

BLUE & GOLD

PGAA Honors Alumni with Annual Awards

Leadership and service highlight each recipient's contributions

This year, the Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Association (PGAA) moved its annual Alumni Celebration to the virtual realm. You can watch the recognition ceremony at <http://bit.ly/PGAA2020>.



Harry P. Bowser '72

"For nearly 50 years, Harry's tireless effort, energy, and passion to support and grow Pitt Greensburg have been second to none. Harry is a teacher, coach, and community leader that the University is lucky to have as an advocate, representative, and ambassador."

With those words, Robert P. Najim '93, MBA, CPA, president of the Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Association (PGAA) Board of Directors, recognized Harry P. Bowser '72 with the PGAA Alumnus of Distinction Award. The award acknowledges excellence among alumni of Pitt-Greensburg. It is the highest honor given by the PGAA to an individual alumnus/alumna annually.

Bowser graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with degrees in secondary education and history after attending the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg from 1968 through 1970. He completed

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Hung Vo '14

"I am so grateful to be the recipient of the Volunteer Excellence Award," said Huong Vo '14. "I chose to be a member of the PGAA to give back to the university that has provided me with so much during my time as a student. I truly enjoy volunteering on campus, planning events for alumni, networking, spending time with old friends, and meeting new people. I am thankful to have the opportunities to volunteer for the PGAA."

The PGAA Volunteer Excellence Award was established to recognize alumni who volunteer their time to the PGAA and the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg.

"She truly volunteers as much as she can and does her best to get others involved as well," said Najim. "She brings such positive energy to the PGAA. Her volunteer efforts have made our events stronger, more engaging, and have increased participation in the organization and the campus in general."

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Katie Byers '17

"Katie is a talented, bilingual, rising professional. As the assistant director of Career Services at Pitt-Greensburg, she goes above and beyond to help students achieve their professional goals," said Najim, in his recognition of Katie Byers '17, the recipient of the PGAA Young Alumni Leadership Award. "We especially appreciate her contributions as a member of the Professional Development Committee."

The PGAA Young Alumni Leadership Award recognizes established and future leaders among Pitt-Greensburg's young alumni who are age 35 and younger.

"Pitt-Greensburg provided a strong foundation and sparked my interest in academics, volunteerism, and leadership," said Byers. "The faculty and staff challenged me to discover my potential and expand my worldview, and they supported me as I worked toward my goals, explored my interests, and took on new

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Message from the President

I am extremely proud of the efforts of our faculty, staff, and students as we prepared for, began, and now complete the fall semester. We have transformed so many aspects of our operations since March, but one thing remains unchanged: we will never waver in our commitment to student success. That is what we do; that is who we are.

The fall 2020 semester began on August 19 with 1,406 students enrolled for classes. Residential students returned the weekend prior to the start of classes and settled into their living quarters.

Of course, this is a semester unlike any other in our history. Over the summer, we prepared to implement the Flex@Pitt teaching model. This new approach allows a student to be in the classroom with an instructor, or attend a class remotely, and be able to switch between modes as needed. This was enabled by installing new technology in our classrooms and providing extensive training for faculty. Students and faculty can now engage in meaningful learning together whether they are physically distanced by six feet or by many miles!

Many other changes were required to create the safest possible learning environment at Pitt-Greensburg. Enhanced cleaning regimens were instituted, ID scanners, and sophisticated no-touch thermal imagers that quickly take a person's temperature were installed in campus buildings, and building entrances are staffed by "concierges" who help all who enter to follow required protocols. In addition, surveillance testing for coronavirus was instituted, masks are required on campus both inside and outside, and a contact tracing group was assembled. At this writing we have experienced few cases of COVID-19 among students, faculty, and staff.

Even though our campus operations are a little different this semester, students, faculty, and staff continue to do exciting things. For instance, we also have established new work-study opportunities for students with the corresponding skill sets and financial need. These opportunities offer students on-campus employment in a safe environment and provide much-needed income. Students have the added benefit of real-work experience that can be added to their resumes.

Thank you for your continued support of this remarkable, resilient learning community.

Hail to Pitt!



Robert Gregerson, PhD
President



University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

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150 Finoli Drive, Lynch Hall 203
Greensburg, PA 15601
724-836-7497
pgnews@pitt.edu www.greensburg.pitt.edu

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PGAA Honors Alumni with Annual Awards



Harry P. Bowser '72

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his term of service with the Pennsylvania National Guard and was hired by the Southmoreland School District where he taught social studies to grades seven through 12 for 35 years and served as head of the Social Studies Department.

Bowser also was active in Southmoreland athletics, serving in various coaching positions. He is probably best remembered for his two stints as head basketball coach with the Scotties where he turned around a program that had not registered a single win in the year prior to his taking over the team.

The recipient of the 2016 Volunteer Excellence Award, Bowser serves on the board of the Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Association and is one of the founding members of the Pitt-Greensburg Men's Basketball Alumni Club (MBAC) and regularly contributes to the MBAC newsletter. Bowser also serves on the PGAA Events Committee.

Bowser was a member of Pitt-Greensburg's inaugural basketball team and continues to be involved with the team. He has worked with every men's basketball head coach in the history of the campus. In 2013, he joined the coaching staff as a volunteer assistant men's basketball coach and character coach through the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"I have never done anything for the sole purpose of winning an award," said Bowser. "I initiated these projects and participated in these activities because they were things that should be done. Winning this award is both humbling and gratifying."

Bowser and his wife, Karon, have two sons, Adam '03 and Ryan. A resident of Alverton, PA, Bowser enjoys spending time with his granddaughters Alexis and Mikayla, and traveling.

Read Bowser's full bio at <https://bit.ly/PGAA-Bowser>.



Hung Vo '14

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A member of the PGAA board, she chairs the Events Committee and is frequently found, cell phone in hand, sharing video of an event for a "Facebook Live" when it is possible to hold events in person. She also brings new ideas to the virtual realm, contributing a range of activities that are bringing Pitt-Greensburg alumni together from across the nation and the globe. She also advocates for events being held throughout the region to engage with alumni across the area.

Vo transferred to Pitt-Greensburg in 2011 and graduated with a bachelor's degree in natural science. She received the 2013 John Ridilla Leadership Award Scholarship and the 2014 PGAA Award for Community Service for her contributions to the campus and community. She held multiple leadership positions with the Student Government Association (SGA), the Academic Village Senate, and Habitat for Humanity (HFH).

After graduation, Vo worked at MedExpress Urgent Care as a medical assistant, earned an EMT license, and enrolled in nursing school. In 2019, she graduated from the Shadyside School of Nursing and now works as a nurse at UPMC East. Currently working on her master's degree at Carlow University, Vo plans to become a family or pediatric nurse practitioner.

Read Vo's full bio at <http://bit.ly/PGAA-Vo>.



Katie Byers '17

Continued from page 1

opportunities. I feel truly grateful to work here and give back to the university that provided me with transformative experiences and to help students discover their path."

Byers graduated from Pitt-Greensburg in 2017 with degrees in Spanish and Psychology. She became a member of the PGAA Board of Directors and the Professional Development Committee, contributing to the Campus to Career panel and three virtual career panels. Byers's connection to the Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Association began her freshman year when she received the PGAA Incoming Freshman Award.

Byers earned a master's degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and received the 2019 S. Trevor Hadley Outstanding Student Award. A graduate assistant, she was the Mock Interview and Etiquette Dinner Coordinator within IUP's Career and Professional Development Center. Byers also served as a graduate research assistant and contributed to a study exploring effective teamwork behavior to inform a National Science Foundation-funded project for IUP's Professional Teamwork and Leadership minor.

In March 2019, Byers returned to Pitt-Greensburg as the assistant director of Career Services. She assists students and alumni in their career exploration and preparation through individual appointments, programming, and networking efforts. On campus, Byers serves as the treasurer for Staff Council and has co-planned events to engage and connect staff. Byers also is a co-advisor for Pitt-Greensburg's chapter of Habitat for Humanity (HFH).

Read Byer's full bio at <http://bit.ly/PGAA-Byers>.

Student Emergency Fund helps students when the unexpected strikes

This past spring brought a variety of unexpected challenges to all of us, and for some Pitt-Greensburg students, the Student Emergency Fund was there to help them get through those challenges.

Since its inception, the Student Emergency Fund has been used to assist students facing a range of challenges:

- It provided money to cover a security deposit in March 2020 when a student couldn't move back home for the semester and didn't have enough money to cover both the deposit and first month's rent on a small apartment.
- The fund allowed a student to use Uber to travel back-and-forth to campus for classes during two weeks last fall after an auto accident put his car in the garage for repairs.
- The Emergency Fund paid for a winter coat, scarf, hat, gloves and boots when a student was unable to purchase the items due to a lack of funds last winter.

The Pitt-Greensburg Student Emergency Fund was created just for situations like this. It allows Pitt-Greensburg to help students when they are facing hardships. It is one way that we can support students and allow them to focus on their classes and earning their degrees. If you'd like to help us continue to help students, please visit greensburg.pitt.edu/bg-newsletter-campaign.

Home stretch: Tech for the Future Challenge

Can you help us reach the finish line?

September 30, 2021, will be a significant date in the history of Pitt-Greensburg. With your help, Pitt-Greensburg will have achieved full funding of the endowment that is currently being built through the Technology for the Future Challenge. Our campus will be in an improved position to face the future with the technological resources our students, faculty, and staff need.

The finish line is looming, and we still need to raise \$75,000 toward our \$250,000 portion of the total \$500,000* to complete the endowment.

You can help us reach this goal by making a gift today to the Technology for the Future Fund at www.greensburg.pitt.edu/bg-newsletter-campaign. Your support will help to further secure the campus's technological future.

**The Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) grant matches every dollar raised in the Technology for the Future Challenge. Our \$250,000 portion will be matched by the grant to give us a total of \$500,000 in the endowment fund.*

How you are helping our campus when you contribute to the Technology for the Future Challenge

Since the Challenge's inception in 2016, \$344,000 in total funding has been raised through your gifts and the SIP grant's dollar-for-dollar match. Interest from this portion of the endowment is already available for use in making improvements to our campus technology, and the Pitt-Greensburg community is benefitting from the money raised thus far.

Most recently, equipment was purchased in the Pitt-Greensburg Gaming Arena located in Cassell Hall 210. Thirty members of the Pitt-Greensburg esports team are using the 10 newly installed 23.8" high-definition LED monitors, 15 headsets, 15 gaming mice, and 15 gaming keyboards for their competitions.

Esports teams have grown in popularity across the nation, with just a handful documented in 2016 to nearly 500 collegiate programs today. With 97 percent of teens regularly playing video games, colleges and universities find esports teams a beneficial recruiting element in a competitive marketplace. Students benefit when they win scholarships and cash prizes from competing that can be applied to education expenses. They develop marketable skills from collaborative team play in a technology-rich environment and are exposed to a variety of high-tech career pathways. (Dell Technologies Esports in HIED infographic).



When not being used by the esports team, Cassell Hall 210 will double as a training center for faculty, allowing them to enhance their remote teaching skills, receive mentoring, and take advantage of on-campus professional development opportunities.

This funding was also used to equip a studio space for faculty to use in recording their asynchronous class sessions. It offers a green-screen background, quality web camera and microphones, and a fully-equipped computer and software to use for editing the final product.

\$250,000		\$344,000 secured to date (donations+match)	FINAL GOAL: \$500,000
	TECHNOLOGY for the FUTURE CHALLENGE	The Power of One Donor	
<p>Your gift will help us meet the ever-changing technology needs of our campus. This dollar-to-dollar match is part of the Title III Strengthening Institutions grant.</p>	<p>Thank you to the donors who have contributed to our Challenge.</p> <p>Can we count on you to help us raise \$75,000* by Sept. 30, 2021 to reach our goal of \$500,000?</p> <p>*To be matched for a total of \$156,000</p>	<p>The Power of One says that YOU can make a difference, YOUR voice, YOUR participation, YOUR donation matters.</p>	
<p>Every gift counts. Every gift is multiplied. To make your gift, visit greensburg.pitt.edu/bg-newsletter-campaign</p>			

Campus Store under new management

Barnes & Noble College to offer increased variety



Pitt-Greensburg welcomed Lindsey Martin and Barnes & Noble College (BNC) to its Campus Store this summer. Blue & Gold chatted with Martin, the store manager, about how this partnership will benefit alumni.

While COVID-19 may prevent alumni from visiting the Chambers Hall store, alumni have several options for online shopping. This includes visiting the store from the Pitt-Greensburg website (www.greensburg.pitt.edu), from PittGreensburg.bnccollege.com, or through the “My College Bookstore” app. Alumni can download the app from the Google Play Store (Android OS) or the Apple Store (Apple OS), or search for “Barnes & Noble College” there.

Most coupons and discounts will be available from all of these locations, but Martin recommends using the “My College Bookstore” app during the holidays, “Often, extra coupons for discounts and specialty items are offered through the app.” The app offers a customized experience and emailed coupon codes for the store and website. The app functions also include new item notifications, order placement, and shipment tracking. Martin expects the website to be fully populated with merchandise in time for the holidays. The merchandise ranges from Pitt-branded apparel, gifts, and accessories that will appeal to alumni to standard supplies, equipment, and textbooks for students.

Shoppers using the app or the website will notice that some items are marked “drop ship,” meaning that merchandise will ship directly from the vendor. All other items will ship from the Campus Store. Martin looks forward to offering a wider variety of items as the store’s inventory grows.

Barnes & Noble’s access to vendors and contracts with vendors like Nike, Under Armour, and Champion allows for competitive pricing. BNC also forges partnerships with local businesses. Club Color is a BNC feature that allows custom items to be manufactured and used for fundraising. For instance, artwork that has been reviewed for branding purposes can be put on anything from Columbian jackets to pencils.

Martin has worked for Barnes & Noble College for 16 years. She started her career at the Newark (OH) regional campus in The Ohio State University system. Her career path brought her to Pennsylvania when she was named assistant manager at the Robert Morris University store. She then transferred to Duquesne University as their textbook manager and was next promoted to manager of the Seton Hill University (SHU) bookstore. Now she is managing both the SHU store and the Pitt-Greensburg Campus Store.

“Community—that one word says it all,” says Martin. “We see ourselves as a partner to the students, the fans, the staff, the faculty, and the alumni. We’re here to serve everyone.”

For more information about how BNC and the Campus Store are serving students, please visit <http://bit.ly/BNCCampusStore>. Martin welcomes questions and inquiries. Please contact her at LIM93@pitt.edu or 724-836-9928.

Honor Roll of Donors

Dear Alumni and friends,

Thank you for your generous support of the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg during the past fiscal year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020). Contributions from alumni and friends are paramount to Pitt-Greensburg’s ability to support its funding needs.

Our number one priority is scholarships, followed by enriching the academic experience, enhancing the student experience, and building a beautiful campus.

Our Honor Roll of Donors can be found at <http://bit.ly/HonorRoll-19-20>. Again, we extend our deepest gratitude to each of you for helping

Pitt-Greensburg continue its mission of building a liberal arts college for the 21st century.

Hail to Pitt!

Pitt-Greensburg makes every effort to ensure accuracy in the Honor Roll of Donors. If an inaccuracy is noted, please call (724) 836-9942 or email kraising@pitt.edu.



The Power of *One Donor*

Blue & Gold Celebration

A mix of virtual and in-person events brought our community together

Pitt-Greensburg marked the 10th anniversary of its Blue & Gold Celebration with a mix of in-person and virtual events that brought people together to celebrate friendship and our campus.

Here are some of the highlights!



Photos in this logo are from Blue & Gold events prior to 2020.

Art Show @ Pitt-Greensburg

This year, nearly 120 pieces were entered in the Art Show @ Pitt-Greensburg that celebrates the talent of the campus and community. Thank you to our Canvas Sponsor West Point Auto Works. The complete show is available online at www.greensburg.pitt.edu/blue-and-gold/art-show where you can see all of the entries and winners. First-place winners in the Judged Categories were:

- Mixed Media: Larry Brandstetter for Brightly Whispered
- Drawing: Tammy McGee for Nose to Nose
- Photography: Vincent Ferrari for Milky Way over Lifeguard Station
- Painting: Kathy Sartoris Rafferty for Adam's Apple



Fan Favorite: Westmoreland County Courthouse by Rebecca Hagan

2020 Pitt-Greensburg Golf Outing presented by Elliott Group

Thank you alumni, parents, staff, faculty, and friends for spending a beautiful day on the greens raising funds for and celebrating Pitt-Greensburg. For a complete list of team and skills contest winners, plus a special video message, please visit www.greensburg.pitt.edu/golf-outing. Our golfers said that they enjoyed catching up with college roommates, teammates, and friends; enjoyed meeting other alumni; and enjoyed the chance to golf with co-workers. The 2020 outing is the top fundraiser in its 21-year history—thank you to each and every sponsor and in-kind donor.



1st Place/Top Alumni Team: Scott Kislak '06 (PHARM); Todd Kettering '06; Bernie Dickson; Jim Rubino

2020



Bobcat Block Parties

New this year were three virtual Bobcat Block Parties! Alumni from the different decades were invited to participate via Zoom. Campus President Robert Gregerson stopped by to provide an update on the campus, along with PGAA board members who hosted the event and shared trivia and photos from the various class years periods.



Virtual Hospitality Raffle

Pitt-Greensburg's popular Hospitality Raffle went virtual, too. From September 25 through October 8, one prize was raffled off each day, with a total of 14 Pitt Swag prizes distributed. Winners were announced via official Pitt-Greensburg social media accounts.



Stained Glass Tour with Terry Bengel '80

Stained glass artist Terry Bengel '80 showcased the stained glass art on our campus in a 30-minute video tour available here: www.greensburg.pitt.edu/about/blue-and-gold/stained-glass-tour. His presentation sparkles with the history and details about both the campus and the varieties of glass displayed here.



Happy Camper Cupcakes

Perennial favorite Happy Camper Cupcakes visited campus with their specially-made Pitt-branded confections for the campus community.



Bonfire

Pitt-Greensburg's bonfire drew a nice student crowd who helped to congratulate the Homecoming Court and Royalty. COVID-19 protocols of social distancing and face coverings were followed.



Austin Yasofsky and Larissa Nemchik, the 2019 Homecoming Royalty, pause for a photo with Melissa Paravate and Brandon Cross after they were crowned 2020 Homecoming Royalty.

Alumni Awards Celebration

The annual Alumni Celebration was held via Zoom this year. Honored were Harry P. Bowser '72 (Alumnus of Distinction), Huong Vo '14 (Volunteer Excellence), and Katie Byers '17 (Young Alumni Leadership). Please see the article on page one for the achievements and contributions of our alumni winners.



Blue & Gold Blood Drive

The American Red Cross hosted this annual blood drive that was open to the campus community.



Founders Day Duck Dash

Duck #100 was the winner of this year's Founders Day Duck Dash. Also known as Sal Ami, Duck #100 was designed by Yomarilis Gueits Rodriguez. Both Rodriguez and Sal Ami will have their names added to the special trophy that is displayed in the President's Office.



Pawprints

Pitt-Greensburg earns spots in national rankings



Pitt-Greensburg was honored to be recognized in two spots in the Washington Monthly's 2020 College Guide and Rankings. The campus was one of 219 schools recognized as a top liberal arts college in the United States based on our contribution to the

public good in social mobility, research, and promoting public service. The campus was also one of 397 schools recognized in the category of America's Best Bang for the Buck in the Northeast, an exclusive selection of schools ranked according to how well they help students attain marketable degrees at affordable prices.

The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education (WSJ/THE) Rankings noted that of all students polled, those at Pitt-Greensburg were more likely than those at many other schools to believe their educational experience warranted the price tag. The WSJ/THE rankings noted that our greatest strength is our student outcomes—the measure of how much value the school can add to its students' future financial lives. Plus, our students continue to tell us that they are more likely than students at many other colleges to choose their campus again.

Pitt-Greensburg was also one of 50 schools to be recognized as having the Best Criminal Justice programs by Learn.org.

Addison Gibson Foundation scholarship award to benefit 20 students

A recent scholarship award from the Addison Gibson Foundation will benefit 20 Pitt-Greensburg students who meet the eligibility requirements. The scholarships will be awarded this academic year and can only be applied to tuition and fees. Eligible students must be residents of western Pennsylvania for at least two years, have completed one full year of college, have a GPA of 3.0 or higher for the most recent two semesters, and show financial need. Designation of the funds will be determined by the Pitt-Greensburg Office of Financial Aid.



Alumnus designated a Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellow of PA

Cheyenne Perez '20 was designated a Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellow of Pennsylvania. Perez is continuing her education at Duquesne University, where she is participating in a specially designed, cutting-edge master's degree program based on a yearlong clinical experience—including schools' current remote and virtual learning arrangements. As

part of the program, Perez is student teaching in biology at Allerdice High School while she pursues a master's degree in Duquesne University's MAT-Secondary Education with a specialization in biology.

The Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship in Pennsylvania is a highly competitive program that recruits recent graduates and career changers with strong backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, and math. It prepares them specifically to teach in high-need secondary schools. Throughout the three-year commitment as a teacher of record at a public school, Fellows receive ongoing support and mentoring.

While at Pitt-Greensburg, Perez was a Science Learning Community Scholar and a member of the Pitt-Greensburg chapter of the biological sciences national society. She also did independent research on the impact of opioids within a model organism.

Pitt-Greensburg partners with WDC to present speakers series

This fall, Pitt-Greensburg partnered with the Westmoreland Diversity Coalition to present a series of workshops and speakers designed to facilitate understanding of key issues facing our community and nation. Growth through Knowledge and Understanding featured four workshops and two panel discussions, each led by local experts, that discussed Judaism and topics related to social justice and racial equality. Dr. Robert Gregerson, campus president, moderated a panel of students from local colleges and universities who talked about the future they envision in light of the calls for social justice. Dr. Sheila Confer, director of the Academic Village, led a workshop designed to develop an understanding of privilege and how it can be used to lift others up and move toward a more equitable and just society. Albert Thiel, director of the Student Center and Student Involvement, served as co-chair for the series with Carlotta Paige, director of the WDC.



Drive-thru tours provide innovative way for prospective students to see the campus

This past spring, the Pitt-Greensburg Office of Admissions was faced with major changes to its operations due to COVID-19 precautions. In-person events, the industry standard, quickly changed to online sessions with prospective students



interacting with campus representatives via Zoom.

"The online sessions are great for answering questions, sharing information about majors, or finding out about the financial aid process—but most students and their families want an in-person visit to get a sense of what campus feels like," said Dana Bearer, director of Admissions. "In fact, a visit to campus can be one of the most important aspects of the decision-making process."

This summer and fall, Pitt-Greensburg offered drive-thru campus tours as part of its admissions process. Prospective students and their families registered for a time-slot to spend 30-minutes on campus—all from the comfort of their vehicle. This innovative approach to the traditional campus tour allowed campus representatives and visitors to maintain physical distancing protocols and still participate in an in-person visit to campus.

"Our drive-thru tours have been well received by prospective students and their families. They are grateful for this opportunity to visit campus and meet our faculty and staff," said Bearer. "This is one way we can safely give them that experience."

The tour is designed to be both fun and informative. It's a pre-planned route that allows visitors to see all of the campus buildings. At designated spots, the visitors, who remain in their vehicles, pause to chat with campus representatives. Joining President Robert Gregerson, PhD, in staffing key locations along the tour route are representatives from most campus departments and offices.

Please visit <http://www.greensburg.pitt.edu/admissions/visit-campus> for the most current information about all visitation opportunities available to prospective students and their families.

Ghilani wins campus's first-ever Innovation in Education Award

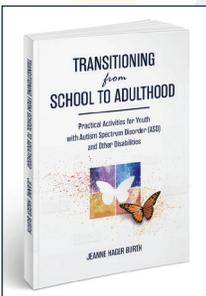


Provost Ann Cudd, PhD, Frank Wilson, and Jessica Ghilani

This fall, students had the opportunity to take a new class about the history of journalism and fake news developed by Jessica Ghilani, PhD, associate professor of Communication. The course, Fake News: Journalism & Democracy, aims to foster digital media literacy and provide context about the business of news as it functions as an integral part of American democracy.

Ghilani received funding to develop the course when it was one of six proposals selected to win a prestigious Innovation in Education Award, administered by the Office of the Provost's Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence (ACIE). She is the first person from Pitt-Greensburg to receive this award, which typically recognizes projects outside of the humanities that are taking place at the University of Pittsburgh.

This past spring, Ghilani was joined by two other Pitt-Greensburg faculty members in making poster presentations at the inaugural Fueling Our Future Showcase, a program intended to showcase the projects that are the result of receiving internal funding from the University of Pittsburgh. Ghilani's presentation focused on her new course, while Frank Wilson, PhD, assistant vice president for Academic Affairs, and Kayla Heffernan, PhD, assistant professor of Mathematics, presented Expanding and Refining First-Year Learning Communities at Pitt-Greensburg. Pitt-Greensburg was the only regional campus represented at this event held at the Pittsburgh campus.



New book will help individuals with ASD and their caregivers

Pitt-Greensburg education majors under the leadership of Jeanne Burth, EdD, associate professor of Education, contributed to the newly published book *Transitioning from School to Adulthood: Practical Activities for Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Other Disabilities* (Universal Publishers, 2020). The book is a collection of descriptions, instructions, and practice activities for young people who have more barriers than most

emerging adults. These activities are helpful for teachers, service providers, or parents who assist individuals with ASD, along with other challenges, such as cognitive or intellectual disorders, developmental delays, and specific learning disabilities. The activities are designed by future teachers, undergraduate students in Burth's classes who are studying to be teachers. The chapters in this book describe adult activities for independent life or supported environments, provide step by step instructions, and allow the individual to practice the skills.



Schrum's play premieres in Ohio

Stephen A. Schrum's play, *Aliens, 3 Miles, Turn Left*, had its Ohio premiere as part of the virtual programming presented by the Abbey Theater in Dublin, OH. The show ran from October 16 through October 25. James Harper performed in this production that is described as an "unofficial love letter to Alfred Hitchcock and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*."

CARP holds Community Paint Days

The Community Arts and Reintegration Project (CARP) hosted two Community Paint Days for the mural planned in New Kensington. Pitt-Greensburg students joined Tim Holler, PhD, CARP director and associate professor of Criminal Justice, at the event that is described as a giant paint-by-number project. The painting sessions were held outdoors with participants social distancing and using face coverings.



CARP, a program administered out of Pitt-Greensburg's Center for Applied Research (CFAR), is partnering with Westmoreland Community Action on the mural project. Funding, in part, is provided through a grant from the University of Pittsburgh's Year of Creativity. Additional information about the mural project may be found here: <https://bit.ly/CARP-NewKen-Mural>.

Bernie Wilke, who has more than 80 community murals to his credit, continues to provide artistic expertise and direction to the project. An adjunct professor at Westmoreland County Community College, Wilke describes himself as a visual artist who is committed to working in community settings.

The mural is symbolic in a number of ways. A selfie-spot is being incorporated that would allow a person to look like they were pouring molten aluminum into their molds. Also, in an effort to include the rich diversity that is representative of New Kensington, a diverse group of individuals will inhabit the design in a variety of ways. The location of the New Kensington mural will be the building formerly housing Walt's Deli.

Summer enrollment increases for second-straight year



For the second consecutive year, Pitt-Greensburg has seen an increase in the number of students taking summer classes. Nearly 500 students, either from Pitt-Greensburg or from other Pitt campuses, participated in remote learning sessions that started in May and finished in August.

Retirements

Pitt-Greensburg expresses its gratitude to these members of its faculty and staff who announced their retirement in 2020. Their years of cumulative service number more than 330, but their contributions to the success of the campus are immeasurable.

Faculty

- **Estela Llinás**, associate professor of Engineering/Mathematics -- 39 years, 4 months
- **Gary Lutz**, assistant professor of English -- 36 years, 8 months
- **Tom Wolf**, associate professor of Information Science -- 52 years, 4 months

Staff

- **Janet "Dolly" Biskup**, administrative assistant to the President, 41 years, 9 months
- **Sandra Buehner**, Library specialist -- 20 years
- **Brandi Darr**, director of Financial Aid -- 21 years, 7 months
- **William "Bill" Franicola**, Physical Plant supervisor, 30 years, 2 months
- **Diane Hughes**, Library specialist -- 14 years
- **Delia "Dolly" Oslosky**, Maintenance I -- 23 years, 4 months
- **Linda Soltis**, Maintenance coordinator -- 16 years, 4 months
- **Linda Szypulski**, Administrative secretary -- 12 years, 9 months
- **Kimberly White**, Maintenance II -- 25 years

Bobcat Athletics

2020 fall season postponed; coaches & teams focus on spring competitions



Student-athletes who compete at the NCAA Division III level play because they truly love their sport. They don't receive athletic scholarships, and the programs they compete in aren't bolstered by the financial backing that comes from television and branding contracts.

Successful student-athletes figure out that time-management is key to getting everything done. They understand the meaning of commitment. Not being able to practice and compete is a significant change for these young men and women who have spent much of their lives on the playing field.

Jeremy Yetter, Pitt-Greensburg's director of Athletics, took a few moments to reflect on what transpired this past spring and fall. As the semester progresses, Yetter and his coaching staff continue to work closely with the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) and the NCAA—all with the goal of keeping Pitt-Greensburg student-athletes safe and healthy.

"The situation is constantly under review as we monitor the COVID-19 numbers on our campus and in the region," said Yetter. "We meet weekly

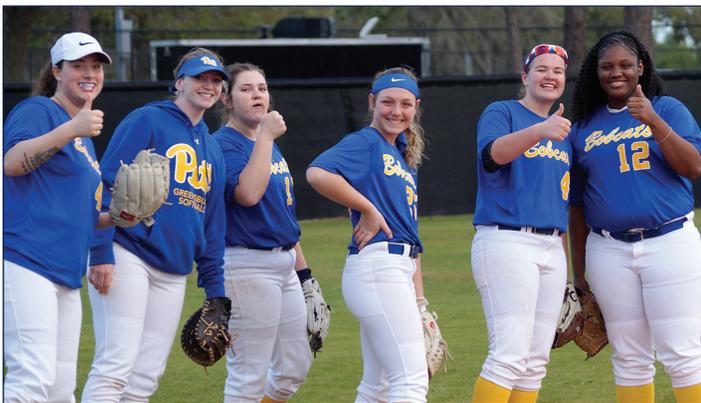
with the athletic trainers to discuss the past week and make adjustments. They [the trainers] help to educate our student-athletes about the importance of wearing face coverings, social distancing, and hygiene—which help to prevent the spread of both COVID-19 and the flu."

For Yetter, spring break marks the division of life before Covid-19 and life after Covid-19. He remembers that the baseball team had just returned from their spring break training trip to Florida, while the softball team was finishing up their pre-season competition and training there. "That's when we made the decision to postpone all spring sports for the remainder of the semester, and the University of Pittsburgh announced that our students would not be returning to campus for the spring semester. All of our operations would be remote, and from that point on, our campus started working on how we would safely return for the fall semester."

He described the past six months as scary, frustrating, and hopeful. It was a continually evolving situation. "We were meeting weekly with the AMCC to discuss our options for conducting the fall athletic seasons, said Yetter. "The NCAA guidelines were also evolving. By midsummer, we had made the difficult decision to postpone outside competitions for the fall 2020 semester. We simply did not have the resources to follow the NCAA Resocialization Guidelines that went from recommendations to mandatory. I knew our coaches and student-athletes wanted to compete, but their safety was the ultimate concern."

At this writing, the AMCC has approved revised schedules for fall and winter sports to run concurrently in the spring 2021 semester. "These are schedules that will allow us to compete against our AMCC opponents," said Yetter.

Men's and women's basketball, men's and women's soccer, volleyball, and men's and women's cross country will each have nine competitions against AMCC opponents, followed by the Conference playoffs. The NCAA playoff tournaments for fall sports are canceled.



Photos from competitions occurring prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kelsey Oddis '18 named women's basketball coach



Distinguished women's basketball player Kelsey Oddis '18 was named head coach of the Pitt-Greensburg Women's Basketball team after serving the past two seasons as an assistant coach under former Head Coach Hayley Schaeztle.

"We are thrilled to have Kelsey as our Head Women's Basketball Coach," said Jeremy Yetter, director of Athletics. "Kelsey has a strong passion for coaching. She also has a strong desire to lead our women's basketball program and will do a great job building upon our success in this sport."

Oddis, a native of Lower Burrell, PA, helped guide the Bobcats to a 17-10 overall record and the team's first playoff victory, which came via a 71-53 win over Penn State Behrend in the first round of the 2020 AMCC Tournament.

"I look forward to continuing to build the culture that I have been fortunate enough to be a part of as a player and as an assistant coach here at Pitt-Greensburg," said Oddis. "I am excited for this opportunity and am looking forward to continuing our team's success on and off the court. I'm also grateful to Pitt-Greensburg for this opportunity."

In her four seasons playing for the Bobcats, Oddis was a two-time All-AMCC selection, earning First Team honors as a senior for posting averages of 19.4 points and 11.4 rebounds, both of which ranked second in the AMCC. Oddis also became the 12th player in program history to eclipse 1,000 career points and concluded her four years ranked seventh all-time with 1,203 career points.

An outstanding student in the classroom, Oddis was a two-time Academic All-Conference selection and a member of the Psi Chi Honor Society. She graduated from Pitt-Greensburg in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in psychology and recently earned a master's degree in sports management from California University of Pennsylvania.

The Arts

Creativity flourishes on campus amid changes and adaptation

Fall theatre production features radio-play format; Spring production will occur in Second Life

Creativity and resilience describe how our campus has responded to new operating protocols, and it is now less so in the area of the visual and performing arts.

This fall, the Pitt-Greensburg Theatre Company, under the direction of Stephen A. Schrum, PhD, associate professor of theatre, transformed Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* from a stage production to a radio play. The 11-member cast performed two live performances (Nov. 7 and Nov. 8) using the Zoom platform. The performances were also streamed via Facebook Live. A recording of the production may be enjoyed at <https://www.greensburg.pitt.edu/academics/majors-minors/visual-and-performing-arts/news>.

Schrum noted that Zoom presented its own challenges that the Company had to overcome. For instance, Zoom won't allow for two people to speak at the same time, so the timing of sound effects and the spoken word needed to be precise. This allowed the actors to do some of their own sound effects to accomplish this precision. In keeping with the radio play format, the actors remained off camera, allowing the audience to be immersed in the voices, sounds, and music creating the drama.

Virtual rehearsals were held twice a week, with Schrum helping the cast to hone their acting skills, and develop their characters' physicality and motivation. John Richey '19, an alumnus of the visual and performing arts program, returned to the Theatre Company for one of the roles.

"It was important to maintain some semblance of structure and routine when we returned for the fall semester," said Schrum. "Everyone likes to do theater, and the plays and rehearsal schedule give students a creative outlet and structure that supports their other studies and activities."

The selection of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* was an easy one for Schrum as he watched the real-life drama playing out around the

COVID-19 pandemic and the decisions being made. In the play, Dr. Stockmann discovers the local spa must be shut down to protect people's lives. There is resistance because the baths are bringing in tourists and helping the economy. Dr. Stockmann is vilified by his own brother, the town's mayor.

Plans for the spring semester are underway, too. A musical was under consideration but then tabled due to the limitations

of an in-person performance. Instead, Schrum returned to the script for the 2020 spring production of *The Government Inspector* (adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher) that had been cancelled. Pulling from his own experience in producing and performing in the 3D virtual world of Second Life, Schrum thought it would be a great learning tool for the students to create a virtual representation of the set, interact with each other, and perform.

"The actors can create their own avatars," said Schrum. "We can take the stage designs that were created by M.K. Hughes in SketchU (a 3D design program) and easily import them into Second Life. Second Life will also allow costumes to be created for each avatar."



A screenshot from a rehearsal held on Zoom

Outdoor rehearsals and face coverings allow the Chorale to keep making music

The Pitt-Greensburg Chorale and Chambers Singers usually look forward to performing twice a year for the community, either in their home venue of Mary Lou Campana Chapel and Lecture Center or in local churches. COVID-19 has forced them to break that tradition.

Over the course of the semester, the group continued to meet and practice—following protocols for wearing face masks and social distancing. At this writing, they are rehearsing a short program that they hope to record or perform in a live-stream so family and friends can see what they are doing.

"I have nothing but enormous gratitude to these students who say that this is an important part of their campus life and their lives in general," said Christopher Bartley, director of the Chorale. "Anyone who comes to singing in a group like this finds that it is wonderful for both your soul and your community. We never felt that so palpably until it was taken away from us."

Bartley and the Chorale members stayed in touch throughout the spring semester with regular check-ins via Zoom, but the platform just doesn't allow for singing in a group. Like other groups on campus, they continued to look for ways to come back together. For Chorale, it was with the understanding that singing in a group offers legitimate reasons for concern during this pandemic.

"We have advantages," explained Bartley. "We are small, and our space [Mary Lou Campana Chapel and Lecture Center] can be devoted to our activities. We're not dependent on ticket sales. We can be a community and share a song or two." After consulting with a bevy of research about singing, he and the Chorale decided to move forward with in-person rehearsals.



Chorale members practice outside.

The group of approximately 23 meets weekly. When the weather allows, they meet outside. Much of their work this semester has been focused on learning the Sacred Harp tradition of sight reading, often referred to as "shape-note singing." "We may not be preparing for a concert as we would under normal circumstances, but we're practicing techniques that will make singing a lifelong joy." While there is no 100 percent guarantee of safety, the group is being vigilant and is prepared to stop rehearsals if necessary.

Please watch for updates about the performances of the Chorale and Chamber Singers via the campus website (www.greensburg.pitt.edu) or our official social media channels.



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The Pitt-Greensburg Alumni invite you to their upcoming virtual events!

Because of the fluidity of events due to COVID-19, please check our website (www.greensburg.pitt.edu/alumni) for the latest information on the campus status and events.

Merry Mingle

The Merry Mingle will go virtual this year, so get jingly with it and join the fun on Friday, December 4, from the comfort of your own home. Alumni from across the nation and the globe can come together for an evening of fun. For more details, please visit the Alumni Event page.

Professional Impressions

Mark your calendar and save the date for Professional Impressions on Thursday, February 25, 2021. Details will be available soon.

Be sure to regularly check www.greensburg.pitt.edu/alumni for up-to-the-minute information on events and activities as possible changes in our operational posture may cause plans to be modified.

New events are added each week!

Visit www.greensburg.pitt.edu to view additional events.

A complete schedule of athletic events is available at www.greensburg.pitt.edu/athletics

Class Notes

Carolyn Raymer '91 is a research lab staff employee within the Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine Core Lab within UPMC Montefiore. She is involved in molecular research lab testing of human tissue cell cultures of COPD, lung injury, and asthma patients.

BJ Bertges '05 shared that, as of September 2019, she is the director of Championships and Development for the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA), a national sports governing body. Prior to this, she was the assistant athletic director and head women's volleyball coach at Penn State Beaver.



Larry Bigante '11 wrote that he and his wife Elizabeth are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Madison on November 20, 2019. He added, "She was born 22 inches tall, so hopefully she will play basketball at Pitt-Greensburg like her father!"

The family of **Danamarie Watka '11** announced the founding Dana's Sweet Wishes, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose goal is to educate people about ways to deal with the stress and anxiety of modern life in a fun and healthy way. The nonprofit is currently working to distribute the children's book, *Right Now, I am Fine* by Dr. Daniela Owen, PhD, to 500 first-grade students in 2020. The book was written to help children deal with the complications of stress and anxiety brought on by the many changes caused by COVID-19. Watka passed unexpectedly in 2018, losing her battle with mental illness.

Share your news with us! Visit <https://www.greensburg.pitt.edu/alumni/update-my-information> to update your information and share career updates, marriages, births, and new degrees.

Pitt to the Power of **One**

Stay up-to-date with what is happening at Pitt-Greensburg, reconnect with friends, and share your news!

