

Millersville University

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Jan.  
2021

The start of the spring semester is here and I'm eager to connect once again with the faculty, staff and students. While we are in the middle of winter, the days have just begun to grow longer. So too is our experience with the pandemic. We need to maintain our focus and resolve to deal with the elevated case numbers, but the early stages of vaccine distribution suggest that brighter days are ahead.

Last month I highlighted reasons to celebrate. Over the past weeks, we have had additional cause to celebrate with the [announcement](#) that we are freezing the cost of room and board for 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years; this decision is in line with our goal to keep the cost of attendance for our students affordable. Not all institutions that aspire to keep the cost down succeed, but we are fortunate to have a talented financial leadership team that is committed to living our mission. We also have a [new video](#) recognition of 2019 years of service awards, which were celebrated in 2020. Congratulations and thank you to all of the awardees who make Millersville a warm and welcoming place.

In this month's newsletter, we hear from Drs. Duane Hagelgans and Victor DeSantis of the Incident Management Team on Millersville University's COVID-19 response. We also learn about two new academic programs and a recent grant awarded to the Watershed Education and Training Institute (WETi). We find winter inspiration and rejuvenation in the Winter Wellness Wonderland and hear of Dr. Irwin's new film, "Raising Faith: Stories About Dyslexia." Finally, we celebrate the continued success of the Lombardo Welcome Center and reaffirm Millersville's response to climate change.

As we start the second half of this unique academic year, I wish to thank everyone for your continued strength and resilience and for placing the health and well-being of our community first.

Be kind, be safe and stay healthy.

## Q/A WITH IMT

The Incident Management Team at Millersville is chaired by Drs. Victor DeSantis and Duane Hagelgans. They recently responded to questions about their work.

### **Who makes up the IMT?**

The Incident Management Team consists of a cross-divisional team of staff, faculty and students. The members were chosen for their unique expertise and to allow each division to have representation for proper decision making and collaboration. The team has shown an ability to explore issues and approach problems from varied perspectives.

### **How often does the IMT meet?**

Currently the IMT is meeting every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning. Some members of the team have additional meetings throughout the week for problem-solving and decision making, along with the development of additional working plans.

### **What are the most important issues the IMT is dealing with right now?**

Our most pressing issue is making sure we are ready for the spring semester, including being properly prepared to receive students safely and perform the necessary asymptomatic testing of students upon their return to campus and then throughout the semester.

### **What does the spring semester look like at this time?**

Although the number of cases across the country and region is very high and increasing, we are beginning to see a light at the end of the tunnel with the introduction and rollout of vaccines. We have every expectation that the spring semester will start and continue similar to the fall semester. Our enhanced ability to perform asymptomatic testing of all students returning to campus as well as random testing throughout the semester will increase our ability to have more data for quicker intervention if issues arise. We will also continue symptomatic testing to get support and treatment to those students impacted by the virus.

### **Will there be an in-person graduation in May?**

At the beginning of the fall semester the Cabinet set a goal to have a graduation ceremony in May. While there are many issues outside of the IMT's control, such as vaccines and the new variant of the virus, we will work together as a campus community to follow proper protocols and increase our chances of having an in-person graduation on campus. Our task is to develop plans and processes which allow us to safely hold the event for students and their families.

### **What are the most important things you'd like the campus community to know in relation to COVID?**

COVID requires ALL of us in the Millersville University community and the greater community

to work together if we are going to be successful in returning to some sense of normalcy. All of us want to see a vibrant campus with face-to-face classes, performances, athletics and an exciting social experience. However, to accomplish this, we must unite in sacrificing some things in the short term for the long-term goals. COVID is a deadly virus. We must respect it and do the right thing!

### **Why is the LIVESAFE app so important?**

Livesafe allows us to accumulate data about our campus community so that we can plan accordingly. If we see rising numbers, we can look for the cause of the trends to address the issues that may be leading to these trends. This app also allows each person to take responsibility for ourselves as part of the greater community, staying home when we have symptoms and quarantining to stop the spread.

### **What has been the mental health toll of this virus and the mitigation efforts?**

There is no question that the virus itself and our mitigation measures have taken a toll on the mental health of our community. We know that students, faculty and staff would rather be on campus, working side by side, and contributing to the Millersville University experience. We remind our community members to be mindful of their mental health, practice self-care, and seek assistance and support when necessary. We are all in this together and we care deeply about each other, so please embrace kindness and compassion and display our EPPIIC values.

## **NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

Two new programs at Millersville will help students gear their education toward their career goals.

We recently announced the addition of a new Bachelor of Science degree in sport administration. Such multidisciplinary programs allow students to take courses from more than one academic discipline, which can help tailor their experiences to their career.

Students have the option to minor or double major in sport administration through programs offered by the marketing and management departments, as well as options in sport business or sport coaching. There will also be opportunities for students to engage in high impact experiences such as global learning courses, study abroad options, writing classes, diversity courses and a required internship.

In addition, we now offer a new Master of Education degree focused on special education for accomplished teachers. The program was recently revamped with an emphasis on producing outstanding special education teachers. Rather than completing a thesis or field placement,

students in the program will experience a specialized capstone activity. This activity will serve as a culmination of everything they have learned throughout the program.

## WETI GRANT

Millersville University's Watershed Education Training Institute (WETi) was recently named a grant recipient of the 2020 Clean Water Fund by Lancaster Clean Water Partners. The funds received through this grant will be used to provide pre-service student teachers with formal classroom instruction at the National Stormwater Center (that will also lead to a certificate of participation) as well as visit impaired stream/river systems from the headwaters of the Conestoga to the Chesapeake Bay.

Through WETi, our students provide programs for primary and secondary age school students, as well as their teachers. It's all part of training them to be watershed ambassadors.

Drs. John Wallace and Nanette Dietrich were instrumental in obtaining the grant, which will be used to educate and teach students about the importance of helping to conserve water and improve stormwater management in an effort to minimize negative impacts on our waterways. The Clean Water Grant will allow WETi to create programs that revolve around experiential learning opportunities for student teachers, in addition to providing opportunities to interact with water professionals at local, regional and national levels.

Also named as Clean Water grantees are Donegal Trout Unlimited, Salisbury Township and West Lampeter Township.

## WINTER WELLNESS WONDERLAND

Perseverance in the face of a pandemic crisis and social unrest has not been easy, but nonetheless has been the Millersville way since early 2020. To support our faculty and staff to continue rising to the challenge this winter, the Office of Human Resources and Millersville University's Employee Wellness Committee have partnered to offer a Winter Wellness Wonderland. It's a collection of articles, pre-recorded videos, Zoom discussions and game shows. These offerings are presented by colleagues from departments across the University. They are intended to provide support in the following areas: physical health, emotional care, financial wellness, social connection and professional development.

The Winter Wellness Wonderland calendar kicked off in December and concludes March 19, 2021, just prior to spring's arrival. Each week, details regarding the lineup of events available

to employees can be viewed via 'Ville Daily. You can also learn more by visiting <https://www.millersville.edu/hr/wellness/winter-wellness-wonderland.php>.

Some highlights of events to come include:

- **"Exposing News and Social Media: How to Not Catch or Spread Misinformation through Source Evaluation"** a timely discussion with Michele Santamaria of McNairy Library,
- **"Strategies for Improving the Ergonomic Design of Your Remote Work Area"** a relevant topic for our remote teams, shared by Gail Fellows of Environmental Health & Safety,
- **"Can you believe this happened at Millersville?"** an informative game hosted by Josh Belice of Admissions that's sure to provide fun facts about our University,
- **"How 2 Save \$"** a useful and light-hearted video prepared by Jason Rodriguez of Housekeeping And much, much more!

For more information or to be included on a group email distribution list for program updates, contact Wendy Bowersox at [wendy.bowersox@millersville.edu](mailto:wendy.bowersox@millersville.edu).

## LOMBARDO WELCOME CENTER GRAND AWARD WINNER

Millersville University's Lombardo Welcome Center has been awarded the 2020 American Council of Engineering Companies Engineering Excellence Grand Award in Category B: Building/Technology Systems. With this award, The Lombardo Welcome Center joined 15 other engineering projects from across the country to compete for the top national honor. We cannot acknowledge this achievement without thanking the creative and innovative minds who made it possible. AKF Group, a full-service consulting and engineering firm and Spillman Farmer Architects worked with the University on the Lombardo Welcome Center.

In addition, the University recently signed a "We Are All In" pledge as a follow-on to a previous pledge we signed in 2016 entitled, "We Are Still In." Both reaffirm our commitment to responding to climate change. Millersville joins more than 1,300 institutions who have signed the pledge. It aligns with our efforts to be carbon neutral by 2040. Our efforts were also recently recognized in the Princeton Review Guide to Green Colleges. This is the sixth year and counting that MU has been nationally recognized by the Princeton Review as one of the most environmentally responsible colleges.

The Lombardo Welcome Center has become a showcase of sustainability for current and prospective students, staff and the greater community. The extra energy generated through the Lombardo Welcome Center is used to power other buildings on campus.

## MU PROF DEBUTS FILM AT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

[Dr. Stacey Irwin](#) a professor in the Media Arts Production program is also a filmmaker. Recently, her film, "Raising Faith: Stories About Dyslexia," debuted at the [Helsinki Education International Film Festival](#).

The production of the film took place over five years and included a number of Millersville students and graduates in the process, including Dr. Irwin's daughter, Faith, who is a junior in our entertainment technology program and was a producer and a featured talent in the film.

It was a multi-department endeavor. Students who helped with the project include the music composer, Alexander Sumoski, from the business administration program; the production assistant, Daniel Irwin, from writing studies; 2014 graduate Kelly James who was an intern; 2015 graduate Brianna Garber who assisted with the film as part of her independent study; and the credits were designed by 2018 graduate, Anthony Burgos.

In most cases an international film festival is an in-person, red-carpet affair, however, many awards ceremonies and festivals, like HEFFI 2020, opted to stream their events online due to the ongoing pandemic. The film is also a finalist in the Sweden Film Awards Festival. Congratulations to Dr. Irwin on this outstanding achievement!