**DEAR COLLEAGUES,**

As we approach the holiday season, let us all reflect on the positive synergy that has occurred during a very tumultuous year. What better time than now to show our gratitude for the things in life that have really taken center stage: our families, our beliefs and values, and the sincere respect we hold for one another and our communities. I am personally thankful for colleagues who find new and inspiring ways to engage and collaborate with each other.

Against that backdrop, let’s take a look at some reasons for optimism as we head into the new year:

- **You have each, individually and collectively, played a critical role in maintaining a strong student experience while successfully dealing with the challenges of COVID-19.**
- **Along with our students, we truly experienced the very spirit of Quest: Open Questions Open Minds and we all, in our own ways, contemplated the four open questions.**
- **Together, we exceeded the goals of the Keep the Promise campaign and made significant progress towards its three pillars: Advancing Academic Innovation, Investing in Student Success, and Igniting the Power of Our People. That final pillar really hits home!**
- **We avoided increases in cost for health insurance, and we provided whole-being virtual challenges for the mind and body, and flexible work schedules to maintain health and wellness.**
- **With your support and feedback, we moved the performance annual review process forward. Next up: we are including individual goal setting for staff and midyear check-ins.**
- **We are an even more vibrant and inviting campus with the Schellhase Commons as our campus gateway!**
- **We recommitted to intensifying our diversity and inclusion initiatives. Our community values now proudly and emphatically reflect those ideals, and we’re raising awareness of them through DART and such initiatives as the inclusive community grant opportunities. Our work is nowhere near done, but we are making positive strides.**

We know that COVID-19 has brought many challenges throughout the year, and those challenges have affected us all differently. But through that, we worked together to accomplish so many great things—all in a manner that reflects the very best of Ursinus. Our campus community shines because of you and your hard work! Thank you again for your incredible adaptability.

I wish all of you a joyous holiday season and hope you get some well-needed time off. Please enjoy your time away from work and with your families as we re-energize for 2021!

**Go Bears!**

Kelley Williams, director of human resources

---

**Celebrating 25 Years of Service**

This academic year, five of our Ursinus co-workers are surpassing an important career milestone: 25 years at the college. They have each contributed to our Bear community in immeasurable ways and we thank them for their dedication and commitment to our students, faculty, and staff. Please join us in paying tribute to them.

- **Perry Kline** is a true “unsung hero” among the facilities team. He happily serves the Ursinus community as an HVAC specialist.
- **Anthony Lobo,** an associate professor of biology, performs research on antibiotic resistance and is currently involved in two interdisciplinary research projects with faculty colleagues.
- **Alan Morrison** is a familiar face in Bomberger Auditorium and is often seen at the college’s milestone events. The Ursinus organist has performed in prestigious concert organ venues around the world.
- **Mike Twarzogowski,** affectionately known as “Mike T.”, is supervisor of support services and, as one of the many people who “make the college go,” lends a helping hand to all those in need.
- **Eric Williamsen,** an associate professor of chemistry, serves with Lobo as co-coordinator of the biochemistry and molecular biology major. His research expertise is in high-performance liquid chromatography.

For more employee milestones, see the inside of this newsletter.

---

**#GIVING2UCDAY IS TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2020**

We hope that you will participate in this important day of giving for the college. We’re seeking 2,020 donors within 24 hours. Visit ursinus.edu/giving2ucday.
This year, our annual open enrollment period will run from November 23 to December 4. For 2021, both Independence Blue Cross and MetLife have provided us with a 0% increase on all of our plans. All premiums for our various coverages will remain at the 2020 level and will not change for 2021. This includes both the high-deductible health plan and the buy-up medical plan, both dental plans (base and buy-up), and the vision plan.

The college will continue to support the current HSA funding of $350 for each employee in the base plan. This will be funded into your account in January 2021. We will continue to support the current wellness funding of $300 for employees who complete the requirements of the program. This will be funded in the usual manner, either in June 2021 or December 2021.

The human resources team and the benefits committee will continue to meet throughout 2021 to explore current offerings in the market and identify the best options to serve the needs of our employees. Each year, as the insurance landscape continues to change, we work hard to address any new challenges while identifying the reasonable solutions for the entire Ursinus community.

PREPARING FOR WINTER BREAK

Employees will be granted flexibility to how they approach paid time off between December 21 and January 1, which is the current holiday schedule. We know some faculty and staff need to support our students during the final two days of exams on Dec. 21 and 22, so we ask supervisors to provide additional latitude in addressing official paid time off for employees impacted by this scheduling overlap.

This is also a reminder that the college will be moving to all-virtual education after the Thanksgiving break and the students will not return to campus until January 19, 2021. Staff employees should continue to work remotely during this period (with the exception of the holiday closure) to address daily operations and departmental needs.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

The Office of Communications thanks you for the valuable feedback you provided on internal communication strategy in its recent survey. Please stay tuned for more information about results and how we intend to better communicate to you.
UPDATING THE HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGIC PLAN

The HR team continues to work on the Human Resources Operating and Strategic Plan as a means to invest in our people as the most important asset. While much of this work this year has been focused on the enhancements to the performance management platform, we continue to evaluate our processes to enhance the employee experience. Some of our initiatives include:

Community values
Employees are now speaking about our community values and Quest as it relates to their work during the annual review process.

Our People, the new HR newsletter
We have created this robust newsletter as a means to communicate important employee information, celebrate our successes and people, and provide updates on the HR strategic operating plan.

Management training
Even though we were interrupted by COVID-19 and had to move to virtual training, we were able to complete one round of supervisory training for 23 staff supervisors. We will continue to evaluate developmental needs and hope to present another training program in the spring.

Performance management platform
We added goal setting and community values to our annual review process. We also created a process for individual development plans for those interested in professional growth.

Job transition plans
For employees who experience a role change, we have created a process to assist in defining priorities and projects during their transition so that employees are successful in addressing the new work expectations.

Recruitment platform
We have begun to evaluate our recruitment process and work on recruitment tools for search committees as a means to make the process more efficient.

Gender, Pronouns and Chosen Name
According to the Ursinus College’s community values statement, the college “provides for a diverse community in which all members are respected, included, supported, and treated equitably.” As part of our ongoing movement toward that goal—and as the result of many conversations with students, faculty and staff—the college is in the process of updating information systems to better reflect the chosen names, pronouns, and gender identities of its community members.

Last month, students’ names were updated in Self-Service and Canvas to reflect choices they indicated during admission process. Students, faculty, and staff whose information is present within Self-Service can now edit their pronouns, chosen name, and gender identity. The first wave of changes was implemented in Canvas, dining services, and the ID card system. Please visit the new web page for more information.

The Laughlin and Tortorelli Staff Awards
Earlier this month, the annual staff awards were presented to two longtime, dedicated employees of the college. The Flora A. Tortorelli Staff Service Award was awarded to Mike Twarogowski, supervisor of support services. Erin Hovey, digital content manager, was honored with the Laughlin Distinguished Administrator Award.

Mike was described as “a true team player, cheerful, approachable, honest and creative. He makes things happen and is an unsung hero of every major event on this campus.”

Erin, an Ursinus alumna, was described as “the definition of a ‘Bear for life,’ known for her great sense of humor and as a positive person who likes to solve problems, even if those problems seem impossible.”

Read more about the awards and the recipients on the staff assembly awards page.

NACA Recognizes O’Brien
Congratulations are in order for Katie O’Brien, student success and retention specialist, for earning the Mid Atlantic Higher Education Research Scholarship from the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) Foundation. The Foundation currently offers a variety of scholarships to assist undergraduate students, graduate students, professional staff, and associate members in pursuing educational interests and career development.

SAVE THE DATE

Beginning Monday, January 18, we will again begin the spring semester with a week of celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the legacy of the civil rights movement. More details will soon be available on the Ursinus website and faculty/staff page.
MEET GABRIELLE WRIGHT, DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS SAFETY

Gabrielle Wright joined the Ursinus community in September 2020 following a career in safety and emergency management in the Orange County, Florida, public school system. She holds a degree in public administration and emergency management and homeland security from the University of Central Florida.

Her experience is extensive in emergency communication and emergency management, including work with the Orlando Police Department, the city of Orlando, and Seminole and Osceola counties in Florida.

On transitioning to higher education for the first time, Gabrielle said she is looking forward to the opportunity to work across departments and roles with faculty, staff, and students alike. She is also connecting with our local partners in the Collegeville police and fire departments as well as the Trappe ambulance squad and other local first responders.

In her short time on campus, Gabrielle has jumped in with both feet, working to build relationships across the Ursinus community. She led her first student town hall in October and said she is pleased to join a team that has such good working relationships with colleagues and students alike.

She said she’s “looking forward to building on and expanding those existing relationships to enhance the student experience” and is thrilled to find such a collegial community with shared mission and commitment to the Ursinus students.

Born and raised in Florida, Gabrielle said she is excited about her move to Collegeville along with the joys of her first autumn and investing in her first winter weather gear.

MILESTONE YEARS OF SERVICE

Ursinus is proud to recognize the following employees on their years of service to the college:

45 Years
Houghton Kane, politics.

35 Years
Tim Grater, facilities; Kelley Williams, human resources.

30 Years
Beverly J Gaydos, career and post-graduate development; Benita Luttcher-Hoorfar, modern languages; Todd McKinney, student activities.

20 Years
Paula Alvarez Tames, international programs; Roger Florka, philosophy and religious studies; Gary Meikrantz, facilities; Matt Mizenko, modern languages; Xochitl Shuru, modern languages.

15 Years
Joel Bish, psychology; Mark Ellison, chemistry; Mark Feinberg, athletics; Meredith Goldsmith, English and dean’s office; Eva Jaeger, biology; Jerilyn Kucharski, athletics; Carole Nienius, athletics; Diane Skorina, library and information technology; Giovanna Steyaert, modern languages.

10 Years
James Ascareggi, health and exercise physiology; Janelle Benner, athletics; Missy Bryant, student affairs; Maria Carosella, advancement; Abbie Cichowski Kim, advancement; Carlita Favero, biology; Mydhili Govindarajula, library and information technology; Safoua Laraki, modern languages; Nicholas Scoville, math and computer science.

5 Years
Susan Adam, math and computer science; David Aipperspach, art and art history; Crystal Bacon, athletics; Melody Bish, psychology; Celine Brossillon, modern languages; Robert Clothier, president’s office; Chris Corish, advancement; James Lee Cox, athletics; Andy Edwards, communications; Brianne Farris, enrollment; Al Gnoza, campus safety; Meghan Gualtieri, theater and dance; Paul Harris, campus safety; Rudolph Henkel, business and economics; Christopher Herdelin, business and economics; Richard Huey, physics; Christine Iannicelli, library and information technology; Nicole Ivaska, health and exercise physiology; Michael Mackin, facilities; Lauren Makuch, psychology; Kara McShane, English; Cale Nelson, human resources; James Shaw, facilities; Qian Sun, modern languages; Simara Price, biology; Katie Turek, UCARE; Margaret White, athletics.