

**State of the University  
Friday, September 7, 2018  
4:00 p.m., Clair Performance Hall, Winter Center**

### **Welcome/Overview of Remarks/Priorities**

Thank you, Provost Prabhu, for your gracious introduction.

Good afternoon Trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents and friends. It is my distinct pleasure and honor to deliver my first state of the university address as the 15<sup>th</sup> president of this great institution.

I want to start by thanking all of you in this auditorium and those joining us online. I am grateful to my predecessor, Dr. John Anderson for his generosity of time and assistance during my transition to this role. It is a privilege to acknowledge and thank Dr. Francine McNairy and Dr. Joseph Caputo for the foundation that they laid and upon which I will build.

To our faculty emeriti, thank you. We are indebted to you for the role you have played in the lives of our students and alumni. Congratulations on your well-deserved recognition. I invite you to continue your longstanding relationship with Millersville and look forward to knowing you.

To our current faculty, I thank you for educating and challenging our students. Your collective accomplishments are too numerous to mention, but I hope that you had an opportunity to review some of the highlights as they scrolled on the screen. This past week was exciting as we began this academic year. You and your students are off to a tremendous start, and we are just beginning our journey together.

To our dedicated staff, I appreciate your continued commitment to the role you play in our students' success. Along with our faculty, you are the people who make Millersville a special place.

To our alumni here today and joining us online, I look forward to hearing your 'Ville story. We have more than 66,000 living alumni in all 50 states and 72 countries around the world.

Finally, to members of the Council of Trustees, we are grateful for your support and guidance. To our invited guests, thank you for joining us today.

Over the next several minutes, I will share with you the State of the University as well as my plans and priorities for this academic year and beyond.

We have made great progress and improvements on many fronts. Let me share a few examples with you.

**Enrollment:** Once again, our first-year enrollment numbers are strong. Approximately 1,380 freshmen, and 500 transfer students joined us this semester. The average GPA for our incoming freshmen class is 3.41, and the average SAT total increased by 16 points to 1079.

In addition, we welcomed 29 international students, and our out-of-state freshmen enrollment has gone from 156 students to 188 students in just one year.

While our retention numbers place us in the top 25% of PASSHE institutions, it is our goal to improve the retention rate for ALL our students. Currently, our overall retention rate is 76%, and our underrepresented student retention rate is 72%.

**Financial Aid:** During the last academic year, we awarded over \$6 million in scholarships and nearly \$16 million in grants to our students. For the first semester alone in this academic year, we have awarded over \$5 million in scholarships and \$18 million in grants.

**Fundraising:** In April, we received a donation from a local philanthropist to establish our first school named in honor of a donor. Patrick J. Tell was motivated to give to Millersville University partly because it is so ingrained in the Lancaster County arts community. The \$2 million endowment for the Tell School of Music will be used to provide scholarships, purchase new equipment, and bring outstanding performers and experts to work with our students.

**Dining:** Our dining staff opened an “Allergy Free” zone where students can choose from over 20 non-allergen ingredients. And our cooks prepare personalized made-to-order selections. Whenever possible, they source the food locally.

**Facilities:** Our Facilities staff has been busy. We have new artificial turf on Chryst Field and a new perimeter drainage system at the stadium. And surely you have noticed our campus beautification program. The HVAC system in Stayer Hall was replaced with a new system over the summer. While we understand the challenges of installing a new system, we also acknowledge that opening week conditions in several of our buildings were less than optimal. Going forward we are making changes in how projects will be scheduled and carried out.

**Automation:** The PHEAA State Grant process was automated, reducing the processing time from two days to one-half day each week. Our Office of Student Accounts implemented initiatives to eliminate paper and streamline processes. And all departmental deposits are now submitted electronically. They also overhauled communication initiatives to foster more positive interactions between the office and students and their parents.

**Sustainability:** To advance our sustainability efforts, the Lombardo Welcome Center was completed. It is one of only a handful of zero energy buildings in North America. In the first few months of its existence, this positive energy facility has produced three-

times more energy than it has used. Inspired by this performance, **I am pleased to announce that this spring we will establish a Positive Energy Fund**, that will provide grants to faculty and students who wish to contribute **positively** to local and global communities. The funds used to establish this program come from utility rebates, which we will use to power the human energy of our students; inspiring them to create **a positive, sustainable future** aligned with the U.N. sustainable development goals.

As you can tell, Millersville University has a strong foundation on which to build. With an estimated economic impact of over \$500 million, Millersville University is a driving force in our region, which positions us to make our collective energy felt as we serve the public good.

Now I'd like to share a sampling of this past year's accomplishments.

**Faculty:** First, our faculty. You engage our students and involve them in your research projects - a rare opportunity at the undergraduate level. Last year, 62 Meteorology majors participated in a 2-week National Science Foundation-funded educational deployment, which brought an atmospheric research aircraft to Lancaster airport. The "Student Experience in Airborne Research - Mid-Atlantic Region," allowed our students to work directly with the aircraft crew and scientists to prepare pre-flight forecasts, design flight plans, and fly the missions.

Locally our students excavated one of the earliest known settlements in Pennsylvania; and they studied rare bats in Lancaster County and threats that impact endangered animal species.

Our faculty also gave our students opportunities to hone their presentation skills. More than 400 students participated in our signature "Made in Millersville" event and our Millersville Scholars Program students presented at the PASSHE Diversity Summit.

**Community partnerships:** You, our faculty, formed partnerships with local enterprises to benefit our students and our community. Let me share a few examples:

- Through a partnership with SCORE Lancaster-Lebanon, more than 55 students were mentored through a grant from the Lancaster County Community Foundation's BB&T Economic Growth Fund. These students completed over 100 hours of supervised project work for their employer host and received valuable career skills.
- Our Watershed Education Training Institute partnered with the Lancaster Conservancy and Stroud Water Research Center to prepare students for watershed research, advocacy and conservation.
- And, the Millersville University Foundation gave our students \$200,000 to gain hands-on investment experience. This initiative, known as the Marauder Fund, has seen an investment return of 15.8% since inception.

**Recognitions:** In addition to your teaching responsibilities, many of you have been recognized for your outstanding contributions. Let me list a few:

- Dr. Karen Rice was appointed by the National Association of Deans and Directors of Social Work to identify and draft best practice guidelines for Doctor of Social Work programs.
- *Insight into Diversity* magazine recognized two of our faculty for their efforts in supporting students.
  - First, Dr. Kim Mahaffy was recognized for her three-day summer program, which pairs incoming Latino freshmen and transfer students with junior and senior Latino peer leaders.
  - Dr. Brent Horton received one of the 2018 “Inspiring Programs in STEM Award” for the Biology Mentorship Program aimed at increasing the success of underrepresented biology students.
- Dr. Marilyn Parrish and her McNairy Library colleagues are partnering with the local TV station, WGAL, to preserve and digitize their film archives.

**Mentorship:** You, our faculty, have also educated and trained winners! A few examples follow:

- Three Graphic Communication students won the Gutenberg Awards sponsored by the Graphic Communications Education Association.
- Our Programming Team students placed first in the Pennsylvania Association of Computer and Information Science Educators Programming Contest.
- Our Cyber Defense Organization Team competed in the Mid-Atlantic Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition and was one of the eight teams that qualified for the regional finals.
- We had 141 PSAC Scholar-Athletes this past year. These are students with a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher. This is a record for us, and an increase over the previous year by 16 scholar-athletes.
- And our own Sunflower Greene won the NCAA Division II National Championship for shot put.

**Global education:** Faculty, you had a busy year preparing global citizens. You traveled with our students to several countries in North and Central America, Europe, and Africa.

You also brought the world to our doorstep. I recently had the opportunity to attend a session at the Capacious Affect International Conference organized by Dr. Greg Seigworth. We welcomed more than 200 engaged scholars from 22 countries to Lancaster. One attendee from South Africa shared with me that she attended the first conference two years ago, and found it to be so productive that this year she brought 5 people with her. She also told me that she intends to bring 10 people with her to the next conference! That is progress!

**Compassion:** You nurtured our students to be caring and compassionate, which is one of our core EPPIC values. Let me list a few examples:

- You challenged our students to make a personal contribution in ways that prompted one of them to raise a puppy to improve the life of a person with disabilities; this puppy was later selected to serve in the CIA.
- Brandon Lee, our national Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellow, learned the skills needed to serve as an effective agent of social change. After completing his training in identifying an opiate overdose and the administration of Narcan, he helped to implement a free opioid reversal training program for members of our university community.
- And, finally, 400 of our students are registered to participate in tomorrow's United Way Day of Caring. Over 20 non-profit agencies will be assisted through this community outreach effort.

Our faculty opened doors and their hearts to children of migrant workers and to young adults with intellectual disabilities. Let me share a few examples:

Our Migrant Education Program has the largest enrollment of the five service regions in Pennsylvania. This program provides support for K-12 students, extended-day programs, and summer school.

Our College Assistance Migrant Program is unique in Pennsylvania. This program assists migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their children to successfully complete their first undergraduate year.

Shortly after I arrived on campus, I met our Integrated Studies team members. These enthusiastic and compassionate faculty and coaches enable students with intellectual disabilities who are interested in an academic, vocational and social university experience to do so. Our program is unique because it is inclusive and serves as a model for other universities.

Faculty, you are compassionate, highly-qualified, and internationally recognized, and I appreciate what you do for our students. I applaud you; this assembly applauds you; and you should applaud yourselves!

I have a challenge for you, faculty. Will you develop additional programs of distinction...and build curricula that enhance students' skills...so that they will be prepared to fill the gap between what the world needs today and what it will demand tomorrow? We need to prepare students for jobs that don't even exist today. We need to educate students to invent the future, and I believe we can do it!

**Alumni:** Now let's talk about our alumni. Many of you may be familiar with the story of Roy Clair.

A member of the Class of '67, Roy and his brother Gene founded Clair Brothers Audio when they supplied sound equipment for Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. The band was so impressed that they invited the Clairs to accompany them on the road. This led to a client list of artists including Elton John, Rolling Stones, and U2.

The Clair Brothers have since designed and built numerous sound systems, including the first stage monitor. They also engineered and manufactured the first hanging sound system. Their innovations are now standard equipment for live events around the world.

Through the University's partnership with Clair Global, our Music Business Technology students have hands-on opportunities to study live audio with industry professionals at Clair's Lititz headquarters.

And let's not forget all the teachers that Millersville University has produced over the years. Each day they touch the next generation of students who will contribute to our future.

I look forward to hearing from many more of our alumni who have been inventing the future following their graduation from Millersville University.

Alumni, you have made your alma mater proud. I know there are greater things to come from you, and I appreciate what you do for our students. I applaud you; this assembly applauds you; and you should applaud yourselves!

As the saying goes, "It takes a village..." So alumni, I now have a challenge for you.

We need you to become mentors and role models for today's students. You have witnessed the changes in business, technology, and the economy.

We need you to mentor our students about ways in which they can prepare for prodigious changes in the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world of the future.

We also need you to become their role models for setting aspirational goals. And, quite frankly, we need you to be role models for giving back to this community. I am inspired by the story of one of our 2015 graduates. He believed that his partnership with his

athletic coach gave him the skills needed to be successful in business, and he wanted to give back. That recent graduate became our youngest endowment donor ever!

Some of you received financial aid when you attended this institution; there are many more who need to stand on your shoulders. I urge you, alumni, to nurture those who will invent the future by mentoring them and modeling for them your appreciation for the place where it all started for you – Millersville University.

**Staff:** Our University is blessed with skilled and hardworking staff. From our grounds, through our dining and residence halls, to our offices...our staff are knowledgeable and dedicated. To show you our appreciation, I have asked the Human Resources office to reinstate the employee recognition event to honor those celebrating milestone anniversaries. Furthermore, I am working with my Cabinet to create new professional development programs for faculty and staff.

Now, let me share with you a personal example of our valued staff.

While working in my office early one morning in July, a gentleman in a green Millersville T-shirt, shorts and work boots entered my office. He introduced himself as John with Facilities and said that he was in the building to check on the HVAC system.

After thanking John for saying hello, I told him that I appreciated all the good work that he and his staff do for our University.

He smiled and his response was: "Millersville is a great place to work!" That attitude was evident from the people I met when I was a candidate, and it is one of the reasons why I am standing here today.

Our staff are invaluable in creating a culture of hospitality. From the beauty of our campus, through the welcoming smiles, the compassion in treating illnesses, to the diligence in helping to resolve customer service issues. It is our staff who bring unique skills and talents to our campus every day. They remind us that it is all of us, working together, that create a vibrant atmosphere of friendliness that enriches our students' experiences.

You are a hard-working and dedicated staff, and I appreciate what you do for our students. I applaud you; this assembly applauds you; and you should applaud yourselves!

So, staff...I have a challenge for you, too. I challenge you to be empowered to offer your thoughts and suggestions about how we can become an even more welcoming and inclusive community. I challenge you to become the compassionate face of the University so that parents know that there is someone on campus who will care for their students.

**Community partners:** And now to our community representatives. We are grateful for those of you who have partnered with us to provide first-hand experiences for our students in real-world settings where they can exercise their knowledge and skills. Millersville and Lancaster offer a wide variety of opportunities and experiences for our students. I have already mentioned several of these organizations and there are numerous others.

In addition, the local community and Central Pennsylvania have challenged us to develop new programs to meet their workforce needs. For example, Willow Valley Communities have partnered with us for employee training and professional development. Based on their workforce needs, we developed a customized program to provide intermediate-level supervisory and leadership training.

Recently, I attended Lancaster Chamber's "Wake Up to the Issues" forum where I received a very warm welcome from the business community. I have been invited to serve on the Chamber Board beginning next year, providing another avenue that will directly connect our University to our community's business leaders.

Community leaders, you are wonderful partners. You shepherd our students into the working world. You mentor our students and provide settings in which they put their education to work. You involve us in developing the full potential of your employees. You are visionary leaders, and I appreciate what you do for our students. I applaud you; this assembly applauds you; and you should applaud yourselves!

Here is my challenge for you.

You are at the front line of the future of industry, technology and education. I implore you to bring us your challenges so that our students will build the future with you.

**Students:** Now students...it's all about you. You are the reason why our scholarly faculty and dedicated staff show up each day. You are the reason why our alumni and business community invest in this institution. And because we all believe in you, we have launched a capital campaign that is all about you!

You have heard me challenge our faculty, staff, alumni, and community leaders to help prepare you for the future. We will require you to solve problems that seem unsolvable, but we know that it is only a matter of time before you see what others do not; and develop new ideas, new theories and new solutions that will move society forward.

Rotary phones have transitioned to cell phones.

Records have transitioned to Spotify.

Encyclopedias have transitioned to Wikipedia.

These examples became reality because some people saw something that others did not. They transitioned from thinking, "That is not possible," to imagining the possible. And that's why we named the campaign, "Imagine the Possible."

Our commitment to you through this campaign is to make a world-class Millersville University education affordable; so that you will see what others do not; so that you will be prepared to fill jobs that do not yet exist; so that you will be the ones to invent the future...to imagine the possible.

Our goal is to raise \$32 million in private support by 2020 to assist with three priority areas: *Scholarships, Student Learning Experiences; and Marauder Athletics.*

Our scholarship goal of \$10 million will ensure that Millersville remains accessible, affordable, and competitive.

Our goal of \$16 million for student learning experiences will enable you to participate in high-impact practices to further academic engagement and practical application of your studies.

And I am glad to share with you that Marauder Athletics is one of the priorities in our University-wide fundraising campaign. With a goal of \$6 million, we are establishing scholarships to ensure a championship-caliber experience to equip our Marauders to excel on the field as well as in the classroom.

I'd like to take a moment to share an example of a Marauder scholar athlete who exemplifies success inside and outside the classroom.

Last season, Kyra Brakefield, a junior forward for our Field Hockey team, ranked fourth in assists, was a PSAC scholar-athlete, made it to the Dean's List for the fourth time and to the Division II National Academic team.

But wait, there's more.

She was selected to participate in the Integrated Computational and Experimental Research Experience for Undergraduates at North Carolina State University.

Let's take a moment to hear from Kyra.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=X6YPmY7W5Vw&feature=youtu.be>

Thank you, Kyra, for sharing how the "Imagine the Possible" campaign and private support have impacted your life.

Kyra's experience at Millersville is one to which every student should have access. I am pleased to share with you that since July 1, 2017, "Imagine the Possible" has already raised \$16 million to support student success!

This is for you students! You are intelligent and industrious. I applaud you; this assembly applauds you; and you should applaud yourselves!

Students, we are working diligently to expand your access to internships, service learning, study abroad and summer programs. Your faculty is eager to engage and mentor you.

This is my challenge to you. Take advantage of all that Millersville and your faculty have to offer. Do not be bound by the brick walls or the technological footprint of the campus. Pursue your educational goals and aspirations so that you see what others do not. We expect you to invent the future. We need you to imagine the possible.

Now I come to our Council of Trustees. I appreciate your hard work last year with the presidential search and transition. You are very dedicated and generous. For example, when you enter the Lombardo Welcome Center or the SMC dining hall, you will see flags of several countries hanging from the ceiling. The addition of this international flavor to our campus was made possible by the generosity of the Chairman of the Council of Trustees, and it is a demonstration of leadership by example. I hope others will follow suit.

You are a supportive and considerate group of people, and I appreciate what you do for our students. I applaud you; this assembly applauds you; and you should applaud yourselves!

My challenge to you is to continue your support, not only for me as President, but also of the faculty, staff, and our students. I challenge you to engage in the “Imagine the Possible” campaign, not only by your own giving but by sharing the Millersville story and encouraging others to give.

At this point you must be wondering, “Well what exactly is this new president going to do?” And that’s a fair question, so let me address that.

For this academic year, I will listen, learn, build relationships, and assess all facets of our University. I will continue to advance our fundraising campaign working tirelessly towards raising funds to ensure our students’ success. Rest assured that when I am not on campus, I will be sharing our story, our vision, of making the exceptional Millersville educational experience available to more students.

The process of building relationships, listening and learning began in earnest during my trips to Lancaster County earlier this year. Along with my wife, Dr. Judith Wubah, I met with campus, civic and business leaders to introduce myself and to strengthen the strong ties between Millersville and the Lancaster community.

To further these discussions, and to hear from all of you, I am inviting Marauders from across the country and around the world to join me for a candid conversation about the

future of our University. My office and our Advancement office will coordinate the Listening Tours.

You can find a listing on the President's Office website [<http://www.millersville.edu/president/listening-tour.php>]. These tours will take place in the coming months with in-person gatherings and on-line fora for Millersville students, alumni, parents, friends, faculty and staff.

To guide these conversations, I am asking "Listening Tour" attendees to share their unique 'Ville story and specifically to reflect on these three key questions. These are:

- 1) What do we do best?
- 2) What are we not doing?
  - a. And finally,
- 3) What are your hopes and aspirations for Millersville University?

Your thoughts will serve as a guide as we define what is needed to support our students, and as we strive to make Millersville the model of exceptional and affordable education.

The timing of these sessions is fortuitous in that we are also preparing for our Middle States review and development of our next strategic plan. We have decided that our Middle States Self-Study Report will not just reflect where we have been, but will be aspirational in nature. So, your participation in these listening tours will provide valuable information as we reexamine our vision and mission statements and realign our institutional priorities.

Your input will also assist me as I fill key positions. The first order of business will be to fill the Chief Diversity Officer position, and that search is currently underway. In addition, there are some key senior leadership positions that need to be filled; we will begin working on those searches as soon as possible.

Together, we can craft a shared vision for our institution. I encourage you to attend a listening tour session, participate in a Middle States self study, or serve on a search committee.

The collective intelligence of our community will enable us to determine our priorities and our aspirations. Your insights will help us to unlock Millersville University's immense potential. **Together we will create the vision of a future in which we can all see ourselves; where we will all be empowered to own this place – MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY!**

We still have challenges to face – closing the graduation gap for our underrepresented students; providing necessary services and support for our students to graduate in a timely fashion with minimum debt, and ensuring our financial security, to name a few.

It will take hard work, but we are no strangers to hard work. It will take thoughtful creativity, but we are no strangers to this concept either.

Now I issue this challenge -- to those assembled here and those joining us online; to our faculty, staff and administrators; to our alumni; to our community partners; and to our students:

- **Together**, let us resolve to make this institution the model of how comprehensive universities can contribute towards addressing critical societal challenges.
- **Together**, let us resolve to educate students who will be recognized for inventing the future so that others will seek partnerships with Millersville University.
- **Together**, let us resolve to become the exceptional higher education model of student success; faculty excellence; staff hospitality; community partnerships; alumni support; and board engagement.
- And, **together**, let us resolve to establish our university - **Millersville University** - as a premier institution of higher education; the **best** public liberal arts university; first in PASSHE, then in Pennsylvania, then on the East Coast and finally in the nation.
- **Together**, we will pursue this goal strategically, systematically and unapologetically. The best University in the nation...**THE 'VILLE!**

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you in a few moments at the Garden Supper at Tanger House!