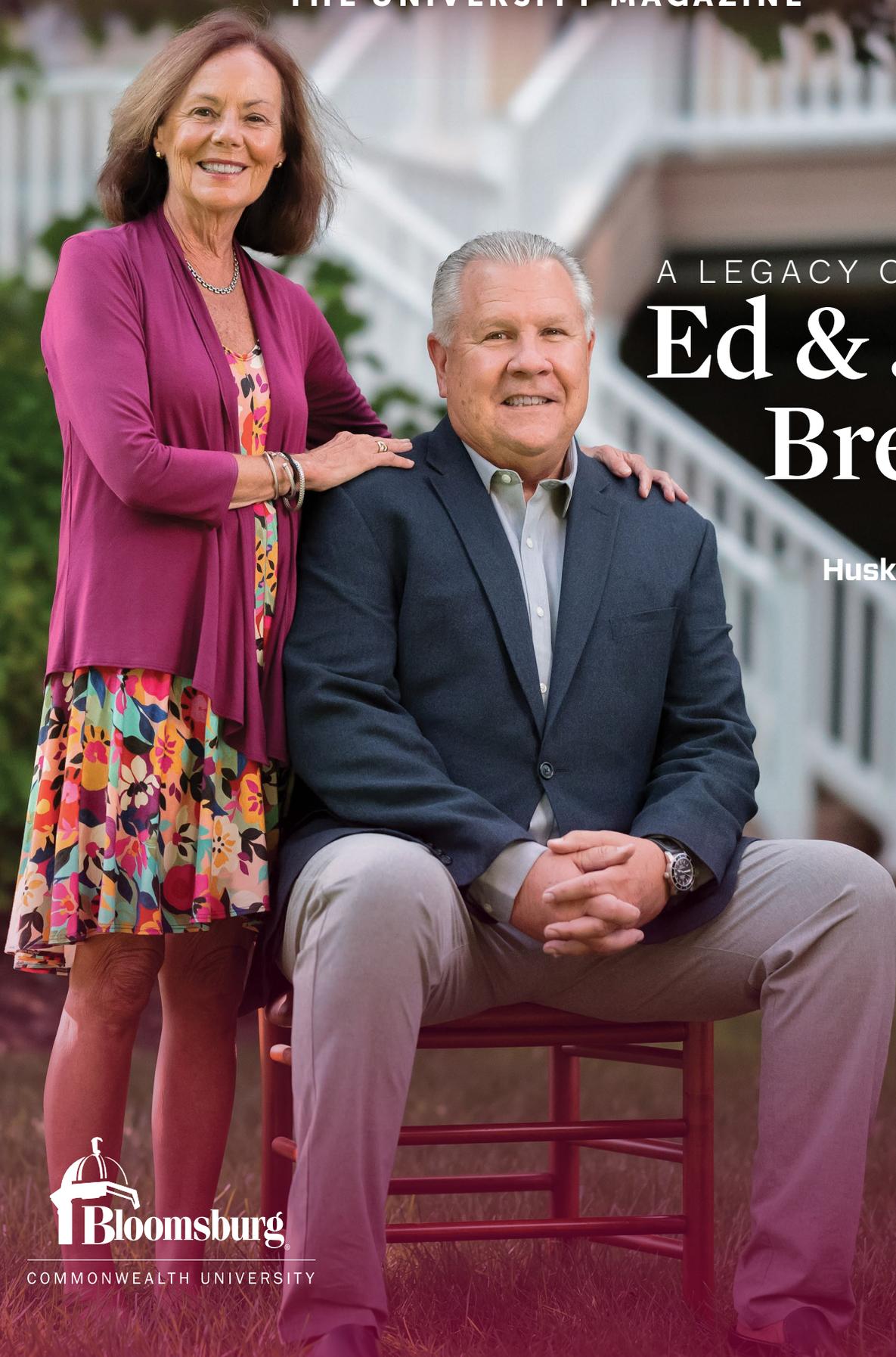


# Bloomsburg

THE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE



A LEGACY OF GIVING:  
**Ed & Julie  
Breiner**

*Page 14*

**Husky Homecoming**  
*Page 8*





### **Greetings Bloomsburg Family,**

The life of a university is marked by many notable milestones. As Commonwealth University continues to grow and evolve, the launch of our first strategic plan is an important accomplishment. I am proud beyond measure of the talented team members who have devoted their time and energy to the strategic planning process over the past year. Their collaborative efforts have brought forward a long-range plan that is notable for its focus and commitment to putting students first.

Each of the plan's four strategic priorities is built around the principle that students are at the heart of our mission, goals, and purpose. Not only does the plan lay out measurements of success through well-defined metrics, but each of the plan's strategic priorities is buoyed by three core commitments that will guide and inform our work well into the future.

I hope you'll read more about the launch of our first strategic plan in these pages. It is a bold and ambitious plan and I am proud of the focus on student success. Witnessing our university community work through the process of developing a strategic plan and now beginning

to bring it to life through dynamic and impactful initiatives has affirmed my belief in the strength and heart of our Commonwealth University family.

There are many great things happening at Commonwealth University, and we bring them to you in the pages that follow. From the launch of the strategic plan, to earning landmark grants, and launching a fully updated academic curriculum, we continue to hold an exceptional student experience as our north star.

Our cover story profiles the remarkable generosity of Ed and Julie Breiner, who have made the first-ever transformational gift to Commonwealth University. The Breiners' \$5 million gift will support nursing education at all CU locations—Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, Mansfield, and Clearfield. The Breiner's incredible gift will empower the newly named Breiner School of Nursing to provide an affordable, top-tier education and produce exceptional nursing graduates.

To our Bloomsburg alumni and supporters, it has been wonderful to see so many of you on campus over the past few months as we celebrated homecoming and all the joy that comes with Fall on a university campus. If you have not been back to campus recently, I hope you will visit and explore how to stay engaged with the Husky community and support our students in achieving their goals. There are so many ways to get involved and share your generosity with our students—from mentorship, to internships, or professional experience grants—your involvement in our students' experience has the power to transform their lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bashar W. Hanna". The signature is stylized and includes a flourish at the end.

Dr. Bashar W. Hanna,  
*President*





COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

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# Bloomsburg

THE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE



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*Cynthia Shapira, PASSHE Board of Governors chairwoman*

## Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield to Launch Partnership with Google

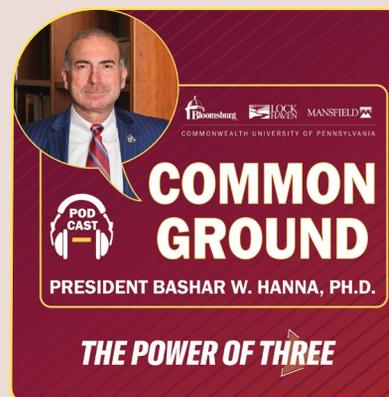
Commonwealth University (CU) and Google are coming together to support a new public-private partnership to enable students to earn industry-recognized certificates during their regular undergraduate programs to support their career readiness and help meet the workforce's evolving needs. The partnership provides skills training in the fields of cybersecurity, data analytics, digital marketing/e-commerce, business intelligence, IT support, project management, and user experience (UX) design, with no experience required.

Commonwealth University's offering is part of a larger partnership between Google and Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) that will reach thousands of students and workers across Pennsylvania, with training for some of the state's most in-demand jobs, including those within the communities near the Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, Mansfield, and Clearfield locations.

Google employees developed the Google Career Certificates to support skilling for in-demand fields. The program includes an employer consortium of over 150 companies—including Pennsylvania-based companies such as SAP, Expedient, the Project Management Institute, and Google—that hire talent trained in the certificate fields. More than 200,000 people have graduated from the program in the U.S., and 75% report a positive career impact, such as a new job, higher pay, or a promotion, within six months of completion.

The university is currently exploring several options for the first steps of the partnership, according to Hope Lineman, CU Executive Director of Workforce Development.

"History majors who acquire data analysis skills or English language and literature majors with project management skills such as those offered in partnership with Google, often increase their entry-level salary by at least 30%," says Lineman, who is also Strategic Advisor to the Chancellor on Workforce Innovation at PASSHE.



## President Hanna Launches 'Common Ground' Podcast

The podcast, "Common Ground," hosted by President Bashar Hanna, has released one episode a month since its first on May 1 this year.

The Common Ground podcast brings together leaders from across Pennsylvania to engage in meaningful conversations and explore the pressing issues our institutions, communities, and students and their families face on their path to earning a degree.

Podcast guests have included John Wetzel, Chair of the council of Trustees and former PA Secretary of Corrections; Jennifer Wakeman, Executive Director of DRIVE and Hope Lineman, PASSHE Executive Director of Workforce Development; Deans Dr. Leo-Felix Jurado from the College of Health Professions and Dr. Ann E. Larson from the College of Education and Human Studies; Chad Lassiter, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission; Dr. Diana Rogers-Adkinson, CU Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Lynda Schlegel Culver, State Senator and Bloomsburg alumna, PA State Treasurer and Bloomsburg alumna Stacy Garrity, as well as Mansfield alumnus and ESPN Radio Host Freddie Coleman. Listeners can subscribe to Common Ground on Spotify, Apple Music, and other major streaming platforms, or visit [www.commonwealthu.edu/commonground](http://www.commonwealthu.edu/commonground) to listen to episodes, learn more about the podcast, and submit ideas for future episodes or guests.

## University Awarded Grant to Accelerate Special Ed Teacher Certification

Commonwealth University's special education program was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to accelerate programming for PK-12 Special Education Teacher Certification. Commonwealth University was one of 15 universities awarded a portion of the \$1.5 million grant.

"These grants will expedite the process of becoming a certified special educator and enable more teachers to enter the field faster," says acting Secretary of Education Dr. Khalid N. Mumin.

The grant addresses the need for certified special educators across the state amidst the dramatically increasing number of emergency-certified teachers in the field of special education. The accelerated program includes courses and fieldwork beginning this summer and extending through next summer. The grant will provide graduate-level students working on emergency certifications tuition and fee incentives at the program's beginning, mid-point, and end.



Zach Hicks '23, special education, now teaches at Shikellamy Middle School.

"This grant funding gives an opportunity for Commonwealth University to be a leader in presenting an accelerated, sustainable model for certification within the context of a master's level program," says Dr. Brooke Lylo, Associate Professor in the Department of Exceptionality Programs at CU.

"We're very excited about the Pennsylvania Department of Education award. Preparing and certifying special

education teachers is a high-need area in the education employment sector," says Dr. Bashar W. Hanna, President of Commonwealth University. "We're grateful for this funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and thank Dr. Mumin and the department for their confidence in special education teacher preparation at our university."

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office Awards \$91,000 in Grants to Support DEI Efforts Across Campuses

Commonwealth University's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has awarded 22 individuals across four locations in Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, Mansfield, and Clearfield mini-grants for the 2023-24 academic year totaling more than \$91,000.

The mini-grants, used by the 14 faculty, seven staff, and one student, will provide financial assistance for trainings, conferences, research, immersion activities and programming that strengthen excellence in diversity and inclusion for individuals or the community at Commonwealth University.



Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg held its ninth annual White Coat Ceremony for second-year nursing students on Saturday, Sept. 17, in Haas Center for the Arts, Mitrani Hall. More than 130 students participated in the ceremony, which celebrates sophomore nursing students who are entering the next phase of their education.

## Two New Student Members Appointed to Council of Trustees



The Commonwealth University Council of Trustees has named two new student council members for the 2023-24 academic year. **Jessica Dodge** has been appointed as the student representative for the Bloomsburg location and **Tynesha Holloway** has been appointed to represent Lock Haven.

A nursing major in her second year at Bloomsburg, Dodge is a resident of Orangeville and a 2022 graduate of Millville School District, where she was class valedictorian. At Millville, she was a Mid-Penn All Star for varsity soccer and basketball, and served as student council president as well as class president.

"The student trustee position provides an opportunity to be the voice of the students of Bloomsburg, while being involved in monumental changes of an integrated Commonwealth University. It was something I knew I had to pursue," Dodge says. "I am blessed to be able to challenge myself to make a better future for Commonwealth University."

Dodge has been active in numerous community organizations and an employee and volunteer at Camp Victory of the Nicholas Wolff Foundation in Millville. She has volunteered at the John

Buck Memorial Food Bank in Orangeville and at the Millville Elementary School where she helped organize and conduct activities for elementary students. Dodge also is a member of several organizations including Nursing Christian Fellowship, Student Nurses Association, Nursing Learning Community and Bloomsburg's chapter of Rotaract. She is involved with the Lives Changed By Christ organization and is employed by Geisinger in Danville as a nursing assistant.

Holloway, of Philadelphia, is a senior criminal justice major at Lock Haven. She is a 2020 graduate of Preparatory Charter High School, where she was a member of the step team and student council. At Lock Haven, she is the president of the Black Student Union and handles public relations for the Multicultural Activities and Advisory Council.

"I wanted to become a student trustee because I believe that I have a strong voice and am able to communicate what needs to be done on campus in a respectful way," Holloway says. "I want to advocate for students because we are important and our wants and needs matter. I want to see real changes before I graduate and I believe with the voice that I have on campus that can be accomplished."

Holloway also is a student representative for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, a student member of the Commonwealth University Senate for first-year experience (for students in their first year at Lock Haven) and is a volunteer at the Haven Cupboard, a food pantry for Lock Haven students.

"Student trustees serve an integral and valuable role at Commonwealth University through their representation to the university's Council of Trustees. I would like to congratulate Jessica and Tynesha on their appointment and thank them for their service to their fellow students and the university. Jessica and Tynesha are strong examples of leadership in action and I look forward to their valuable insights and contributions," says Bashar W. Hanna, President.



## Jeff Emanuel Named ZIPD Director

**Jeffrey Emanuel** has been appointed director of the Zeigler Institute for Professional Development (ZIPD) in the Zeigler College of Business at Commonwealth University. Formerly director of the Foundation of the Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce, Emanuel's career has been focused on experiential and lifelong learning.

"ZIPD gets to the heart of what makes people truly successful and happy in life," said Emanuel. "It's finding a career that aligns with your skills, passions and values that leads to true success."

This program is about making students more well-rounded by building their career skills. They don't know what they don't know. Through ZIPD we help them strengthen skills employers seek the most—leadership, team work, communication, problem solving, and professionalism. By attending the annual ZIPD conference and meeting with alumni and employer partners working in the field, we fill in those gaps."

Emanuel plans on strengthening the community service requirements and add wellness opportunities to the ZIPD program.

## Lura Good Brings New Voice to Campus Media as Confer Center Director

Radio has a new voice on Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg's campus. **Lura Good**, a veteran on-air personality for Selinsgrove-based Hanna Radio (92.3-97.5-106.1 FM) has been appointed Director of the Kerby Confer Media Center.

The Kerby Confer Media Center was established with a \$5.3 million gift from radio legend Kerby Confer. The center's home will be in McCormick Center, currently undergoing renovation, and will encompass interactive collaboration spaces where students and faculty can explore radio, video, podcasts, live-streaming, and other forms of broadcasting on campus.

"Going on air is a privilege. You are being invited into a person's life," says Good. "Radio is where you connect to someone personally. You become part of their routine and you get to be a storyteller."

A graduate from Bucknell University with a master's degree in higher education and curriculum development, Good recalls how radio was a part of her routine as a listener. "When I was working as a teacher in New York, I knew I was running late in the morning if I missed the birthdays on the radio."

She finds it interesting how audio is being used in new forms and is excited to work with students and explore all mediums of broadcasting.

"I fell into radio by accident," Good admits. "A friend worked at one of the local radio stations." She soon became a promotions assistant with the station and gradually transitioned to on-air roles.

Good currently has her own show at WHNA, Hanna Radio, part of Seven Mountains Media, and a podcast, *The 570h!*. She has also served as Promotions Director and morning show co-host at the crosstown Sunbury Broadcasting Hot AC "94KX" WQKX Sunbury radio station in the past.

Good's commitment to community extends beyond the airwaves. She holds a Walk for Hunger with the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, where she walks from Selinsgrove to Bloomsburg with an empty shopping cart to spread awareness and raise money



for the people who go hungry during the holiday season. She has raised just over \$14,000 in the past, with each dollar feeding someone in need. With a colleague, Good also has launched a weekly feature, "Four-Legged Friend Fridays," to help find homes for adoptable animals.

She plans to expand the curriculum around the media and journalism program to use the Kerby Confer Media Center to the fullest.

Good also wants students to branch out and explore all the opportunities held in the new media center, including CU-Bloomsburg's own station, Husky Student Radio (WHSK). "Radio is a community resource. I want students to think of WHSK as a community resource," Good says. "Right now, radio is a club on campus. But in the future, it will be part of the curriculum."

Established through a gift from Terry '76 and JoAnn Schultz Zeigler '77, the Zeigler Institute for Professional Development (ZIPD) prepares students for professional success by supplementing coursework with real-world and experiential learning opportunities.

While with the Chamber Foundation he used his experiences to create a leadership program for the medical residents and involved them in the community. Emanuel was formerly manager of graduate medical education and med-peds residency coordinator at Geisinger Health System. He has also

been employed by Lockheed Martin as an associate chemist and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials at the National Institute of Standards and Technology as a quality analyst and laboratory assessor.

Emanuel is the secretary of the board of directors for Smart Futures, a nonprofit software development organization dedicated to providing an online career planning and portfolio platform that helps schools easily implement the career education and work standards within any classroom or virtually. He has also been involved with the Maria Joseph Continuing

Care Community, the Danville Child Development Center, and the Young Life Ministry nonprofit organizations.

Emanuel holds a bachelor's degree in Geo-Environmental Engineering from Pennsylvania State University and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. In addition, he has a Talent Pipeline Management Certificate and is a Business Leads Workforce Policy & Program Fellow with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and has obtained Executive and Performance Leadership Certificates from Cornell University.

# Commonwealth University Launches **LANDMARK STRATEGIC PLAN**

## THE UNIVERSITY'S FIRST-EVER STRATEGIC PLAN PUTS STUDENTS AT ITS CENTER

In October, the Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania Council of Trustees formally approved and endorsed the university's first-ever strategic plan. The approval marks the culmination of more than a year of planning that involved input and perspectives from across all locations and levels of the university. The University Senate previously endorsed the plan at its September 14 meeting.

The plan has measurement of success built into it. Each of its four strategic priorities is coupled with selected metrics, such as average unmet need and average net prices compared to Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education average, placement rate of graduates, and student retention, that the university will monitor to determine the overall success of the plan.

The plan's four strategic priorities are: Student Success; Academic Excellence and Innovation; University Success; and Welcoming and Inclusive Community. Each of these strategic priorities is undergirded by the plan's three core commitments: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB); Strategic Communications; and Thriving Students, Faculty, and Staff.

"I believe one of Commonwealth University's greatest strengths is our steadfast commitment to putting students first. That commitment is on full display in the university's first strategic plan. This ambitious and comprehensive plan places student success at the center of our goals, planning, and initiatives and promises to continue the great work we have begun. With a focus on four strategic priorities that are layered throughout the institution we will build upon our mission to provide high-quality education through high-impact practices, career connection, and inclusivity. I have no doubt

that Commonwealth University will continue to grow and thrive as we launch the strategic plan," says Council of Trustees Chair John Wetzel.

"Commonwealth University's strategic plan is built on the core pillars that will carry the institution forward and deliver on the promise we have made to students and families across the state and region to provide an exceptional education experience, rich with opportunity and delivered affordably. The work we have done thus far through the integration process and our vision for the future of Commonwealth University have proven central to the plan's creation. As we move forward, the strategic priorities and core commitments will be woven into every area and every initiative we undertake at Commonwealth University. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Strategic Planning Committee for shepherding the plan to completion, especially core team members Cori Myers, John Bodenman, and Amy Osborne," says Bashar W. Hanna, President.

The Student Success priority will focus on providing holistic and inclusive support to meet the needs of all students and prepare them for personal and professional success. Its initiatives will include the development of meaningful opportunities for career readiness, the growth of exemplary and holistic student support services, support to graduates as they launch their careers, and embedding of financial literacy into the learning process.

The Academic Excellence and Innovation priority initiatives focus on the inclusion of high-impact practices, accelerated programs, and innovative credentialing opportunities into the educational offerings as well as investments in both employee professional development and



### MISSION

Our hard-working and determined students are at the heart of everything we do. Commonwealth University leverages the power of Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield to provide affordable, high-quality education emphasizing high-impact practices, personal and career connections, and inclusivity supporting all learners to succeed in our region and beyond.



**VISION**

Commonwealth University will be a premier regional public institution that supports and prepares all students for success in the global workforce by providing an accessible and transformative educational experience.

**VALUES**

- Resilient
- Student-Centered
- Accessible
- Welcoming & Inclusive
- Collaborative
- Innovative & Exceptional

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

**Student Success**

Provide holistic and inclusive support to meet the needs of all students and prepare them for personal and professional success.

**Academic Excellence and Innovation**

Provide an innovative and transformative educational experience that prepares graduates and credential earners to succeed in meaningful careers and beyond.

**University Success**

Ensure fiscal sustainability, increase enrollment, and develop cutting-edge systems and processes to attract and retain diverse students, faculty, and staff.

**Welcoming and Inclusive Community**

Create an inclusive and welcoming university culture while developing and strengthening connections among our multiple locations and within our local communities

and the development of scholarly and creative works that make an impact far beyond the campus community.

The Welcoming and Inclusive Community priority seeks to build a culture that embraces change, improves communication across the complex organization, supports the affinity groups that foster a sense of belonging (student organizations, athletics, etc.), and enhances the university's mutually beneficial relationships with its surrounding communities.

The University Success priority focuses on student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates as well as employee recruitment and onboarding. It includes the launch of strengthened marketing efforts and fundraising campaigns to support plan progress.

Following approval of the plan, execution began immediately, with each unit including efforts under its purview that directly support the priorities and move the university toward meeting the selected metrics for measurement.

**CORE COMMITMENTS**

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)**

Serve as central guiding principles and efforts that ensure all students and university personnel can feel valued, supported, and empowered.

**Strategic Communications**

Ensure effective communication across the organization while elevating our reputation externally.

**Thriving Students, Faculty, and Staff**

Foster a culture that embraces growth and wellbeing so that students and university personnel can thrive.



# HOME COMING 2023

The weather was wet and raw on Saturday, Oct. 14, but Huskies maintained their warmth and good cheer for Homecoming. In addition to football, Bloomsburg athletes competed in field hockey, women's club rugby, and water polo. At the Fenstemaker Alumni House, the Husky pack gathered for the annual Alumni Tent Party, which featured food trucks, a photo booth, and children's activities.





The Bloomsburg State College Class of 1973 returned to campus for their 50th reunion reception on Friday, Oct. 13, 2023 at the Greenly Center in downtown Bloomsburg. Class members were greeted by Commonwealth University President, Dr. Bashar Hanna and gathered for a cocktail hour and buffet dinner while reconnecting with former classmates.



A Multicultural Student-Alumni Networking Social was held on homecoming Saturday in Monty's.



## Commonwealth University Launches Entirely New Academic Curriculum

### Every Course, Within Every Program, Within Every Degree, Within Every College was Rewritten, Reviewed, and Updated—In a Single Year

Commonwealth University (CU) has done what perhaps no other institution of higher education has done before—update and launch an entirely new curriculum in a single year. The change, which began with the Fall 2023 semester following the integration of three historic public universities (Bloomsburg University, Lock Haven University, and Mansfield University) in 2022, has allowed CU to quickly create an academic array that is modernized for the educational needs of students and relevant to the requirements of today's employers.

"With the integration of the new university, we were offered the opportunity to do something enormous for our students," says President Bashar Hanna. "Change of this magnitude often takes several years in higher education," he adds. "Instead, we took the bull by the horns, collaborated with our faculty, regional

employers, and area experts, and created an academic array that puts students, their employability, and quality academic experience at the center.

"With this new curriculum, we truly embrace the power of three, bringing together the best of what each CU location offers and building out the programs that create the opportunities our students need to succeed while at Commonwealth U. and after graduation." Hanna says.

The review and launching process for the new curriculum began with the faculty. Through a variety of sessions, the faculty and university leadership came together to begin the critical work of examining, in

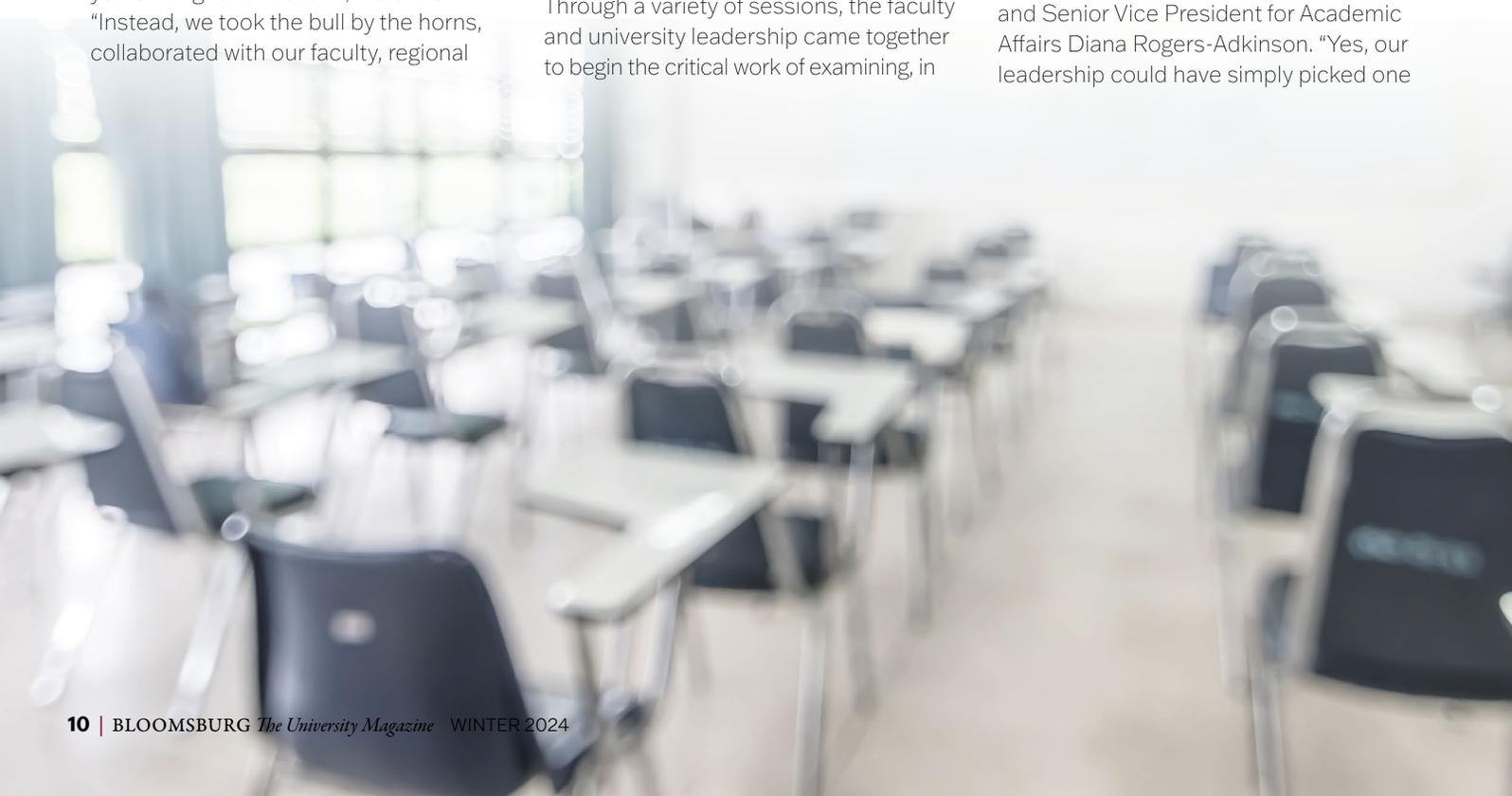
many cases, three different programs at three different institutions, and determining how best to identify their strongest attributes, modernize them for changing workforce and student needs, and ensure a quality experience for all students regardless of campus location.

The work was then expanded to invite key strategic partners to join curriculum advisory boards. These advisors included

top area employers who shared their workforce needs, including what skills graduates require to succeed immediately on the job. Finally, in some cases, feedback was gathered from the students themselves.

**“With this new curriculum, we truly embrace the power of three, bringing together the best of what each location offers...”**

"While students are at the heart of this new curriculum, the faculty were most definitely its champions," says Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Diana Rogers-Adkinson. "Yes, our leadership could have simply picked one



of the three campus programs and been done with it. However, that would not have coalesced the faculty at our three locations. The faculty needed the opportunity to come together as one department, one mind, one soul, one curriculum.”

Relevance and modernity are the two words that come immediately to mind when discussing the new array, she noted. To accomplish those goals, the faculty worked with regional employers and advisory groups to suggest outcomes desired from graduates. These outcomes were taken into consideration in the development of course offerings and material. In addition, high-impact practices such as internships and undergraduate research were thoroughly embedded into academic programs.

“Every single year students now have the opportunity to do some type of applied work, be that on or off campus,” Rogers-Adkinson says. “And a majority of these are embedded experiences in our degree programs.”

This infusion of high-impact experience into each degree is part of each student’s new Professional Map.

“We’ve embedded these practices across the four-year degree, and we call that our Professional Map,” Rogers-Adkinson explains. “Students now get to see two things right up front: here’s my Degree Map, which includes the content I’m going to learn over those four years and, simultaneously, here’s my Professional Map, which includes experiences either in or out of the classroom that tie my learning to the real application.”

The update also allowed CU to take a close look at how technology is embedded in the curriculum. With different opportunities and faculty at each location, it was important to ensure students at one location did not miss out on the opportunities at another of

the three locations. To combat this, many programs and courses have both face-to-face and remote or hybrid format offerings.

Several of these programs also take advantage of new technologies for remote learning, such as the newly launched WeConnect and Zoom+ classrooms. These high-tech spaces allow students attending the remote classes to feel physically in the learning space with their in-person professors and peers at another campus location. The six WeConnect classrooms across the CU campuses allow for a more immersive digital experience for remote learning by using large high-definition screens and sound systems to feature classmates’ faces and voices similarly to how they would appear in a traditional lecture hall setting. The new classrooms allow students to make eye contact with the professor, and the professor to engage them and the learning space in much more interactive, natural ways than traditional online meeting platforms allow.

“We are so pleased to be able to offer the new curriculum this semester,” President Hanna says. “It has been a labor of love and much hard work that brings together the absolute best our faculty and facilities have to offer, coupled with the experiences employers need right now. I could not be more proud of our community.”

Additional information on the new academic array was featured on the Common Ground podcast.

Use the QR Code to listen to the  
Common Ground podcast.



## Council of Trustees’ Citation Recognizes Faculty Work in Revising Curriculum

At a meeting on Oct. 6, the Commonwealth University Council of Trustees enacted a citation commending the academic leadership and faculty for completing the construction of the new curriculum in just one year.

The citation, accepted by Provost Diana Rogers-Adkinson and President Bashar Hanna, notes that faculty, chairs, deans, academic affairs leaders, the Interim Curriculum Committee, and University Curriculum Committee reviewed more than 2,200 individual curriculum documents over the last academic year.

The faculty prioritized the needs of the students to ensure a unified high-quality educational experience; and contributed extensive time, talent, and collaboration within their departments to develop the new syllabi and programs of Commonwealth University.

## COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY AWARDED \$2.9 MILLION IN NSF GRANTS

By Eric Foster

### Commonwealth University (CU) students choosing to pursue majors in science will get a boost thanks to two grants totaling \$2.9 million from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The NSF awarded a six-year, \$2.5 million grant to CU through its Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics program for the CU-THRIVE in STEM Project.

And to help students succeed once they are at CU, the university has been awarded a three-year \$400,000 Improving Undergraduate STEM Education grant from the NSF for the Starting Out Strong in STEM project.



### SCHOLARSHIPS TO MAKE EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE

The \$2.5 million CU-THRIVE in STEM Project will aid in the recruitment, retention, and graduation of academically talented students with demonstrated financial need.

The grant, available beginning in the Fall semester of 2024, will fund renewable scholarships for an estimated 38 students. Qualifying students pursuing bachelor's degrees in biology, chemistry, computer science, digital forensics and cybersecurity, engineering, geosciences, mathematics, and physics at the Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield locations will receive four years of renewable scholarships up to \$15,000 in last-dollar scholarships.

"These scholarships are aligned with our mission as an institution and with the mission of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education," says Latha Ramakrishnan, Dean of the College of Science and Technology. "Over its six-year duration, this grant will provide four years of scholarship support to three cohorts of 12 or 13 students or 152 scholarships to 38 unique first-time, full-time students. Students can receive a full, 'free ride,' scholarship for four years."

The CU-THRIVE in STEM Program will also provide students with evidence-based academic, social, and professional supports. The program will also include summer bridge experience, first-year learning community, service-learning research project, customizable professional experience grants, peer and faculty mentors, and STEM-dedicated career development, which will set CU-THRIVE scholars up for success at CU and beyond in their STEM careers.

"It really took a village to create this grant," says Project Principal Investigator Dr. Jennifer Whisner. "The expertise and experience of



Principal investigators William Calhoun, Jennifer Whisner, and David DeVallance

co-investigators Dr. Kate Beishline in biology at the Bloomsburg campus, Dr. Mike Cullin in biochemistry, chemistry, engineering, and physics at the Lock Haven campus, Dr. Kristen Long in biology at the Mansfield campus, and Dr. Barry Minemeyer in mathematics, computer science, and digital forensics at the Bloomsburg campus were critical to the proposal's success."

"The CU-THRIVE in STEM program presents a dynamic example of the power of three and what is possible at Commonwealth University by harnessing the strengths of our locations to provide



*Barry Minemyer, associate professor of Mathematical and Digital Sciences*



*Kristen Long, associate professor of Biological and Allied Health Sciences*

opportunities for students to succeed," says Bashar W. Hanna, President.

### **HELPING STUDENTS START STRONG**

Entry level STEM courses are often the most rigorous of a college student's course load. The \$400,000 Improving Undergraduate STEM Education grant is intended to increase the number of students who successfully complete their first-year STEM courses, and retain more, and more diverse students in STEM majors.

The grant, "Improving STEM Student Success Through the Integration of Learning Assistants and Co-Requisite Models in First-Year Courses," will fund implementation and expansion of two innovative, evidence-based practices in Commonwealth University's College of Science and Technology, and help CU fulfill its workforce development mandate by graduating more students who can fill

the growing need for qualified STEM job candidates.

The learning assistant model pairs specially-trained students with faculty who implement an active learning approach in their courses. Learning assistants (LA) take a one-credit course that helps them effectively engage and assist students and work closely with faculty mentors to facilitate learning both inside and outside the classroom.

The co-requisite model replaces developmental math courses with additional assistance in some sections of first-year math courses. Bloomsburg mathematics faculty have already replaced key developmental courses with co-requisite sections.

The math co-requisite model was expanded to Commonwealth University locations, Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield, in the Fall semester. The grant will provide students and faculty in

these transformed courses with additional support from learning assistants. The grant also provides support for CU faculty teaching first-year courses in biology, chemistry, geoscience, and physics who have committed to adapting their courses to include LA-facilitated active learning, as well as faculty professional development activities to enhance student learning and success in first-year STEM courses.

Project impacts will be felt beyond first-year CU STEM classrooms as project research results will be used to evaluate, further develop, and share best practices in teaching and learning.

The Improving Undergraduate STEM Education project is led by Whisner, William Calhoun, professor of mathematics and digital sciences, and Dr. David DeVallance, Associate Dean of the College of Science and Technology.



# A Legacy of Giving:

Ed & Julie Breiner's Journey from  
Bloomsburg Graduates to Philanthropic Leaders

By Tom Schaeffer '02



*Pictured L-R: past Breiner Scholarship recipients Alexis Bird '21, Lindsay Stine '21, Noah Green '21, Tyahva Wilhour '22, Lenora Pierce '21*

**C**ommonwealth University has received its first-ever transformational gift. The \$5 million gift from Ed and Julie Breiner, both 1977 graduates of the CU legacy institution Bloomsburg University, will support nursing education at all CU locations—Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, Mansfield, and Clearfield.

Their commitment marks the first multimillion-dollar alumni gift that supports the new comprehensive direction of the integrated university and largest single gift ever given to the School of Nursing at any of the historic campuses. In honor of their support, the school, which has programming at all university locations, will be renamed the Breiner School of Nursing, within the College of Health Professions.

Ed and Julie's story began in their hometown of Easton, Pennsylvania where fate intervened, setting them on a course that would bring them together and shape their commitment to giving back.

The couple's paths first crossed when they were set up on a blind date at the age of 15. Ed recalls those early days, saying, "We went on a blind date when we were probably 15 years old and developed a friendship. We didn't get together because we were both involved with other people at our respective high schools, but we remained friends."

Ed's academic career began at Shippensburg, where he aspired to play college football while pursuing his undergraduate degree. Julie's post-secondary education began at an all-girls school in Hackettstown, N.J.



*From left: President Bashar Hanna, Trustee and nursing student, Jessica Dodge, Ed and Julie Breiner, Kim Olszewski, senior associate dean of the Breiner School of Nursing, Erik Evans, vice president of university advancement, Leo-Felix Jurado, dean of the College of Health Professions*

Once they each realized their first choice schools weren't the right fit, they transferred to Bloomsburg. Julie arrived at Bloomsburg in the spring of her first year. Ed took a semester off and worked in a foundry, where he quickly discovered that he wanted to give college another try.

"So, I followed Julie to Bloomsburg," Ed jokes. "I knew two things: I didn't want to work in the foundry, and I wasn't going to be able to ask this girl to marry me unless I had some bigger plans for the future."

After graduating in December 1977 from Bloomsburg State College—Ed with a degree in accounting and Julie in biological sciences, they embarked on careers close to home. Ed became an accountant at the same foundry where he worked during his semester off, and Julie began with an internship as a medical technology professional.

## A LEGACY OF GIVING

Ed's next step was taking on a role as an accountant with Ingersoll Rand, a job that eventually led to a sales position that took the couple to Texas in 1981. He stayed with Ingersoll Rand for 18 years before making the tough decision to move back to Pennsylvania for a position with Schramm Inc., a family-held global business specializing in drilling products and heavy machinery.

That's where fate would play a role again, reconnecting Ed and Julie with Bloomsburg. In 2010, two specialized mobile rotary drill rigs produced by Schramm Inc. played a pivotal role in the rescue of 33 Chilean minors trapped during a dangerous mining job. The national event led to Ed being in the news, which prompted members of Bloomsburg's marketing and communications team to reach out for a story.

The experience rekindled a connection with Bloomsburg, which led to Ed and Julie, who had already been regular supporters of Bloomsburg, making their first major gift to create the Ed and Julie Breiner Scholarship to support students majoring in business and nursing.

Ed notes that their commitment to giving back was strengthened by realizing the financial challenges facing students in the modern era. "At the time, we were thinking about making a gift to support education, and we wanted to support the state system," he says.

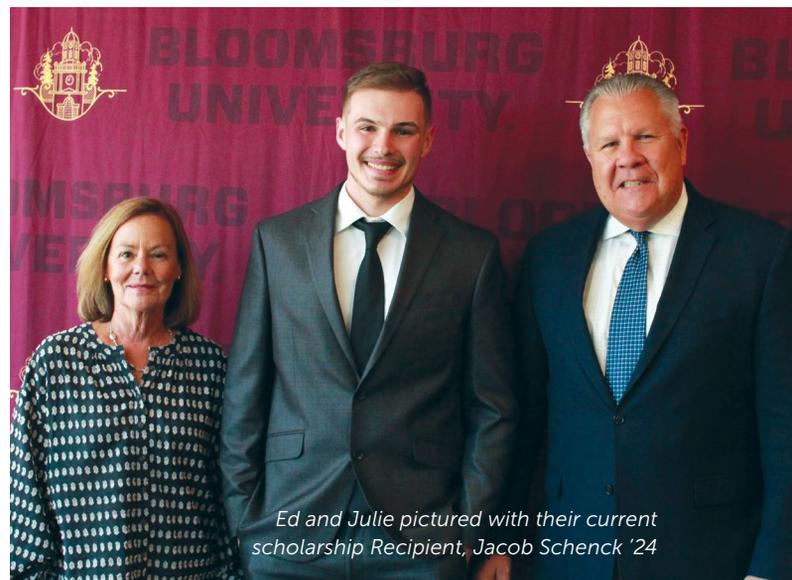
"Outside of raising our family, creating that scholarship was one of the most rewarding things we've ever done," says Julie, who considers the now 13 students who have received their scholarship as extended family members. It's truly a privilege to watch them grow because we meet them as freshmen, and we say goodbye to them right before graduation, and just to see them mature and hear about their next steps is inspiring."

In 2012, a few years after Ed and the management team bought Schramm, Inc., the company was sold to private equity investors. Ed's journey from the foundry to the pinnacle of the corporate world reflected his well-rounded approach to business, which he attributes to his Bloomsburg education.

With the sale, Ed and Julie were in a position to make an even more significant impact on Bloomsburg students through their philanthropic support. "Sometimes in life, it's just like that," says Ed. "The timing was right. We knew we wanted to do something to support one of the state schools, and we thought initially it would be here in West Chester, where we live, but then we got the call from Bloomsburg."

After seeing how much their scholarship impacted their recipients, Ed and Julie knew they wanted to support an area where they could have a more exponential impact. The result was a \$1.9 million gift to establish the Breiner Endowed Professor of Nursing in 2014 as part of Bloomsburg's "It's Personal" campaign.

The Breiners' main goal for this gift was to help as many students as they could because of the impact those students could then make in their respective communities as healthcare providers.



Ed and Julie pictured with their current scholarship recipient, Jacob Schenck '24



*Ed and Julie with Roongo, Leo-Felix M. Jurado, Dean, College of Health Professions Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania, and Kim Olszewski, Senior Associate Dean, Breiner School of Nursing.*

"Our daughter is a nurse, and our niece graduated from Bloomsburg's nursing program, so it was a natural fit for us," Julie adds. "We were introduced to so many wonderful people in the department through our scholarship recipients, which just stirred a lot of enthusiasm within us for the program."

The Breiners have formed special connections with scholarship recipients and have also forged a lasting relationship with Kim Olszewski, the second awardee of their professorship and current senior associate dean of the School of Nursing.

"It has been amazing working with Ed and Julie; I have been so inspired by everything they've done for me and our students," says Olszewski. "Their support embodies the definition of philanthropy and they have positioned us to recruit and retain the most talented aspiring healthcare professionals to make a significant impact on healthcare, especially considering the pressing nursing shortage we are facing within the next few years."

Now retired and living in their home in West Chester, Ed and Julie remain devoted to two core values: family and giving back. With three adult children and six grandchildren, they stay busy with grandparent duties, but Ed and Julie are active in their community when the grandkids go back home.

The Breiners' philanthropic journey is rooted in a profound commitment to giving back. They have supported their community through various avenues, including Ed's involvement with the the Boards of the Chester County Hospital, Penn Medicine, and the Chester County Food Bank. They have

also addressed food insecurity by volunteering at the Chester County Food Cupboard. Julie's engagement with various nonprofit organizations reflects her unwavering dedication to uplifting the lives of others, from serving on the board of The North Star of Chester County to helping raise money for scholarships for women in the Chester County area.

Ed and Julie's recent gift extends their legacy of giving through a \$5 million gift from their estate to name the Breiner School of Nursing, which will benefit students across all Commonwealth University locations.

The Breiners' extended support of nursing education stemmed from their recognition of the critical need for nurses, especially in underserved areas. Their enduring connection with Commonwealth University, especially the School of Nursing, was a driving force behind their latest \$5 million gift through their estate.

"We need more nurses," emphasizes Ed. "And if we need them here, I know in the more rural parts of the country, it's even more of a challenge."

Julie underscored the importance of their gift, saying, "It's really about what's best for the students of central Pennsylvania. This is taking the strengths from all the institutions and combining them to provide a service for these students that surpasses what could be done on an individual campus."

"We've realized the success that we feel blessed by and what we have," says Julie. "And we want to share that with others."



# A HOLLYWOOD STORY

## IN BLOOMSBURG By Tom McGuire

If Franklyn Quiteh's story as a football player at Bloomsburg was shopped to Hollywood movie producers, it'd likely be rejected as unrealistic.

There is no way that a player who landed the starting tailback job as a redshirt freshman through a series of strange events, would become the second-leading rusher in NCAA Division II history and win the 2013 Harlon Hill Award—the D-II version of the Heisman Trophy.

But this story is true.

As a high school player at Pocono Mountain West, Quiteh, the son of Liberian immigrants, wasn't highly recruited despite posting a single-season school record of 2,278 yards and 27 touchdowns as a senior. Few universities, not even hometown East Stroudsburg, showed much interest. Still, Quiteh (pronounced Kui-EH-tay) looked to stay in the area.

"At Pocono Mountain West, we weren't a hotbed for recruits, so it took a lot of work from coaching staff to generate interest," says Quiteh. "I had interest from D-I schools like Liberty, Delaware, New Hampshire, as well as D-II schools Shippensburg, Lock Haven, and Shepard. But I really wanted to stay close to home so my parents could see me play all the time."

When the Huskies showed interest, Quiteh jumped at the opportunity. "I attended football camps at Bloomsburg, so I was familiar with the school and coaching staff."

Redshirting the first year was standard practice for nearly all players. But, after spring practice in 2010, Quiteh was fourth on the depth chart.

"My initial thought was that there was work to be done and I needed to carve a role out for myself," Quiteh says of his career start at Bloomsburg. "I began to

concede mentally that I wouldn't get any real playing time until my junior year."

"When spring practice ended, the feedback from the coaches was encouraging and made me want to do what I could to build on it," he adds. "My thought process was to 'star in my role,' whatever role that would be, and take opportunities in stride."

And then came the summer of 2010. The third-string running back had academic trouble and dropped out. The second stringer blew out his knee doing a workout. The starter was dismissed just one week before the season opener. Suddenly, the player not even mentioned in the media guide was going to be the starter in week one in Ashland, Ohio.

"Going from role player to starter was quite the change. I knew what the running back position meant to the offense and the tremendous amount of responsibility that came with that position," says Quiteh.



Quiteh took his opportunity and ran with it...literally.

Against Ashland University, Quiteh rushed for 140 yards and a touchdown in a 24-14 loss. A star was born.

Quiteh ran for a total of 2,010 yards that year and, remarkably as a freshman, finished sixth in Hill voting.

As a sophomore, injury limited Quiteh to just 1,192 yards and 12 touchdowns, a great season for most players. In his junior year, he upped his total rushing yards to 2,121 and 24 scores. And he put himself in Harlon Hill Award contention. One of three finalists, Quiteh earned a trip to Florence, Alabama, for the 2012 Hill Awards banquet. He finished third.

"When I didn't win the Harlon Hill that year, I was upset," says Quiteh. "I was more upset with what the trophy could have represented for my community and how I could motivate so many athletes in the Pocono mountains to always pursue something much greater than themselves."

That third-place finish proved to be a motivator.

"That finish put everything into perspective," says Quiteh. "I was putting so much stock into individual awards that, I didn't appreciate the special position I was in. It was an honor to be in the mix. The next year I used that new mindset to focus on something much bigger

than me—a championship. It wasn't about the trophy, it was about the team again, as it should have always been. The original motivation became the 'new' motivation."

As a senior in 2013, Quiteh was even more dominant—finishing with 2,195 yards, 29 rushing TDs, and 31 overall TDs. He led NCAA Division II in four categories that season: rushing yards (2,195); rush yards/game (182.9); rushing TDs (29), and scoring (15.7 points per game). He also set a new school single-game record with 304 yards rushing against East Stroudsburg.

The entire team, under head coach Danny Hale, excelled, winning the PSAC championship game against Slippery Rock and earning a spot in the NCAA D-II playoffs.

Like a political campaign, a campaign for Quiteh to win the Harlon Hill was launched. The webpage, [www.buhuskies.com/quiteh](http://www.buhuskies.com/quiteh), was created to showcase Quiteh's stats and highlights and can still be accessed. Quiteh was again in the top three, earning a trip to the awards dinner.

This time, he came home with the prize. Quiteh was named the best Division II football player of 2013.

"I was way more nervous in 2012 than I was in 2013 before the announcement," Quiteh remembers. "My mindset had changed. What I set out to do, I had accomplished in winning a conference



title. Being there again I considered a luxury. My goal for that trip was to enjoy the company of other elite athletes while taking in the experience of being in Florence. Did I want to win? Of course. But if I didn't, I wouldn't have been upset."

So if Hollywood came knocking with the idea for a movie, how would it go?

"I don't think anyone could have written the script to my football career," says Quiteh. "Some of the best things in life can't be predicted, but in many cases, those events are the most memorable."

A story memorable enough to be a movie. Now, who plays Franklyn?

*Editor's note: (Tom McGuire is the former Bloomsburg sports information director (1997 to 2016). He retired from Commonwealth University earlier this year.)*



# COACH MARVIN: A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

By Mary Raskob

*In 15 years at the helm of the Bloomsburg men's and women's swimming teams, head coach Stu Marvin made a splash in the sport. A big splash.*



**T**hough he retired in June 2023 ripples of his legacy of excellence will be felt for many seasons to come.

For Marvin, coaching was a dream that continued in large part where it started—at Bloomsburg.

Marvin, a '78 Bloom grad, had a stellar career in the pool for the Huskies. On the deck outside the pool, his squads have racked up dozens of individual and team championships.

As a swimmer, Marvin was an 11-time All-American performer and won six Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference titles. He became the university's first triple All-American award winner in 1975 and repeated the feat in 1977. A two-time Danny Litwhiler Underclass Athlete of the Year and the Robert Redman Award winner as a senior in 1978, Marvin was inducted into the Bloomsburg Athletics Hall of Fame in 1990. Marvin was also inducted into the Pennsylvania Swimming Hall of Fame, Broward County Florida Sports Hall of Fame, Upper Dublin High School Athletic Hall of Fame, and the Florida Gold Coast Masters Hall of Fame.

"I want to thank former director of athletics, Mary Gardner, for giving me the chance to lead these programs in 2008," says Marvin. "It's been a dream come true to do this—to coach the team that you swam for."

Under Marvin's watch, the women's team achieved a .650 winning percentage in dual meets, while the men posted a .613 winning percentage. They have a combined

13 runner-up finishes at the PSAC Championships and finished as high as 15th at the NCAA Championships.

"It's been a pleasure to watch both teams return to the top of the PSAC," says Marvin. "Sharing my enthusiasm and 50-plus years of experience in competitive swimming has been very rewarding."

With Marvin coaching, the Huskies produced 41 PSAC champions, won 109 PSAC All-Conference awards, and set eight PSAC all-time records and six PSAC meet records—five for the men and one for the women. Marvin won a PSAC title with the men's team for the first time in program history in 2021 and completed the first undefeated season for the Huskies in 2017.

Marvin was named the PSAC Coach of the Year six times while he guided six swimmers to PSAC Swimmer of the Year, Swimmer of the Meet, and Freshman Swimmer of the Year honors. His Huskies have earned a pair of PSAC Sportsmanship awards and produced one PSAC Champion Scholar.

Marvin led eight student-athletes to Danny Litwhiler Underclass Athlete of the Year honors, six to Robert Redman Senior Athlete honors, four Joanne McComb Underclass Athlete of the Year honors, and four Eleanor Wray Senior Athlete honors. He also guided two individuals to Senior Scholar-Athlete of the Year awards.

As a team under Marvin, the Huskies have made 10 NCAA Championships appearances, which led to 19 individual All-Americans, earning 66 All-American honors and 16 Scholar All-Americans between the College Swimming & Diving Coaches Association of America and College Sports Information Directors of America. They also earned six All-American Scholar Team awards.

"My wife Meg is an avid international traveler and now I will be able to join her on her many adventures," says Marvin. "I can't wait to share these countless explorations all over the world!"

The first ripple of Marvin's influence is reflected in Bridget Hilferty, a star Husky swimmer who took the reins as head coach of the men's and women's swimming teams after serving as assistant under Coach Marvin for the past 10 years.

A four-year performer for the Huskies, Hilferty '14/'22M was a dominant force in the distance freestyle events, earning NCAA All-American honors in the 1000 free and 1650 free in 2012. She was a perennial top-eight finalist at the conference championships and was a key performer during dual meet competitions. Hilferty is ranked in BU's all-time top 10 in the 1650 free (fifth), 500 free (fifth), 200 free (sixth), and 1000 free (sixth). She was twice named the BU Swimmer of the Year (2011, 2012) and was a two-time team captain (2012, 2013).

The ripples of Marvin's influence flow outward again, as former Husky All-American Eric Usbeck '17 is the program's new assistant coach. Usbeck was an All-PSAC performer 19 times and a five-time PSAC Champion. He was voted team MVP, was the winner of the Robert B. Redman Senior Male Athlete of the Year award in 2017, and a three-time recipient of the Dave Gibas Award. He earned All-America honors in the 200- and 400-yard freestyle relays and the 200-yard medley relay. Usbeck set four Bloomsburg and PSAC records as part of relay teams.

"There are no words to describe the impact that Stu not only had on me but the entire Bloomsburg swimming and athletic family," says Hilferty. "He will be greatly missed but is always welcome on the pool deck."

“There are no words to describe the impact that Stu not only had on me but the entire Bloomsburg swimming and athletic family. He will be greatly missed but is always welcome on the pool deck.”

— BRIDGET HILFERTY '14/'22M

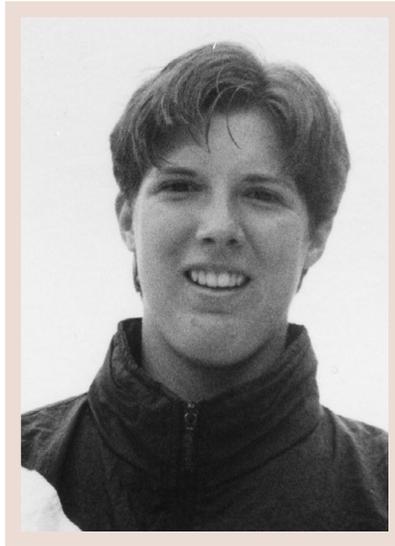


# BLOOMSBURG HALL OF FAME

The Bloomsburg athletic department officially inducted six alumni student-athletes into the Bloomsburg Athletics Hall of Fame on Sunday, October 15, as part of the Homecoming and Parents & Supporters Weekend festivities. This group marked the 41st Athletic Hall of Fame class and, with the addition of six individuals, brought the number of members enshrined to 208.



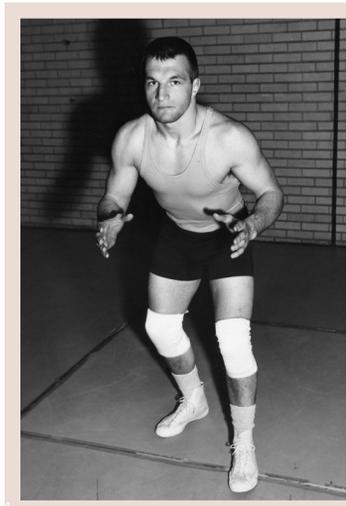
## Captain Tracy "Trey" Wirth '99 | Women's Soccer



Captain Wirth was a vital member of the early success of the Bloomsburg women's soccer program during a four-year stint with the Huskies from 1995-1998. As a goalkeeper, Wirth was a two-time All-American and a three-time All-Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) selection. Wirth is among only two goalkeepers in program history to earn multiple All-American honors. During Wirth's career, Wirth posted 20 total shutouts, the fourth most in school history, and had 0.70 goals against average—allowing just 36 goals in 4,538 minutes. Wirth's GAA stood as the program record until 2019.

## Amber (Hackenberg) Brosius | Women's Cross Country and Track & Field

Amber (Hackenberg) Brosius was a standout cross country and track and field athlete at Bloomsburg for four years. Hackenberg joined the Huskies in the fall of 2004. She was the first women's cross country All-American and earned several Academic All-America, All-Region, and All-PSAC honors during her career. During her track career, Hackenberg was a four-time All-PSAC performer. In 2008, Hackenberg qualified for the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships in the 5,000m run after setting the school record in the event at the Penn Relays. She took 17th overall in the Olympic Development race at 17:16.42.



## Bill Paule '65 | Wrestling

Bill Paule was a four-year varsity letter winner for the Bloomsburg wrestling program from 1961-65. Paule was the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) champion and a PSAC runner-up twice. He capped his career as a Husky with a fourth-place finish at the NAIA Tournament. During the 1961-62 season, Paule went 5-3 in duals as a freshman and finished second overall at 147 pounds at the PSAC championships. During his time at BU, the Huskies went 45-4-1 in dual meets.



**Franklyn Quiteh '13 | Football**

Franklyn Quiteh graduated as the decorated running back and one of the most decorated student-athletes in Bloomsburg University football history. He was the top back in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference and NCAA DII during his four years as a Husky. Quiteh's career culminated in receiving the Harlon Hill Award following his 2013 campaign, and he finished third in the vote following the 2012 season. The Harlon Hill represents the top player in the nation in DII football. In his four years on the gridiron, the Huskies went 39-9, were the PSAC East champion twice, and advanced to the NCAA DII national tournament three times.



**Lindy (Altadonna) McKinney '99 | Women's Lacrosse**

Lindy (Altadonna) McKinney is one of the most decorated defenders for the Bloomsburg lacrosse team. During her career, McKinney collected several All-American honors from the United States Women's Lacrosse Association (USWLA) and the Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association (IWLCA). As a defender, she was a three-time First Team All-American by both organizations following the 1997, 1998, and 1999 seasons. McKinney was a three-time First Team All-PSAC Defender during that season as well.



**Sheila (Zilinski) Hughes '04/'06M | Field Hockey/Women's Lacrosse**

Sheila (Zilinski) Hughes was an exceptional Bloomsburg field hockey program member for four seasons, leading the Huskies to two-straight NCAA National Championships and back-to-back Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) championships. During her career, Hughes collected several National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) and Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association (IWLCA) All-American and PSAC honors. Following the 2002 field hockey season, Hughes was named the PSAC Athlete of the Year and the NFHCA National Player of the Year.

# Bloomsburg Honors Alumni

By **Andrea O'Neill '06**

Every year, the Bloomsburg University Alumni Association recognizes alumni for their exemplary service to the university and their communities. Alumni are eligible for The Maroon and Gold Excellence (Young Alumnus) Award; William T. Derricott '66 Volunteer of the Year Award; and Distinguished Service Award.

The 2023 winners are outstanding examples of the Husky spirit and demonstrate a lifelong commitment to service before self. We're proud to recognize their dedication to paying it forward while giving back.



Alumni Award Winners: Hakeem Thomas '17, Austin Edgette '18, Wayne Whitaker '79/'95M, Steve Messner '68/'70M

## Maroon and Gold Excellence Award: **Austin Edgette '18**



Austin Edgette

Bloomsburg University baseball's second All-American and most recent MLB draft pick may have made baseball his top priority while on campus, but he knew his future would be bigger than athletics. In fact, it was his desire to help and inspire others that drew him to Bloomsburg.

"Bloomsburg Baseball was more about culture and

finding success over winning and that was exactly what I was looking for," says Edgette.

Once elected captain his junior year, Edgette found a renewed focus on the MLB draft and a sense of purpose by using his role as a ballplayer to connect with the communities where he played.

"There's a level of happiness I found by seeing the impact I can have just by signing a hat and having a conversation," says Edgette. "I realized Bloomsburg Baseball had given me a platform."

The San Francisco Giants drafted Austin Edgette out of Bloomsburg University, but he says what really changed his life was the phone call that came after.

"I got a call from a freshman teammate [and] he told me that he wanted to get drafted," recalls Edgette. "All of a sudden, younger teammates were acting like it was possible. When I think about that day I don't think about my name on that draft list I think of that phone call."

Edgette spent two seasons with the Giants before deciding to utilize his degree in finance. The first stop in the transition was Bloomsburg—specifically the annual Baseball Career Night organized by head baseball coach, Mike Collins—to gain perspective and get advice from fellow Huskies already working in the industry.

"It provided some direction and allowed me to transition to Lincoln Financial," says Edgette.

Now a wholesaler consultant for Lincoln Financial Distributors, Edgette has been recognized by Lincoln Financial for his relentless mentorship of new hires and shares his wisdom and inspiration with middle and high school students about holding onto one's dreams in the face of mental health, familial, and other challenges. He is also a frequent alumni volunteer with the Bloomsburg ZIPD Conference and Baseball Career Night.

"Bloomsburg gave me an opportunity to give hope to others. That's something I'll never lose sight of."



Hakeem Thomas and his wife, Coleen Thomas '17 at Homecoming.

## 2023 William T. Derricott '66 Volunteer of the Year Award: Hakeem Thomas '17

Hakeem Thomas '17 was only two weeks removed from a military deployment to the Middle East when he arrived at Bloomsburg University as a first-generation college student. And while Thomas' college career started out with all the optimism of any new adventure, the mental and physical trauma from his deployment and a lack of career direction led to his first year ending with an academic dismissal from the university.

"I had a lot of demons I didn't know I had," explains Thomas. "In the military, we are 'mission first,' and I had failed my mission as a college student."

The feelings of failure from the dismissal compounded his PTSD and nearly led Thomas to take his own life. But a well-timed phone call from his now wife, Coleen and a concerted effort by Bloom faculty and staff toward his reinstatement—Thomas' "village" as he now describes it—helped him develop the academic skills necessary to complete his degree and address what had been hindering him internally.

"Without the staff and faculty, I would not be sitting here. No doubt about it," explains Thomas. "I was given a second chance as a student and a second chance at life."

That reinstatement was a turning point for Thomas, who began to give back immediately through the Bloomsburg University Student Veterans Association (BUSVA), and later as an alumni volunteer through the Career Intensive Boot Camp (CIBC) and COST Pathways events. Thomas also holds an executive position on the Bloomsburg University Alumni Association board of directors. This relentless involvement with his alma mater led Thomas to be named the 2023 William T. Derricott '66 Volunteer of the Year.

"My new mission in life is to keep giving back and keep helping the next generation," says Thomas. "The only way I can repay my village is to be part of someone else's, and I will do it every time."

## 2023 Distinguished Service Award Steve Messner '68/'70M

If anyone took the mission of education to heart, it's Steve Messner '68/'70M. Recruited immediately out of Bloomsburg State Teachers College by the Lower Dauphin School District, Messner made an immediate impact on his students as tough, but fair. In fact, his first homeroom class dedicated their yearbook to Messner, and the district recognized him as a Lower Dauphin Outstanding Teacher.

His love of education would later prompt Messner to give back to his community and alma mater in such a way that he was named a 2023 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award.

But education wasn't just a means to a living for Messner. Messner used his personal and professional contacts to help his students and drive his volunteer work, especially with America's Promise, through which Messner was instrumental in delivering more than 400,000 books to youth in the greater Harrisburg region over two decades.

"There are small things that anybody can do to help others," explains Messner. "Any small idea can turn into a big deal if you stick to it. It's important to look for ways to help people, and it doesn't have to be a big project. The ways you can give back are endless."

Messner credits Bloomsburg with the inspiration and skillset that have driven his extensive service. In fact, when it came time to reconnect with his classmates for the class of 1968 reunion, Messner volunteered as chair of the 50th reunion committee and established a scholarship for students majoring in education—encouraging his classmates to do likewise.

"I realized early on in my career that I had been exposed to leadership skill sets at Bloomsburg that were valuable to me throughout my lifetime," recalls Messner. "I thought it was only right that I would give so that others would benefit from those same opportunities that were afforded to me."





## 2023 Distinguished Service Award **Wayne Whitaker Sr. '79/'95M**

A ripple effect of success that extends across regions and generations has earned Wayne Whitaker Sr. '79/'95M the 2023 Distinguished Service Award.

The New York City native enrolled at Bloomsburg State College in the fall of 1975 and while he struggled at first to adjust to the rural environment, the lessons he learned on campus allowed him to pass along his wisdom to fellow Huskies over the next three decades.

"I didn't want to leave New York," recalled Whitaker. "But I had the greatest experience. Bloom is where I learned my purpose."

"I cried on the bus because I didn't want to leave New York," recalls Whitaker. "But I had the greatest experience. Bloom is where I learned my purpose."

Whitaker became a recruiter for Bloomsburg University, working exclusively with high schools in the Philadelphia area to not only increase the student population at Bloomsburg, but also to provide racially diverse students from urban locations the opportunity of higher education.

Whitaker brought the Bloomsburg story to inner city schools, churches, youth clubs, and arranged bus trips by which prospective students could tour the campus, meet other students, observe classes, talk with professors, and connect with alumni from the Philadelphia area.

"He was determined to make sure that Bloomsburg was on the map," says retired school counselor Beverly Tedesco.

But mostly, Whitaker brought access. A first generation college student from a large city, Whitaker understood the challenges that awaited students from urban areas and worked to remove barriers from the admissions process that collided with full time jobs, familial responsibilities, or a lack of technology.

"He would never take a student that was not qualified, but a lot of times our students would disqualify themselves," explains Tedesco. "He would accept a paper application or extend a deadline. It gave that student a chance. It made Bloomsburg a viable option."

"The first thing I would tell the students to do when they got to Bloomsburg was, 'Go find Mr. Whitaker,'" says Tedesco. "Wayne had things in place that pulled them together and gave them a purpose and a mentor."

Wayne Whitaker retired from Bloomsburg University in 2020 with a legacy that includes three generations of Bloom alumni who have impacted their communities and professions. Equally great has been his impact on the university itself in the form of a more racially diverse Husky pack; the return on a 30 year investment in the underrepresented students of Philadelphia.

## Honoring the grit and determination of Huskies who are making the climb...

Dear Fellow Huskies,

Nominating a classmate is not just about acknowledging their success; it's a chance to celebrate the enduring friendships and collective growth that defined our educational experience. Your participation in this process not only uplifts their accomplishments but also strengthens the bonds that connect us as a community. I assure you; the process is not only gratifying but also an opportunity to rediscover the shared pride we have in each other's achievements.

Let's come together to honor the exceptional individuals who represent the best of what Bloomsburg has to offer. Your nomination can make a lasting impact.

**Lamar K. Oglesby '07**

Alumni Awards Committee Chair, Bloomsburg Alumni Association



## Call for Nominations: Bloomsburg Alumni Awards

2024 nominations are now open. Deadline to nominate is January 26.

For more info about the 2023 alumni award winners visit:  
[bloomu.edu/bu-alumni-awards](https://bloomu.edu/bu-alumni-awards)



## 60s

**Harold Ackerman '65** has photography featured in the Spring 2023 issue of *The Penn Review* and other work forthcoming in *Pithead Chapel*. Two of his poems appeared recently in *Schuylkill Valley Journal*. He has published several collections of photographs and poetry, most recently February 2, available at the Blurb bookstore. Ackerman earned an M.A. at the University of Kansas and a Ph.D. at Indiana University of Pa. and taught basic writing, composition, and ESL classes at Bloomsburg University for 26 years. He is married to Jane Archer Ackerman, a '64 BU graduate.

## 70s

**Donato Nieman '74** was appointed State President for AARP New Jersey in January 2023. Nieman retired from a career in municipal management in 2022 after nearly 40 years of public service. His last position was as Township Administrator for Montgomery Township, N.J., and is currently the part-time interim borough administrator in Pennington, N.J., mentoring the candidate for the position.

**Robert DeCarolis '76** entered Oregon State's Hall of Fame. DeCarolis spent 17 years at Oregon State, including 13 as the athletic director. Under his leadership, OSU grew the school's athletic budget by more than \$20 million.

## 80s



**Jean M. Runyon '80, Ph.D.**, was recently installed as the sixth president of Piedmont Virginia Community College in Charlottesville. Previously, Runyon was the campus vice president at Front Range Community College's

Larimer Campus in Colorado from 2015–2022. From 2007–2015, Runyon served in progressively responsible leadership positions at Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland. Runyon holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Education in Education Technology Management from Northcentral University, Master of Arts in Education and Human Development from George Washington University.

**Richard DiLiberto '82** was honored by UNICO National, America's largest Italian-American service organization. DiLiberto received the 2023 Philip Mazzei Americanism Award. A graduate of MMI Preparatory School and current board chairman, DiLiberto was inducted into the school's Wall of Fame and has served on the board of directors since 2013. He is a litigation partner in the Wilmington, Delaware, law firm of Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor, LLP.

**Mary Scandle McHugh '83** retired as a parole agent with over 35 years of service with the State of Pennsylvania.

**Michael Boguski '85** has retired as President of Specialty Property & Casualty at ProAssurance. Since stepping into his role as President of Specialty P&C four years ago, Boguski has brought those operations together under common leadership and overseen the integration of NORCAL into the ProAssurance organization.

**John Reilly '85/'21M** has been named Chief Financial Officer of Mrs. T's Pierogies. Reilly, of Ashland, has been with Mrs. T's for 16 years and has most recently held the title of Director of Finance. He also recently completed his Masters in Business Administration and Management from Bloomsburg University. With this new title, Jack will continue to oversee and direct all Financial Activity and Mrs. T's Revenue Growth Management Team. His new role will also have him oversee all IT activity.

**Richard King '86** was selected as the Construction Financial Management Association's (CFMA) 2023 Danny B. Parrish Outstanding Leadership Award recipient. King, CPA, CCIFP, is Treasurer/CFO at Schlouch Incorporated, where he manages accounting, finance, IT, insurance, contracts, Human Resources, and administration. King joined Schlouch in 1998 and has over 35 years of experience in public accounting and industry. King is a founding member and past President of CFMA's Greater Berks-Lehigh Valley Chapter. He has served on CFMA's Executive and Leadership Development, Conference Planning, and Heavy/Highway Committees.

**Keith Youtz '86** will retire after this school year from Lackawanna Trail Junior Senior High School. He has taught mathematics for 33.5 years. He will also resign as the head wrestling and cross-country coach and assistant coach for track and field. He has been a wrestling coach for 36 years at several schools, 24 of those years at Lackawanna Trail, three as an assistant to Ron Evans, and 21 years as head coach.

**Julie Beck Burkhart '88** has been named dean of Elms College, Chicopee, Mass., School of Nursing. Beck joins Elms from Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pa., where she recently served as director of Nursing and Health Sciences. The author of the book *The Meaning of Voice to Experienced Nurses in Magnet Hospitals*, Beck has more than 20 years of higher education experience in nursing.

**Charles Zwicker '88** has been named president and chief operating officer of Wyoming-based Weidenhammer, a technology company. He is the second president in the company's 45-year history. Charles G. Zwicker has been named president

and chief operating officer (COO). He has more than 30 years of experience in consulting and sales and marketing. Zwicker joined Weidenhammer in 2006 as a sales manager before moving to sales director, vice president, and most recently COO. Zwicker co-chairs The Chamber of Commerce for Great Philadelphia's Middle Market Action Team's Steering Committee. He also serves as a Judge of Elections in Montgomery County, a Steering Committee member at La Salle College High School, and as an adult leader in Scouting BSA.

**Karen Krisch '89** has been named Pennsylvania's 2023 National Distinguished Principal by the Pennsylvania Principals Association. An educator for 29 years, Krisch served in her current role as principal at Marion-Walker Elementary School (K-5) since 2017. Previously, she was principal at Bellefonte Area Elementary School, principal and vice principal at Bellefonte Area Middle School, and an assistant administrator for the Bald Eagle Area School District.

## 90s



**Nelson Barr '91** has been named vice president field claims at ERIE Insurance for the Hagerstown claims office. Barr joined ERIE in 2005 as a property adjuster. Since then, he been a large loss specialist,

property claims supervisor, and most recently, a property claims examiner in the Raleigh Branch. Barr also served in the U.S. Army Reserve and holds Senior Claim Law Associate (SCLA) and Associate in Insurance (AINS) and is a property arbitrator.

**William Klaips '93** has been named assistant medical center director at the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center (WBVAMC). Since 2014, Klaips has been the executive assistant to the director and public affairs officer at the WBVAMC. Klaips began his career with the VA in 2005 as an electrical engineer in facilities management service. During his career, he has progressed through various leadership roles within the organization, including chief of project engineering, associate chief of facilities management service, and acting chief engineer at the Wilkes-Barre and Erie VA Medical Centers.

**Jennifer (Gadomski) Orr-Greene '94** joined Cedarville Engineering Group, LLC, in Pottstown as the Environmental Team Lead. She began her career at the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, assuming various roles in water resources management. Most recently, she served as the Eastern Policy Director for the conservation organization Trout Unlimited.

**Steven Keen '94** has been named assistant dean of Transportation Technologies at the Pennsylvania College of Technology in Williamsport. A veteran of regional career and technical education, Keen was most recently director of career and technical education and high school principal in the Jersey Shore Area School District. Before joining Jersey Shore in 2013, Keen was an accounting teacher and coach in the Sullivan County School District, where he also taught in the Penn College Dual Enrollment program and was a business, computer, and information technology instructor in the Keystone Central School District.

**Wade Becker '95** has been named chief revenue officer at RKL LLP. Since joining the RKL partnership in February 2014, Becker has been active in business development and relationship management. He was integral to launching the firm's Harrisburg office in 2014 and continued to build RKL's presence in the Capital Region.

**Lisa McCracken Lehman '96** has been named head of research and analytics at the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing & Care (NIC). She was formerly senior living research and development with specialty investment bank Ziegler, where she was the primary researcher for the LeadingAge Ziegler 200, the Ziegler CFO Hotline poll, and other publications. She began her career as a research analyst at Holleran, a healthcare and aging services research and consulting firm, where she was promoted to vice president of research, managing partner, and ultimately, president between 2009 and 2013.

**Jeffrey Matzner '96** has been named assistant superintendent of the Gettysburg Area School District. Previously, Matzner served as principal at Central Dauphin Middle School for about 12 years. He earned his superintendent's letter in 2017 and then his Doctor of Education in school system leadership a year later, both from Widener University. His career includes teaching at South Middleton School District, where he taught sixth-grade math, science, geography, reading, and English at Yellow Breeches Middle School. He then became assistant principal at Linglestown Middle School in Central Dauphin School District.

**Dr. Claire Watson '98M**, who directed the initiative that created St. Bonaventure University's Dennis R. DePerro School of Health Professions in 2016, has been named the school's interim dean. Watson joined the St. Bonaventure faculty in 2013. She holds a Ph.D. in public health from Walden University, a master's degree in public health from Walden, a master's in exercise science from Bloomsburg University, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the State University of New York at Geneseo.

**Mary Murphy-Kahn '99M** was appointed Greenwood School District's superintendent. She has 17 years of teaching experience, including Saint Monica School, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, Selinsgrove School District, and Shikellamy School District. She began her administrative career as Shikellamy School District's assistant high school principal for two years before becoming the district's middle school principal, a position she held for eight years.

**Donald Richardson '99** has been named head football coach at West Catholic Preparatory High School in Philadelphia. Previously, he was assistant football coach at The Haverford School for 18 years.

## 00s

**Lon Morris Sr. '01** was promoted to Chief Operating Officer for the UNB Bank in Mount Carmel. Morris has been with the bank since March of 1995, previously serving as Numidia's bank branch manager.

**Lisa Slover Hivner '02** has been named director of student services for the Carlisle Area School District. She is a board-certified behavioral analyst who has worked as a transition coordinator in the Newport School District and as an autism behavioral educational consultant for the Capital Area Intermediate Unit.

**Jon Trosky '03/'04M** is in his second year of teaching at the Hazleton School District's Career Center, where he is a mass communications instructor. He is also beginning his 15th year as a part-time instructor at Penn State Hazleton and PSU Berks, where he teaches classes in computers, graphic design, new media, and emerging technology.

**Nicole Meckes Gunderman '06** was named Outstanding Citizen of the Year at the Freeland Memorial Day celebration. Meckes is a seventh and eighth grade modern world studies teacher at Freeland Elementary/Middle School in the Hazleton Area School District. She has been employed by the district since 2007 and at Freeland Elementary/Middle School for 12 years. Along with her teaching duties, Meckes is the adviser for the SADD and History clubs.

**Tiffany Forman Myers '06** has earned her Pennsylvania real estate license and has joined RE/MAX Bridges in Lewisburg as a sales associate. She was previously the settlement coordinator at the firm and will continue her administrative role inside the RE/MAX Bridges office. Before joining RE/MAX Bridges, she worked as an administrative assistant and finance staff member at SureHealth Pharmacy, now Caresite Pharmacy, and was a stay-at-home mother for three children for 10 years.

**Patrick Anderson '09** has been named president and senior director of engineering and operations at Citizen's Electric in Lewisburg. Anderson brings ten years of electric utility experience to the Citizens' team, recently serving as a senior engineer in metering with PPL Electric Utilities.

## 10s

**Larissa Savitsky '11** has joined the sales team of Bowen Agency Realtors. Bowen Agency Realtors is a full-service real estate agency with offices in Selinsgrove, Sunbury, and Lewisburg.

**Matthew Wincek '12M** has been named Tunkhannock Area High School principal. A former Wyoming Valley West teacher, Wincek was most recently curriculum director at Wyalusing Area School District.

**Joshua Roosa '13** has been named the head men's wrestling coach at Misericordia University. Roosa spent the last three seasons as the head coach at King's College. Previously, he spent five years as an assistant at D-I Appalachian State, including four seasons as head assistant coach.

**Katelyn Kelleher '14** has been promoted to coordinator of crisis services at Scranton Counseling Center, a community-based private nonprofit behavioral health provider serving Lackawanna, Susquehanna, and surrounding counties.

**Gene Tunney '14** has opened New Street Dental in Bethlehem. The office specializes in restorative dentistry and general dentist services.

**Alyssa Sanonu Meyers '15M** was named director of philanthropy at Community Giving Foundation in Berwick. In her position, Meyers-Sanonu will work closely with the foundation's president and CEO to bolster referral pipelines and serve as a spokesperson and presenter on behalf of the foundation. She most recently served as the Education and Enrichment director at the Berwick Area YMCA. She previously worked on well-being and community development initiatives at Arizona State University.



**Scott A. Koman '15**, a manager with Pennsylvania-based accounting firm Boyer & Ritter, was recognized by the National Association of Certified Valuators and

Analyst and the Consultants' Training Institute as among its list of leading 30 professionals 30 years of age and younger. In addition to his CPA license, Koman has obtained credentials in Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) and Master Analyst in Financial Forensics (MAFF). In 2022, Koman CPA, CFE, MAFF, also earned the Certified Valuation Analyst (CVA) designation.

**Dylan Kimbar '16** was sworn in as an officer in the Pennsylvania Capitol Police Department. Before joining the PA Capitol Police Department, he served as a patrolman for the Portland Maine Police Department.



**Molly R. Ciaccio '19** recently joined the law firm of Wyatt Early Harris Wheeler in High Point, N.C. as an associate attorney. Her areas of practice include Estates and Elder Law. Ciaccio earned her J.D. from the Elon University School of Law in 2022.

## 20s

**Henry Hynoski '20M** has been named principal of the Southern Columbia School District High School. A Southern Columbia graduate and former NFL player, Hynoski was hired last week as the district's new high school principal. Hynoski led the school's football team to four state titles before playing for the University of Pittsburgh and winning the Super Bowl with the New York Giants.

**Cristian Vazquez '22** joined the Catawissa Borough Police Department. Vazquez is bilingual, speaking English and Spanish. His family moved to Shenandoah from New York when he was nine.

## Marriages

Rebecca Andrews '16 and Kyle Fleischood '16 on Oct. 2, 2020

Liza Gillette and Brian Jay Lawall '15 on Oct. 22, 2022

Cole Neff '20 and Lindsey Sell '19 on Oct. 22, 2022

Samantha Perna '17 and Evan Marx '17 on June 10, 2023

Matthew Cox '17 and Allison Chory '18 on Aug. 4, 2023

Megan (Dempsey) O'Malley '10 and Timothy O'Malley on Aug. 25, 2023

Cara Kobeski '12 and Kevin J. Chuff on Sept. 3, 2023

## Births

Julie (Fufia) Yagielniskie '12 and Scott Yagielniskie, a daughter, Kira Elise, on May 17, 2022

Katelin (Bolig) '13 Auchenbach and John Auchenbach '13, a daughter, Mackenzie, on Sept. 28, 2022

Tyler DiRienzo '14 and Colette (Wolfe) DiRienzo, a son, Jack, on Oct. 18, 2022

Robyn '05 and Adam '04 Westover, a daughter, Savannah, on Dec. 27, 2022

Brittany (Bartol) Backer '15 and Derrick Backer '14, a daughter, Caroline Anne, on Feb. 15, 2023

Rebecca (Andrews) Fleischood '16 and Kyle Fleischood '16, a son, Connor Jay, Feb 17, 2023

Terry J. Tirko '16 and Emilee (Gearhart) Tirko, a daughter, Ellie Deloris, on March 11, 2023

Emily Vollmer '14 and Troy Sayles, a daughter, Phoebe, on March 11, 2023

Mary '10 (Lorence) Schrader and Fred Schrader '11, a son, Benjamin Andrew, on March 21, 2023

Paul '08 and Heather (Brassington) Scharf, a daughter, Ramona Marie, on March 31, 2023.

Taylor William Freda '17 and Peter Freda '16, a daughter, Lucy Addison Freda, on May 26, 2023

Anna (Newcomer) Cooper '17/'20M and Cody Cooper '16/'20M, a daughter, Hadleigh Mae, on June 7, 2023

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## In Memoriam

*Athletics Pioneer*

### JOANNE McCOMB

**Joanne McComb**, 90, a fixture in women's baseball history, Hall of Fame women's basketball coach, and administrator, passed away at her home on June 21. She leaves behind a 26-year legacy that shaped the athletic landscape at Bloomsburg University.

McComb served in various roles before retiring in 1986. During her six seasons as the women's varsity basketball coach, McComb guided the team to an impressive record of 52 wins and 15 losses. Her coaching earned her a spot among the top five coaches in the university's history, with an outstanding winning percentage of .776. McComb was also known for her time as a professional baseball player for the



Springfield Sallies in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL).

The iconic 1992 film about the league, "A League of Their Own," featuring Tom Hanks and Geena Davis, told the story of the League's origins. McComb played herself in a cameo role, helping to immortalize the experiences of all the players in the post-WWII league.

## Obituaries

- |                                |                                 |                                  |                                |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bertha May Sturman '48         | Lynald Silsbee '65              | David Tracey '73                 | Mary Ann Kershitsky Blosky '82 |
| Janet Page Hartt '49           | Jack Stanton '65                | Charles Wehinger '73             | David Gillis '82               |
| Helen Brace Hess '49           | Robert Keagle '66               | Karen Jagodinski Werner '73      | Lori Goodling '83              |
| LaFerne Shirk Keller '49       | Arthur Hakim '67                | Diane Walworth Willis '73        | William Townley '83            |
| Frances Cerchiaro Abitanta '50 | Carole Jones Kalinowski '67     | Albert Fagnani '74               | Cathleen Curran Eltringham '85 |
| Thomas Goodwin '53             | John Ray '67                    | Robert Foltz '74                 | Peggy Ann Garner Conklin '90   |
| Sara Hoffman Allen '54         | Regis Stirling '67              | Catherine Walkowiak Kaminski '74 | Heidi Werner Newell '91        |
| Francis Gavio '54              | Paulette Mrochko Platukis '68   | Kathryn Timalonis Musser '74     | Nancy Hofbauer Phillips '91    |
| Anthony Hantjis '54            | Joseph Walton '68               | C. Eric Cureton '75              | Lisa Pizzichemi Daley '93      |
| Keith Smith '54                | Jane Faust '69                  | Donna Marie Mehalick Gulash '75  | Eric Frost '94                 |
| Vincent Buckwash '55           | Betty Jane McCutchen Gasper '69 | Victor Mallory '75               | Brett Long '94                 |
| Shirley Wagner Friedman '57    | G. Laepple '69                  | Lena Koch Shannon '75            | Karen Bush '95                 |
| Harley Stewart '57             | Ann Brandt '70                  | Diane Boyd Gaskins '76           | Melissa Stuart '95             |
| Sandra Pfister Brown '59       | Larry Geguzis '70               | Carol Boelhoff Giesen '76        | Margaret Barbarito '96         |
| Barbara Curry Eskilson '59     | Grace Mensch Jaskiewicz '70     | Thomas Kubishin '76              | Jason Hines '96                |
| Louis Marsilio '59             | Patricia Fear '71               | Kaárin Bishop Reinecker '76      | Sarah Peters '97               |
| John Varcoe '59                | David Herlinger '71             | Ray Reinard '77                  | Walter Nichols '99             |
| Dean Schaffer '60              | Linda King '71                  | Margaret Varner '77              | Aaron Norakus '00              |
| Joseph Swatski '60             | William Langan '71              | James West '77                   | Nancy Smith Wheeler '00        |
| Edward Glennon '61             | Suzanne Shaffer Moore '71       | Cathy Lucrezi '78                | Linda Metzger Teberio '02      |
| Ted Sees '61                   | Thomas Plishka '71              | Robert Lynn '78                  | Rosalinda Virruso Giles '03    |
| James Huber '62                | Cindy Berkheiser '72            | Linda Breisch Cook '79           | Paul Gola '03                  |
| Joseph Pecorelli '62           | Thomas Breit '72                | Donald Gaughenbaugh '79          | Carole Derricott '04           |
| Charles Sipos '62              | Robert Casey '72                | Robert Peiffer '79               | Robert Buff '07                |
| Sally Chambers Bowen '63       | Jeffery Maurer '72              | Kenneth Bollinger '80            | Glenn Knott '11                |
| Maureen Janerich Raiter '63    | James McCue '72                 | John Green '80                   | Amanda Smith '12               |
| Ronald Harvey '64              | Robert Ross '72                 | Lorraine Swaim '80               | Troy Nicholson '15             |
| Randall Young '64              | Ruth Williams Webb '72          | Lynn Worthington Dibble '81      | Caitlin Guerin '20             |
| Fred Dallabrida '65            | Robert Oliver '73               | Susan Trynoski '81               |                                |

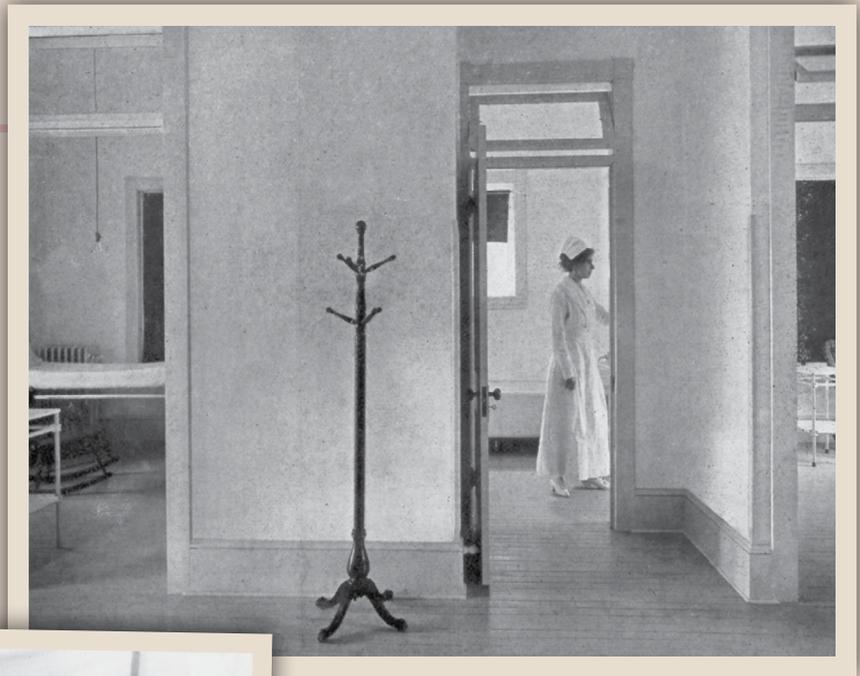
# NURSES on Campus Through the Years

By Robert Dunkelburger

## 1916

Before there was an academic nursing program on campus, there were nurses. Shown is the interior of the campus infirmary, located on the current site of Northumberland Hall, 1916. For many years medical treatment at the Bloomsburg State Normal School was limited to sick rooms in the dormitories.

An infirmary building was established in 1915, a gift of that year's graduating class. The modern facility, located some distance from the dormitories, was staffed by a trained nurse and featured four rooms for patients. It provided a safe location for isolating ill students and preventing the spread of disease.



## 1979

More than 1,500 people had their blood pressure taken by Bloomsburg State College student nurses during the annual Bloomsburg Fair in September 1979. Seen here is Helen Shiner, working as a clown during Fair Week, having her pressure taken by student nurses, from left, freshman Debbie Sabalesky, Kingston, and seniors Jill Layton and Kathy Solley, both from Williamsport. As a result of this outreach, nearly 200 persons suspected of hypertension were referred to their physicians.

## 1989

Two Bloomsburg University nursing students, at right Beth N. Ferrier, Class of 1990, examining a medical printout as part of their training, 1989. The clinical laboratory experience in local hospitals has been a primary component of the nursing curriculum at Bloomsburg since the first students enrolled in 1975.



## Marty Wygmans

*Vice President for Student Success and Campus Life*

Interview by Elizabeth Arnold



When Marty Wygmans joined Bloomsburg as associate vice president for student success in 2018, she came to the position with a long history of helping students overcome obstacles to succeed. As the project director for TRIO Programs and executive director of student services at Binghamton University, Wygmans oversaw Student Support Services, Upward Bound, and veterans' services.

Today at Commonwealth University, Wygmans serves as Vice President for Student Success and Campus Life and campus administrator for the Mansfield location. In her role as Vice President across all locations she oversees a full range of services that help keep students on track to graduation, and when needed, give them the push they may need. This includes the campus housing, health and wellness services, disability services, academic advising and tutorial services among others.



**Q | Tell us about your education journey. How did it lead you to work in higher ed?**

**A |** My educational journey was full of twists and turns and a lot of missteps. Neither of my parents attended college. After graduating from a small, rural high school in Michigan, I started off at a small technical school. That didn't work for me, so I quit and took a year off from my education. I enrolled at the local community college and completed an associate's degree in commerce. Two-years later I realized that a bachelor's degree was necessary. I attended a small liberal-arts university as a business major with a minor in Psychology. At this point it had taken me nearly seven years to get my bachelor's degree. I took another few years off before starting my master's degree. It wasn't until I was in my forties that I decided I wanted a doctoral degree.

As many people do, I fell into my career in higher education. While I was working on my master's degree, I was lucky to get a job at the local community college to oversee the computer lab at one of the satellite campuses. Then, a full-time job opened up working with single parents and other students on workforce development. After multiple years and moving my way up through roles focused on students, I am now vice resident of Student Success and Campus Life for Commonwealth University.

My journey has taught me a few things. First, you have to be willing to step into new things. Everyone starts somewhere. Second, you will make mistakes and fail. That's how we learn. Third, I had to learn to let people help me, advise me, and guide me. I had to say "yes" to things that were scary. Finally, I learned to have fun at work, make friends, and believe that I could make a difference.

**Q | How has working in the area of student success informed your perspective on the challenges many students face on their path to a degree?**

**A |** Student Success and Campus Life covers so many areas of a student's life. Everything from their residential arrangements, to their social activities, to academic supports. Every day I see the challenges for students that didn't exist when I entered my career so many years ago.

Human beings' lives are complicated and being a student adds a complication. We, as educators, need to understand that our students do not land on our doorstep with everything they need to succeed. We need to help them acquire what's missing, guide them to resources, and help them grow into the expectations we place on them as newly minted adults.

**Q | How do you define student success?**

**A |** Success comes in many forms. Trying something new, making friends with new people from new cultures or towns, getting a C in a class that was extremely hard for them, living away from family—sometimes in a new country—all of these are forms of student success. We focus on grades, graduation, and persistence—but for some students, success is something more.

**Q | What is the most rewarding part of your job, and why?**

**A |** Working with students is, by far, the most rewarding part of my job. Seeing them come in as first-year students, learning about their stories, hearing about their joys and struggles, and helping them navigate their new environment is incredibly rewarding and amazing to witness. As they progress year by year, seeing the growth and change they experience brings such

joy to my life. I am so happy that I've stayed in touch with many of my former students as they move on to careers and families. Nothing makes me happier than to write them a letter of reference and remain a part of their journey.

**Q | Life on college campuses has changed a lot in the past 10 to 15 years. What do you see as the biggest shifts in campus life?**

**A |** I think two things have really changed in campus life. First, the introduction of Facebook and other forms of social media. When I started in my career, bullying was localized and usually between students who knew each other. Now, it is pervasive through social media and it cannot be erased. This causes repeated trauma for students. Which leads to my second shift—the mental health needs of students continue to grow and require attention. Our current students were in high school during the pandemic shut down. They experienced a different kind of social life, family life, and academic preparation than those in previous years. Because of their experiences, we need to change the way we help them acclimate to campus life, it is no longer "business as usual." The goal is to help the university become ready for our students, instead of the viewpoint that it's all on the students to be ready for the university environment.

**Q | How do you enjoy spending your free time?**

**A |** I love photography and try to spend time in my home photography studio or in nature taking photos. I have two adorable little dogs that are my models.

Other than that, I enjoy spending time with my family—both near and far—I am frequently found at shows watching my husband perform with his band(s) all over New York and Pennsylvania.



**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

# Matt Yurkunas

**Community Government Association (CGA)  
President 2023-2024 Academic Year**

Yurkunas, a computer science major, has been involved in the CGA for the past two years, most recently serving as vice president. He is also a member of the Honors College and a resident assistant. This past summer he completed an internship in Berlin, Germany, with FENISKA, a firm that provides ways to identify early health problems in pets.

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