

Millersville University

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Feb.
2024

The Spring semester appears to be moving faster than anyone can imagine, and Spring break is already around the corner. Although I enjoy the stunning beauty of our campus with each snowfall, I am looking forward to warmer weather in the next few weeks.

With a message of "Give to What You Love," our campus community came together in grand fashion on Feb. 14, 2024, to benefit our students. Thanks to your generous support, we raised \$826,634 from 2,276 gifts in 24 hours, a new record for the highest fundraising total in the 11-year history of the event. No matter the size, every gift mattered, and this event was another demonstration of the 'Ville spirit. For that, I am grateful!

My thanks go to the Advancement team for leading the successful event, which included many University staff, faculty, students and volunteers who played important roles in helping us reach new philanthropic heights. I heard our students enjoyed the evening event, and we plan to bring it back next year. I am incredibly grateful to our student-athletes, coaches, staff, and alums for engaging in heated competitions that raised over \$550,000, representing about two-thirds of this year's total.

A special congratulations to our challenge winners:

- Most dollars raised: women's golf and men's basketball.
- Most gifts given: field hockey and baseball.
- Most dollars increase: women's golf and men's golf.
- Most donors increase: field hockey and men's tennis.

In this edition of my monthly updates, you will read about several new initiatives and programs to support our students, including a grant to combat food insecurity, a Meditation and Mindfulness space, and a program to promote natural resource studies and careers in conservation. Our goal is to provide holistic education supporting our students' bodies, minds, and spirits. You can also catch up on news about our athletics teams and the upcoming Spring Job and Internship Fair.

GRANT ADDRESSES FOOD INSECURITY ON CAMPUS

Millersville University is the recipient of a \$40,000 Hunger-Free Campus Grant as one of 30 institutions to receive support from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. These grants, originating under the Wolf Administration and continued by the Shapiro Administration, are awarded to help schools address food insecurity on campus and create initiatives to expand awareness of the issue.

With the 2022-23 grant, the University was able to renovate space at the HUB, which allowed it to expand its kitchen, the Campus Cupboard, and the facilities' restrooms for ADA compliance. The HUB provides four hot meals each week for free, along with free grab-and-go breakfast items and snacks daily. The Campus Cupboard allows students to "shop" for grocery items once a week at no charge, including fresh food and even personal hygiene items.



To build off the progress made by last year's grant, part of the funds this year will be used to create a "Sub-HUB Station" in the Student Memorial Center. Unopened food items are collected in boxes by the Food Recovery Network near the Galley and the Anchor and then delivered to the HUB. The Sub-HUB Station would provide a more prominent space with refrigeration and shelving, so more students know about the resource.

Additionally, the funding will be used to further expand the HUB's outreach. Dr. Mary Beth Williams, vice president for student affairs, explains that more students are utilizing the HUB now. "The HUB currently serves around 350 students per week, and the student use of the Campus Cupboard continues to rise," she says. "With this grant, MU will provide funding to The HUB for expanded meal programming and funding for increased advertisement about HUB services throughout campus."

She continues, "Having a wonderful community partner like The HUB is essential to serving our food insecure students, and finding ways to communicate with students about the resources is vital to that success."

A third goal is to use the grant to provide students with hot meals and distribution of food items during the holiday break. "Many students, primarily our international students, LGBTQ+ students and students who were raised in the foster care system, do not have another place to go during the break when the campus dining facilities are not regularly open," says Williams.

Ultimately, these initiatives are another way to showcase the University's commitment to its EPPIIC Values. "At its heart, this grant proposal is about sharing," says Williams. "Students want to share food they have with other students in need, and Millersville faculty, staff and the HUB all want to support students in any way they can. With this funding, our community can come together and help feed students in need."

2024 SPRING JOB AND INTERNSHIP FAIR

Millersville students have the opportunity to make contact with potential employers at the Spring Job and Internship Fair.

The Spring Job and Internship Fair will be held on Mar. 19 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Ville Courts in the Student Memorial Center. This event is for current Millersville students, as well as alumni. The fair will host around 150 companies and organizations with the goal of representing many career fields. A complete list of employers that will be present can be found on [Handshake](#).



Students are encouraged to attend and discuss the opportunities available for internships and full-time jobs directly with employers. "The fair is a great opportunity to practice talking with employers, many of whom are Millersville alumni," says Shelly Cauthen, administrative assistant of the Career Center and coordinator of the Spring Job and Internship Fair. This event allows for networking opportunities that students may not otherwise encounter. "There really isn't a better way to meet multiple employers in one specific location and get it all done at one time," says Cauthen. By talking with employers and asking questions, students can get an impression of their future career fields, as well as of local employment opportunities.

Internship opportunities will be in abundance, with around 100 positions available. "Internships give students an opportunity to gain confidence in a field before they secure a particular position, which gives them a leg up as they enter the actual workforce," says Cauthen. Working an internship allows students to get hands-on experience that can't be replicated in the classroom. Experiencing an internship can also help prompt students' decisions for future career choices, whether they choose to stay in the same industry or not. "We've had students do an internship and say, 'Wow, I thought this is what I wanted to do, and it's nothing like what I expected it to be,'" says Cauthen. Internships aid students in making informed decisions regarding their career paths.

Those planning to attend the Spring Job and Internship Fair are encouraged to update their resume beforehand and bring printed copies to leave with potential employers. Attendees are also encouraged to dress appropriately in business casual attire for the fair. Assistance with obtaining professional clothing for students is available through the Thrift Shop, call: 717-872-4571

NEW SPACES FOR STUDENT SUPPORT AND SUCCESS

New this semester, Millersville students now have a Meditation and Mindfulness room and a Title IX student meeting space.

Located in room 203 of the Student Memorial Center, the Meditation and Mindfulness room provides a physical refuge for students seeking to focus on practices that promote their spiritual and mental well-being.

“After reviewing room usage data within the SMC, we chose to transform an underutilized conference room into an active space that will provide ongoing support to our student body,” says John Hearn, director of operations of the Student Memorial Center at Millersville University.



The Meditation and Mindfulness room promotes privacy by including newly painted white walls, three chairs on the perimeter, a tower lamp, four salt lamps, additional prayer rugs, meditation and mindfulness cards and resources, sound machines to reduce the noise and tinted windows. To remind students who use the space of the MU's [EPPIIC value](#) of inclusion, the focal point of the room is a handmade wooden map of the world on the central wall.

“Although long-term plans are vital for growth, the Division of Student Affairs desired to provide space that will meet and address the needs of our students today,” says Hearn.

Whether students choose to use it for prayer, meditation or reflection, the space is designed with many needs in mind. It aims to support various faiths, promote positive mental health practices, and create a welcoming environment for exploring personal interests.

During the spring semester, the SMC will operate from Monday – Friday, 7 – 12 a.m., Saturdays from 8 – 12 a.m., and Sundays from 9 – 12 a.m. The room will be opened on a walk-in basis. If students prefer, they may use this room on their own for up to 20 minutes at a time by changing the name of the door from empty to occupied.

The Title IX student meeting space is a private and confidential trauma-informed meeting/interview space where students can meet with the Title IX Coordinator, University Investigator and/or their advisor during the Title IX Process. The Title IX student meeting space is located within Dilworth 204

“Trauma-informed interview spaces, also known as soft interview rooms, are integral for the Title IX office to be able to fully and properly respond to reports of sexual misconduct on campus,” says Bradley Davis, Title IX coordinator and labor relations specialist. “Evidence-based practices call for a trauma-informed approach to reports of rape and sexual assault, and a soft interview room is considered an integral component of the trauma-informed approach.”

“Creating a space that is comfortable rather than stark allows the participant to feel physically and emotionally safe and can have a significant impact on the interview process,” says Davis.

With its location in the Dilworth Building, the Title IX student meeting space is separated from other student spaces on campus, giving privacy and confidentiality to all those who meet with the Title IX office.

The most efficient way a student can report sexual misconduct and initiate the University's investigation processes is by filling out the [sexual misconduct report form](#).

Available to all Millersville students:

- [Resources](#): If students need information on counseling, health services or related resources, Title IX staff members can provide warm referrals to both on- and off-campus providers.
- [Supportive Measures](#): If you need a change in your on-campus arrangement, a No-Contact Order with another Millersville affiliate or other accommodations related to your Title IX concern, Title IX staff members can assist with those processes.
- [Reporting](#): If you want to file a formal complaint with the University, MUPD or another police department, the Title IX office can walk you through the options available and connect you to appropriate offices.

A member of the Millersville University community may also choose to contact Mr. Davis at (717)- 871-4100.

TASK FORCE PROVIDES RECOMMENDATIONS TO LEVERAGE LOCATION

As I often say, we are fortunate to be in Lancaster County. For institutions of higher education, location is instrumental in defining a distinctive character. Millersville University's location makes us exceptionally fortunate.

Not only are we situated in the charming, comfortable and safe borough of Millersville, but we are also only a few miles from Lancaster City, which routinely ranks among the best small cities in the country. Our broader home, Lancaster County, attracted more than 10 million visitors in 2022.

Jointly, there is a vibrant food, arts and culture scene and abundant outdoor recreation opportunities. Finally, our region is home to a strong base of businesses, industries, and nonprofits to provide our students with limitless possibilities for service projects, internships and employment.

Recently, a task force of faculty and staff examined how we may better leverage our location and all it offers. Throughout their meetings, the group learned how the University currently engages the region in our activities and began developing new opportunities to deepen that engagement.

Over the weeks ahead, we will explore ways for the University to further our relationships with the city, county and region. Examples of short- and long-term activities include:

- Collect and expand the inventory of current curricular engagement with the region;



- Develop signature experiences across the student enrollment lifecycle;
- Increase the visibility of regional engagement conducted through University centers;
- Promote existing opportunities led by student organizations that provide regional immersion experiences;
- Provide familiarization tours of Lancaster City for key student groups and;
- Engage students with public transportation to increase their comfort in accessing Lancaster City and the region.

I look forward to continuing this conversation and providing updates over the months ahead.

PROGRAM STRIVES TO EXPAND REPRESENTATION IN ECOLOGY FIELD

A game-changing grant was awarded to the Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society during the 2022-2023 academic year. This financial boost is not just about dollars and cents; it resonates with a Millersville University professor because the grant fosters interactive field opportunities and transformative experiences specifically curated for systematically underrepresented minority students. The goal? To ignite a passion for ecology, natural resource studies and careers in conservation.



“My career goal is to work in the fields of wildlife ecology and natural resource management to improve conditions for wild plants and animals,” says Dr. Aaron Haines, professor of biology at Millersville University. “Having professional ecologists and natural resource managers that consist of individuals from diverse backgrounds and life experiences produces more robust solutions to our natural resource problems.”

Putting the grant to use, the chapter collaborated with Millersville University and Delaware Valley University. Together, they are actively recruiting underrepresented students and organizing various activities. The overarching objective is to facilitate a more seamless integration of these students into the wildlife field. The initiatives include wildlife excursions, professional workshops, field experiences, and conference participation. These efforts aim to enhance the overall experience for underrepresented individuals, fostering a stronger connection within the dynamic realm of wildlife studies.

The grant helped cover travel expenses, food, entrance and registration fees. It also provided seed money for additional grant opportunities to support further opportunities for underrepresented minority students seeking to be involved in wildlife-related activities.

“My colleague Dr. Brent Horton was a great inspiration with his establishment of the Biology Mentoring Program on campus,” says Haines. The BMP provides additional support for underrepresented biology students. Based on these experiences, I feel I could do more to help diversify the fields of wildlife ecology and natural resource management.

The inaugural excursion occurred in the fall at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, a nonprofit refuge in Central Pennsylvania focused on raptor conservation. This hands-on experience gave participants valuable insights into the world of raptors and enhanced their understanding of conservation efforts at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.

If students want to become more active in the outdoors, Haines recommends some of the great clubs on campus, such as the Conestoga Club. He also invites students to volunteer with his [Applied Conservation Lab](#).

SPRING SEMESTER SPORTS ROUNDUP

It is a busy time of year in Millersville Athletics as the winter sports teams enter postseason action, and our spring sports are starting! The men's basketball team is in contention for a PSAC East championship and an NCAA Tournament berth. Two crucial home games are remaining! Coach Casey Stitzel's team hosts nationally ranked East Stroudsburg on Saturday, Feb. 24 and rival West Chester on Feb. 28. Those games will significantly impact our team's championship hopes! This Saturday is Senior Day for both the men's and women's programs, and we will be honoring former head coach Mary Fleig as part of the festivities.



I want to congratulate the women's swimming program and first-year head coach Evan Anthony for their performance at the PSAC Championships, where they tied their best-ever finish and qualified their most swimmers ever. The track and field team also finished sixth at the PSAC Indoor Championships, with freshman Chanel Hercules placing as the runner-up and breaking a 13-year-old school record. Darian Hauf earned All-PSAC honors in the pole vault for the third time in her career.

Baseball and softball are off to fast starts. The baseball team is ranked No. 6 in the nation and recently returned from a trip to Houston where it had the chance to play in Minute Maid Park, the home field of Astros' outfielder and 'Ville alum Chas McCormick '17. As the weather continues to warm, I hope you can cheer for our teams at Seaber Stadium, Cooper Park, Biemesderfer Stadium and McComsey Tennis Courts.