

Millersville University

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Dec.
2019

It seems like just yesterday that we kicked off the start of the semester at the State of the 'Ville. Yet, here we are at the end of the fall semester and getting ready to celebrate the holiday season. As I proclaimed in the State of the 'Ville speech, it is going to be a great year! I am proud to report that we are well on our way to fulfilling that pledge, and it is truly reflective of the efforts of our entire campus community. Thank you all for your unwavering support of our students and our university.

In this month's issue, I highlight our fall commencement ceremony that took place this past weekend. We celebrated the academic success of over 400 graduates and we honored six distinguished alumni for their hard work and dedication. It was a glorious day! In addition, I want to call your attention to our new degree program in Population Health and the promise of a new piece of scientific equipment, both of which will make a difference for our current and future students. Finally, my special thanks to all of our faculty and staff who have played a significant role in charting our future as part of the Strategic Plan and Facilities Master Plan initiatives.

As we head into the holiday break, remember to take time to relax and recharge from the rapid pace of the past semester. Enjoy time with your family and friends and take a moment to reflect on the many blessings in your life. I am looking forward to seeing you in 2020 to launch an exciting new decade for Millersville University. Peace, blessings and joy to you and your families.

WINTER COMMENCEMENT

Graduation is the biggest day in the life of a university. It marks the culmination of years of work, late nights, coffee, energy drinks and a lot of perseverance by our students. On Sunday I had the privilege of shaking the hands of 432 Millersville University students who graduated in our December commencement.

I was honored to greet students like Abbey Ford, a political science/government affairs major, who spent the past two years serving as the Millersville University student representative to the Millersville Borough Council. Abbey was a big help in liaising with our very important neighbors.

Another one of our stellar students crossing the stage was Steve Forsythe who graduated Magna Cum Laude with a degree in mathematics. Steve had a tough journey, but is now on track and already landed a job as an Actuarial Analyst in Lancaster.

I also greeted Poushali Ghosh, who majored in meteorology with minors in computer science and mathematics. She received the Hollings scholarship and interned at the Earth Systems Research Lab in Boulder, Colorado. She was also heavily involved with the Student Government Association. Next up is graduate school in atmospheric science.

Congratulations to Abbey, Steve, Poushali and every one of our students who graduated on Sunday.

It was also a pleasure to present an honorary degree to Andrea Shirk, the general manager of Rock Lititz and to hear the words of encouragement from Michael Shirk, CEO of The High Companies. Like all our students, Mr. Shirk did his homework, speaking with 10 recent alums who work for him at The High Companies to get their perspective on Millersville. I certainly agree with the alums who told Mr. Shirk how much they appreciate our great faculty and the investment they make in our students.

NEW POPULATION HEALTH PROGRAM

Workforce development is one of my goals for the University. It is important that we prepare our students for careers that are in-demand in the larger Lancaster community, as we collaborate with business leaders to set our students up for success.

Our partnership with LGH-Penn Medicine is a great example of this collaborative spirit. One goal of this collaboration is for Millersville to develop classes to assist in providing healthcare professionals in Central Pennsylvania with the emerging skills and tasks they need for careers in public health and population health management.

I'm excited to report that Dean Michael Jackson has begun work on a certificate program in Population Health with collaboration between our nursing, social work, sociology and other departments on campus. Our goal is to launch the certificate in fall 2020, with a full degree program to follow.

Healthcare administration is the single fastest-growing sector within healthcare and the goal of this program is to provide these professionals, along with members of their healthcare teams, such as nurses, social workers, IT technicians and others, with a better understanding of population health and value-based care.

Millersville is well-suited to lead the initiative to prepare graduates for careers in healthcare. We have all the right ingredients; faculty expertise, curriculum, relationships with local healthcare agencies who are leaders in the field, and the infrastructure to initiate such a program.

I am excited to see these programs develop over the next year.

NEW MICROSCOPE

The hard work of our faculty in the College of Science and Technology has paid off with a National Science Foundation grant (\$287,234) to purchase a Scanning Electron Microscope. The instrument will be a strategic resource for our institution and the surrounding community because it will advance scientific inquiries and drive collaborative research among academic institutions and industry.

We have not had a microscope with this type of capabilities since 2012. It will allow our students to work with and understand the functionality of a state-of-the-art, advanced microscope while studying structures that previously couldn't be seen. Right now, the highest attainable magnifications with the light microscopes on campus are around 1,000 times. The new electron microscope can attain magnification higher than 300,000 times. Students and professors will soon be able to study tiny nanostructures. Previously, they had to travel to Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington D.C. to use such equipment. Now, we have that right here in Millersville.

The microscope will also provide opportunities to work with our local schools and organizations. The grant proposal highlighted how Millersville would work with Lancaster County schools and non-profits, like the North Museum and Lancaster Science Factory, to use the instrument. We are excited about future collaborations with these organizations.

I would like to thank Dr. Maria Schiza, the Principal Investigator of the National Science Foundation Grant, along with co-PI's Drs. Christopher Hardy, Charlton Wolfgang and Jeremiah Mbindyo. We expect the new Scanning Electron Microscope to be in use by the 2020 fall semester.

UPDATE ON 2025 STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The fall semester has been a busy time for the countless members of faculty, staff and students who volunteered their time to participate in the 2025 Strategic Planning Design process. More than 80 members of our campus community are members of the All University Council (AUC), which has been charged with crafting our next strategic plan.

Through the hard work of the Phase Teams and under the leadership of Assistant Vice President for Institutional Assessment and Planning, Dr. Lisa Shibley; Interim Chief of Staff, Dr. Victor DeSantis; and Associate Professor of Communications & Theatre, Dr. Jennifer Wood, the AUC has examined the University's mission and vision statements and begun the work of crafting strategic issues that will guide goals and objectives for the University.

The AUC is currently seeking feedback on the mission and vision statements from our wider University community. Tomorrow is your last chance to [fill out this survey](#). Don't miss the opportunity. Dr. Shibley says that the AUC and Phase Teams have worked very hard this semester to lay the groundwork for a strong strategic plan that will see Millersville University into 2025. Recommendations from the AUC have been given to the Strategic Advisory Council for their review. When we return from winter break, the work will continue. Next steps for the group are moving, "from the conceptual to the practical phase," as Dr. DeSantis told the team at their last meeting.

STATE VISITS

Millersville received attention this fall from two state agencies; we had the pleasure of hosting both the Secretary of Human Services for Pennsylvania and the Auditor General for Pennsylvania.

On Nov. 20, Secretary Teresa Miller toured Millersville University's Campus Cupboard food pantry to learn about food and other assistance programs available to students. Secretary Miller also met with students, faculty and administrators to discuss challenges and barriers students face every day and potential solutions, including increasing Pennsylvania's minimum wage.

A Government Accountability Office report released in January 2019 indicates that at least one in three college students do not always have enough to eat. Additionally, 71 percent of college students today do not fit the model of a "typical" college student and may be financially independent, work at least part time, enroll in and stay in college at a later age, or have dependent children. These factors, when paired with other challenges students face such as cost of tuition, lodging and/or transportation, books, and supplies, can create significant barriers to making ends meet.

On Nov. 7, Auditor General Eugene DePasquale hosted a roundtable in Duncan Alumni House on campus regarding college affordability and college debt. His visit was to talk to students and administrators in an effort to gather information on student debt burdens. The roundtable was part of his follow-up report on a performance audit of the state's student loan agency. The Auditor General is holding similar discussions across the state with current students and recent graduates about the challenges of paying for college.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

Over the past 10 years, the University has experienced a lot of change especially from a facilities perspective. Twenty buildings were expanded and renovated, new residence halls were built and the first Zero Energy building was constructed.

Those projects were made possible with the guidance of a comprehensive facilities master plan that served as a roadmap. Earlier this month, our Council of Trustees approved our new facilities master plan. The plan's primary focus is the concept of developing a new science building - assuming that the campus population will remain relatively static (no major growth or reduction).

This plan also contains many more project concepts ranging from short to long term plans. Some of the proposed projects include:

Short term, 1-5 years out:

- Landscaping and grounds maintenance to ensure our campus is a first-class destination university
- Wayfinding and exterior signage to help people navigate around campus
- Residential house assessment to identify improvements, such as handicap accessibility, that are needed

5-15 years out:

- New Science and Technology facility at former Gaige Hall site
- Brooks Gym renovation
- Caputo Hall renovation and Roddy Hall demolition
- Pucillo Gym renovation
- Stadium projects
- University Research Park / Maker Space

15-25 years out:

- Develop former Roddy Hall site for Tennis Courts and/or parking
- Construct new academic building(s) in southeast section of campus
- Pedestrian mall at South George Street and reconfigure McComsey Hall parking lot

All of the projects are dependent on funding. A brief overview of the concepts is available online at: <https://www.millersville.edu/facmgmt/administration/cfmp-workshop-presentation.pdf>.