

Millersville University

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Sept.  
2021

Dear Millersville University Community,

As we head into fall, I am looking forward to welcome the cooler temperatures and beautiful foliage that blankets our campus in vibrant colors. Based on activities across campus during the first weeks of the semester, it is safe to say we are returning to our new “post-pandemic normal.” From sporting events through admission open houses to classes being held in our campus tents, the activity level has increased considerably. A special thank you to all those who attended the State of the ‘Ville event and shared your enthusiasm at the garden supper; it was a glorious evening. For those unable to join us, the video and other artifacts from the day are [available online](#).

I express my appreciation to the campus for your continued vigilance in our efforts to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. We recently did our first round of asymptomatic surveillance testing for students. During the two testing days, 360 students attended. Of these, 153 were tested and 207 opted out due to being fully vaccinated. The good news is that we had no positive case among the 153 students tested. The next round of surveillance testing will be held September 29th and 30th. Faculty and staff who wish to participate in the surveillance testing program on one of those dates are encouraged to [register in advance here](#).

At the end of the fourth week of the semester, we have a cumulative number of 71 positive cases of COVID-19 in our community. This number is relatively lower than what is occurring on other campuses. I applaud everyone who is contributing toward our safety, especially our COVID Monitoring Team. Also, I am grateful for the cooperation of our students, faculty and staff that has led to this low number. But we need to be vigilant and continue to follow the simple guidelines and rules that will keep our community safe. Members of our campus community are reminded that face coverings are required while in indoor common spaces (e.g., classrooms, hallways, meeting rooms) regardless of vaccination status and regardless of social distance. Individuals are not required to wear face coverings in private spaces, such as residence hall suites or when alone in offices.

In this month’s newsletter, I share highlights about the success of our faculty colleagues in the competitive PASSHE faculty grants process. An update is provided on one of our new

academic programs in the sciences. Finally, I spotlight two of this year's student leaders - Leizel Schlott of the Student Government Association and Madison Whitcomb of the Council of Trustees.

I look forward to seeing you on campus in the weeks ahead and remind you to join us for the fast-approaching Homecoming Weekend in October.

Daniel A. Wubah  
University President

## MILLERSVILLE TOPS PASSHE FACULTY PROFESSIONAL GRANTS

Each year, PASSHE's Faculty Professional Development Council awards grants to professors to support their scholarly and creative endeavors. Millersville University faculty topped the chart this year with more proposals submitted than any of the other State System schools. That resulted in Millersville faculty receiving more money for their grants than any other institution.

Of the 15 submitted, eight proposals from Millersville were accepted with total funding coming in at \$59,825. We feature two of the winning grants.

Dr. Jennifer Frank's proposal was one of the eight accepted. The associate professor in our School of Social Work is using the funding to support a pen pal project dubbed Stepping Stones. The purpose of this project is to decrease social distance between groups and increase empathy by pairing community members from rural and urban areas with students of social work and sociology as pen pals in order to better understand the ways in which social connection can decrease loneliness and increase generativity.

A research project investigating the effects of vaping on the esophagus was also approved for faculty member Dr. Heather Lehman, assistant professor in biology. There is not much research in this area, and Dr. Lehman plans to study human cells that line the esophagus to observe the effects of vaping on those cells and any changes they may undergo.

I am so impressed by our brilliant faculty members who continue to pioneer important research across a wide array of disciplines. Please join me in congratulating them on their success. You can view the full list of these awards on the [SOTV website](#).

## \$1.9 MILLION GRANT TO TRAIN BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Thanks to a [\\$1.9 million grant](#), Central Pennsylvania will soon have more well-trained behavioral health professionals. The grant to Millersville University is from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. Karen Rice, chair of the [School of Social Work](#) says the project will help to teach graduate students about the unique needs and challenges found in today's behavioral health fields. The grant will also give students the chance to gain valuable work experience with one of our community partners. In addition, students will receive a \$10,000 stipend upon completion of their specialized training and internship.

The "Promoting Rigorous and Interdisciplinary Mental Healthcare Education" project, otherwise known as PRIME, will provide clinical training opportunities for graduate students in the Masters of Social Work and Clinical Psychology programs. [PRIME](#) is co-directed by Rice and Dr. Debra Vredenburg-Rudy, chair of [psychology](#). Additional PRIME leadership team members include Drs. Leonora Foels, Laura Granruth, Curtis Proctor, Karena Rush, Kat Walsh, and School of Social Work Field Director, Heather Strohman.

Congratulations to Drs. Rice and Vredenburg-Rudy and their leadership team.

## PSSI READY FOR SEMESTER

After six weeks of work, the students selected to participate in Millersville University's [Pre-Scholars Summer Institute](#) program are ready for the semester!

The PSSI program, which takes place from July to the start of freshman orientation in August, is an extensive program that counts for six credits. Students who participate in the program learn valuable skills that help them adapt to and succeed in higher education.

The program consists of numerous workshops, classes and programs all designed to help students get a feel for what their typical day might look like in a college setting. The program began each day with breakfast at 7 a.m., and then math class for three hours until lunch. From there, they attended English or anthropology classes until 3:30 p.m. After classes, the students participated in workshops from 4-5 p.m. on topics such as mental health, Millersville University's Library, study skills, diversity, code of conduct, University police and more.

Forty-seven students were selected and participated in the PSSI. These students represent 14 different majors, including biology, sports management, education and applied engineering.

The program also provides various mentoring opportunities for the students. Additionally, they are given training for their various student accounts, ordering textbooks and other important factors that will aid in their transition to freshman year.

The PSSI is hosted by the Office of Student Access and Support Services. By focusing on college readiness and access, the office hosts various programs to help students through their time at Millersville University. For more information, visit <https://www.millersville.edu/sass/>.

## NEW STUDENT LEADERS

Leizel Schlott is the president of Millersville University's Student Government Association and Madison Whitcomb was recently sworn in as the student member on the Council of Trustees for Millersville University.

Originally from Narrowsburg, New York, Schlott is a senior majoring in International Studies. She previously served as director of SGA social affairs. Schlott hopes to increase SGA's activity on campus through volunteering and outreach efforts to students and organizations. Schlott also hopes to develop fundraising events that will allow students to raise money for organizations and departments on campus. To learn more about [Millersville SGA, click here](#).

Every Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) university has an eleven-member Council of Trustees that includes one student. Whitcomb was sworn in earlier this year after being approved by PASSHE's Chancellor and appointed by the governor.

The responsibilities of the trustees can be found in Act 188 of 1982. Amongst them is making recommendations to the chancellor for the appointment and dismissal of the president. They also approve the university budget, new academic programs, contracts, and fees other than tuition. The president frequently consults with the trustees about University issues.

Whitcomb is a rising senior from Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. She is an honors student with a dual major in Mathematics and Economics.

Congratulations to both of these student leaders.

## MILLERSVILLE FALL SPORTS ARE BACK!

It is great to see our student-athletes in competition again after more than 600 days away. Our men's soccer team, the two-time defending PSAC champions, are off to a fast start again with a 5-1 record and ranked No. 12 in Division II.

Likewise, the field hockey team is back to its winning ways, undefeated and ranked No. 6 in Division II. Bri Harsh, the recent PSAC Athlete of the Week, leads the conference in goals scored.

Our football, cross country, tennis, golf, women's soccer and women's volleyball teams are also competing each week. We've already seen tremendous fan support at our many home events. I encourage you to visit [millersvilleathletics.com](http://millersvilleathletics.com) and check out the teams' schedules to see when you can show your Marauder Pride and support the teams at home. I know they appreciate the support.