



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: *STRATEGIC VISION*



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

A Powerful 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 Statement

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.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE POWER OF THREE

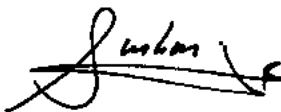
Vision. By definition, vision is the ability to plan for the future with imagination. As an institution of higher education that description seems especially apropos. In our inaugural President's Report, I talked about the power of transformation. We have transformed three historic institutions into Commonwealth University so that we may continue to transform the lives of our students. And now, nearly two years in, vision is the word that propels us forward.

I am incredibly proud of the accomplishments we have realized thus far, many of which you will read about in the following pages. From a complete update of our academic array to the creation of our first strategic plan and countless other achievements that have taken place behind the scenes—the hardworking and committed team at Commonwealth University has done incredible work in service to our students.

As we move boldly into the future, we will be guided by our strategic plan and the vision it embodies—to continue creating innovative academic opportunities that will guide our students to success through robust and relevant coursework and purposeful career preparation. Already our Professional U initiative, which offers high-impact career experiences, is making a tremendous difference in the lives of our students through mentorship, internships, study abroad and more.

Thanks to our generous donors, many of these experiences are grant funded. As our students prepare to enter the workforce, these opportunities prove life changing. We know that students who participate in an internship have a 76% higher likelihood of being employed immediately after graduation compared to 36% for those who don't complete an internship.

The power of higher education is to be transformative. We are laser-focused on our vision for the future, and on fulfilling a strategic plan that promises to grow our position as a powerhouse institution that launches the careers of new generations of visionaries and changemakers.



Dr. Bashar W. Hanna
President





COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY:

Students at the Center

By **Council of Trustees Chair John Wetzel**

It is no secret that higher education institutions across our state and across the country stand at a crossroads. With costs rising, the number of college-bound students declining, and many students and families questioning the value of a college degree, colleges and universities bear the responsibility of remaining relevant and demonstrating the inherent value in earning a degree.

In my own college experience, it took time and mentorship for me to fully appreciate how a degree would forever alter the trajectory of my life. My professors and coaches at Bloomsburg University saw something in me that, at the time, I did not recognize in myself. Their influence led me to take advantage of the academic opportunities available at Bloomsburg.

Though my circumstances caused me to take much more time than most students, I graduated and went on to a fulfilling and meaningful career that spanned more than 30 years in the criminal justice system. In 2021, I retired as Pennsylvania Secretary of Corrections, having served for more than 10 years in that role.

I have spent much of my life working with people who came into the criminal justice system, knowing that if they had received access to the same opportunities I had, they could likely have occupied the same seats I have. That experience led me to remain involved in both leadership and mentorship positions with

Bloomsburg, and now Commonwealth University, where I serve as Chair of the Council of Trustees.

My story echoes those of many Commonwealth University students. Knowing that is why I am so encouraged by the work taking place at Commonwealth University to give students and families an option for an affordable, high-quality education that offers students the skills they need to find success in today's workplace. Our mission of providing access to an affordable and transformative education is vital to the future of higher education in our state.

Since the formation of Commonwealth University in 2022, our faculty and staff have worked tirelessly with employer partners to match the needs of the workforce with the CU educational opportunities. That dedicated team has completed a total revision of our academic curriculum and program offerings to include career and professional experiences that give graduates the technical and professional skills necessary to make a lasting impact on their families, communities, and professions.



In only our second year, Commonwealth University began with a 10% increase in first-year undergraduate enrollment and a 26.5% increase in graduate enrollment. The work we have done to strengthen relationships with our local school districts, including a robust merit scholarship program, has led to exceeding enrollment goals in Bloomsburg by 120%, in Lock Haven by 115%, and in Mansfield by 129%. Our early success serves to continue the centuries-long tradition of preparing our state's workforce and transforming the lives of Pennsylvania's students in the process.

Another significant achievement is the progress being made by our most vulnerable students. The retention performance gap of our underrepresented minority students shrank from 12.3% to 6.8% during our initial year as an integrated university, meaning that minority student retention compares more favorably to the rates of majority students. The retention performance gap between our Pell Grant-eligible students and their non-Pell eligible counterparts also shrank from 6.7% to 5.1%. Clearly large numbers of our minority stu-

dents are finding the resources they need to succeed in their early experience at CU and are returning to continue their educational journey on our campuses.

The results we're seeing at Commonwealth University speak to the passion and dedication of our people—the talented faculty that prepare students academically and the committed staff that support them throughout their education journey.

If you have young people in your life, even if they don't currently see college in their future, I ask you to encourage them to explore Commonwealth University. Learn about the ways we're developing new state-of-the-art academic programs that are readying our students for exciting career fields while building upon the initiatives that set our students apart.

As a champion for the power of higher education and a decades-long witness to the heartbreak of lost opportunities, I believe all students deserve a chance to change the trajectory of their lives. Education is, without question, the most powerful and effective way to make that happen.

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, 2023 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.

“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. As we move forward, the strategic plan priorities and core commitments will be woven into every area and every initiative we undertake at Commonwealth University,” says Bashar W. Hanna, President.

“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. 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 Wetzell.

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.



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.

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-faculty engagement to foster innovation 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.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

Meet Commonwealth University's Community Scholars

In the fall of 2022, Commonwealth University introduced the Community Scholars program to create increased access and affordability for students in the region. The agreements, signed with 50 school districts from Northeastern and Central Pennsylvania, guarantee admission and up to \$28,000 in merit-based scholarships for qualified graduates. In the fall of 2023, Commonwealth University welcomed the first class of Community Scholars to its locations.



McKenna Zellers

CU-Bloomsburg

McKenna Zellers, of Sunbury, is a Nursing major and graduate of Shikellamy High School '23. Zellers is also currently a patient care technician with the Geisinger Health System as she pursues her bachelor's degree as part of CU-Bloomsburg's Class of 2027.

"I learned of the Community Scholars Award around the same time I was accepted into Bloomsburg's nursing program. As an Early College student (at the time), I knew Commonwealth University was committed to helping local students. Along with the reputation of Bloomsburg's nursing program and knowing the impact of the community scholarship, it only convinced me further I was meant to be a Husky!"



Aliah Meyer

CU–Mansfield

Aliah Meyer, of Mansfield, is a Psychology major with a minor in Criminal Justice. She chose Mansfield because of the immediate connection she felt with the campus and the close proximity to her family. Aliah works as a daycare teacher’s assistant in Big Flats, NY while she pursues her degree. Her plan for the future is to attend law school and become an attorney.

“This scholarship means a lot to me as I am a first-generation college student. I am extremely grateful to be able to have the opportunity to earn a Community Scholars award, because it will allow me to achieve my goals without financial burden, allowing me to focus on my studies and personal growth.”



Jenna Pizzoli

CU–Lock Haven

Jenna Pizzoli from Mount Carmel came to Lock Haven to pursue a degree in Early Childhood Education (PK–4). Along with working toward her teaching degree, Jenna is a student-athlete and a member of the Lock Haven Bald Eagles’ Women’s Basketball Team, which recently completed a record-breaking season and earned a bid to the 2024 Division II Women’s Basketball Championship.

“Receiving the Community Scholars award was key in my final college decision. This scholarship has truly allowed me to focus more on my academics rather than worrying about how to fund my education, all while playing a Division II sport. Within the first few weeks of being on campus, I knew this was the right place for me to thrive.”

COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



“I view our diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives as foundational building blocks that establish a true sense of belonging for our students. We are championing programs that will drive change across our campuses and the communities they call home. Our aim through this programming is to add value to students' lives and empower them to become allies and difference makers. My hope is that we will continue to see our efforts grow and empower students to learn from each other through real, meaningful engagement.”

– ALBERT JONES, *Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer*



Learn. Understand. Appreciate.

29th Annual Sankofa Conference Brings CU Students Together to Celebrate Black History Month

On February 17, over 200 Commonwealth University students and local high school students attended the 29th Annual Sankofa Conference at Bloomsburg. The Sankofa conference is designed to help students learn, understand, and develop leadership skills, support personal growth and encourage diverse thinking perspectives on how to be more inclusive in their lives. In addition, the overall goal of the conference is to create social justice advocates for positive change in today's society. A specific call to attention was a highly engaged and interactive workshop session led by Commonwealth University undergraduate students, Emily LaCoe and Rachel Poley, both education majors, on racial inequalities in special education.

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 at Commonwealth University 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.”



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

Multicultural Alliance Field Day at Lock Haven Welcomes Students From All Commonwealth University Locations To Campus

Nearly 250 Commonwealth University students from Lock Haven, Clearfield, Mansfield, and Bloomsburg gathered at Lock Haven for a Multicultural Alliance Field Day event last September.

The event included lawn games, inflatable games, food trucks, give-aways, 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. 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.”

– **Mia Swales**, Assistant Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Multicultural Center Director.

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 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 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. 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.

Relevance and modernity are the two words that come immediately to mind when discussing the new array, notes Commonwealth University Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Diana Rogers-Adkinson. To accomplish those goals, the faculty worked with regional employers and advisory groups to suggest outcomes desired from CU graduates. In addition, high-impact practices such as internships and undergraduate research were thoroughly embedded into academic programs.

This infusion of high-impact experience into each degree is part of each student’s new Professional Map. “We are so pleased to be able to offer the new curriculum to our students,” Hanna says. “It has been a labor of love 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 prouder of our community.”

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



“We’ve embedded high-impact practices across the four-year degree, and we call that our Professional Map. Our 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.”

– DR. DIANA ROGERS-ADKINSON,
Provost and Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs



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

Public Safety Training Institute

LEADS THE WAY IN NON-CREDIT EDUCATION

The Public Safety Training Institute at Mansfield, has met and continues to meet the overall system and university goals, emerging as a leader in non-credit education and training. Upon integration, Commonwealth University was charged to become a leader in Workforce Development and non-degree training. CU has focused on non-credit training and its use in creating a funnel to degree programs, as evidenced by the Police Academy Pathway with the new criminal justice curriculum, non-credit programming, fundraising, networking, and extensive exposure to various constituent groups in the region and beyond. Workforce Development has secured a training vehicle that will be utilized to deploy Emergency Vehicle Operation Certification to emergency and safety personnel.

In 2022-2023 the Public Safety Training Institute increased the total number of training hours by 71.8% growing from 19,114 total training hours in 2021 to 32,845 in 2022.

Focus on First Responder Mental Health: Workforce Development is creating a mental health division for



The Public Safety Training Institute at Mansfield is a state leader in non-credit education and training.

first responders to address and assist individuals properly when responding to a situation. This focus on mental health training is critically important now and in the future. The new mental health focus allows CU to incorporate the latest technology in training, and places an emphasis on school resource officer training.



Council of Trustees' Citation Recognizes Faculty Work in Revising Curriculum

At a meeting in fall 2023, 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 previous academic year.

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

COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY AWARDED \$2.9 Million in NSF Grants

By Eric Foster

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

The NSF awarded a six-year, \$2.5 million grant to Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania 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 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."



Kate Beishline, associate professor of Biological and Allied Health Sciences



Principal investigators William Calhoun, Jennifer Whisner, and David DeVallance

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 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 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



Barry Minemyer, associate professor of Mathematical and Digital Sciences

Long in biology at the Mansfield campus, and Dr. Barry Minemyer 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 opportunities for students to succeed," says President Hanna.

HELPING STUDENTS START OUT STRONG

Entry level STEM courses are often the most rigorous of a college student's course load. The \$400,000 Improving Undergraduate STEM Education grant is targeted on increasing 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.

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.

Commonwealth University Part of PASSHE Initiative to Expand Work-Based Learning

Commonwealth University is one of five universities within Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) participating in a pilot initiative with major employers to significantly increase work-based learning that provides real-world experiences for students. Highmark Health is the initial partner employer and Strada Education Foundation awarded Commonwealth University \$100,000 of a \$750,000 grant to support the pilot project.

Work-based learning, which can include internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing and more, allows students to connect their classroom education with technical and workplace skills and to develop professional connections and networks as part of their overall education. University students with high-quality, work-based learning, especially paid internships, have more confidence in their skills, are more likely to get higher-paying jobs after graduation, and are more satisfied with their education and career choices, according to findings by the Strada Education Foundation.

However, low-income, first-generation, Black and Latino students, and women are less likely to have paid internships, which can reduce their employability and income after graduation. To address the access gap, the pilot has a goal of 60% of students in the initiatives being low-income, first-generation or underrepresented minorities, which closely mirrors their representation among all PASSHE students.

Pennsylvania has worker shortages and a critical education and training gap: 60% of jobs in the commonwealth require some higher education after high school, but only 53% of workers have the needed degree or credential, according to the Lumina Foundation.

The three-year pilot will reach more than 1,000 students, beginning in fall 2024.



Students in the physician assistant program utilize Anatomage tables during their anatomy courses.

Commonwealth University Partners with Temple University for Graduate Program Articulation Agreement

An Articulation Agreement between The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg and the Speech, Language and Hearing Science Department at Temple University will admit up to three students from Temple University, who meet the strict prerequisites, into the Doctorate of Audiology program at Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg.

This agreement aligns with the university's mission by promoting a high-quality, inclusive education in a high-impact profession and will result in a more diverse applicant pool that will increase diversity of students enrolled in the Doctorate of Audiology Program at Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg, allowing students enrolled in the program to become more culturally aware and sensitive. Along with producing high-quality applicants to meet the program's admission goals, the agreement aligns with the university's strategic priority of fostering a welcoming and inclusive community and also supports the core commitment of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Physician Assistant Program Employs High-Tech Training with Anatomage Tables

In 2023 the physician assistant program initiated the use of Anatomage tables for us in anatomy instruction. The tables offer a high-tech option for virtual dissections of cadavers and represent a significant and innovative use of technology.

Focus on Student Success: Nursing

Recognized as a leading accredited undergraduate and graduate level nursing program, Commonwealth University prepares future nurses for a wide range of careers in critical care, obstetrics, pediatrics, rehabilitation, trauma, home care, and other clinical specialties and case management. Over the past year, CU nursing students have achieved notable success in state and national certification exams, including:

- | 2023 Graduating Class Achieved 95% or Higher Pass Rate for Associate and BSN National State Board Examination
- | 100% Overall Pass Rate for Nurse Anesthesia (CRNA) Students on National Certification Exam
- | 100% Pass Rate on Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner National Certification Exam
- | 100% Placement Rate of Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Anesthesia (CRNA) graduates

Career and Technology Centers Articulation Agreements Across the Region

Commonwealth University has partnered with Career and Technology Centers across the region to form 13 Articulation Agreements for career and educational pathways into CU's criminal justice and early childhood education programs. Results of these agreements are leading to new enrollment across these disciplines for fall 2024. Workforce Development and academic departments are continuing to collaborate to bring additional articulation agreements to academic departments throughout the year.



“ We approach the student experience from a holistic view, recognizing that to truly support students we need to address the entirety of their needs. This view has led to resources that are tailored to our individual campuses and student populations. ”

– DR. MARTY WYGMANS
Vice President for Student Success
and Campus Life

A Warm Welcome for Incoming Students

Commonwealth University orientation programs offer incoming students an opportunity to get to know their campuses and begin acclimating to college life. Since 2022, CU has completely re-imagined the orientation experience to improve student readiness and outcomes.

Orientation by the Numbers:

96%

of students who attended summer orientation in 2023 enrolled for the Fall.

87%

of students who attended orientation rated the experience as good or excellent.

90%

of students said that orientation programming helped them become more informed about campus resources.

Student Success Specialists Positively Impact Retention

Student Success Centers at Commonwealth University allow students to meet one-on-one with staff members trained to address student needs holistically. The resources on each campus are tailored to the unique needs of each location while working within existing support systems. Success specialists offer students mentorship that focuses on both academics and the challenges that often come with balancing their life and coursework, recognizing that the struggles students experience academically are typically indicative of struggles stemming from other areas of their life.

Commonwealth University-Mansfield Opens Student Success Center

In early February, President Hanna joined students, faculty, and staff at CU-Mansfield to celebrate the opening of Commonwealth University's new Student Success Center for that location.





Focus on Student Mental Health: Fresh Check Days and Pet Therapy

In support of mental health, pet therapy sessions are a favorite activity and study break among CU Students. In partnership with the Jordan Porco Foundation, each CU campus hosts a Fresh Check Day to provide resources around mental health and introduce students to on campus resources including the University Counseling Centers. To learn more about Fresh Check Day visit [Freshcheckday.com](https://www.freshcheckday.com).

Success Specialists have made a measurable difference in positive retention outcomes as evidenced by fall 2022 to Spring 2023 Retention Data

In fall 2022, **452** students met with a Student Success Specialist.

76.5%

of students who met with a Success Specialist enrolled for spring 2023.

79.4%

of the underrepresented minority students who met with a success specialist in fall 2022 enrolled for the spring of 2023.

Commonwealth University-Clearfield Holds 34th Founders' Day Convocation Awards Celebration



Commonwealth University-Clearfield held its 34th annual Founders' Day convocation awards celebration in the Clearfield Academic Building multipurpose room. The event, hosted by the Clearfield Educational Foundation and CU-Clearfield, honored 22 students with awards and scholarships. State Representative Dallas Kephart served as the Founders' Day speaker.

Supporting Students Through Professional U

Commonwealth University Jones Professional U Fellows have awarded **\$147,000** in Professional Experience Grants through 140 applications.

CU Hosts Career Expos

In the fall 2023 semester 94 employer partners attended on-campus Career Expos to recruit students from all three Commonwealth locations. 92% of participating employers indicated they were successful in achieving their recruitment goals at these Expos.

Career Intensive Bootcamp Prepares Students for Their Professional Climb



During the three-day Career Intensive Boot Camp students strengthened their professional skillset through team building and personal branding exercises, alumni panels, and employer presentations, as well as a networking lunch and etiquette dinner. Topics included everything from navigating career paths and money management to student loan repayment and job searching.

ATHLETICS

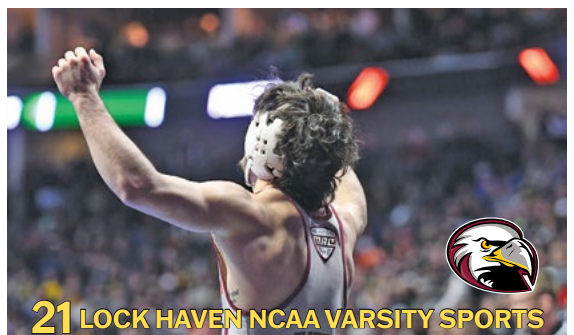
Celebrating Our Exceptional Student-Athletes

Athletics is an integral part of the college experience, providing lessons in teamwork, sportsmanship, and leadership. Our student-athletes shine on and off the field and proudly represent their campuses as Huskies, Bald Eagles, and Mountaineers.

534 Combined Number of Scholar Athletes
Bloomsburg 269 • Lock Haven 184 • Mansfield 79

 **25** States Represented

 **12** Nations Represented



Making an Impact: Commonwealth University Experiences Enrollment Growth in First Year

In fall 2023, Commonwealth University welcomed its largest first-time freshmen and first-time graduate classes. First-time freshmen enrollment was 2,581, which represented a 10% increase from Fall 2022. First-time graduate enrollment was 566, which represented an increase of 14% from fall 2022.

Currently, applications for admission are up more than 22% for the incoming 2024-25 class, including a 39% increase in applications from transfer students.



We know how important scholarships are in making a degree attainable. We've frozen tuition the past five years and are proud to offer robust merit scholarships that significantly reduce the cost of attending college. We're pleased to see that students and their supporters have taken notice of the outstanding opportunities at Commonwealth University and the transformative degrees we provide.

– DR. STEPHEN LEE, *Vice President for Enrollment Management*

Meeting Student Needs

Through a strategic approach to financial aid, Commonwealth University has reduced barriers to enrollment for low income students. In addition, Commonwealth University increased the enrollment of students qualified for Pell Grants by 27%. By increasing the average financial aid award that first-time students receive the amount of unmet financial need has been significantly reduced, alleviating one of the many factors causing students to withdraw before graduation.



Merit Scholarship Program Attracts Students from Local CU School Districts

Commonwealth University has agreements with 60 school districts in Pennsylvania that provide up to \$28,000 in merit scholarship for qualifying first-year students at participating high schools. Qualifying first-year Pennsylvania students outside those school districts may still be eligible for up to \$20,000 in merit scholarship aid with out-of-state and international students having the potential to reduce the cost of tuition by more than 50% through scholarships.

Developing Community College Pathways

To promote transfer student enrollment, Commonwealth University signed articulation agreements with six community colleges in Central and Eastern Pennsylvania. Students who complete an associate's degree, and meet grade point average standards, are eligible for scholarships that range from \$5,000 to \$2,000. Transfer students from other institutions are eligible for scholarships that range from \$2,500 to \$1,000 for in-state students and \$9,500 to \$4,500 for out-of-state students.



Paying It Forward:

The Lock Haven Legacies of Dr. Thane & Rachel Turner

Commonwealth University–Lock Haven stands as a testament to the transformative power of small-town, state-funded higher education; a place where dreams are nurtured and Bald Eagles take flight. For high school sweethearts Thane '89 and Rachel Turner '89, The Haven is more than an alma mater; it's a cherished chapter in their shared journey of professional success, and paying it forward.

Rachel's roots run deep, born and raised in Lock Haven, while Thane's connection began in 1979 when his father, Neil, became the seventh head wrestling coach in Lock Haven history.

The Turners' commitment to paying it forward for the betterment of students, while honoring legacies of the past is palpable. In 2001, they established the Troy Turner Memorial Wrestling Scholarship in honor of Thane's brother who died in 1986, just two years after earning a philosophy degree from Lock Haven. Troy '84, along with Thane, and their brother, Trent '91, all wrestled for Coach Turner at The Haven.

For the past 22 years, the Troy Turner Memorial Wrestling Scholarship has assisted Lock Haven wrestlers. Now, with a recent major gift—and renaming of the scholarship to The Turner Family Scholarship—Thane and Rachel are aiming to make an even greater impact through an endowment that will sustain Lock Haven's nationally-renowned wrestling program in perpetuity.

The Breiner School of Nursing

Commonwealth University Receives Transformational \$5 Million Gift to Support Nursing at All CU Locations

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.

"We believe in the transformative power of education," The Breiners share. "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."

Community Support for CU-Mansfield Students

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.



PSECU Donation – Shown are Dr. Bashar W. Hanna, Commonwealth University President, left, and Dave Sikorski, PSECU Business Advisor.



President Hanna Launches ‘Common Ground’ Podcast

The podcast, “Common Ground,” produced by Commonwealth University and hosted by President Bashar Hanna, launched on May 1, 2023.

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 Freddie Coleman, Mansfield alumnus and longtime ESPN Radio Host, Daniel Greenstein, Chancellor of Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education, John Wetzels, Chair of the council of Trustees and former PA Secretary of Corrections; and Chad Lassiter, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission; among many others.

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.

“Over the past year we have witnessed incredible generosity that supports Commonwealth University’s mission of supporting students and equipping them for meaningful careers. Our passionate donors understand the needs of our students and aim to create impactful opportunities for them to thrive through scholarships, professional experience grants, mentorship, and experiential learning. We are grateful for their commitment to Commonwealth University’s mission and support of our strategic vision.”

–ERIK EVANS Vice President for Advancement



Commonwealth University Raises Funds through Giving Days

Each year, alumni and supporters from Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield turn out in force to support students through the All In Days of Giving. The events support scholarships and programs which benefit students across Commonwealth University.

2023 Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, Mansfield All In Days of Giving Totals *

Amount Raised: \$385,206	Donors: 1,474
Unrestricted Funding: \$36,401	

* cumulative raised across three campuses.

Investing in Students, Investing in the Future

Affordability and access are two of the most pressing issues facing prospective students and their families. In partnership with Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), Commonwealth University aims to keep an education affordable and accessible for all students aspiring to attain a degree, recognizing that a high

percentage of our students are first generation and come from low- and middle-income families.

PASSHE is currently seeking a state funding increase for 2024-25 that would enable a sixth consecutive year of frozen tuition at all state-owned public universities. Student affordability is about more than keeping the cost of an education

low. It is a strategic investment in Pennsylvania’s future workforce. More than 90% of CU students are Pennsylvania residents, and close to 80% of our students remain in the state after graduation. Our vision is to continue serving as an economic engine for Pennsylvania by providing our students with in-demand, professional skills at a price they can afford.



Community Connections

In March, President Hanna attended the Wellsboro Rotary Club to provide updates about the CU-Mansfield campus. He also hosted a community breakfast at Mansfield to connect with local leaders.



President Hanna joined CU-Bloomsburg students for the annual Beyond the Fountain event, during which students and residents join together to walk from Carver Hall to the Bloomsburg Town Square to show support for a community united against all forms of hate and bigotry.



In the fall, CU-Lock Haven and CU-Clearfield hosted Congressman Glenn “GT” Thompson for the 24th Government Outreach Program, which invites local high school students to engage with leaders and learn more about government processes. 2023 marked the Congressman’s 12th year hosting the program at Lock Haven.

Looking Ahead

“ 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.”

– Dr. BASHAR W. HANNA
Commonwealth University President



