

Millersville University

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

December  
2018



The semester has gone by faster than I could have imagined but it has been exciting and productive as my learning process continues. In this month's issue, I highlight our fall commencement ceremony that took place this past weekend. It went well and I am grateful to our faculty members who participated in such high numbers to support our students. Bravo! I look forward to seeing even more faculty at the spring commencement. We celebrated the accomplishments of our alumni and friends of the University during the ceremony. Six alumni awards were given out to recognize their hard work and dedication to Millersville. We also hosted the Celebration of Scholars Luncheon to thank our donors and friends who support our students through

scholarships and fellowships. I am very proud of the academic programs that have been recognized at the national level this past semester and a few of them are highlighted below. While we are on break, our facilities staff will finalize work on the establishment of a nanotechnology lab to enhance our offerings in applied engineering and related fields. And finally, our information technology staff will be rolling out the next phase of the Office 365 migration to faculty and staff.

Remember to relax during the break so that you will come back refreshed for the new year. While there may be material gift-giving this season, let us pause to remember the reason for our joy. I am looking forward to an exciting 2019 as your president. Peace and blessings to you and your families at this yuletide.

## MILLERSVILLE HOSTS 162ND ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

Challenging, humbling, and rewarding are just a few of the words I would use to describe the commitment that millions of students across America make to earn an undergraduate degree. After years of hard work and dedication, more than 400 Millersville University students made that walk across the stage on Dec. 16 and received their degree at the Fall 2018 Commencement Ceremony.

This year's ceremony, held in Pucillo Gymnasium, featured keynote speaker Dr. Daniel Greenstein, the fifth chancellor of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. And, we were delighted to have Cynthia Shapiro, chair of the Board of Governors with us for the occasion.

Among the 400+ students, the commencement ceremony honored:

- Seven students with departmental honors in psychology, earth science, government, music, and applied engineering, safety and technology
- Four graduates of the honors college
- 10 students graduating Summa Cum Laude, highest honors
- 30 students graduating Magna Cum Laude, high honors
- 51 student graduating Cum Laude, honors
- One honors degree at the associate level

I sincerely appreciate the participation of more than 100 faculty and staff in the procession, and the hard work of the large team of faculty and staff that spend countless hours preparing for this wonderful celebration. It was a glorious day for our students and our university and I will forever remember my first "Marauder" commencement. [Watch a replay of commencement](#)

## NEW NANOTECHNOLOGY LABORATORY

Over the winter break, our facilities team will be hard at work completing some repair and renovation projects in several campus buildings. One of the more noteworthy projects coming to completion is the creation of the Nanotechnology Lab in Osborne Hall. Dr. Mark Atwater of the Applied Engineering, Science and Technology (AEST) Department is the lead faculty member in the new lab. This lab will support externally funded faculty research, including a prestigious National Science Foundation Career grant. It also creates a space where faculty research can be performed in collaboration with both undergraduate and graduate students from across the College of Science and Technology. This research also builds on and is integrated into existing curriculum, particularly through the nanotechnology options available to students within AEST, chemistry and physics.

## CELEBRATE SCHOLARS LUNCHEON

On Dec. 7, I had the honor of attending the University's fifth annual Celebrate Scholars Luncheon. This uplifting event provides students the opportunity to meet and thank the donors who personally support them. Over the course of a wonderful holiday meal, our students and their donors got to know each other. As students shared their academic and athletic achievements with our supporters, each conversation served as a reminder that private support makes an incredible difference. Plus, I was very proud to hear so many of our students' accomplishments.

Donors in attendance included alumni, friends, faculty, University retirees and members of the Lancaster business community. These supporters have either established a permanent endowment, creating a lasting legacy by ensuring permanent support of the University, or a named annual award, increasing Millersville's current-use, financial support available to students. As we expressed our thankfulness for the donors' support, programs like Celebrate Scholars are what make Millersville the special and unique place it is.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (ERT)

We live in an increasingly unpredictable and volatile environment—one that demands preparations for any eventuality. At Millersville University we want to make sure that we are as well prepared as possible for emergencies. To that end we have reconstituted the Emergency Response Team (ERT). Such a team has become a critical component of every campus community to ensure the safety and protection of our students, faculty, staff and visitors.

On Tuesday, Dec. 18, the new ERT took part in a table top exercise of a mock emergency scenario that focused on a real-world crisis/emergency that could happen at MU. The purpose of the training was to make sure that people from many areas across campus know how to work together to prepare for, manage and resolve emergency incidents and high-risk situations. In addition, the Clery Act requires the University to hold a training exercise at least once a year. The drill will be evaluated and future training will include any changes or improvements necessary.

## UNIVERSITY ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS

MU has strengthened itself as one of the top institutions in the state, again this year. From its online course options to its diversity efforts and fundraising initiatives, MU has led the charge in each field, garnering awards from various outlets. Thanks to all the hard work by those on campus, MU continues to be an award-winning university!

### Diversity Excellence

For the seventh year in a row, MU was nationally recognized with a Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine. This award highlights the efforts and successes that colleges and universities make in order to encourage diversity and inclusion on their campuses. Thanks to student organizations, events and campus centers such as the Dr. Rita Smith Wade-El Intercultural Center, MU has remained at the forefront and earned the award for seven times. This is the only award of its kind in the United States. [Read more here.](#)

### Best Online Colleges

MU was ranked 12th on the 2019 Best Online Colleges in Pennsylvania list by the SR Education Group at [GuideToOnlineSchools.com](http://GuideToOnlineSchools.com). This ranking is based on a combination of factors including annual tuition, accreditation data and the median salary of alumni.

MU was ranked 29 in the top 63 Best Online Schools in Pennsylvania by the [Community for Accredited Online Schools](#). The list of 63 included nine of the 14 schools in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, and MU was ranked sixth amongst those. The methodology used in the rankings included quality, affordability, flexibility and programming. Statistical data from more than 7,500 postsecondary institutions was reviewed for the rankings. [Read more here.](#)

## Exceptional Fundraising

MU was selected for a national fundraising award for 2018 by the [Council for Advancement and Support of Education \(CASE\)](#). CASE selected MU as one of five schools for the “Overall Improvement for Public Comprehensive Institutions with Endowments over \$35 Million” award category. This CASE award recognizes fundraising programs and activities at institutions that demonstrate the highest level of fundraising practices that help educational advancement both locally and internationally. The student focused fundraising campaign, titled “Imagine the Possible,” has helped lead the way here at MU. [Read more here.](#)

## Awards for Graduate Programs

With MU’s recent focus on expanding graduate program offerings, awards have followed. The University’s Online Emergency Management master’s degree program ranked seventh in the nation by [TheBestSchools.org](#). [Read more here.](#) Additionally, the master’s degree program in Gifted Education ranked 22 in the nation for [CollegeChoice.net](#). [Read more here.](#)

## 2018 ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

The Millersville University Alumni Association has selected six individuals who have stood out in their careers and made an impact through community service, personal and professional achievement. These award winners were honored during the fall commencement on Dec. 16. Congratulations to all!



### Distinguished Alumni Award – David Hoffa '01, Ph.D.

Dr. David Hoffa graduated from Millersville University’s Industrial Technology program in 2001 and went on to earn both his master’s and doctoral degrees. Following his graduate work, Hoffa made many significant contributions in both industry and academia. He developed a “people first” management style and became focused on continual improvement of himself and others. In his current role as a Process Engineering Manager at Johnson & Johnson, Hoffa has helped companies save more than \$31 million using Lean and Six Sigma. Hoffa was recognized in 2017 with the Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering’s second highest service distinction, the Dr. Alvin Rudisill Exemplary Service Award. Hoffa was the 26th recipient in the 52-year old professional association. To read his full bio visit [Dr. David Hoffa Bio](#).



#### **Honorary Alumna Award – Susan P. Luek, Ph.D.**

Dr. Susan Luek contributed a great deal to Millersville during her 40-year career as a professor and continues to give even in retirement. From 1972 until 2012, Luek taught psychology and oversaw the operation of Millersville's experimental rat laboratory. Byerly Hall, which houses Millersville's psychology department, was renamed Luek Hall in her honor in fall 2017. Her contributions have been financial, as well. The Susan P. Luek High Impact Practices Endowment was established using a \$360,000 gift from Luek. In addition to teaching at Millersville, Luek served as advisor for the MU Psychology Club and brought the honors society in psychology, Psi Chi, to campus in 1989. Along with Dr. Ruth Bennis-Suter, she started the Women's Center, and helped to initiate Millersville's honors program, which is now known as the Honors College. To read her full bio visit [Dr. Susan Luek Bio](#).



#### **Outstanding Volunteer Service Award – Jerri Anne Johnson '76, '87M**

Jerri Anne Johnson's passion for teaching has been a hallmark of her career and service to Millersville University. Johnson stayed close to home following her undergraduate work, teaching in the School District of Lancaster for 10 years. She then returned to MU to earn her Master's of Education. While studying psychology during her master's training, Johnson authored a research paper titled, "The Effects of Stimulant Drugs on Hyperactive Children." This sparked an interest in medical research, which later led her to Abbott Laboratories. Johnson was the first in her family to attend college and recognized the value of giving back to the University. She has served as a student mentor, research proposal reviewer and MU Commencement volunteer. She has volunteered with the Millersville University Alumni Association since 2005. To read her full bio visit [Jerri Anne Johnson Bio](#).



#### **Young Alumni Achievement Award – T. Joseph Dennes III '04, Ph.D.**

Dr. Joseph Dennes graduated with departmental honors from Millersville University in 2004 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. During his time at Millersville, he received the American Chemical Society Southeastern PA Section Award, the American Chemical Society Undergraduate Award in Analytical Chemistry, a National Science Foundation Undergraduate Research Fellowship, the Gerald S. Weiss Inorganic Chemistry Scholarship, and the Millersville University Search for Excellence Scholarship. Dennes is in his 10th year of service at DuPont Central Research & Development. In his career at DuPont, he has authored more than 30 patents, and his work has resulted in the commercialization of new products in the fields of energy storage, food pathogen detection, textiles, filtration, consumer products and medical device packaging. To read his full bio visit [T. Joseph Dennes III Bio](#).



**Young Alumni Achievement Award Recipient – Leslie Gates '03, Ph.D.**

Dr. Leslie Gates graduated from Millersville University in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in Art Education. Following graduation, Gates taught art in the York City and Greencastle-Antrim School Districts. In 2012, Gates returned to Millersville as a faculty member in the Department of Art & Design, where she currently serves as an Associate Professor of Art Education. Gates was named Pennsylvania Art Education Association's "Art Educator of the Year" in 2017-18. Her commitment extends to educators state-wide; Gates has served on PAEA's Board of Directors from 2009-2017 and has been involved in planning PAEA's annual conference since 2010. To read her full bio visit [Dr. Leslie Gates Bio](#).



**Young Alumni Achievement Award Recipient – Michelle Kaufman '03, Ph.D.**

Dr. Michelle R. Kaufman is an assistant professor in the Department of Health, Behavior & Society at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. As a social psychologist, she studies how interpersonal relationships and social factors contribute to health disparities, and how behavior change interventions can mitigate these factors. Kaufman has authored more than 30 peer-reviewed publications tackling difficult issues such as sexual violence and sex trafficking. She has four manuscripts under review focusing on sexual violence and has presented at more than 60 scientific meetings. Kaufman's immense influence spans several continents, with current and past projects in the U.S., Nepal, South Africa, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire and Indonesia. To read her full bio visit [Dr. Michelle Kaufman Bio](#).