and the University are doing to ensure it meets its goals.

"To achieve this goal, we need to focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy, carbon offsets and waste diversion and recycling on campus. This is a big task and goal that involves multiple stakeholders and everyone across campus."

Hamaty believes the role of a sustainability manager is important not only for MU, but for all of higher education. "Universities hold a powerful role in society, as institutions of higher education foremost, but also as institutions for discovery, ingenuity and creativity. All these aspects are critical when tackling climate change and being a sustainable institution."

Hamaty notes she is happy to be part of the University's plan to be better. "I am thrilled to be working for an institution that is actively making strides to implement changes that positively impact and benefit the MU community and the greater community."



Kaitlynn Hamaty was hired as the new sustainability manager.



# MU Continues to Combat the Teacher Shortage

Millersville University is committed to combating the current educator shortage in a variety of different ways, including expanding its online course options and publicly sharing the possible causes of and solutions to the shortage. This summer, the University hosted the Future Educator Academy to recruit high school juniors who are interested in education and provide a residential college experience.

During July, 14 students from five school districts were able to experience what it's like to be a college student, all while learning more about what their future as an educator could look like.

"The ultimate goal is to recruit more students, especially students of color and first-generation students, into the field of education," explains Dr. Miriam Witmer, associate professor of educational foundations and coordinator of the Color of Teaching program at the University. Witmer facilitated the academy alongside Dr. Jeffrey Wimer, professor of wellness and sports sciences.

"Scholars have the opportunity to see what college life is like," Witmer adds. "They also did a lot of self-reflection and learned about careers in education, so we hope they are motivated to pursue a college degree and to consider becoming an educator. Scholars from different schools were able to bond, so new friendships were made."

This was the first year that the academy was open to students outside of the School District of Lancaster. Other schools represented include York City, Penn Manor, Manheim Township and Ephrata.

Students began the week with a low-ropes course team-building activity. This first day focused on good communication and problem-solving between the scholars. After that, the students were able to attend various classes offered by MU faculty, so they could experience a typical college classroom.

Students participating in the Future Educators Academy experienced the Watershed Education Training Institute on campus.

Supplementary sessions on financial aid, student success, and building friendships were included during the week. A closing ceremony was held on the last day with families.

Additionally, each student received a copy of "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," by Sean Covey. "Reading this book and having group discussions about its content promoted a deeper sense of purpose and sense of community for the scholars," says Witmer.

Millersville University continues to address the educator shortage in other ways as well. In a recent survey sent out to 16 Central Pennsylvanian school districts, it was discovered that while many students have high respect for their teachers, they are uninterested in the profession due to their perception of low wages in the education field.

"We need to educate high school students on the realities of the teaching profession through programs like the FEA and future teaching clubs in high schools," says Dr. Lara Willox, dean of the College of Education and Human Services. "The starting salary may be less than in other careers, but there are many opportunities to increase salaries."

As for other strategies, Willox explains, "We have started a fully [online early childhood program](#) to allow working adults to earn teaching certification. We also have an emergency certification program that will enable teachers teaching on emergency licenses to get certified in less than 18 months."

Overall, the University is tackling educator shortage in many ways, but the academy in particular is an important tool for easing anxieties students may have about higher education and for recruiting more education students. "It



## MU Offers New Educational Leadership Program



Beginning in Summer 2024, Millersville University will offer a new [post-master's Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership](#). These courses have been approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for the Superintendent Letter of Eligibility for those who qualify, and all courses will count toward the Doctorate in Educational Leadership at the University as well.

Dr. Ann Gaudino, professor in the [Educational Foundations department](#) and program founder, shares, "We are thrilled to continue the long legacy of developing educational professionals at Millersville University. We will be training the school superintendents and education organization leaders of tomorrow."

This graduate certificate is a resource for the department to help the education workforce develop their skills and credentials, learning more about how to best assist today's learners in the classroom.

"Those in the education workforce, particularly K-12 educators, are facing a myriad of new challenges," says

Gaudino, "the Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership is a cutting-edge program to help educators become both scholars and practitioners with a doctoral degree."

These skills include advanced-level leadership, resource leadership, governance, instruction and learning, equity and inclusion, and facilities and technology. The program also caters to a wide variety of professionals, including school principals looking to attain their superintendent licensure, teachers, counselors, University faculty and administrators or other education professionals.

While the courses will be taught online by Millersville faculty, learners will complete internship hours in person in educational institutions with mentors to gain hands-on experience. This one-year certificate program is offered during the summer, fall and spring semesters. Those who are interested may begin in any semester.

For more information about the Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership, click [here](#).



## Excentia Partnership A Success

Last year, Millersville University and Excentia Human Services announced a partnership to address the challenges facing the human services workforce in Lancaster County, which included developing Excentia Human Services' [Center for Training and Professional Development](#) and creating two customized training programs. Within the first year, Excentia Human Services hoped to graduate 15 employees from the program. They recently celebrated 44 graduates from the center, with more on the way.

Excentia Human Services employees can undergo two programs through the Center. The Direct Support Professional Enrichment Program, through [The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals](#), requires about 50 hours of coursework and six in-person sessions, focusing on various topics like promoting professionalism and handling conflicts, crisis prevention and incident management, boundaries and more. Once complete, employees earn their DSP I certification.

The Excellence in Human Services Leadership Program is a nine-month course where employees focus on leading with vision, emotional intelligence, communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, team dynamics and embracing change, among other skills. Mary Godin '15, director of development and marketing at Excentia Human Services, says the company has heard great feedback, particularly about the Excellence in Human Services program. "Most of this feedback centered on the fact that the course gave them the opportunity to enhance their leadership and managerial skills."

"What's great is this program has participants in every facet of our organization, meaning upon successful completion of the course, their influence and learning will have far-reaching and dramatic effects on our organization, which will ultimately benefit our quality of service and employee morale," she says. In fact, in collaborating with MU to create the Center, Excentia Human Services was recently named a [Nonprofit Innovation Awards](#) winner by Central Penn Business Journal. "We're proud that the CTAPD is getting the recognition it deserves," says Godin. "What a lot of people don't know is that this curriculum is entirelyly unique," she continues. "There are two women who have dedicated hours of their expertise to developing this program for our employees – Hope Schmidts, director of workforce development programs at MU, and Renee Rohrer, training lead at Excentia Human Services. Our Nonprofit Innovation Award honoree designation is a testament to their efforts and the partnership between



Excentia graduates with Millersville's Hope Schmidts (far left) and Dr. Victor DeSantis (far right).

Millersville and Excentia Human Services." Godin says that this is an important partnership because it addresses the challenges facing the human services field. "In the past two years, the intellectual disability and autism communities have experienced a mass exodus of direct support professionals causing great concern, as they are vital to providing supportive services to people."

"Many human service agencies agree that their workforce is reaching a critical point in providing services to people, especially within the intellectual disability and autism communities. Excentia Human Services contacted MU, knowing its reputation as a regional powerhouse, to brainstorm a solution to this workforce issue. It quickly became clear that the closely aligned values of our two organizations would drive our collaboration." The Center is now expanding its course offerings even further through NADSP. Excentia Human Services will offer its employees the opportunity to earn all levels of the Direct Support Professional certification. Employees who earned the DSP I certificate can continue with DSP II in early 2024 and DSP III later on.

"Excentia Human Services believes in approaching everything they do with integrity, honesty, respect, and accountability; creating a positive, supportive environment where all people can have their voice heard; cultural competency, high ethical standards, and equality and fairness in all things; and building partnerships with the people we serve, their families, and everyone in our community," Godin concludes. "Millersville University's EPPIIC values align seamlessly with our values."

## Lifesaving NARCAN® Trainings on Campus



A group of Millersville students, staff and faculty who completed the training pose for a photo.

In response to the growing concern of opioid overdoses, Millersville University implemented preventative safety measures around campus. According to the 911 calls, 1,682 suspected overdoses were reported in 2022. NARCAN® (Naloxone HCl) Nasal Spray is an emergency treatment of possible opioid overdoses that, if administered immediately, temporarily reverses opioid overdoses. NARCAN® does not replace medical attention. In case of an opioid emergency, call 911.

To prioritize the health and safety of its students, Millersville partnered with Lancaster Joining Forces to set up emergency NARCAN® boxes near every AED station on campus. NARCAN® sprays are also available for free at the Cumberland House and Health Services in the Witmer Building. During this fall semester, multiple NARCAN® training courses were conducted on campus, led by Blueprints Recovery, to teach students, staff and faculty how to administer the medication to a person suspected of overdosing.

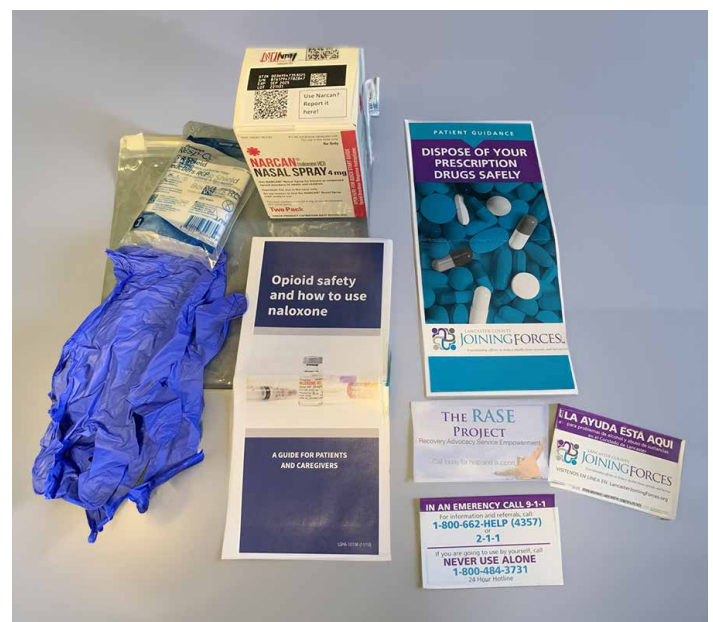
Margaret Thorwart, director of the Center of Health Education and Promotion, urges Millersville students to attend an upcoming winter or spring NARCAN® training. "Come learn about what NARCAN® is, how to use it, and leave with a free NARCAN® kit. Blueprints Recovery is coming to campus to host NARCAN® training open to all students, faculty and staff. You will learn about opioid abuse and trends and understand/debunk the negative stigma surrounding NARCAN® accessibility. You will leave prepared to handle an opioid overdose emergency. NARCAN® Kits include two doses of Naloxone, gloves, CPR shield, instructions on how to use and support services/resources."

When asked why attending NARCAN® training is essential for Millersville students, Thorwart responds that, "The Millersville University Alcohol and Other Drug Task

Force seeks to lead a movement at MU to provide knowledge and training regarding Naloxone as well as make NARCAN® widely accessible in case of emergency."

Through the initiative, MU also seeks to provide comprehensive prevention education regarding the overdose crisis, the influx of fentanyl and how to prevent overdose. Naloxone is not intended just for law enforcement or first responders, but for anyone who knows someone who uses prescription or illicit opioids and members of the community who can act as bystanders if an overdose event were to occur." Millersville is taking preventative measures, equipping its students, staff and faculty with the tools to combat the opioid and Fentanyl crisis.

[Learn more](#) through Millersville's Center for Health Education and Promotion.



## Advocating for Undergraduate Research

Ensuring that policymakers and leaders understand the importance of undergraduate research and scholarships is essential to all college students. This is why it's important that Dr. Carrie Smith and Tatiana Pashkova-Balkenhol, along with five students at MU, were accepted to be part of the Council of Undergraduate Research's Scholars Transforming Through Research program.

The program allows participants to learn and understand how to communicate to stakeholders the importance of their research and scholarships through both virtual and in-person events. As team leaders, Dr. Smith and Pashkova-Balkenhol represent MU through two programs, the Center for Public Scholarship & Social Change and the McNairy Library Music Research Fellows program. They offer guidance to their students, Tehya Walters, Ty Geiger, Sydney Rauchut, Sarah Qundes and Julissa Rodriguez to actively engage in the Scholars Transforming Through Research activities.

In order to be part of the program, teams had to submit an application that was reviewed against others from across the country, making for a competitive application process. Each application discussed how team members have been impacted by undergraduate research.

Smith, coordinator of the Center for Public Scholarship & Social Change at MU, explains why she wanted to be part of the program. "I work with and mentor students in conducting community-engaged research. For community-engaged research to be truly effective, it requires an understanding of how to explain sometimes complex and obtrusive findings to various stakeholders."

The students involved in the program have completed research or are in the process of completing research. The program will allow them to learn how to communicate with leaders. "The STR program is focused on enhancing undergraduate students' communication and advocacy skills so that they can convey the value of their undergraduate research experiences to various stakeholders, such as funding agencies, elected officials, future employers and community members," Pashkova-Balkenhol explains, an Undergraduate Research & Instruction Librarian.

The students will present their research at Made In Millersville. Pashkova-Balkenhol notes the connections between Scholars Transforming Through Research and Made in Millersville. "Both STR and Made in Millersville are focused on promoting the undergraduate research experience. Both



Tehya Walters, Ty Geiger, Sydney Rauchut, Sarah Qundes and Julissa Rodriguez are part of the Scholars Transforming Through Research Program.

encourage students to translate their research projects into comprehensive and accessible summaries and communicate the value of their projects to diverse audiences."

Recently, both teams attended the in-person training event where they participated in networking events with faculty and staff from other universities. They also visited Capitol Hill to meet with staffers from Senator Bob Casey, Senator John Fetterman and Representative Lloyd Smucker's offices where the students put their training to work, advocating for funding undergraduate research, university-community partnerships, arts and humanities and youth mental health.

Pashkova-Balkenhol understands the importance of undergraduate research and the skills students gain from engaging in it. "Students who participate in undergraduate research opportunities are better prepared for graduate schools or professional careers. Students improve transferable skills, such as critical thinking, presentation and written communication and time management skills. They build overall confidence in their abilities and create communities of practice where they learn with and from each other."

By completing the program, Pashkova-Balkenhol hopes to accomplish one main goal. "Upon the completion of the program, we will be able to put our advocacy skills into practice by advocating for sustainable funding to support the future students' participation in the library's research fellows' program," Pashkova-Balkenhol says.

Overall, Smith hopes to create new policies to help make a change by completing the program. "I hope that we will come away with valuable skills in learning how to communicate community-engaged research to various stakeholders. In particular, I hope that we will learn how to translate our work into concrete policies and change on the ground."



# SPORTS NEWS

## Kate Corcoran named Director of Athletics

After a nationwide search, Millersville University recently announced that Kate Corcoran will be the next director of athletics. Corcoran comes to the 'Ville from Cabrini University, where she served as vice president of athletics and student engagement. "Kate's leadership experience in the areas of athletics and student engagement will benefit our student-athletes," said Dr. Gail Gasparich, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Millersville. "Having an equal commitment to our students' athletic endeavors and academic experiences will ensure our students benefit from all aspects of their college experience at Millersville University."



At Cabrini, Corcoran provided leadership in the areas of the student-athlete experience including residence life, student engagement and leadership, counseling and psychological services and health services. She also designed, implemented, managed and evaluated Cabrini's 18 intercollegiate athletics programs and oversaw the budget.

"I am excited and grateful to be joining Millersville University and leading Millersville Athletics," said Corcoran. "My sincere thanks to President Wubah, Dr. Gasparich, Dr. Lynn Marquez and the entire search committee for trusting me with this role. Throughout the entire process, I was very impressed by the student-athletes, staff, coaches, and individuals I met at Millersville. Their commitment to each other, the student-athletes, and the passion they have for Millersville Athletics was palpable."

Corcoran has been with Cabrini since 2016, when she started as senior associate director of athletics and senior women's administrator. In 2021, she was named director of

athletics and recreation and became vice president of athletics and student engagement in 2022. During her time at Cabrini, the men's lacrosse program won the 2019 NCAA Division III Championship, and the department totaled 41 CSAC and Atlantic East Conference championships in six years. Eleven programs reached NCAA Tournament play. She successfully raised funds for several facility enhancement projects, and she launched the department's first week of giving that has since topped its goal in each of the last three years. She has also served on numerous NCAA committees.

"Millersville Athletics is positioned to be successful not only in the PSAC but regionally and nationally, and my focus will be to further build on the success the Marauder community has achieved. The experience we provide will prepare our student-athletes for life after Millersville and set them up to be successful in their chosen career path. As the director of athletics, I plan to be very visible and collaborative not only with our coaches, staff and student-athletes but across the entire campus as well," said Corcoran. "I believe it is important to listen and interact with the community so we can better serve our student-athletes as we strive to push our department forward."

Corcoran earned a bachelor's degree in sports management/business administration from DeSales University and a master's degree in business administration from Rosemont College.

Corcoran will continue to direct Cabrini through the remainder of the athletic year and will officially begin as director of athletics at Millersville in the summer of 2024. Millersville Associate Director of Athletics Larry Earnesty will continue to serve as Millersville's interim director of athletics during that time.

"I want to personally thank Larry for graciously serving as our interim director of athletics," said Gasparich. "Larry is an outstanding asset to the University."

## Pollock, Sweda, and cross country team earn USTFCCCA All-Academic honors

The Millersville cross country team was named a 2023 NCAA Division II All-Academic Team, and runners [Bri Pollock](#) and [Hannah Sweda](#) were named All-Academic Athletes.

The All-Academic Athletes and Teams for the 2023 NCAA Division II Cross Country season were announced on Thursday by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA). In order to qualify for All-Academic distinction, student athletes must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25 on a 4.0 scale and finish in the top-30 percent of their respective regional championship meet, among other qualifiers. In order to qualify for All-Academic distinction, teams must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, including the most recent grading period and compile a team score at their respective regional championship meet, among other qualifiers.

The Marauders finished the semester with a 3.49 GPA, marking the 17<sup>th</sup> time in the last 18 years the Millersville cross country team has been awarded the honor.

Sweda, a senior studying criminology and sociology, helped lead the Marauders to a sixth-place finish at the PSAC Championships with a season-best time of 24:15.9.



Millersville University Cross Country competes against F&M at a meet last fall

Sweda also earned a spot on the All-PSAC Second Team. Pollock, a freshman studying pre-med, also had an impressive rookie season for the Marauders. Pollock also placed inside the top five for Millersville at the PSAC Championships, placing fourth on the team with a time of 24:46.0. "These awards are always a nice recognition of the hard work that our athletes put into our sport and into their studies here at Millersville, it makes me very proud" said head coach [Andy Young](#).

## Steve Sweeney becomes first Marauder named Academic All-America twice

[Steve Sweeney](#) established a new level of elite Millersville University student-athlete Tuesday when he became the first Marauder ever to be named College Sports Communicators (CSC) Academic All-America® for a second time.

Sweeney earned second team recognition by posting a 3.91 cumulative GPA as a graduate student in technology and innovation while also playing safety at a high level on the field. Since 1983, Sweeney is one of just 23 Marauders to be named Academic All-America®, and he is one of only two Millersville football players. In 2022, Sweeney became the first Millersville football player honored since 1991 (Tom Burns).

A total of 52 Division II players were recognized in 2023, and of that group, 17 were repeat selections.

Academic All-American is a title reserved for college student-athletes who perform at an elite level in their chosen sport and in the classroom. Student-athletes must have at least a 3.50 cumulative grade point average, compete in 90% of their team's games or start in at least 66% of the games.

Sweeney started 44 consecutive games in the Black and Gold from 2019-23, recording 196 career tackles and seven interceptions. In 2023, Sweeney recorded 52 stops and broke up six passes.

## Millersville cheerleading secures ninth in first nationals appearance

The Millersville cheer team secured a top-10 finish in its first ever appearance at the UCA College National Championship in Orlando, FL. on Jan. 12.

The Marauders finished ninth out of 38 teams in the Open All Girl Game Day division. Millersville produced a score of 90.90 in the preliminary round to advance to the semi-finals and clinched a spot in the final round with a 93.2. The Marauders finished with a 93.13 to earn the honor of being a top-10 team in the country in the Open All Girl Gameday division.

The Millersville University cheerleading team poses outside of the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in Orland, Florida



## Marauders execute in the classroom and earn CSCAA Team Academic Honors

The Millersville University women's swim team has been working hard to excel both in the classroom and in the pool. The Marauders were recognized by The College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America (CSCAA) as a Scholar All-America Team for their academic performance in fall semester. 783 teams were honored from three NCAA divisions, NAIA, and NJAA. To qualify for this award a team must exhibit exceptional grade point average during the Fall 2023 semester. Of those teams, 595 finished with a 3.0 GPA or higher. This makes the team eligible for the Intercollegiate Coach Association Coalition All-Sport Academic Standings.

Millersville had a combined team GPA of 3.33. While dedicating time to their academics, the Marauders also finished their regular season with a 5-2 dual record, remaining undefeated on the road. The team will head into the PSAC Championships on Wednesday, February 14 with a program record for number of swimmers qualified.

Founded in 1922, the College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America (CSCAA), is the nation's first orga-

nization of college coaches. The mission of the CSCAA is to advance the sport of swimming and diving with coaches at the epicenter of leadership, advocacy, and professional development.



Marauder swimmers junior Ava Adiletti (L) and junior Mackenzie Yosko (R)



## Field hockey lands 10 student-athletes on NFHCA Academic Squad

The National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) released its [Division II National Academic Squad](#) for the 2023 season and included 10 Marauders on the list.

The NFHCA acknowledged a total of 383 undergraduate student athletes from 34 Division II institutions. The organization honors individuals who earned a cumulative grade-point average of 3.5 or higher through the fall semester of the current academic year. Millersville was one of 23 institutions and one of 6 PSAC member universities to have at least 10 student-athletes recognized by the NFHCA for their academic excellence.

The Marauders named to the list were seniors Caroline Griffin, Emma Hoats, and Kristin Strijdom, junior Gianna Cugino, sophomores Makayla Brunnabend, Daniella Fazeakas, Kayla Peakes, Daina Thomson, and Myah Yesko, and freshman Erin Esterhuizen.

The NFHCA will announce three more awards later in the month, starting with the NFCA Scholars of Distinction on Feb. 19, followed by the NFHCA National Academic Team awards on Feb. 21, and will conclude with the announcement of the National Scholar-Athlete on Feb. 26.



The Millersville Field Hockey team lines up on the field at Biemesderfer Stadium



Millersville University