

Millersville University

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Dec.
2024

December always seems to proceed at a rapid pace and this year has been no different. In fact, given the later Thanksgiving date, it seems the month has gone by in a flash, but not without some extraordinary highlights.

Our commencement ceremony this past Saturday was upbeat and full of smiles. The temporary move to the 'Ville Courts was executed flawlessly by our events planning team and I appreciate the faculty and staff who made the day special for our graduates with their families and friends. It was inspiring to hear the life journey of Judge Jodie E. Richardson, a dedicated alum and strong supporter of the 'Ville.

The last month of the calendar year provided an opportunity to participate in one of the events that make Millersville University unique. This is our highly acclaimed Glorious Sounds of the Season concert. For my family, the event marks the traditional start of our holiday season. This year's concert featured 16 ensembles, 27 holiday songs, and 350 talented students. The three shows, two on Saturday and one on Sunday were close to or completely sold out and raised almost \$50,000 to support our students in the Tell School of Music. The ticket proceeds from the event support 30-40 scholarships annually, benefiting current and incoming first-year students through our dedicated GSS Scholarships. Judith and I also enjoyed meeting Millersville alumni and friends at the Maker's Market and Alumni Gathering on Saturday afternoon. My sincere thanks to all the faculty and staff who made the concerts and related events such an extraordinary success.

This past Wednesday, we completed the Strategic Plan Listening Tour sessions for the Fall semester, which was opened to students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and friends of the 'Ville. I appreciate the time and energy of everyone who participated in the sessions. As we look forward to the Spring semester, we have several committees working to analyze the data and draft recommendations for the 2025-30 strategic plan. After a January workshop by the Council of Trustees and the Cabinet, we will present a framework for campus feedback and ultimately seek final endorsement of the COT at the June 2025 meeting. There will be additional opportunities for campus groups to provide input into the final plan so stay tuned to provide feedback next semester.

In this month's newsletter, you can read more about the Council of Trustees' recent action to continue holding the cost of attendance down for our students and their families. You can also learn about our First-Generation Forward program and the recent Celebration of Scholars event. Finally, I have highlighted the success of our winter track and field athletes in their opening competition and a well-deserved award for our golf coach, Scott Vandergrift.

Judith and I wish everyone in our campus community a happy, blessed and safe holiday season.

NO INCREASE IN HOUSING AND DINING AT THE 'VILLE

The Council of Trustees at their quarterly meeting on Dec. 4 voted to hold the cost of housing and dining at Millersville University for the 2025-26 academic year. That coupled with the University's move to a flat rate tuition, will help keep the total cost of attendance down for students and their families.

The COT did vote to increase two fees. The student fee managed by the Student Government Association will go up 5%, an increase of \$9 a semester. The SGA asked for that increase after surveying students on campus. In addition, the tech fee, which has been frozen for the past eight years, will be increased to cover the accumulated inflation. That means students will pay 25% more, an increase of \$60 a semester.



"As part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing the student experience at Millersville University, we've implemented transformative updates to our IT infrastructure and services," says Joshua Hartranft, Chief Technology Officer for Millersville. "From secure and efficient platforms to advanced classroom technologies and mobile credentials, these initiatives are designed to streamline operations, improve accessibility, and create a more connected campus environment."

The next COT meeting will be in March of 2025. [More information on the COT can be found here.](#)

Millersville University hosts First Gen Forward Event

The office of Student Access and Support Services hosted a First Gen Forward event on Nov. 8. to provide insight into college life as a first-gen student and the vast amount of resources MU provides.

The event was held for prospective first-generation junior and senior students from the TRIO Talent Search program, and Millersville University students, faculty and staff were also invited to attend. Each high school student was afforded the ability to make connections with current MU students who share similar backgrounds.



Throughout the day, visiting students from Reading High School attended several presentations about what it means to be a first-gen student as well as the financial and social aspects of it. MU First Gems, a student club for first-gen students on campus, hosted a student panel for the attending high schoolers. A financial literacy presentation was held and provided resources and insight on how to pay for college as a first-generation student. Short-term and long-term goals are kept in mind when planning these events and the resources provided within them. SASS shares what they want high school students to get out of this event.

“Post-secondary education is attainable for them being first-generation,” says Bemnet Bekele, project coordinator for Talent Search at Millersville. “For them to be able to see themselves on campus whether that be networking with faculty and staff, we’re hoping that they will build those long-term relationships.”

The team at SASS wants to provide an accurate depiction of what it means to be a first-generation student and clear up any misconceptions about what it means to be one. First-gen individuals are those whose immediate parents did not complete a bachelor's degree in college. Grandparents and siblings who have completed a bachelor's degree do not affect a person's status.

“The Talent Search Program is excited to celebrate even more first-generation students throughout the month,” says Bekele.

For more information about Talent Search and the pre-college programs they offer, visit the Talent Search page.

CELEBRATING SCHOLARS

Scholarship recipients and the donors who supported the scholarships recently packed Lehr Room in Gordinier Hall for the “Celebrate Scholars” event. It was an opportunity for the students to meet with and thank the donors who made their scholarship possible. Benefactors and their student scholarship recipients from our four academic colleges, the Honors College and athletics were present.

Through the generous gifts of our donors, we are helping our students succeed. Together we are equipping them with the knowledge and tools needed to make a difference and encouraging them to build a more just and equitable world.



Julia Fallows, '25, a senior Secondary Education English major and member of the Cygnus Society, credits scholarships with enabling her to thrive in higher education. “Scholarship support relieves financial pressure, allowing me to focus on coursework, co-curricular activities, and helping others as a tutor,” she says. Fallows has made the Dean’s List each semester, is a sprinter on the women’s track team, and plans to become a teacher. She is student teaching at Manheim Township High School and has held leadership roles in organizations like the National English Honor Society and the Color of Teaching Mentorship Program. Her achievements include presenting research in New Mexico, representing Millersville in Chicago as a Newman Civic Fellow, and traveling to Italy and Greece for academic and athletic purposes.

Dr. Kemah Washington, '23 was also on hand for the event and shared highlights of the Millersville University Foundation Board. “Thanks to the generosity and commitment of many of you here tonight, our Foundation now holds assets of over \$70 million,” says Washington. “The incredible support you’ve given us means we can fund over 1,100 scholarships and programs here at the university, directly impacting the lives of students and enhancing their academic journeys.”

I deeply appreciate the generosity of our campus community and friends who continue to drive the philanthropic spirit at the ‘Ville.

HAUF HITS NCAA MARK AS MARAUDERS START SEASON AT BISON OPENER

The Millersville track and field team kicked off its 2024-25 season at the Bison Opener with a promising start to the campaign before the winter break.

'Ville went up against PSAC rivals Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Shippensburg, but also against Division I competition in Bucknell, Penn State, and Saint Francis. Even with the increased competition, the Marauders showed out on Saturday by shooting up the conference leaderboard, and [Darian Hauf](#) hitting the NCAA mark in pole vault.



Head coach [Andy Young](#) said Hauf's goal was to qualify for the national meet this indoor season in pole vault, and the senior wasted no time in hitting the mark. Hauf won the event by clearing a height of 12-9 1/2, with the NCAA mark set at 12-2 1/2. Hauf cleared the jump on her first attempt to earn the top spot in the conference so far but was unable to make it over 13-1 3/4. [Megan Malecki](#) finished behind her in sixth place and qualified for the PSAC meet with a height of 11-5 3/4, which is currently the third best mark in the conference.

[Aasly De Leon](#) was one of the newcomers Young mentioned could make an immediate impact, and the freshman proved her coach right in her collegiate debut. De Leon qualified for the conference meet and finished fourth in the 60-meter dash with a time of 7.69, the best in the PSAC and third best time in program history. She followed that up with a third-place finish in the 200-meter dash with a time of 26.10, the fourth best time across the conference.

The Marauders dominated the mile run, securing first, third, and fifth place finishes. [Bri Pollock](#) won the event with a time of 5:15.66, putting her in sixth place all-time in the program record book. [Emily Massage](#) took third place with a time of 5:20.47, and [Marissa Mounce](#) rounded out the group with a finish in 5:25.80. The trio currently hold the best three times in the conference, with Pollock and Massage clinching their bids for the conference meet.

The Marauders have a gap in their schedule with winter break and won't compete again until 2025. Once they return from break, they'll travel to the Alvernia Winter Invitational, taking place at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 18 in Reading, PA.

Scott Vandegrift Named Recipient of 2024 Labron Harris Sr. Award

PGA of America Golf Professional Scott Vandegrift, Head Coach at Millersville and a member of the Philadelphia PGA Section has been named the 2024 Labron Harris Sr. Award recipient presented by the Golf Coaches Association of America in cooperation with the PGA of America. The Harris Award is presented to the college or high school coach and Class A PGA Professional whose support of the game through teaching, coaching, and involvement in the community has helped ensure the game of golf's continued growth and who represents the finest qualities the game has to offer.



“Being selected to receive the Labron Harris Sr. Award is something that I’ve always dreamed about happening” said Vandegrift. “I was flattered that former SMU coach Barry Rodenhaver nominated me, and after researching the history of Labron Harris Sr., it meant even more to me to be considered.”

Vandegrift was hired as head men’s golf coach at Millersville in 1985 and has also been the head women’s golf coach since the program’s inception in 2008. A GCAA member since 1997, the Delaware native’s Marauders have maintained success at the conference, regional, and national level, winning a combined 123 events (93 men and 31 women) and six Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) Championships (five men and one women). 2002-03 saw the men win a program record five times, including the program’s first NCAA Regional title (East), and qualify for their first NCAA Division II Championship. The women won the PSAC Championship during the 2015-16 season and have won 14 tournaments since 2021, highlighted by four in 2023-24 and three already this fall.