

Millersville University

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Oct.
2023

The rapidly changing October weather has been the backdrop of a whirlwind of exciting events and programs on campus. Judith and I have enjoyed attending a full slate of activities, including annual events such as Breast-A-Ville, PrideFest and the Drag Show, the Athletics Hall of Fame dinner, and Homecoming Weekend festivities.

The wet weather on Homecoming did not dampen the spirits of our Millersville community. We were able to adapt to the weather in a nimble manner. For example, the annual Millersville Parade kicked off the festivities along George Street, followed by our Block Party at 'Ville Courts and several reunions and other celebratory events. We unveiled a new tradition with the recognition of our inaugural group of [Marvelous Marauders](#). I am grateful to our staff and volunteers who executed these events with flexibility and resilience. Their efforts resulted in a memorable weekend for our students, alumni, employees and friends.

While you often hear me speak glowingly of our students' scholarly and creative endeavors, it is with similar excitement that I report on our faculty's research and creative works. Under the leadership of Provost Gasparich, we held the [Celebration of Faculty Scholarship, Promotion and Tenure](#), which provided an exciting opportunity to showcase the scholarly and creative work of our faculty. Our faculty members are exemplary teacher-scholars, and I look forward to this new event becoming an annual showcase as we continue to tell the story of excellence at our university. Congratulations to the faculty members who were tenured and promoted this year and were honored as part of the celebration.

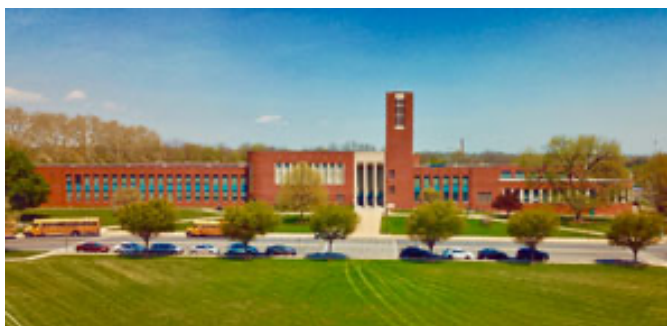
In this edition of the President's Updates, I highlight our new dual enrollment programs with three area high schools that are designed to open our doors to new learners. Also highlighted in this edition are Millersville faculty from Educational Foundations and Psychology, who are doing excellent work in the community on issues of environmental education and mental health. Finally, we introduce you to our new director of the Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El Intercultural Center, Denice Velez, and finally the new inductees into the Athletics Hall of Fame.

DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS

Earning college credits while in high school is a great way for students to get a head start on their college career. This fall, students from McCaskey High School, Penn Manor High School and Ephrata High School are earning college credits at Millersville University.

As education is consistently one of the top majors at MU, McCaskey High School and Millersville University's Color of Teaching program created a partnership, Future Educator Pathway, that allows juniors and seniors to take classes for credit towards the University's education program.

Throughout the two-year program, students will earn 12 credits after completing four classes, both at McCaskey and on-campus at MU, including University 103, Wellness 240, Psychology 100 and Communication 100.



Dr. Lara Willox, dean of the College of Education and Human Services, explains how this program will benefit the students. "This program allows students to earn college credit and prepare for a career in education. Students are being exposed to college-level work while in high school, and the program also supports the educator shortage by attracting high school students to a career in education," Willox explains.

Once students complete the program, they will be considered for early acceptance at MU, have the opportunity to join the [Color of Teaching mentoring program](#) and receive an invitation to the Millersville Summer Educator Academy.

Students at Penn Manor High School also have an opportunity to earn college credits at MU. Penn Manor High School and the Lombardo College of Business have partnered to provide high school juniors a chance to earn credits towards an MU business degree.



Dr. Marc Tomljanovich, dean of the Lombardo College of Business, explains what the program will entail. "We have partnered with Penn Manor to provide their students interested in business to take Lombardo College of Business courses in their last two years of high school. The selected students will take one business class each semester during their junior and senior years."

Tomljanovich also explains the program has several goals to accomplish. They include:

- Allowing high school students to cultivate their interests in business beyond the courses offered at Penn Manor.
- Potentially increasing the number of students attending college by lowering the barriers in the following ways: Students start college with 12 academic credits in their pocket, helping to lower the cost and time of receiving a bachelor's degree
- Increasing retention rates for the students who choose to attend college

- Students in this program are exposed to different academic resources, helping them be successful not only in these courses but in college as well
- Students begin college in a relatively comfortable manner by being with classmates that they know who also share similar interests
- Helping to connect MU even more strongly to the surrounding community, directly integrating with our mission

Similar to the Future Educator Pathway, students enrolled in the program will take introductory business and economics classes at Penn Manor. After they complete the first three classes, they will be able to choose a business class of their interest to take on-campus at MU.

After earning all 12 credits, the students will be conditionally enrolled at the University.

Once the first group of students completes the program, Tomljanovich hopes to expand it. “Our vision is to expand this program to other local high schools, using the experiences we gain over the next year.”

Meanwhile, The College of Education and Human Services started a partnership with Ephrata High School for future educators funded through a Dual Credit Grant from the PA Department of Education. The partnership began this summer when Ephrata sent several high school students interested in becoming teachers to our [Future Educator Academy](#). Millersville University identified courses that Ephrata students could enroll in as dual enrollment courses that qualify for an education degree. Several students are currently enrolled.

'VILLE USES GRANT FUNDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

With assistance from a grant provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, Millersville University recently helped introduce new environmental studies projects to the Penn Manor School District. That led to Hambright Elementary School winning a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience School of Excellence Award.

Initial funding came from the NOAA Office of Education’s [Bay Watershed Education and Training](#) grant, from which the University received \$396,318. The University used these funds to provide teacher training, curriculum assistance, supplies and more to help Penn Manor schools develop environmental education experiences for its students in accordance with the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience framework.



The Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience is a learner-centered model of education that focuses on investigations into local environmental issues and leads to informed action. Creating watershed experiences for the students requires hands-on learning inside and outside of the classroom. Millersville University and the Shared Waters Project both work together to help implement this experience.

The [Shared Waters Project](#) is a collaboration across the Chesapeake Bay Region that focuses on systematically impacting students through teacher professional development and Meaningful Watershed

Education Experience implementation. It also involves training the next generation of teachers in watershed education concepts during their undergraduate studies, including those attending Millersville University.

Hambright Elementary teachers Katie Harnish and Brad Showalter implemented their [award-winning MWEEs](#) in their classroom in the spring of 2022. Mr. Showalter and his class explored groundwater, and his students painted storm drains to remind people not to pollute and to help protect the water. Meanwhile, Ms. Harnish and her students completed a campaign with the school to reduce personal water use. Dr. Nanette Marcum-Dietrich, professor of Science Education at the University, explains, "What's important is that each project highlights student choice and student voice in the design of these action projects."

Marcum-Dietrich says that in addition to the University's work assisting Penn Manor teachers, environmental education has been embedded into MU's introductory education courses. The focus is on introducing systemic changes that allow environmental education to be more easily integrated into schools and for future teachers to be trained in Meaningful Watershed learning. "We're excited about this being something that will be integrated long-term in the Penn Manor School District and the teacher education program at MU," Marcum-Dietrich concludes. "In three years, we'll have embedded environmental education into the curriculum to provide every fourth grader with a Meaningful Watershed Education Experience."

MU PROFESSOR PRESENTS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND THE ELDERLY

Dr. Shaun Cook, associate professor of psychology and director of the Neuropsychology of Memory and Aging Lab at Millersville, recently joined other experts at the Ware Center for the "State of Mental Health: The Elderly" forum.

The forum discussed the various ways in which elderly people are suffering from mental health issues and related symptoms, some of which are less noticeable. The forum was meant to shed light on the elderly's relation to both mental health and cognitive diseases and to offer possible solutions.

As a neuropsychologist, Cook has training with and expertise in memory, aging and the brain. "One of my master's degrees and my PhD are in cognition and neural systems. I have been conducting research with older adults and patients who suffer from various forms of brain damage my entire career," he says.

"This demographic is important, especially today, because it is growing at a significant rate - especially here in Lancaster County."

Cook says that one reason he's interested in the topic is due to this demographic growth. As the elderly population grows, the more these issues will impact our community and the world around us.

Additionally, Cook notes that he's always been fascinated by the brain and neural systems. "When I started to do research on patients with different types of brain damage, the controls for these patients were



mostly older adults. So naturally, I began to learn about aging, and that just made me more interested in it.”

Some improvements are being made to help this issue, including potential breakthroughs in treatment options. “There are some new pharmaceutical options that show promise,” Cook says. “We are not there yet with them, as the studies on them are not completed and need to be replicated, but they show promise.”

“Another area showing promise is in genetics research and potential genetic therapies. Lastly, some technological advancements are notable in that we have ways to connect with older adults that we did not have in the past.”

However, there are some roadblocks to this progress. Getting services to those who need them can be difficult, particularly for those who live in rural areas. Cook says that help and treatments can also be difficult to afford for patients who need it.

One of the ways we can combat this issue on behalf of our elderly friends and relatives is to help raise awareness about this problem, like with events such as the conference at the Ware Center. Cook says it's helpful to have numerous professionals in the field converge to discuss their specific areas of expertise and views. “Hopefully, it provided information and education to everybody involved, especially the audience. And, at the same time, it helped everyone realize that there are lots of moving parts involved in these issues.”

“I also think that it helped everyone, including me, consider factors that I had not necessarily been thinking about,” he adds. “So, I see multiple benefits to events such as this.”

People outside of the healthcare and academic fields can also do their part to help. “I think the two major ways family and friends can consider helping are first to get educated about these topics,” says Cook. “Something as simple as knowing who to contact for services and information can go a long way.”

“Second, I think family and friends should think about who they vote for. Most of the funding for the types of programs involved with these issues comes from government agencies,” he concludes. “So, if it is important to someone that these programs exist, provide services and expand with the growing population of older adults, then we need elected officials who will prioritize and fund these programs.”

NEW DIRECTOR OF INTERCULTURAL CENTER

Denice Velez was recently named the director of the [Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El Intercultural Center at Millersville University](#). She previously served as the associate director for the Dowdy Multicultural Center at West Chester University.

Velez has extensive experience, including a position at the Cross-Cultural Center and Latinx Resource Center in Southern California. “In these roles, I have enjoyed empowering students to understand their role in social justice and affirming their diverse identities,” says Velez. “I look forward to bringing these experiences to working with students with their talents, skills and passions to address similar topics.”



Velez received a bachelor's in Ethnic Studies and Chicana Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, a Master of Public Policy and a master's in Higher Education from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. "My educational experience does not only encompass my time in formal educational institutions, but my interactions with various cultural communities from whom I have learned a lot," says Velez. "Having Ethnic Studies as part of my background has provided me a lens to begin understanding the importance of centering people whose experiences have been excluded in institutions like higher education."

With the fall semester underway, Velez has begun preparations for upcoming activities and events. "We had welcoming events for returning and new students, including activities for EPPIIC weekend, an LGBTQ+ Welcoming Reception, and a Students of Color Cookout," says Velez. "Additionally, I am excited to be in the process of hiring student staff that will continue to bring life into the Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El Intercultural Center, where students are also able to connect with one another and learn about cultural and social justice topics."

Velez is positively adapting to the Millersville campus and has high praise for the Millersville students. "In my time at Millersville, it has been exciting to meet student leaders who care deeply about making sure that marginalized students are supported and cared for," says Velez. "They understand the importance of creating an environment where everyone is included and can truly live the [EPPIIC values](#)."

Velez set goals for her new role. "I will strive to increase the support for marginalized students while at MU," says Velez. "Also, I seek to educate and challenge our campus community to learn about social justice issues and about topics impacting diverse communities. This work can only be done in collaboration with students, staff and faculty, while centering and empowering those in the margins."

"We need to continue to strive more to not only be accepting of diverse communities but to truly show appreciation and care," says Velez. "I think we have great opportunities at Millersville given the resources that we have on campus, such as the talents of students, faculty, and staff, and also the experiences that the surrounding community can offer."

ONESIS COMING SOON

OneSIS (One Student Information System) is a State System project to migrate all universities to the Ellucian-managed Banner Student Information System in the Cloud. Millersville University is one of the nine PASSHE universities that will be part of this shared technology platform.

Currently, each PASSHE institution manages and maintains a local system. The Board of Governors approved the transition to OneSIS, with the first university onboarding in fall 2022.

Joshua Hartranft, Executive Director of Technical Solutions, says the project has been in the works at Millersville for the past two years, and work will continue into 2025. "The new OneSIS will replace the current Banner system that we have used for the past 25 years," says Hartranft.

"Once implemented, the new system will give students, faculty and staff enhanced self-service options as well as better support for mobile



devices. Students will be able to register for courses, check and accept financial aid, and check and pay their bills, along with other features," explains Hartranft.

Both Commonwealth and PennWest are already using the system.

Because of delays from the US Department of Education with financial aid materials this year, the University had to delay the rollout of OneSIS on campus. The current timeline is to have admissions and financial aid moved to the new system by the fall of 2024, with the student rollout in early 2025.

As OneSIS is rolled out, there will be training through how-to videos and specific training for departments and faculty that require training.

ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME

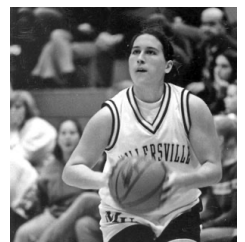
During Homecoming Millersville University inducted its 2023 class into the Athletics Hall of Fame. The class includes Sara Burcin '01, women's basketball; Conor Gilbert '15, men's golf; Kristen Maze Manderachi '06, women's lacrosse; Chas McCormick '17, baseball; Mark Udovich '82, football; Jaime Vazquez '16, men's soccer; the 2014 field hockey team; and Lois Morgan '54.

"The phrase that comes to mind with this year's hall of fame class is 'history making,'" said Millersville director of athletics Miles Gallagher. "These Marauders set records, won championships, and exemplify what it is to be a Millersville student-athlete both on campus and after graduation. We are excited for this class to take its rightful place in the hall of fame."

The induction dinner and ceremony were part of Millersville University's Homecoming Weekend.

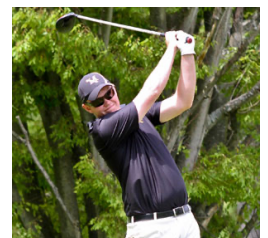
Sara Burcin '01 (Women's Basketball)

A sharpshooter with no comparison in the history of Millersville women's basketball, Sara Burcin scored 1,543 career points, establishing a scoring record that stood for nearly 20 years. Burcin set a Millersville record by making 78 more 3-pointers than any other Marauder and sank an incomparable 39% of her shots from deep. Burcin is one of just four Millersville women's basketball players named All-PSAC East First Team three times and the only player to win the PSAC East Freshman of the Year Award. Burcin helped Millersville to three 20-win seasons, a PSAC East title in 1999-2000 and played on two NCAA Tournament teams.



Conor Gilbert '15 (Men's Golf)

A true leader and a champion, Conor Gilbert is considered by longtime Millersville golf coach Scott Vandegrift as his program's most influential team captain. In that captaincy, Gilbert led his team to a PSAC Championship in 2013 while earning medalist honors, becoming just the second Marauder in program history to finish first at the conference championship event. Gilbert landed All-PSAC East First Team honors twice and owns Millersville's seventh-lowest career scoring average. Gilbert's play helped the 2014 and 2015 teams to the NCAA Super Regional, and the ninth-place finish in his senior season is still the best in program history.



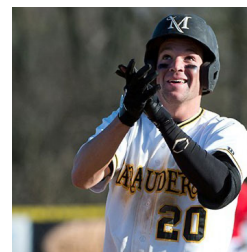
Kristen Maze Manderachi '06 (Women's Lacrosse)

Millersville's only lacrosse player named All-PSAC four times, Kristen Maze Manderachi made an impact on defense and in the midfield with her tenacity and toughness. Maze Manderachi landed All-PSAC First Team recognition and team MVP honors three years in a row. She also served as a team captain during her junior and senior seasons. Maze Manderachi led the PSAC in draw controls and groundballs as a senior and ranked second in both categories in 2004. An outstanding student as well, Maze Manderachi graduated Magna Cum Laude from the Millersville Honors College.



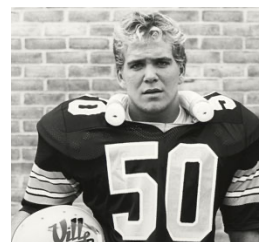
Chas McCormick '17 (Baseball)

Before he won a World Series ring with the Houston Astros, Chas McCormick set the PSAC hits record with 306 while also finishing among the all-time conference leaders in runs scored, RBIs, doubles, stolen bases and walks. Voted the 2017 PSAC East Athlete of the Year, McCormick graduated as the only Marauder named All-PSAC East four times and the only position player named All-Atlantic Region First Team three times. McCormick hit .373 with a .441 on base percentage while playing 223 games. His four-year career resulted in four school records. A winning player, McCormick helped Millersville to three PSAC East titles and four NCAA Tournament berths. His ninth-inning home run and walk-off triple in the 2015 PSAC Semifinals helped Millersville to its first conference championship in 17 years. In 2016, McCormick was voted the NCAA Atlantic Regional's Most Outstanding Player as the Marauders finished as the national runner-up.



Mark Udovich '82 (Football)

In 1981, Millersville deployed the most dominant rushing attack in the NCAA, smashing PSAC records as the offense ran over opponents. The heart of that unstoppable running game was Mark Udovich, who paved the way for 3,552 yards—a mark that still ranks first at Millersville. Udovich is Millersville's most decorated offensive lineman, holding the rare distinction of earning All-PSAC East First Team honors in all four seasons of his career. Udovich blocked for two different All-American running backs, and Udovich earned that lofty status himself in 1981 as he was voted a Kodak First Team All-American. Udovich's unsung work on the offensive line led Millersville to three-straight PSAC East titles from 1979-81, and he started at center in Millersville's first NCAA Playoff game.



Jaime Vazquez '16 (Men's Soccer)

A game-changing and supremely skilled forward, Jaime Vazquez dazzled Millersville fans and the opposition alike by scoring 39 goals and 94 points on his way to three-straight All-Atlantic Region selections and All-America honors as a sophomore in 2013 and as a senior in 2015. In his final season, Vazquez tallied 19 goals and 42 points, leading the PSAC in seven major offensive categories and landing the PSAC Athlete of the Year Award. Vazquez helped the Marauders to two NCAA Tournament appearances including a trip to the regional final in 2013.



2014 Field Hockey Team

The 2014 field hockey team holds a special place in the history of Millersville Athletics as the first team to win an NCAA Division II Championship and the first women's program to win an NCAA title. Each of the

team's eight seniors started over 20 games and five earned All-America honors. The team, led by PSAC and NFHCA Division II Coach of the Year Shelly Behrens, won a school record 20 games while leading the nation in shutouts and goals against average. Outstanding on the field and in the classroom, the squad produced a 3.24 team GPA, earning an award from the NFHCA. The team also produced the NFHCA Division II Player of the Year and the NCAA's Elite 89 Award winner.



Lois Morgan '54 (Champion of Athletics)

Lois Morgan's impactful contributions to Millersville Athletics are unmatched, and she is the first individual elected to the hall of fame under the special distinction of "Champion of Athletics." A 1954 graduate of Millersville University, Morgan established scholarships for women's athletics and the Morgan Academic Center in 2018. The academic center provided technology upgrades and a study space exclusively for student-athletes. Following the challenges of COVID-19, Morgan came to the aid of student-athletes by establishing general scholarships with a gift of \$500,000. Morgan then started a campaign to build new locker rooms and athletic training spaces at Biemesderfer Stadium with the largest single gift in the history of Millersville Athletics. Morgan's generosity and care for the student-athlete experience has touched the lives of countless Millersville student-athletes.

