

Millersville University

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

March  
2023

Dear Campus Community,

As April approaches, the calendar signals that we are in the home stretch of another successful academic year. Trees are beginning to bud, flowers are blooming, and our resident swans, Miller and S'Ville, are swimming regally around the campus pond.

While our current students are actively engaged in completing assignments and finishing their courses, hundreds of prospective students are visiting our campus as they explore their collegiate options.

Last Saturday, the enrollment management team, under the direction of Dr. Doug Zander, hosted Admitted Students Day to allow prospective students to meet with faculty, staff and current students. We have an additional Admitted Students Day on April 15, and the registration for the event is strong. Tomorrow, Saturday, April 1, we are hosting a Preview Day for high school juniors and their families. I appreciate the hard work of our faculty, staff and students in making these recruitment events successful.

I am optimistic about the early projections for the Fall first-year class, with over 650 deposits already received, which is about 30 deposits ahead of last year at the same time. Following several years of enrollment declines, our goal for Fall 2023 is to stabilize our total enrollment through strong recruitment and rising retention.

As I mentioned during the State of the 'Ville last September, student enrollment is our top priority this year. I encourage everyone on campus to view themselves as part of the recruitment and retention effort, with each employee playing a critical role in supporting our students, whether directly or indirectly.

This installment of the monthly newsletter highlights several exceptional student-faculty research experiences that are enhancing our students' preparation and advancing their disciplines. Also included is a spotlight on an exemplary student-athlete Margaret Thorwart '17, who has returned to campus to lead our CHEP program. You can also read more about our 2nd annual EPIIC Values Awards competition, a recent program on campus focused on the First Amendment and our plans for a popular recreation program.

I look forward to seeing you on April 11 at the Made-in-Millersville event, an athletic competition, or one of our many April activities.

## KITES PROVIDED BY NASA HELP STUDENTS COLLECT ATMOSPHERIC DATA



Our students' research with their professors is nothing short of spectacular. Earlier this semester, the Earth Science 488: Boundary Layer and Turbulence class taught by professor Dr. Greg Blumberg successfully deployed a network of kites to collect measurements. These kites have two primary purposes: research and education about the Planetary Boundary Layer, a layer of the atmosphere that starts at the earth's surface and is about a mile or two thick.

The kites were provided by the Aerokats and Rover Educational Network. "This is a NASA Science Activation Team which aims to introduce NASA technology and practices in authentic, experimental learning environments," says Blumberg. Some kites are used in lighter wind conditions (3 mph), whereas others are better for flying in faster winds (25 mph).

The instruments measure how the temperature, humidity and wind change with height. During a recent training with the ESCI 448 students, they were able to get all three sensors up at one time at Biemesderfer Stadium. This has never been done before and gave them a good chance to compare the different measurements.

"Even though we all live in the Planetary Boundary Layer, it's a very under-observed part of the atmosphere. It changes rapidly through the day and can impact a lot of hazardous phenomena like pollution or thunderstorm intensity. Kite-based observations can give us a better sense of what variability exists in the PBL," says Blumberg.

Prior to launching the kites, Blumberg and his students performed a hazard inventory where they surveyed the area to identify possible obstacles. "Usually, we identify things like trees, buildings, or powerlines. If there are strong wind gusts, it can be tiring to control the kite. The goal here is to build situational awareness so no one gets hurt," he explains. They discuss safety practices, which directly relate to what was learned from the Challenger and Columbia accidents. Students also build skills using computerized data tools widely used in meteorology to analyze data.

This exercise offers students a hands-on opportunity to apply concepts they learned. In class, they review different scenarios to understand how land characteristics influence atmospheric turbulence and boundary layer structures. The weather conditions along an urbanized Delaware beach can be quite different than in a central Pennsylvania valley filled with trees. So, not only does the hazard inventory help with safety, but students develop some initial explanation as to how the land surface characteristics at their flying site might be influencing the atmosphere.

"The primary equipment that takes the measurements is called an AeroPod, a NASA-licensed technology. The AeroPod is an aerodynamically stabilized platform where you can place a sensor or two on the front. The platform looks like a small airplane, and the "wings" help it turn into the wind," says Blumberg.

For more information about the Earth Sciences program, visit [MU ESCI Program](#).

## PROFESSOR, STUDENTS' WORK FEATURED IN 6 CO-WRITTEN ARTICLES



Having an article published with one student is an accomplishment, but having multiple articles published with students is exemplary. Millersville University chemistry professor Dr. Edward Rajaseelan has had six articles published with students over the past three years.

Below we highlight two of the published articles from current students.

Joshua Rushlow is a senior pursuing a bachelor's degree in chemistry. Rushlow's publication is titled "(Chlorido/bromido) [(1,2,5,6- $\eta$ )-cycloocta-1,5-diene] (4-isopropyl-1-methyl-1,2,4-triazol-5-ylidene)rhodium(I)."

Rushlow synthesized a rhodium organometallic catalyst, a complex that reduces the energy required for a reaction to start, thus increasing the rate of a chemical reaction without being used up in the reaction. After making the compound, he was able to crystallize the structure and it was characterized using X-Ray diffraction. This method gives the compound synthesized's exact structure and how it fits into a space with other molecules. The publication was of the crystal structure and all the accompanying data and information.

Elliott Newman is a senior pursuing a bachelor's degree in chemistry. Newman's publication is titled "(4-benzyl-1-methyl-1,2,4-triazol-5-ylidene)-[(1,2,5,6- $\eta$ )-Cycloocta-1,5 diene] (triphenylphosphane)iridium(I) Tetrafluoridoborate."

Newman studied the catalysts used in many industrial reactions. For example, the industries of pharmaceuticals, automotives and petrochemicals all use reactions involving catalysts. The new catalysts Newman synthesized have great potential for these types of reactions. Newman's publication is titled after a new catalyst he successfully synthesized and crystallized. Crystallizing this complex allowed him to understand its chemical structure on an atomic level by using X-ray diffraction, helping explain further why it was such a great catalyst in the various reactions.

## CHEP HAS NEW DIRECTOR AND NEW GRANT

Millersville University alumna Margaret Thorwart '17 was recently selected as the new director of the Elsie S. Shenk Center for Health Education and Promotion. She took over the role last fall. Thorwart was also the assistant field hockey coach and finished the season with the team while beginning the director role. During her time as a student at MU, Thorwart was a standout field hockey player.



"I'm excited to help students on their well-being journey so they can succeed at MU and beyond," says Thorwart.

One service that CHEP provides the campus is peer educators. PEs are trained student leaders who reach out to the campus community and provide individuals with important information on the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle. They provide students with the resources and services available at Millersville University and how to safely make the most out of their college experience.

CHEP provides lifestyle education programs, hosts awareness events, interacts with information tables, and provides educational resources to students on a comprehensive collection of topics, including alcohol and other drugs, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, healthy relationships, safer sex, mental health and stress and body image.

"I want to help students achieve success (whatever that looks like for them individually) on their life journey," says Thorwart.

One of Thorwart's major accomplishments since assuming the role as director of CHEP was receiving a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency to bring health and wellness coaching to Millersville's campus. The grant will help transition the existing wellness advocate program into wellness coaching. In addition to receiving training for herself and her graduate assistant, she was also able to get training for 16 members of the Student Affairs Division as well. Their training was in Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students and Cannabis Screening and Intervention for College Students, also known as BASICS and CASICS.

Thorwart's educational experience includes a bachelor's degree in speech communication with a concentration in public relations and minors in athletic coaching and entrepreneurship from Millersville University, a master's degree in communication studies from West Virginia University and a certificate in higher education policy and student affairs from West Chester University.

“My long-term goal has always been to return to my alma mater to give back what was given to me. I look forward to any opportunity to engage with students, staff, and faculty to promote development and the mission and values of MU,” explains Thorwart.

The mission of CHEP is to cultivate and sustain a healthy campus community by engaging students in intentional, diverse learning opportunities to build competencies leading to healthy lifestyle decision-making and student success.

For more information about the Elsie S. Shenk Center for Health and Education Promotion and upcoming events, [visit CHEP Info](#).

## FACTS VS. FEELINGS AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT

On Thursday, March 16, the panel discussion “Facts vs. Feelings” was held on campus to examine the First Amendment and Free Speech. The panel session, sponsored by the Community Response Team, Student Affairs, Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the MU Police Department, culminated a week of activities surrounding the First Amendment. Other activities included a tabling session on the First Amendment and information on bystander intervention.



Millersville University is committed to creating a diverse campus environment free from harassment and discrimination. The campus sometimes has uninvited visitors who use hateful, bigoted, sexist, homophobic and racist rhetoric. The panel, which included Ande Gonzalez, chief of Appeals and Legal Services with the Lancaster District Attorney’s Office; Jeffrey B. Hawkins, Chief Counsel for PASSHE; Dr. Rob Spicer, associate professor of Digital Journalism at Millersville; and Alyson Crose and Ronald Farrell, both

seniors at MU majoring in Government, Policy, and Law discussed what the University could do, what the legal rights are and appropriate responses from faculty, staff and students. Dr. Laura Granruth, associate professor in the School of Social Work who oversees the Center for Civic Responsibility and Leadership, moderated the discussion.

Some takeaways from the evening:

### **What is the First Amendment?**

Ande Gonzalez explained that it protects our ability to speak our minds. However, it's important to note that it doesn't protect us from hearing what others say.

### **Why aren't social media companies regulated?**

Jeffrey Hawkins says that when it comes to social media companies and free speech, they are simply a platform, and the First Amendment does not apply. They have protections against liability.

### **Why is offensive language protected?**

Alyson Crose said, "When students come here in their late teens and early 20s, they don't have a deep knowledge of the First Amendment. It's easy for students to say this speech shouldn't be protected, it's incredibly offensive, and I find it harmful. But that's exactly the speech that needs to be protected because if it were the other way around, you would want your speech protected."

### **Why can't the University arrest uninvited guests?**

Ande Gonzalez described how he had to stand and hear members of the Westboro Baptist Church tell a Marine's family at his funeral that he deserved to die because the U.S. military supports homosexuality. Gonzalez said, "What they said was harassing, alarming, offensive and caused emotional distress."

A case involving Westboro Baptist Church went to the U.S. Supreme court, which ruled that the followers of Westboro were protected under the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution.

### **What should faculty, staff and students do when someone is on campus spewing hate?**

Pete Anders, MU Police Chief, says the simplest thing is to just walk away. "These people want you to engage, they want you to do something dumb, so they can sue. Just walk away."

### **How do title IX and Title VI come into play?**

"They really don't," says Hawkins. "To have something fit, it would need to be constant, severe harassment that is ongoing. If they do it one time, it doesn't count. Now, if they follow you and harass you for a week, then it would be a factor."

### **Final takeaway?**

"The best course of action is to avert your eyes and cross to the other side of the sidewalk or street," says Ronald Farrell. "If you were on a public street and see or hear things you don't agree with or like, you walk away. You need to do the same thing on campus."

## **EPPIIC VALUE AWARDS RETURN TO MU**

Nominations are now open for the [2023 EPPIIC Value Awards](#). All full-time, part-time and temporarily employed University faculty, staff and departments/units are eligible for this award.





The EPPiIC Value Awards are meant to honor those at Millersville who best showcase the University's EPPiIC values – exploration, professionalism, public mission, inclusion, integrity and compassion. One award is made for each of the six values, and any faculty, staff or student can make a nomination.

“When an organization declares its values, as Millersville University has done in naming our EPPiIC values, it informs the community of employees, customers, visitors, vendors and all others who are exposed to the organization that these are the factors we consider when making decisions and planning the work that we do, and that these are the

behaviors that are expected of its employees when doing business on the University's behalf,” explains Employee Engagement Specialist Wendy Bowersox.

“The EPPiIC Value Award program is intended to recognize faculty and staff members who consistently exhibit these values. It also lets our employees know that their colleagues see and respect their work and behavior.”

Those who want to make a nomination are encouraged to [read over the guidelines](#). In addition to thoroughly reviewing what each of the values means and "look like," these guidelines explain that a nominee will have a greater chance of being selected if detailed descriptions of how they demonstrate a specific EPPiIC value are provided.

Award recipients will be selected by a screening committee, which includes representatives chosen by each of the Cabinet members, Human Resources and union presidents. The recipients will be announced during my 2023 State of the 'Ville address, where they will be awarded a plaque, a certificate and a designated parking space for one year.

Nominations will close on April 19 at 5 p.m. Any students, faculty or staff who would like to [make a nomination can do so here](#).

## A REDESIGN FOR THE MU DISC GOLF COURSE

One of the many outdoor programs campus recreation provides is getting a redesign and upgrade. Plans are in place for the disc golf course on campus to be redesigned and upgraded for a more positive playing experience for the campus community. Due to other campus renovations, the current course is missing a few holes. The course is planned to be redesigned during the coming summer and will reopen for the fall 2023 semester.



Allison Yarrow, Director of Campus Recreation, explains what the plan entails. "Campus Recreation is looking into adding tee boxes, baskets, and signage. We are also looking into options to purchase discs that can be checked out for use on the course."

The course contains various distances and challenges for players. It is located around Pucillo Gym and extends through the ropes course to the area below the turf fields behind Pucillo.

Yarrow hopes the upgrades will create an improved experience for all, "We hope that these upgrades and the new design will provide a better playing experience for Millersville University's campus community," she says.

[The course map can be found here.](#)