

MANSFIELDIAN

WINTER 2024

magazine



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Mansfield Drum Major Kaycee
Hulslander**

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**Finding Ohana:
Kristopher Dumschat '12 Aids
Maui Wildfire Relief Effort**

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Greetings Mansfield 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 Drum Major Kaycee Hulslander. Mansfield's strong legacy of exceptional music programs is on full display through Kaycee's story. She is both a skilled musician and a strong leader—two qualities that have long marked the Mansfield music experience. I hope you will be both encouraged and inspired by Kaycee's story and her love for Mansfield and for music.

To our Mansfield 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 the beauty of our campus and Pennsylvania's Northern Tier. Along with enjoying the beauty and memories of your alma mater, we invite you to stay engaged with the Mountie community and support our students in achieving their goals. There are so many ways to get involved and share your gifts with our students—from mentorship, to internships, or professional experience grants—your involvement in our students' experience has the power to transform their lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bashar W. Hanna". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Bashar W. Hanna
President

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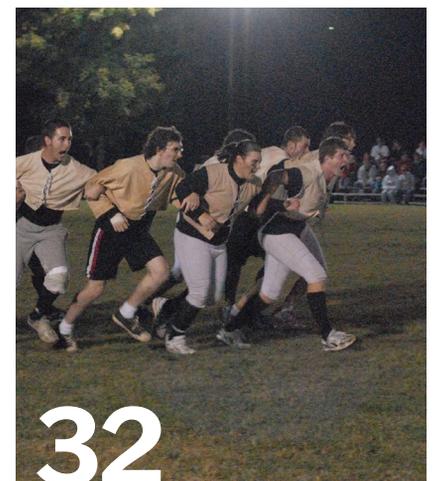
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A group of students gathers on the Lock Haven Commons during the first Multicultural Alliance Field Day

Multicultural Alliance Field Day Brings Students from All Campuses Together

Nearly 250 Commonwealth University (CU) students from Lock Haven, Clearfield, Mansfield, and Bloomsburg gathered at the Lock Haven location for a Multicultural Alliance Field Day event in September.

The event included lawn games, inflatable games, food trucks, giveaways, and raffles as well as an opportunity to connect with fellow students across all CU locations. Student Jaimie Rodriguez Vega, DEI graduate assistant, spoke to attendees and Albert Jones, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer provided a welcome.

“The multicultural field day was an event focused on building unity and strengthening the sense of belonging for all students across the Commonwealth University campus locations,” says Jones. “To see such a diverse makeup of students attending from all four locations speaks to the positive community building that is taking place at Commonwealth University.”

The event was hosted by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Lock Haven Multicultural Center; and Lock Haven student organizations including the Black Student Union, Multicultural Advisory Activities Council, Latino Student Association, Sophisticated Ladies, and Distinguished Gentlemen.

“We really wanted students from all the campuses to meet each other, engage with one another, and truly be able to connect and network,” says Mia Swales, Assistant Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Multicultural Center Director. “We want the students to be able to collaborate as well as program together to truly join as sisters and brothers. We are so much stronger together.”



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.

“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.

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 and 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.

"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."

Mansfield Extends Pennsylvania In-State Tuition and Scholarships to Southern Tier Students in 6 New York Counties

Commonwealth University-Mansfield will offer Pennsylvania in-state tuition and scholarships to new, first-year Southern Tier of New York students who live in Broome, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins counties.

Eligible students residing in those six counties can earn up to \$20,000 in in-state merit scholarships over four years, reducing the cost of tuition by 65%.

"Mansfield has long been a popular destination for Southern Tier students seeking a transformative education to advance their career path," says Stephen Lee, Vice President

of Enrollment Management. "Extending the in-state tuition rate and scholarships to students in these six New York counties makes earning a Mansfield degree even more affordable and accessible.

"We're thrilled to provide the same educational opportunities to students across the Twin Tiers," he adds. Commonwealth University offers more than 160 program options across five locations in Pennsylvania, allowing students to customize their college experience.

The Pennsylvania in-state tuition rate for Southern Tier students is available only at

the Mansfield location of Commonwealth University. Students who select a 2+2 program, where the curriculum requires completion at another location of CU (Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, or Sayre), can maintain the in-state tuition rate at the other location assuming they have completed the full two years at Mansfield and have exhausted the required courses before making the transition.

Students can use their high school GPA to determine the amount of scholarship they are eligible for and learn more about in-state tuition rates at commonwealthu.edu/stny.

University Police Departments Hold Food for Fines Donation Events

For the second year, police departments at Bloomsburg, Lock Haven and Mansfield held a Thanksgiving Food for Fines event, in which parking tickets were forgiven in exchange for donated food items.

Between Nov. 6–17, members of the campus community had the opportunity to have a campus parking ticket dismissed in exchange for a donation of canned food items. Each forgiven parking ticket required a donation of five items, resulting in the collection of 1,910 canned food items and the dismissal of 382 parking tickets across all three campuses.

At Bloomsburg, the food items were donated to the Bloomsburg Food Cupboard, at Lock Haven they were donated to the Haven Cupboard, and at Mansfield the Campus Cupboard and the Mansfield Food Pantry benefitted from the donations.

“The Food for Fines initiative was built from initiatives libraries use to pay off overdue book fees,” says Leo Sokolowski, director of Commonwealth University police. “This good will and charitable event was purposely performed just before Thanksgiving to collaborate with local food cupboards who daily provide food to the community and to our students. We hope it helps to foster a sense of gratitude and appreciation – encouraging people to take a moment, pause, and reflect on the many



Patrol officer Marena Boyce and chief Jeff Perry.

blessings they have been afforded and the importance of assisting others who may not be as fortunate.”

“This initiative is a great example of a win-win for our students and the community. Thank you to our students for their generosity in giving and to the members of our university police departments for bringing this opportunity to our students to benefit the communities we call home,” says President Bashar W. Hanna.

Two New Student Members Appointed to Council of Trustees



Jessica Dodge



Tynesha Holloway

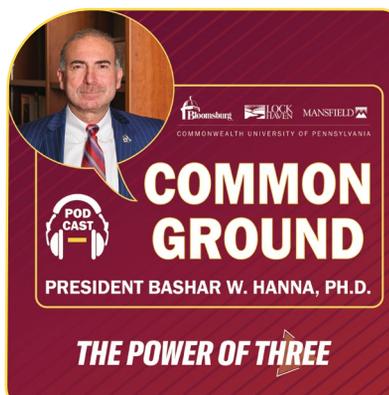
The Commonwealth University Council of Trustees has named two new student council members for the 2023-24 academic year. Jessica Dodge has been appointed as the student representative for the Bloomsburg location and Tynesha Holloway has been appointed to represent Lock Haven. A student trustee will be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

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.

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. She 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.



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 to listen to episodes, learn more about the podcast, and submit ideas for future episodes or guests.



Mansfield Alumnus Freddie Coleman '87 Appears on Common Ground Podcast

1987 Mansfield graduate Freddie Coleman recently joined President Bashar Hanna for an episode of The Common Ground Podcast. Coleman earned a degree in mass communications before

going on to a successful career in radio. For the past 19 years, has been a radio host for ESPN. Today, Coleman is the co-host of ESPN Radio's popular afternoon drive show. Prior to that, he co-hosted *Freddie and Fitzsimmons* alongside Ian Fitzsimmons. He also hosted the *Freddie Coleman Show*. Coleman first joined ESPN in 2004 as co-host of the nightly prime-time program *GameNight* until 2013. He has also hosted NFL on ESPN Radio and makes appearances on ESPN's *First Take*.

Together, Coleman and President Hanna discussed what initially led him to Mansfield, his experiences as a first-generation college student, and his journey to a career in sports radio. They also talked about how Coleman uses his national media platform to influence and encourage his audience by sharing inspirational stories. Coleman shared his advice for today's college students and his belief that Mansfield is a place where students can and should dream big.

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.

"The proposals awarded for this inaugural DEI mini-grant program year will support

the ongoing efforts to create a welcoming and inclusive campus community," says Albert Jones, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer. "The faculty, staff, and students at all Commonwealth locations strive every day to create a sense of belonging within the campus climate. I am excited to see the innovative and value-added initiatives that will continue making things better at Commonwealth University."

"Congratulations to the recipients of Commonwealth University's DEI mini-grants," says Bashar Hanna, President "We thank you for your work on behalf of our students as you implement initiatives that will foster an inclusive, welcoming community across all of our locations."



Transformational \$5 Million Gift Supports Nursing at all CU Locations

Historic Gift Renames Critical
Nursing Education Institution the
Breiner School of Nursing



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

Commonwealth 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.

“There are no words that can truly express how grateful we are for Ed and Julie’s steadfast support,” says CU President Bashar W. Hanna. “This amazing gift and their commitment to supporting education for healthcare professionals will empower our School of Nursing to provide an affordable, top-tier education and produce exceptional graduates. Thanks to the Breiners’ generosity, we can now extend those opportunities and resources to even more students.”

The impact of the gift, donated through the Bloomsburg University Foundation, will help advance nursing education and healthcare across the state. With more than 1,100 nursing students enrolled, spanning from associate to doctorate levels, “Commonwealth University has already established itself as a vital institution within the nursing community, and it is now set to reach even greater impact with this funding,” Hanna adds.

The new funds will bolster various facets of nursing education, including professorships, faculty fellowships, research, clinical support, travel, conferences, networking, outreach, facility enhancements, essential equipment, and software.

“This generous donation will have a lasting impact on our ability to educate and train the next generation of nursing professionals,” says Kim Olszewski, senior associate dean of the School of Nursing. “A gift like this embodies the definition of philanthropy. Ed and Julie 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.”

Since their initial gift to Bloomsburg State College in 1980, the Breiners have steadily expanded their support, enriching

professional experiences for nursing and healthcare students. This gift raises their total contributions to more than \$7.5 million.

Ed Breiner, a retired energy and mining industry executive, and Julie, a retired medical technologist, have dedicated themselves to giving back to both their alma mater and their local community.

“We believe in the transformative power of education,” Mr. and Mrs. Breiner shared. “With this endowment, we hope to provide aspiring nurses with the best education and training possible while also keeping it affordable, ensuring their ability to make immediate contributions in the healthcare field. Commonwealth University’s commitment to excellence aligns perfectly with our vision of affordable, high-quality education for prospective students.”

“Ed and Julie have inspired us all by matching their philanthropic aspirations with their passion for supporting our students throughout the years,” says Erik Evans, vice president for Advancement at Commonwealth University. “We consider ourselves incredibly fortunate that they have chosen to champion the field of nursing at CU, not only leaving a profound impact on our students but also resonating across the entire region.”

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Kevin Butters '24

Safety Management Major



Internship Provides Flight Path to Position in Aviation Firm

By **Claire Thomas**

A successful internship at Lycoming Engines over the summer has put CU-Mansfield senior Kevin Butters on a direct flight to a full-time position at the Williamsport firm.

A legacy student who grew up about 20 minutes away from Mansfield, Butters commutes to campus and will graduate after just three years in May 2024.

Lycoming Engines is a major American manufacturer of aircraft engines. The company has built more than 325,000 piston aircraft engines and powers more than half the world's general aviation fleet, both fixed wing and helicopters. Lycoming also produces the only FAA-certified aerobatic and helicopter piston engines on the market. The company is a subsidiary of Textron, a conglomerate whose subsidiaries also include Arctic Cat, Bell Textron, and Textron Aviation, which includes the Beechcraft and Cessna brands.

"Mansfield has given me a great experience with classes and professors. Everyone has been very supportive and helpful," says Butters. "My experiences in different organizations have helped give me the well-rounded background needed to begin a career."

Butters' internship was in the environmental health and safety division. He led monthly safety trainings, reviewed job safety analysis and personal protective equipment, and mapped hazardous waste containers.

After graduation, Butters' position will be as an associate buyer for procurement. He will ensure all the aircraft engines are shipped, and parts meet quality standards and are delivered on time. The position may require some travel as well.

Butters expects to continue learning, possibly pursuing an MBA through Commonwealth U.

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 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 student-



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

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.

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.





HOMECOMING 2023

2023 Homecoming festivities were celebrated at Mansfield Friday, Oct. 20 and Saturday, Oct. 21.

Activities on Friday included all-day disc golf, a 5K walk/run through campus, and an alumni golf tournament. The Class of 1973 held a meet and greet in North Hall and the Homecoming King and Queen were announced. The Alumni/ Athletic Hall of Fame induction ceremony also took place at Decker Gymnasium.

Disc golf fun continued on Saturday and the campus community was well represented in the downtown



community parade. Many guests attended tailgating activities before the Mountie football team defeated Cornell University. In addition, women's soccer hosted Shippensburg and Field Hockey welcomed No. 7 West Chester during homecoming weekend. An alumni garden bar was held on the South Hall Mall where attendees enjoyed performances by the Mansfield band and cheerleaders, as well as Chris Eckert Music. The Class of 1973 held their 50th reunion, which included a social and dinner at Manser Dining Hall. Later, there was a PRISM concert performance at Steadman Theatre and an All-Greek Mixer at The HUT.





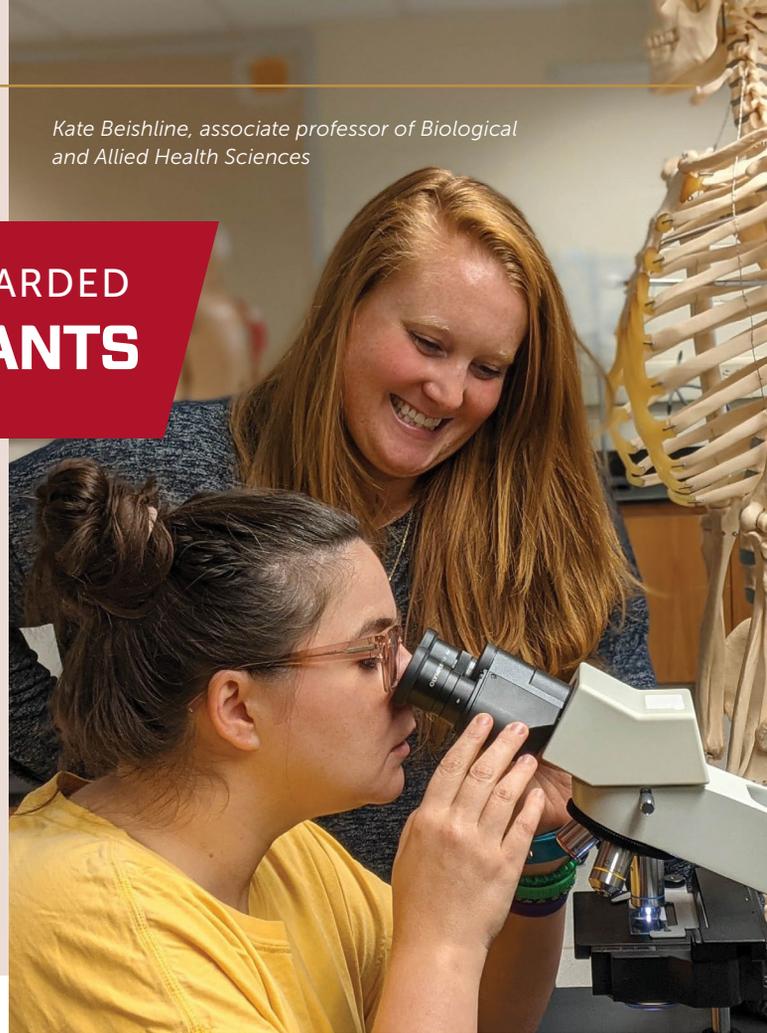
COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY AWARDED \$2.9 MILLION IN NSF GRANTS

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 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.



AN APPRENTICESHIP IN LEADERSHIP

By Eric Foster

It's 6 p.m. on a cool October Friday, and the light is beginning to fade on the Mounties Band practice field high on the hill overlooking the football stadium.

The third band rehearsal of the week wrapped half an hour ago. Kaycee Hulslander is just finishing packing the percussion instruments into the band truck.

The Spirit and The Pride of PA Marching Band has earned a formidable reputation for excellence—underscored by their invitation to perform in the 2024 London New Year's Day Parade Celebrations. As one of the band's drum majors, senior music education major Hulslander helps drive that excellence.

While the public sees drum majors marching at the head of the parade or conducting on the field, Hulslander and her fellow drum major, junior Emalie Caccia, play a critical role behind the scenes before the 70-member band even tunes up.

"We are the first ones on and off the field for every practice and performance," says Hulslander. "We paint the practice field with marks. We begin the equipment set—xylophones, marimbas, timpani, and the sound system. And we're prepared for anything, even down to band-aids."

"My philosophy is the role of the drum major is one of service," says Dr. Adam Brennan, director of bands and professor of percussion studies. "If a student is motivated by ego, that's a red flag. I tell them 99 percent of the time you have your back to the audience. Your job is to make the band shine."

The drum major role demands musical skills that are on-key and interpersonal skills that are on-point. Hulslander personifies both qualities. A native of nearby Wellsboro, she began taking classes in saxophone in third grade at Mansfield's campus. She later served as drum major in her high school band.

"Kaycee is dynamite. She's one of the best drum majors I've had in 30 years," says Brennan. "When Kaycee was a freshman, she was so gung-ho, always asking, 'How can I help?' If she wasn't going to run for the position, I was going to tell her to do it. She is an outstanding musician. Then you've got her dedication and loyalty. She's a natural fit."

Drum majors serve as a liaison between the band director and the band members. "At Mansfield, a drum major has to be a member of the band for at least a year, have at least a 3.0 GPA, and good academic standing in the major," says Brennan, who was a drum major himself for three years in college, an experience he describes as, "three years of student teaching in how to be a band director."

"Candidates for drum major train on how to direct with clarity for outdoors," adds Brennan. "And they do an audition for the band, and the band votes. But I do have the

final say. If there is another drum major, they are involved in the process. Character is a huge part of what we're looking for."

"We look at personality—sometimes we have students who are like me, a little hard-edged, maybe a bit brusque," says Brennan, with a self-deprecating chuckle. "You cannot cross that line and be insulting. And we have students with softer personalities, but the band members will do anything for them."

The importance of soft skills was something Brennan learned in one of his early assignments directing a 200-person band. "The students asked, 'Why do you hate us?' There was no microphone, so I was yelling. I watched a video of the rehearsal with the sound turned down, and I realized I was so focused I needed to remember to smile."

"Being direct can be a wonderful strength, but you need to know how to moderate it," says Brennan. "Drum majors are part of the staff. They teach, they lead rehearsals. If something is going wrong in rehearsal and I'm working with another section, they can stop the rehearsal and address the issue. That allows them to practice teaching."

Just because there's marching involved doesn't mean musicality gets cut from the score. "Marching is just giving music a motion," says Hulslander. "When we march, we step on the beat. It adds flair to the music. I'm a big perfectionist. Every measure, every note needs to be perfectly rhythmically aligned, or I will be disappointed."

While the musicians in the band need to know their parts, Hulslander and Emalie Caccia, need to know all the parts. "Dr. Brennan arranges and creates new pieces for the marching band," Hulslander says. "We get them two days before the band arrives on campus. For two days, we're score studying time, tempo, and meter changes. Who has what melody?"

Turning the written score into a live performance takes focus. "Before I get on the field, I need to be in the right mindset," says Hulslander. "I'm here to have fun, lead others, and make



beautiful music. I might need to take a moment to refresh to get into that mindset. It's hard to make sure everyone is on the same page. When you're working with one section, it's hard to keep everyone else engaged. It's giving everyone a task. Making sure everyone is focused on the then and there."

"We practice a lot to have the 10 minutes of fame," she adds. "And when the 10 minutes are over, everyone is so proud of themselves."

A May 2024 graduate, Hulslander feels well-prepared for student teaching in the spring

semester. "I've learned so much about how to lead a rehearsal, talk to students, and set high expectations."

In addition to marching band, Hulslander maintains her own musical chops on saxophone. "A recital is challenging. It takes a lot of time to find repertoire, practice it, and to really know the music. The dots on the page are just an outline. To express it how the composer wanted it expressed is a whole other level."

"All of my students will be my peers in four years or less," says Brennan. "With Kaycee, I can call her in the office and ask, 'What would you do?'"

Hulslander recalls how her own view of the band grew over her Mansfield experience. "At first, I just wanted to be in band because it's fun. But later, I also wanted to be in a band because we're making something beautiful, and we can express different things. Nothing in the band is about me. It's about us. It's about making something bigger than ourselves."

"The connections I made at Mansfield will be long-lasting, forever," says Hulslander. One connection is especially important. "At Mansfield, I met the person I'm going to be with. Because of music, I met my fiancé, Jeremy Jacobus, a percussion major, who proposed to me last April."



FINDING *Ohana*

Mansfield Alumnus **Kristopher Dumschat '12/'14M** Aids Maui Wildfire Relief Effort

On August 8, tragic wildfires spread across west Maui, Hawaii, impacting the historic town of Lahaina and the rural town of Kula. Thousands of people lost everything, including loved ones, friends, and pets. On August 9, Mansfield alumnus Kristopher Dumschat '12/'14M, communications manager and national spokesperson for the American Red Cross, received a call to deploy with the American Red Cross to Hawaii within the next 36 hours.

After driving nine hours to Florida to drop his dog off in his family's care, Dumschat caught a flight traveling thousands of miles across the country and Pacific Ocean to Hawaii. "Our mission at the Red Cross is to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors," he says.

In his six years at the American Red Cross, Dumschat has witnessed numerous natural disasters and large-scale emergencies. But the Maui wildfires were different. "I've deployed to many disasters over the course of my career, from home fires, fatal explosions, hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, and now this deadly wildfire," says Dumschat. "I knew this deployment was going to be tough and emotional, at a level unlike my experiences before."

Upon arriving in Maui, the Red Cross Team went straight to work. The situation he found himself in proved more dire than he imagined. "Thousands



of survivors were staying in temporary shelters and sharing the space with many other resources from dozens of agencies, local organizations, and hundreds of volunteers. The devastation in the impacted communities was truly heartbreaking and surreal. I met some incredible local Red Cross volunteers and staff, heroic community members, and many brave first responders and members of the military," says Dumschat.

In many cases, the people Dumschat and the American Red Cross were caring for had lost everything. Despite the devastation, he was struck by the strong ties of culture and community holding the Hawaiian people together. Hawaiians have a saying— *KĀKOU*—which means 'us' or 'we are all in this together.' He says, "Throughout my almost month-long deployment, I had the privilege to learn and experience so much about the Hawaiian culture and the history of Maui, the roots that hold this community together. They are *Ohana*, or family. There were many occasions when strangers would walk up and give you a hug for wearing the Red Cross emblem or they would sit down with you and play a beautiful song on their ukulele."

Red Cross teams worked around the clock, most days for 12-16 hours. For Dumschat, it was inspiring to see the hundreds of volunteers who dropped what they were doing and



came to help these communities in need. “The community in Maui is unlike any other I’ve ever experienced. They pride themselves on their ability to support each other, and they do so without question or any expectation for something in return,” he says.

Dumschat experienced many touching moments during his deployment that demonstrated the resilience of the Maui community and the appreciation they felt for those offering relief in the aftermath of the fires. “We were invited to take part in a local native Hawaiian healing blessing,” he says. “It was an experience I will never forget and will cherish for the rest of my life.”

After spending nearly a month in Maui aiding in relief efforts, Dumschat knows that the experience has forever altered his life and outlook.

“My 25 days in Maui changed my life and my perspective on life forever,” he says. “I saw the worst the world can show, but I’ve also seen the best. I held survivors who don’t have any family left, and I’ve cried with families who still don’t know what has happened to their loved ones. My deployment was not only the hardest I’ve ever had to endure, but it was the most emotionally, physically, and mentally draining work I’ve ever done.”

“Maui will always have a place in my heart, and the healing is only beginning. I am proud to be a humanitarian and have a career that allows me to help people in their darkest hour. My time in Mansfield taught me many of the skills I use daily. During that time, we were taught to be leaders and we were always supported when we needed to step in to help our classmates, faculty or the community during their time of need.

“As a Mountie, I will continue to carry the Mansfield Creed with me on every deployment: Character, Scholarship, Culture, and Service. *Mahalo.*”





Commonwealth University Students Travel to Belize

to Research Politics, Culture, and Economy

Fourteen Commonwealth University students from the Mansfield and Lock Haven campuses studied abroad in the Central American country of Belize from May 23 to June 6. The students were part of a faculty-led, short-term study abroad program that has been introducing students to Belize since 2014.

While in Belize, students researched the politics, culture, and economy of Belize. Students chose from one of four major research questions focusing on cultural identity, globalization, sustainable development, or democracy, and, while in-country, they gathered field notes on their research topic.

Belize is a developing country, and the contrast in wealth was noted by students. However, students also observed the friendly demeanor and optimism of Belizeans.

“We grow up with very consumerist values and think that money equals wealth and happiness. Belize proves that this is not the case,” says Charisma Grega, an elementary education major.

Drs. Jeffrey Bosworth and Jonathan Rothermel from Mansfield accompanied the students on the trip and facilitated opportunities for them to talk to a wide range of Belizeans, including community activists, business leaders, and politicians. There also were impromptu opportunities for the students as well, when the president of the senate, the Honorable Carolyn Trench Sandiford, showed up while students were touring the National Assembly to answer their questions.

The small geographic size of the country with a population estimated around 400,000, allowed students to experience a wide variety of the country’s attractions. They climbed Mayan temples in Orange Walk also known





Caption



as “Sugar City,” participated in Garifuna drumming in Hopkins, cooled off in the surf of Placencia, learned to make tamales in San Ignacio and snorkeled in the second largest barrier reef in the world off the coast of Caye Caulker—among many other exciting adventures.

On a visit to the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan, the capital of Belize, U.S. Ambassador Michelle Kwan—the former Olympian figure skater turned diplomat—took time out of her busy schedule to share her story with students and encourage them to pursue their dreams.

For most of the students, it was their first time leaving the country, and for at least five students, it was their first time on an airplane. “I was anxious sometimes, but hands down, it was the best time in my life. I am so grateful I got to go,” says Hailey Morgan, a sociology major. Studying in Belize is a unique opportunity and unlike what most students have experienced, even those who have previously traveled abroad. “Going to Belize gave me a look into a different world and way of life that traveling in



Drs. Jeffrey Bosworth and Jonathan C. Roethermel along with a group of CU-Mansfield students visited the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan, Belize and met U.S. Ambassador Michelle Kwan.

Europe just does not give you,” says Ally Fisher, a political science major.

These experiences also help students find out more about themselves, like Anissa Lytle, a psychology major. “I am now much more confident and can step out of my comfort zone to talk to people that I do not know much easier than before,” Lytle says.

Students who attended the trip were Ally Fisher, of Owego, N.Y.; Paige Grant, of Galeton;

Charisma Grega, of Mansfield; Jeffrey Griffith, of Carlisle; Anissa Lytle, of York; Kelly McFillin, of Conshohocken; Hailey Morgan, of Mount Carmel; Erica Parks, of Elmira, N.Y.; Kat Rowen, of Albrightsville; Hailey Thomas, of Columbia Crossroads; Kathryn Tice, of Covington; and Brittany Tiffany, of Lowman, N.Y., from CU-Mansfield and Katie Gingrich, of Annville; and Megan Reniker, of Lititz, from CU-Lock Haven.



Dave Donlick Named Director of Alumni and Employer Engagement

Dave Donlick '87 was named Director of Alumni and Employer Engagement at Commonwealth University-Mansfield. Donlick graduated from Mansfield University in 1987 with a bachelor's degree in speech/communications.

Donlick started in his new role on June 5 and is located in Alumni Hall G4. He brings years of experience from the commercial insurance industry, holding a variety of positions in underwriting, marketing, and management.

He also served on the Mansfield Alumni Board and was a member of the Board's Executive Committee.

As the Director of Alumni and Employer Engagement, Donlick is responsible for cultivating relationships with alumni, and enhancing employer connections with current students by working closely with the rest of the alumni and professional engagement team at Mansfield.

Donlick's wife, Doreen (McElroy) Donlick, also is a 1987 graduate of Mansfield.

"It is great to be back to where it all started," Donlick says. "I have come full circle and can honestly say, 'once a Mountie, always a Mountie!'"

Kate Billmeyer Named Senior Director of Philanthropy

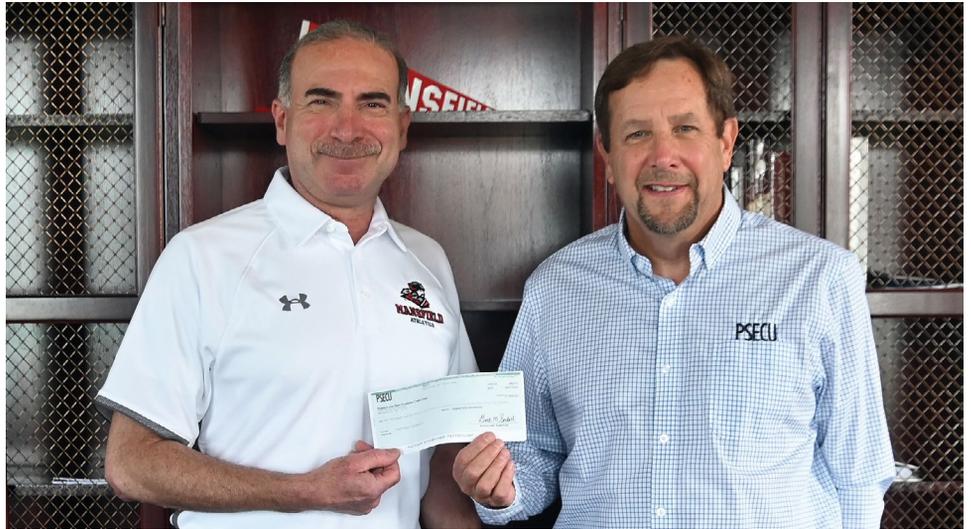
Kate Billmeyer was named Senior Director of Philanthropy at Commonwealth University-Mansfield. Kate started in her new role on Sept. 11 and is located in Alumni Hall G9.

She brings 12 years of experience in fundraising from Geisinger Health Foundation, where she served as the Senior Development Officer for the Women and Children's Institute.

Prior to that, she was a Development Specialist for Children's Miracle Network at Geisinger Janet Weis Children's Hospital. Kate also has strong event management experience.



As the Senior Director of Philanthropy, Kate will focus on relationship development and cultivation of major gifts to support CU-Mansfield.



Mansfield Receives \$20,000 in Donations from PSECU

Commonwealth University-Mansfield received donations totaling \$20,000 from Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union (PSECU). The donations included \$15,000 in scholarships and a \$5,000 general donation to the University to support campus programs, financial literacy education, and other areas of need.

The PSECU Financial Education Center located on the Mansfield campus is available to assist members with their financial needs and provides a wide array of financial literacy information. PSECU supports the campus community by providing sponsorships to

various organizations, including athletics, scholarships for student learners, and offers WalletWorks Financial Literacy Education programs and events.

"We appreciate the continued support given by PSECU to benefit our students through scholarships, programming on campus, and financial literacy," says President Bashar W. Hanna. "Over the years the support of PSECU has been invaluable to our students and their families in helping ease the financial burden of attaining their degree."



Students from all CU locations attended a career road trip at Cornell University

Students Laud Success of Career Road Trip to Cornell

In February, 20 Commonwealth University (CU) students united for a day of professional development at Cornell University.

The Career Road Trip to Cornell aimed to provide students with insights into the world of athletic training, sports nutrition and strength and conditioning. Jointly organized by faculty from Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield, the event is a prime example of how integration is fostering cross-campus collaboration in support of students.

Participants toured Cornell's state-of-the-art athletic facilities. The day provided networking with a wide range of professionals, including strength & conditioning staff, coaches, and athletic trainers, allowing students to establish connections that could help shape their careers.

A highlight of the event was the presence of four Bloomsburg alumni who have made their mark in the field of athletics. These alumni not only provided mentorship, but exemplified the expanded opportunities available to students from all three locations, fueled by integration and "The Power of Three."

Lock Haven student Ryan Flowers, expressed his gratitude, emphasizing how the trip opened doors to a new professional network. Other students echoed this sentiment, noting that the event boosted their confidence and provided clarity on their career paths. One student described the experience as "an absolute blessing" that offered a glimpse into their future. Another lauded the trip as their best college experience to date.

As CU's mission to enhance students' career readiness evolves, faculty and staff are poised to expand their collaborative efforts to better prepare students to excel professionally. The Career Road Trip to Cornell is just one example of how the shared expertise of an alumni network more than 145,000-people strong is empowering CU students to achieve their professional goals, and reach their greatest heights yet.



From left, are Tim Shuey, Mansfield VP of fiscal affairs and CFO; Marty Wygmans, Mansfield VP of student success and campus life; Charity Frantz, C&N director of marketing; and Tom Rudy, C&N Bank EVP-region president.

C&N Bank donates \$40,000 to Commonwealth University-Mansfield's Early College Program

Commonwealth University-Mansfield has received a \$40,000 donation from C&N Bank in support of its Early College Program (formerly known as the Early Start Program).

Beginning with five agreements in 2018, the Early College Program has grown to more than 50 partnerships with public school districts and private schools throughout Pennsylvania.

"Thank you to C&N Bank for their support of the Early College Program," says Bashar W. Hanna, President of Commonwealth University. "Their support is vital to providing our Commonwealth University-Mansfield students in the Northern Tier an affordable, early start to their college education."

Students who successfully complete an Early College course are granted automatic general acceptance for full-time enrollment at Commonwealth University. Specific academic degree programs may require additional application materials for consideration.

There can be many budgetary roadblocks preventing students from receiving the level of education they deserve. C&N is committed to closing this gap by supporting local organizations that have made it their mission to ensure every child has access to educational opportunities.

"At C&N, we believe we play an important role in our local communities. It all starts with our youth—doing our part to provide them with valuable opportunities to learn and grow will lead to a brighter future for all of us," says Brad Scovill, President and CEO of C&N.



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY HOSTS INAUGURAL JOINT ALUMNI EVENT

Commonwealth University achieved a significant milestone in its mission to enhance student success and foster alumni engagement as it hosted its inaugural joint alumni event on July 22. Approximately 50 alumni from Lock Haven, Bloomsburg, and Mansfield gathered at The World of Little League Museum in South Williamsport, for a memorable evening of connection and camaraderie.

This historic event marked one of the first occasions that alumni from our three legacy institutions came together under the banner of Commonwealth University. Among the attendees was a heartwarming representation of the generational legacy of these institutions, with a mother, her sister, and her daughter proudly in attendance from Bloomsburg, Mansfield, and Lock Haven, respectively.

Gail Rarick, a Bloomsburg alumna from the class of '83, exemplified the power of these gatherings by providing a lead for employer connections to East Penn Manufacturing during the event. Her sister, Gwen Gerberich (MU – '85), and her daughter, Charlene Rarick Knauss (LHU – '11), were also in attendance.

"This joint alumni event was magical as we got to see the bond of a family that had experienced the benefits of all three universities together," says Dave Donlick '87, Mansfield Director of Alumni and Employer Engagement. "I am excited to have future events so that we can meet more alumni families with this special connection."



L to R: Mother-sister-daughter alumni trio, Gail Rarick (BU '83), Gwen Gerberich (MU '85), and Charlene Rarick-Knauss (LHU '11) at joint Commonwealth University alumni event.

The gathering featured a private guided tour of The World of Little League Museum, including a commanding view of Lamade Stadium, home to the Little League World Series. The evening concluded with a family-friendly reception catered by Don Waltman's Market House, where alumni continued to connect and celebrate.

The success of this inaugural event foreshadows additional gatherings in the future, strengthening the bonds among Lock Haven, Bloomsburg, and Mansfield alumni, and offering increased opportunities for alumni to engage students.

1970s

Steven Jerolaman '72

published a book of stories and poems titled, *Reflections: Moving Forward While Looking Back*. The book details how many of his mentors at Mansfield helped him to achieve his academic and athletic goals.

Kathryn Tilley Prichard '79

retired from Athens Area School District and her career coach position with Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission. She is enjoying traveling with her husband and spending time with family.

1980s

James D Kimmel '83 retired in June, 2023 after 40 years of teaching.

Dr. Betsy Wyman Grigoriu

'89/ '92 M has been working as a Therapeutic and Educational Placement Consultant for more than 15 years with families who have children of all ages and stages in life to find the most appropriate private therapeutic and educational options.

Dave Donlick '87 was named director of alumni & employer engagement at Commonwealth University-Mansfield.

1990s

Julia Keeney Keenan '92 was appointed interim executive director for McKee Botanical Gardens.

Eric Noll '97 was recently promoted to Chief United States Probation Officer for the United States District Court in the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

2000s

Heather Long '05, MU Alumni-Athletic Hall of Fame member, was named to her fourth consecutive team selection for the United States at the 2023 Women's Masters Hockey O-35 Pan American Continental Cup (PACC), which is taking place in Buenos Aires, Argentina in December, 2023.

2010s

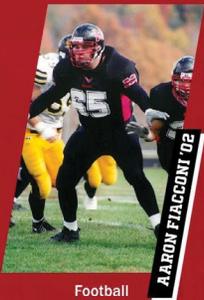
Craig Swagler '10 was named the new president and general manager for Your Public Radio, home of Baltimore's NPR News station WYPR 88.1 FM and home for total music discovery WTMD 89.7. He began his role overseeing both stations on August 1, 2023.

Laquan Magruder '14 was appointed principal of Harrisburg High School - John Harris Campus. He has served as an educator for the past 12 years and won many awards, including the President's Gold Award by Former President Barack Obama.

In Memoriam

Doris Stone Andrews '35	Stephen Lyons '68
Lori Davis Barnett '03	Ruth Morgan Maginsky '55
Martha Ashby Barton '52	Raymond Maginsky '55
Marie Salony Berry '69	Donald Mahon '52
Janel Boden '99	Mary Konsko Mahon '53
Kenneth Bollinger '74	Kevin McDonald '86
Marie Belsak Conrad '71	Cynthia Gebers McKusick '96
Craig Cooley '85	Albert Nacinovich '60
Irene Dickinson '51	Dorothy Quinn Orme Scaggs '74
Emilie VanDewalle Dziabo '73	Michael Poltash '50
Kathleen Bold Edris '71	Robert Putt
Lisa Lazadski Ellermets '82	Cheryl Hock Ripley '75
Thomas Elsasser	Rachael Simms '97
Harland Evans '64	Allan Spicer '86
Sandra Maxson Froebel '61	Merle Stilwell '56
Amanda Golden '01	Barry Swan '64
Janet Wilson Hale '69	Jerrie Hodder Tokarz '73
W. Neil Haskins '52	Barbara Darlak Valtos '71
Rosemary Tuttle Hazen '73	Ruth Parisella Von Nieda '56
Eric Hughes '53	Lisa Fazio Vidal '96
Judith Hymes '63	Sharon Williams '72
K. Anita Turner Johnson '50	Robert Wolfe '67
Dale Jones '71	Harvey Zelkowitz '66
Gayle Keir '71	Alfred Zyga '60
Dale Leibensperger '91	Doris Stone Zymblosky '28





Football

AARON FIACCONI '02



Softball

STEPH SIMMETH MAPSTONE '14



Baseball

AL PROBST '90-'93



Sports Information

STEVE MCCLOSKEY '91



MANSFIELD ALUMNI-ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

CLASS OF 2023



As part of the 2023 Homecoming festivities, Mansfield inducted four individuals into the 2023 Alumni-Athletic Hall of Fame class. The 41st celebration took place on Friday, October 20 in Decker Gymnasium.



Steph (Simmeth) Mapstone '14

Softball

A 2014 graduate, Steph Simmeth was a four-year starter for the Mountaineer softball team as an outfielder.

A rare three-time All-PSAC 1st-team selection, Simmeth ranks among the all-time career leaders in batting average (10th, .358), at-bats (eighth, 419), doubles (third, 35), hits (fifth, 150), runs (fifth, 98), extra bases hits (10th, 42), walks (10th, 40).

As a freshman in 2011, Simmeth started all 28 games of the season posting a team-best .341 batting average while also topping the team with a .400 on-base percentage.

In her sophomore season, she started every game and played a key role in the team posting a 20-15 overall record. Her .374 batting average that season was second best on the team as were her 14 doubles. She also led the team with a .446 on-base percentage and was selected to 1st Team All-PSAC Central honors.

As a junior, Simmeth started all 40 games in centerfield during the 2013 season batting .339, second-best on the team among the starters. She was flawless in centerfield, posting a 1.000 fielding percentage and played a critical role in helping the Mountaineers earn their first-ever PSAC playoff berth and PSAC Central Division title in school history while also earning 1st Team All-PSAC Central honors.

As a senior in 2014, Simmeth started all 32 games she played in, leading the team with a .376 batting average and .438 on-base percentage. Her return to the field after suffering a mid-season injury sparked Mansfield to late sweeps over ESU, Lock Haven, and Millersville to earn the program's second consecutive PSAC playoff berth and first-ever NCAA Regional playoff appearance. She was a first Team All-PSAC East selection as a senior.

Simmith was a second Team NFCA All-Region selection in both 2013 and 2014, while also earning All-ECAC honors and was considered the consummate teammate, putting team success ahead of personal accolades.



Steve McCloskey 1988–2017

Sports Information

Steve McCloskey became Mansfield's first full-time sports information director in July of 1988 and went on to become one of the most decorated athletic communication professionals in the nation over his career.

He was inducted into the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Hall of Fame in 2016 before being recognized with the organization's Lifetime Achievement Award a year later. In 2014, CoSIDA honored McCloskey with its 25-year Award.

McCloskey won every award he was eligible for from the ECAC-SIDA organization, made up of sports information professionals from the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. ECAC-SIDA honored him with the Irving T Marsh Award in 2003 for excellence in the field, the Bob Kenworthy Good Person Award in 2010 for displaying the same respect for the profession as the awards' namesake, and the Pete Nevins Award in 2016 for enhancing the image of the profession.

He was promoted to director of athletic operations and information in 2007 and named Mansfield University Employee of the Year in 2009.

McCloskey and his staff won numerous CoSIDA publications awards, including best in the nation for the 1992 football game program cover. Among his greatest accomplishments is McCloskey's ability to help mold young sports information professionals, with more than 25



former students going into the athletic communications profession at all levels including the NFL, ESPN, and NCAA Division I, II and III.

He was instrumental in the establishment of the sprint football program in 2008 which continued the legacy of football at Mansfield.



Al Probst (left) receives his award from Tim Fausnaught

Al Probst 1990-1993

Baseball

Al Probst was a three-year member of the Mansfield University baseball team including the 1992 team, that played in the championship game of the 1992 NCAA Division II World Series.

Probst was a first Team All-American that season before being drafted in the 17th round by the Houston Astros.

He played 10 years of professional baseball, including his last four years at the AAA level. He still holds several MU hitting records. The CU–Mansfield fisheries program is a sponsor of his "Outdoors with Alan Probst" nationally syndicated weekly television program.

Leading the Mounties to the NCAA Division II National Championship game and second-

place finish at the DII World Series, Probst was one of the top hitters in DII with a .479 batting average. Following the season, he was named All-PSAC, All-ECAC, All-North Atlantic Regional, and first Team All-American. Probst batted .450 in the 1992 NCAA DII World Series with nine hits, including two doubles and a home run, while driving in seven runs.

The Jersey Shore native remains the PSAC career batting champion with a .454 batting average and a slugging percentage of .817. Probst also excelled on defense as the Mountaineers starting catcher, throwing out 17 runners in 1992. He still ranks third in the NCAA DII record book in career batting average .454 and sixth in slugging percentage .817.

In 104 career games, Probst totaled 139 hits, 24 doubles, three triples, and 27 home runs.



Continued Success for Mountie Field Hockey

For Mansfield, the 2023 season proved to be another special one for the field hockey program.

For the first time in program history, the Mansfield Mountaineers field hockey team hosted a home playoff game in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) postseason tournament. In a classic, the Mountaineers defeated Bloomsburg in the 1-0 overtime victory to secure the Mounties' first playoff win in program history in the PSAC Quarterfinals.

For the second straight season, the Mounties found themselves in the national rankings and they were ranked as high as sixth in NCAA Division II field hockey, the highest national ranking in school history. The Mounties never fell out of the rankings, and appeared in every edition. Early in the season Mansfield shut out No. 2 Shippensburg, marking one of the biggest wins in school history.

Standout-goalskeeper August Lewis led the way from the back and the Mountie broke the school's all-time career record for shutouts and she set the single-season record for shutouts.

This could prove to be one of the team's best seasons in team history. In the record book, this 2023 roster has already placed themselves in the top 10 all-time in goals, goals allowed, assists, penalty corners, and wins.

With 12 wins on the season and four ranked wins, including No. 2 Shippensburg, at No. 4 and vs. No. 6 Bloomsburg, and at No. 9 Millersville, this sets the most the team has earned in the Hansrote era.

Aaron Fiacconi '02

Football, Track & Field

A four-year starter on the offensive line for the Mountaineers from 1998-2001, Aaron Fiacconi was a 1st-Team All-PSAC East selection in 2001.

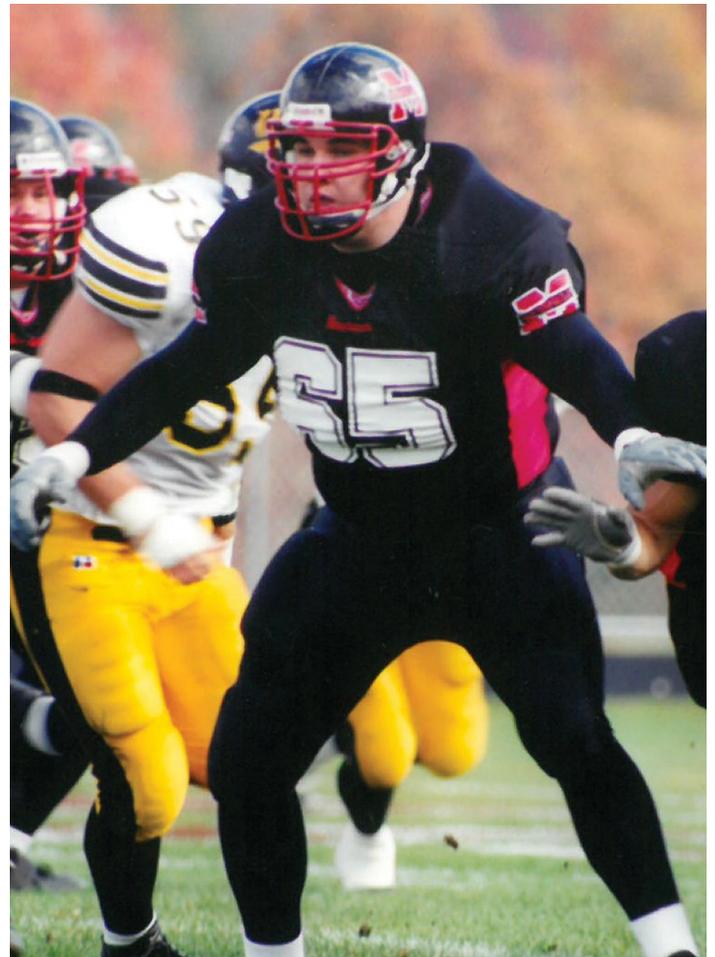
Named a team captain as a senior, Fiacconi anchored the Mounties' offensive line with 73 pancake blocks, 25 touchdown blocks, and zero sacks surrendered.

Fiacconi blocked for the second 1,000-yard rusher in Mountaineer history, while also blocking for the fifth greatest passing season in Mansfield history.

Prior to his senior season, Fiacconi was named the 2001 Butsko Award winner, the highest honor for a Mountaineer offensive lineman.

He was drafted in the fourth round of the Canadian Football League draft in 2002 by Montreal and played for the Alouettes for two seasons before being traded to Winnipeg where he started for two years. He then went to Edmonton from 2007-2011 and was named the team's offensive player of the year in 2010.

Fiacconi also competed on the Mountaineer track and field team, where he threw the shot put and discus.





Mansfield Welcomes Coach Ruff

In early September, Mansfield named Rondell Ruff the new head men's and women's indoor and outdoor track and field head coach.

Ruff joined the Mounties after spending the previous five years at the University of Detroit Mercy, where he was responsible for training the sprinters, hurdlers, jumpers, and relay teams. He also played a pivotal role in recruiting.

He led athletes to school records in the men's 60-meter and 100-meter dashes along with 110-hurdles and 4x100-meter relay. He was also responsible for coaching the 2023 Horizon League Indoor Championship Co-

Athlete of the Meet and 2022 Indoor Horizon League Championship Freshman of the Meet. On the women's side, he coached school records in the 60, 100, and 200 meter dashes, the indoor and outdoor long jump, and in the hurdle events.

Coach Ruff also spent time coaching at Wayne State, Army West Point, Saint Francis, and Michigan. As a student-athlete, Ruff was a four-year letter winner for the Division I Michigan cross country and track and field teams from 2002-06, and he was captain for both squads in his final season.



Heather Long '05 to Represent Team USA

Mansfield Hall of Famer Heather Long '05 will once again represent Team USA.

The former field hockey All-American was selected to represent the United States at the 2023 WMH O-35 Field Hockey Pan American Continental Cup, which will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina in early December. She is no stranger to international competition.

Long first appeared for Team USA in 2018 for the O-35 group at the 2018 Master's World Cup in Spain. Long was selected again to the over-35 team at the 2020 Master's World Cup in England, before recently getting the call to represent the over-40 team at the 2022 Indoor Master's World Cup, and at the 2022 WMH O-35 Masters World Cup.

Long holds the Mansfield, and PSAC, career saves (860) record and single-season saves (341) record. Long was a Second-Team All-PSAC selection in 2003 and earned Second-Team All-American honors. She was a member of the 2001 ECAC Championship team, the first and thus far only championship field hockey team in Mansfield history. Long also had a very productive softball career, starting all four seasons and earning Second-Team All-PSAC East and All-Mid-Atlantic Region honors during her senior season. She was a member of the 2004 ECAC Championship softball team and led the team in batting (.384) while appearing in all 38 games in 2005.

Student-Athletes Stand Strong in the Classroom

During the 2022-23 academic year, the Mansfield student-athletes continued to excel in the classroom as more than half the Mountie programs finished with a 3.0 or higher team GPA.

In all, eight of the 13 Mountaineer athletic programs surpassed a team GPA of 3.0 or higher. Mansfield's institution average came in at an impressive 3.120. The eight programs that hit the 3.0 or higher mark included: women's basketball (3.164), women's cross country (3.556), field hockey (3.169), women's soccer (3.414), softball (3.483), and women's indoor and outdoor track and field (3.120).

A total of 33 Mounties were honored with 2022-23 D2 ADA Academic Achievement awards for achieving an individual GPA of 3.5 or higher.

On July 5, 2023, the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference released its full list of 2022-23 individual scholar-athletes and 71 Mountaineers were honored with the award. Softball led all programs with 18 recipients, of whom each recorded a GPA of 3.25 or higher.

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.



A LOOK AT THE PAST

Gridiron Glow: Mansfield's Famous First Night Football Game

In 1892, Mansfield State Normal School (MSNS) made history as the host of the world's first football game played at night. On September 28, 1892, MSNS team took on Wyoming Seminary, a private college preparatory school located in Kingston. At that time, it was not uncommon for college and high school teams to play each other in football.

Mansfield formed its first football team a year earlier under the direction of Professor John Edwards. Just one year after Mansfield's inaugural season of football, a group of students concocted the idea of playing football under the recently invented electric light. Invented just 13 years earlier by Thomas A. Edison, electric lights were brought to the Great Mansfield Fair by John L. Cummings and the General Electric Company.

Held as part of the Great Mansfield Fair in Smythe Park that Wednesday night in 1892, the game was a big step forward for the Mansfield football program, as well as football itself. Wyoming Seminary had a well-established program that had competed against elite prep schools and collegiate teams. They were the favorite to win the game.

Lighting was provided by the newly formed

General Electric Company powered by a Thomson-Houston dynamo that was shipped by rail from Philadelphia to a siding at Smythe Park. The lights themselves were strung on the front of the baseball grandstand with another set placed on a pole in the center of the playing field itself. That placement would prove to be problematic.

The first night football game was scheduled for 7:30 p.m., but kicked-off at 6:45 p.m. to take advantage of the last moments of twilight. The lighting did indeed prove to be a bit dim. Wearing minimal protective gear—helmets would not come into play for another 20 years—and using a football that more resembled a rugby ball, the two sides kicked-off under minimal lighting. Mansfield won the toss and opened with a close "V" before surrendering the ball to Wyoming Seminary.

The opposing team complained that it was difficult to see the ball and players ran into the light pole in the center of the field. The field itself was part of the display area for livestock at the fair and was also littered with animal residue and spiked butternuts.

The game ended in a 0-0 tie after 10 plays at halftime when referee Dwight Smith deemed it "inconvenient to continue" due to the limited light and foggy conditions.

Still, the occasion of the first night game has become a special piece of Mansfield history and a claim to fame for the small town. The Fabulous 1890s Weekend in 1992 included the first reenactment of the night game held between Wyoming Seminary and a team made up of Mansfield students. The game was played at the same time and location as the one 100 years prior with Mansfield reigning victorious.

General Electric created an award-winning commercial to celebrate the centennial anniversary and memorialize their role in making night football possible. It debuted at halftime of that first reenactment game in 1992. From 1992 until the COVID pandemic, a reenactment game has been held each year, bringing together the Mansfield community and university members to take on the role of football players and run plays identical to those called during the original game.

On September 29, 2022, many Mansfield residents took part in Remember the Night-Remember the Light and turned on their porch lights from 7 to 7:30 p.m. in honor of the 130th anniversary.

Mansfield is recognized by both the College and Pro Football Halls of Fame as the Birthplace of Night Football.

Bloomsburg | Lock Haven | Mansfield

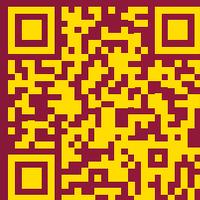
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