

Millersville University

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Jan.
2024

Wishing you a belated Happy New Year and welcome back to campus for the Spring semester.

Given the mild weather trends of the past few winters in our region, I am certain that few would have imagined an opening week impacted by two snow events. While I enjoyed the beautiful snow-covered landscape, I am eager for us to return to normal operating patterns.

As we begin the new semester, I am pleased to report that bargaining teams from PASSHE and APSCUF have agreed, in principle, to a new four-year faculty contract. Work is ongoing between the legal counsels for APSCUF and PASSHE to finalize the contract language, which would be followed by the ratification vote of APSCUF members and the BOG approval process.

Similarly, we received positive news of a tentative agreement between PASSHE and the State College and University Professional Association on a new four-year contract. The tentative agreement will be submitted to the SCUPA membership for its consideration and, if ratified, will go to the State System's Board of Governors for final approval.

Additional details on both agreements will be released in the coming weeks. I am grateful to the system representatives and the leaders of APSCUF and SCUPA, who dedicated themselves to the bargaining process and crafted these agreements.

You may have noticed or heard the demolition activity along East Frederick Street as the four decommissioned houses were removed. This project, approved several years ago, was finally given the green light and funded by the Division of General Services. I'm pleased that our regional first responders from fire companies and law enforcement used the demolition project as a training and professional development opportunity.

To increase support for our students, the McNairy Library 24/7 First Floor Lobby Area, including the café area and reading room, is now available to current MU students to study 24 hours per day during the spring semester. As part of this initiative, Wi-Fi and printing are also available in the space. MU students are required to use their MU ID card to swipe in for access to the 24-hour area after the main library is closed.

Finally, I would also alert you to the public announcement from Governor Shapiro regarding his vision for higher education reform in the Commonwealth. As you may recall, the Governor charged a higher education workgroup last year with rethinking the state's higher education ecosystem and developing a comprehensive plan for reform.

We expect in the Governor's Budget Address on February 6 to call for a major reinvestment in public higher education to ensure our public colleges and universities can help meet Pennsylvania's talent supply needs. As part of that investment, he will invite stakeholders to the table to plan the creation of a new

system that would include PASSHE universities and the state's community colleges as partners in this effort. The press release can be found [here](#).

Governor Shapiro has signaled his intention to engage our state-owned universities and the state's community colleges as primary drivers of his workforce and economic development efforts. It is understood that an undertaking of this size and complexity will require a long conversation with all sectors and significant legislative and executive branch action. While I am ready to engage in this dialogue, along with the Chancellor and other university presidents, I remain focused on the needs and strategic priorities of Millersville University and our future.

In this edition of my monthly newsletter, you can read more about a recent grant to support occupational safety and health training to professionals across the region, as well as the new drone to advance teaching and research in the Earth Sciences department. Also covered are the recently held All Employees Breakfast, the upcoming Demystifying Dyslexia Conference in late January, and the Dress Red Luncheon in early February. Finally, we feature one of our extraordinary students, Chloe Kissinger, for her award-winning efforts in the field of campus recreation.

I am looking forward to an exciting and productive Spring semester.

SUSAN HARWOOD CAPACITY BUILDING OSHA GRANT WORTH \$165,970

Capacity-building grants focus on building the capacity of an organization to deliver occupational safety and health training, education and related assistance to targeted audiences. The organization must provide financial plans to continue capacity beyond the grant period. Two types of capacity-building grants have been awarded to Millersville: developmental and pilot.

"This grant will greatly benefit Millersville University students, especially those taking OSEH courses," says Dr. Betty-Jo Bowers, associate professor and the Occupational Safety & Environmental Health Program coordinator. "We conducted a training session for students enrolled in the OSEH 222 Construction Safety course in November 2023 as part of the current OSHA Susan Harwood Year 1 capacity-building grant for 2022-2023 regarding slips, trips and falls in the general and construction industries."



Including Bowers, the primary Millersville University faculty and staff for this grant are Dr. Jack Ogutu, professor & AEST department chair, and Hope Schmits, director of Workforce Development Programs.

"The purpose of the new OSHA Susan Harwood grant is to continue capacity building for worker safety and health related to fall protection in the construction and general industries," says Bowers. "It is also to prevent serious worker fall injuries and fatalities in these industries by training young, at-risk and/or limited-English speaking workers."

Millersville University was awarded similar capacity-building grants in years past.

“Millersville received a capacity building grant for fall protection on September 30, 2021, for \$71,868,” says Bowers. “MU also received a Capacity Building Developmental Grant for Year 1 focusing on Slips, Trips, and Falls in the General and Construction Industries on September 30, 2022, for \$179,743.”

The Susan Harwood Capacity Building OSHA Grant also seeks to provide training within the workplace environment.

“We are hoping that by training workers in the at-risk, young, and limited English-speaking populations, we will reduce fall injuries and fatalities for workers in the general and construction industries,” says Bowers. “The training will cover fall from heights injury and fatality statistics, hazards, OSHA regulations, donning/doffing fall protection harnesses and fall prevention.”

The grant will also cover the three primary methods of fall protection:

- guard rails
- personal fall arrest systems
- and safety nets

The Susan Harwood Capacity Building OSHA Grant will also have a positive impact on the Millersville community. “This grant provides free fall protection training for the community,” says Betty-Jo Bowers. “Small businesses and potentially schools in Lancaster and surrounding areas will also benefit from this fall protection training.”

NEW EARTH SCIENCES DRONE



Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's the new Earth Sciences department drone! The Earth Sciences department began using a drone this semester to dive deeper into atmospheric, oceanographic and geological research. The University is one of the only schools to be using a drone of this caliber.

The new drone is not for commercial use but specifically for research. It weighs 35 pounds, which is much larger than a commercial drone, and allows multiple payloads to be deployed. Different cameras are used for each area of research. A Sony A6400 camera is used for surface surveying, and a multispectral camera for oceanographic, geological surveying and meteorological instruments. In addition, it can lift up to 10 pounds and has a flight radius of up to 10 miles.

David Fitzgerald, the systems administrator and adjunct faculty in the Earth Science department at MU, explains what information the drone can provide to researchers and students. “For atmospheric research, the meteorology program uses it to gather data including temperature, pressure and winds in the lower atmosphere.”

“Additionally, our oceanographers can use the drone at sea. This allows them to measure things like sea surface temperature, water content and other properties over a large area in real time. Lastly, geologists can do aerial surveys to determine soil and rock types. Emergency Management professionals will also benefit from the drone as they can practice search and rescue and environmental hazard detection,” Fitzgerald says.

Although the user needs a certificate from the Federal Aviation Administration to fly the drone, it will still be beneficial to students in various ways. “This drone is very important to the Earth Sciences department as it greatly increases our ability to do research, but even more importantly, it will allow our students to get hands-on experience in using the drone in field research. Having our students experience using the drone to take data and learning how to analyze the data will give them a big leg up in the industry and graduate school,” Fitzgerald explains.

Fitzgerald hopes to use the drone throughout the semester but understands the safety of the students comes first. “I like to take the drone out over semester breaks and over the summer to minimize flying over people if on campus. When the drone is fully loaded, it weighs 35 pounds, and if an accident occurs, I don’t want it falling on someone. I take it out to test and calibrate instruments, to keep in practice.”

Overall, Fitzgerald understands the importance of having the drone and the new information that comes with it. “This is a great opportunity for our faculty and students to work with the cutting edge of data acquisition.”

ALL EMPLOYEE EPPIC BREAKFAST

As we returned from the holiday break and prepared for the opening of the spring semester, I was pleased to extend my gratitude to our dedicated and talented employees through an all-employee breakfast on Jan. 11. It was a chance for me to thank everyone for their many contributions to the success and well-being of our students.

The “All Employee EPPIC Breakfast” was held in the Upper Deck of Gordinier Hall. I appreciate the hard work of Dining Services to prepare and serve a fabulous breakfast and the event planning committee for developing this new initiative.

Many employees brought non-perishable donation items for the Campus Cupboard. Located in The HUB (beside Dilworth Hall), Campus Cupboard provides free grocery and hygiene product shopping for students once per week during the semester. Our employees generously supported the food drive and donated enough food and other items to fill one of our small box trucks.

Thanks to the generosity of the University Store, five \$75 University Store gift cards were raffled to those who donated non-perishable items. In addition, participants of the breakfast received a University Store coupon for 20% off one MU imprinted clothing or souvenir item, valid on January 11, 2023.



It was a great way to kick off 2024, and my hope is for everyone to have a productive spring semester.

DEMYSTIFYING DYSLEXIA CONFERENCE

Millersville University is working to raise awareness of and support for those with dyslexia.

The third Demystifying Dyslexia Conference will be held on Jan. 27 at 9 a.m. at the Ware Center. The event is organized by Dr. Jill Craven, professor of English and world languages, and aims to provide resources for and education about dyslexia. The event is free to attend unless Continuing Education Credits and/or [Act 48 credits](#) are desired.

The keynote on “Understanding the Cognitive and Neurobiological Basis of Dyslexia” will be given by University of Maryland neuroscientist Dr. DJ Bolger, director of the [Laboratory for Neurodevelopment of Reading and Language](#). Morning sessions feature Kathy Seeman, award-winning reading and dyslexia specialist, and Dr. Pam Kastner, PA State Lead for Literacy.

Afternoon breakout sessions focus on topics of interest to parents/guardians, teachers, students with dyslexia, school administrators, and counselors. Tables featuring advocacy organizations, learning opportunities and counselors will be set up to browse. More information about the schedule and tables can be found [here](#).

Raising a daughter with dyslexia prompted Craven’s passion for spreading education and awareness. “My experiences in raising a child with dyslexia in a school district that wouldn’t even say ‘dyslexia’ spurred me to organize these conferences,” she says. Dyslexia is often misunderstood and thought to be a primarily visual issue, instead of a phonological processing issue. This misconception can be detrimental to the education of those with the disability, especially related to reading comprehension. “Reading proficiency provides the foundation of the education required for a robust democracy,” says Craven.

As of 2022, the majority of K-12 students in Pennsylvania [scored basic or below](#) in reading. “In Pennsylvania, we need to do more to properly educate children with dyslexia; our culture needs to better understand and support people with learning differences,” says Craven. Pennsylvania is among a minority of states in the US that do not have mandated dyslexia screenings for children in school.

It is [estimated](#) that 15-20% of people are on the dyslexia spectrum, making roughly one out of five people susceptible to the impact of misconceptions surrounding the disability. “We want to help individuals with dyslexia, their families, their friends, their teachers and their counselors get the resources they need to support that individual’s positive learning and living experiences,” says Craven.



DRESS RED COMING UP

One of my favorite events of the spring semester is the Dress Red Luncheon. It's an annual event held by the Millersville University Employee Wellness Committee in conjunction with "Go Red for Women," a comprehensive platform designed to increase women's heart health awareness and serve as a catalyst for change to improve women's lives globally.

This year's event will be held on Friday, Feb. 2. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Susan Moyer, a Registered Nurse, Certified Nurse Educator, and Assistant Professor in the Wehrheim School of Nursing at Millersville University. She has been a registered nurse for 22 years and a nurse educator for 16 years.

American Heart Association®



WASSON STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

Congratulations to Chloe Kissinger, a Millersville junior who received the William N. Wasson Student Leadership & Academic Award from NIRSA. Named after NIRSA's founder, the William N. Wasson Student Leadership & Academic Awards recognize exceptional undergraduate and graduate students who participate in or are employed by the Department of Recreational Sports and set the standard on campuses nationwide.



Kissinger is from Shippensburg and is majoring in Government, Policy, and Law. Her involvement in the 'Ville Sports Officials Association and her position as a student manager at the Recreation Center encouraged Samantha Wary, assistant director of campus recreation, to nominate Kissinger for this award.

"Being recognized and earning the William N. Wasson Student Leadership & Academic Award makes me feel as if the work I have been doing at Campus Recreation means something impactful," Kissinger says. "To not only be nominated for this award by my boss, Samantha Wary, but then winning and being nationally recognized for the work I have been doing is phenomenal. I hope that other students in the recreation

department see this recognition and strive for it."

She continues, "I didn't win this award by myself. The students who allow me to facilitate as a leader have helped me along the way, being able to lift up others in the same way my superiors lifted me up makes me want to continue being a leader in the recreation department."

Kissinger notes that this award is particularly meaningful because she will be able to travel to the NIRSA conference in Arizona, and she's excited to be recognized on a national level. She would also like to extend her gratitude to Wary for the nomination.

