

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

AUGUST 2025

As we welcome October, I have been reflecting on how quickly September has passed and how meaningful it has been to begin another academic year together. The State of the 'Ville and Garden Supper provided a wonderful opening to the semester, and I am deeply grateful to all who joined us. The setting, the food, and most importantly, the conversations made for a joyful evening that celebrated the strength of our Millersville community.



During the State of the 'Ville, I introduced our [2025–30 strategic plan, Beyond Boundaries](#). This plan will guide our direction over the next five years, informing decisions about programs and resources that will shape the future of our University. I encourage each of you to take time to review it and consider how it connects with your work and aspirations here at Millersville.

We have received our official enrollment numbers for fall 2025. Our total headcount stands at 7,099, which represents a 1.3% increase from last year. Full-Time Equivalent enrollment also rose by nearly half a percent. Undergraduate enrollment is steady at 5,844, while graduate enrollment saw remarkable growth by rising to 1,255 students, an 8.5% increase over last year. This progress reflects the dedicated work of so many of you in supporting recruitment and retention, particularly among adult learners, graduate students and international students. Thank you for your continued commitment.

Looking ahead, I am excited for our Homecoming celebration on Oct. 3 and 4. With events for students, faculty, staff, alumni, families and friends, there is something for everyone. The theme for this year's annual parade is "Magic of Music," which will be followed by the 'Ville Block Party, Maker's Market, class reunions, trolley tours and a full slate of athletic competitions, including our Homecoming football game against Shepherd University. I hope you will join Judith and me in celebrating the traditions and energy that make Homecoming such a highlight of our year.

In this edition of the newsletter, you will also read about the new faculty members who joined us this semester, an inspiring story of alumna Danielle Croft '15 M'23 and her work on student mental health, and the approval of a new teacher endorsement in artificial intelligence. Additional features include the recent accreditation of our University Police Department and the success of ComMUnity Fest, which brought together students, neighbors and local businesses at the start of September to strengthen the bonds between campus and community.

As we step into October, let us carry forward the momentum of a strong start to the year with renewed energy and purpose. Millersville thrives because of the creativity, commitment and compassion of our people, and together we are building a future that reaches ***beyond boundaries***. Whether through Homecoming events, classroom learning or community partnerships, the work we do together continues to shape lives and strengthen our university. May this season inspire us to dream boldly, support one another generously and continue shaping a University that not only serves our students today but also prepares the world-changers of tomorrow.

MU Welcomes New Faculty for 2025-26 Academic Year

Four new faculty members joined Millersville University for the 2025-26 academic year.

Dr. Farhad Afzali is an assistant professor of information technology in Department of Management and Marketing, The Lombardo College of Business. He received his Bachelor of Computer Science degree from Kardan University and his Master of Science degree in management information systems



and Ph.D. in information technology from the University of Nebraska Omaha. Dr. Afzali served as a visiting assistant professor of information systems and quantitative analysis at the UNO College of Information Science and Technology from 2023 to 2025 and as an adjunct instructor between 2020 and 2023. In 2007, he worked with the International Rescue Committee as a database officer. He joined the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in 2008 and worked for six years as an application developer and database administrator.

Dr. Michele Chronister joins the Wehrheim School of Nursing faculty in a full-time, tenure-track position, bringing a wealth of clinical and academic experience. She began her nursing journey at the University of Pittsburgh, earning her BSN in 1993. A two-time graduate of Millersville University, she received her Master of Science in Nursing – Family Nurse Practitioner in 2014 and her Doctor of Nursing Practice in 2020. Dr. Chronister continues to practice as a nurse practitioner while sharing her expertise with students. She has been a valued member of the university community, first as an adjunct faculty member and then as regular part-time faculty member for the past five years.

Dr. Megeara Mabry is an assistant professor of literacy and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) in the Department of Early, Middle and Elementary Education, College of Education and Human Services. Her research centers on literacy instruction and multilingual students, with a particular focus on supporting linguistically diverse learners in K–12 settings. She joins Millersville from Temple University, where she taught in the undergraduate and graduate-level teacher education programs and served as the director of a National Professional Development grant-funded program, partnering with linguistically diverse public schools in Philadelphia to improve the schooling experiences

of multilingual students. She brings 15 years of teaching experience across contexts, including K–12 English Language Arts and English as a Second Language, adult education, and teacher education. Dr. Mabry earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Millersville University and holds a Ph.D. in literacy and learners from Temple University.

Dr. Molly S. Miller, DTE is an assistant professor of technology and engineering education in the Department of Applied Engineering, Safety and Technology, College of Science and Technology. Dr. Miller spent the last 12 years serving as a high school technology and engineering educator in Lancaster County. She has bachelor's and master's degrees from Millersville University, as well as her doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Miller speaks about and publishes nationally her work on technology and engineering teaching and learning. Her research interests include integrative STEM approaches, productive struggle, holistic education and alternative assessment strategies. She is involved in several student and professional organizations, including state leadership of the Pennsylvania Technology Student Association (TSA) and the Pennsylvania Technology and Engineering Education Association (TEEAP). She is currently serving as the president for the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA).

Alumna Advocates for Tween Mental Health

Aavidum is a student-run organization that promotes mental health awareness and suicide prevention. The word Aavidum, which means “I’ve got your back,” was created in 2003 by students and instructors at Cocalico High School in Lancaster County, as a response to the suicide of a classmate. Since then, hundreds of schools – elementary, middle, high and college – nationwide have added Aavidum chapters.

Millersville alumna Danielle Croft, a reading teacher at Marticville Middle School,

dedicates her time to promoting student mental health awareness as the school’s Aavidum advisor. In 2015, Croft graduated from Millersville University with her Bachelor of Science degree and then completed Millersville’s assessment, curriculum and teaching graduate program in 2023.

She initially got involved with Aavidum as a long-term substitute position at Penn Manor High School. During her tenure, Croft coached the junior varsity girl’s lacrosse team. One day, the lacrosse athletes approached her and the varsity coach with the idea of hosting an Aavidum Awareness Game against Ephrata.

Moved by the students’ efforts to organize the game and advocate for mental health awareness among their peers, Croft was encouraged to promote the Aavidum mission and became a member of the organization’s National Board of Directors.



MU Offers AI Endorsement for Educators

Millersville University is among the first colleges and universities in Pennsylvania to offer a new [AI endorsement for K-12 educators](#).

The endorsement can be completed in approximately seven months at Millersville, with courses offered online and asynchronously. The first course will be offered during Winter Session 2026, Dec. 15 – Jan. 10. Applications require a transcript, proof of certification and a letter of recommendation.

Created by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Artificial Intelligence Endorsement is a four-course (12-credit) program designed to prepare educators to effectively and ethically integrate AI technologies within educational settings.

“We’re excited to be offering the AI Endorsement for teachers,” says Dr. Oliver Dreon, professor in the Department of Educational Foundations. “We recognize how this rapidly changing technology is impacting teaching and learning in schools. The AI Endorsement will help teachers across the state learn how to teach about and with artificial intelligence.”

The AI Endorsement program, which is pending approval from Millersville, will consist of the following four graduate courses, taught by Dr. Dreon, who participated in the development of the program’s competencies, and Dr. Abdul Ibrahim, associate professor in the Department of Educational Foundations.

1. Foundations of Artificial Intelligence in Education
2. Teaching and Learning with Artificial Intelligence
3. Ethical and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in Education



4. Leading and Integrating Artificial Intelligence Across the Curriculum

Each course is structured to build competencies aligned with key endorsement domains, including the foundations and applications of AI, responsible and ethical use, instructional and assessment strategies, student AI literacy and leadership for innovation.

MU Police Department Achieves Professional Accreditation

The Millersville University Police Department has achieved accreditation from the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Program of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association. Accreditation strengthens the professionalism of law enforcement and is a time-proven way of helping institutions evaluate and improve their overall performance.



The accreditation program involves a three-step process: application, self-assessment and formal assessment. Organizations analyze their operations to determine if they meet 136 professional standards. Necessary adaptations and changes are made, then a team of independent professionals visits to verify that all applicable standards have been met. The process culminates with a decision by an authoritative body that the institution is worthy of accreditation.

Led by Chief Pete Anders, the Millersville University Police Department is comprised of 14 sworn full-time police officers, as well as three full-time staff and four part-time staff members. The Department provides professional services to the student residents and visitors to the University 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, through patrol and bicycle units. A proactive agency, it emphasizes a community partnership philosophy using community policing efforts.

“Our mission centers on community engagement and problem solving,” said Anders. “We work hard to build relationships and gain the trust of our students. Our recent accreditation reflects our commitment to consistently improve as a department, assisting and protecting our community. Our sights are now fixed on reaccreditation.”

Sept. 10 CoMUnity Fest Brings Together Campus, Community Vendors

Millersville University's annual ComMunity Fest brought together the campus and local community from 2 to 5 p.m., Sept. 10, on the Student Memorial Center Promenade. Millersville students, staff and faculty attended and engaged with a variety of vendors from the Lancaster County area.

"It's important that students not only connect on campus but connect to and engage in the local community as well," explains John Hearn, senior director of operations at the Student Memorial Center.

"Since Lancaster County will be their new home away from home for several months, we've invited local businesses and organizations to visit campus to share what they have to offer students, faculty and staff at MU."



In 2024, ComMUnity Fest welcomed more than 35 vendors and 600 attendees, and an even larger turnout was expected this year. The event provided an opportunity for students to make their own free wax hands, spin the PSECU wheel for prizes and purchase a taco from Cactus Cafe. From Tanger Outlets to Duck Donuts, each business provided free items such as coupons, food and other fun merchandise for attendees to take away.

Homecoming 2025 at the 'Ville

Millersville University's 2025 Homecoming celebration will take place on Oct. 3 and 4. Events kick off with the annual Millersville Parade, and this year's theme is "Magic of Music."

Students, staff, alumni and community are invited to gather for the annual parade on Saturday from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Marching bands, floats, vintage cars and dancers will fill George Street.

After the parade, join us for the 'Ville Block Party, Maker's Market, class reunions and trolley tours from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Food trucks, local businesses, live music and nonprofit tables will line East Frederick Street Saturday afternoon. The Maker's Market and Skully Shoppes will allow dozens of student and alumni vendors to sell handmade crafts and other unique items in the Student Memorial Center. Several classes will celebrate milestone reunion years, including the Class of 1965s 60th on Friday night and 1975s 50th after the parade. Additionally, tours of campus will continuously depart from the Lombardo Welcome Center.

The festivities will continue with the Homecoming football game against Shepherd University at 2 p.m. at Biemesderfer Stadium. New this year, guests will be able to view the game indoors at the Lombardo Welcome Center.

Also new this year, tours of the residence halls will be offered from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. from the Lombardo Welcome Center.

For a full list of events, [visit millersville.edu/homecoming](https://millersville.edu/homecoming).

