

Points of Pride

December 2024



IUP COMMUNITY PART OF STATE SYSTEM LEADERSHIP, SUMMIT

During the October meeting of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Board of Governors, Abigail Hancox '24 (Student Affairs in Higher Education and Public Affairs) was appointed to a seat on the Board; Council of Trustees Chairman Sam Smith was reappointed to a new term; and Rich Caruso '83 and 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient was named to a vacant seat.

Students Erika Jackson '24 (psychology) and Monserrat Lopez Villagomez (political science), president of the IUP Latino Student Organization, presented “Uniting Through Culture: How Student-Led Programming Led to 200+ Attendees” during the October PASSHE Summit: Uniting for Inclusive Student Success. Dr. Roger Briscoe Jr., IUP executive director of student inclusion, presented “Empowering Student Success: Engaging Multicultural, Underrepresented, and Nonresidential Students Through Data-Driven Initiatives in PASSHE.”

INCREASING RETENTION OF STUDENTS

Following a nearly 5 percent increase in overall student enrollment for fall 2023, retention of new, first-time students has climbed to 75.3 percent for fall 2024, a more than four percent increase from fall 2023 retention of new, first-time students. Fall 2024 enrollment also includes a 50 percent increase in dual enrollment students and increases in three career preparation programs: an 18.7 percent increase in enrollment in the paramedic program, an 11 percent increase in enrollment at the Academy of Culinary Arts, and a 2.5 percent increase in enrollment in the school officer training program.

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES

A total of 563 students will be receiving their degrees at the university's December commencement on December 14. The graduates include 324 bachelor's degree recipients, 202 students completing master's degrees, and 33 students receiving doctoral degrees.



Dr. Kevin W. Bailey '86, 'M90, a 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at UNC Charlotte, was honored by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education with the Keepers of the Flame Award for his long-standing contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts during the 2024 PASSHE Summit.

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CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO RURAL HEALTH



Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services Secretary Dr. Valerie Arkoosh presented the keynote address for IUP and Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC)'s Third Annual Pennsylvania Mountains Rural Health Conference on November 21. More than

300 people attended the conference, which focused on "Cultivating Wellness – Advancing Rural Mental Health Awareness, Research, Services, and Careers" and celebrated National Rural Health Day.

IUP and IRMC's joint podcast, Rural Health Pulse, began its third season with the episode "A Conversation with Dr. Miko Rose, the Founding Dean of the IUP Proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine" on November 21 to mark National Rural Health Day.

Four members of the community were recognized with the inaugural Rural Health Impact Awards during the IUP-IRMC Third Annual Pennsylvania Mountains Rural Health Conference: Joe Bujdos, Mental Health Director for the Armstrong-Indiana Behavioral and Developmental Health Program; Tammy Calderone, Armstrong-Indiana Behavioral and Development Health program administrator; Rachel Grove, director of Ambulatory Social Services with the IRMC Physician Group; and Dr. Joann Migyanka, special education professor emerita.

IUP's Police Academy, part of the IUP Criminal Justice Training Academy, has partnered with the Armstrong-Indiana Behavioral and Developmental Health Program to provide Crisis Intervention Team training for first responders. The initiative was recognized with a certificate of appreciation during the Pennsylvania Mountains Rural Health Conference.

WELCOMING NEW CITIZENS

More than 100 new American citizens from 47 countries were welcomed during an October 11 naturalization ceremony at IUP's Kovalchick Convention and Athletic Complex. The event was part of the annual International Education Week events.



PROPOSED COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE MOVING FORWARD

IUP has formally signed seven clinical training affiliation agreements with regional medical centers and health agencies: Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center in December; Broad Top Area Medical Center, Hyndman Area Health Centers, Nulton Diagnostics and Treatment Center, and The Primary Health Network in November; Indiana Regional Medical Center in September and Punxsutawney Area Hospital in June. Clinical training agreements are key in securing accreditation from the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation.

The State System Board of Governors approved a \$2 million allocation in the 2024-25 capital allocations budget to design the academic building renovation for the health sciences cluster and the proposed college of osteopathic medicine.

As part of a reception welcoming Dr. Ryan Smith and Dr. Luke Mortensen to the proposed college of osteopathic medicine leadership team, Senator Joe Pittman and Representative Jim Struzzi announced that \$2 million from the 2024-25 state budget has been set aside for IUP's proposed college of osteopathic medicine. Smith was chosen in July as the founding Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs and Mortensen began working as the founding Associate Dean of Preclinical Affairs on August 1.

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FACULTY, STAFF, and STUDENT STARS



Dr. Miko Rose, founding dean of IUP's proposed college of osteopathic medicine, was a presenter for the 2024 Osteopathic Medical Education Conference, the world's largest gathering of osteopathic physicians. The Conference was held in conjunction with Dr. Rose's election as a fellow of the American College of Neuropsychiatrists by The Fellows of the American College of Neuropsychiatrists/ American College of Osteopathic Neurologists and Psychiatrists.

Dr. Rose was named one of Pennsylvania's Fifty Over 50 by *City & State Pennsylvania*.

Dr. Rose was a guest on KDKA radio's "The Big K Morning Show" in November with Rich Fitzgerald, executive director of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.



Christina Koren, Director of Strategic Partnerships, was selected by *Pennsylvania Business Central* for its Foremost Under 40 listing.

IUP's student newspaper, *The Penn*, was honored with a legislative citation in November from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in recognition of its 100th anniversary. The citation was co-sponsored and presented by representatives Matthew R. Gergely '02 and Jim Struzzi at the State Capitol in Harrisburg.



Todd Cunningham, who has nearly three decades of experience in higher education information technology, most recently as executive director of Information Technology (IT) Services at IUP, has been named IUP's Chief Information Officer. Cunningham

fills the position formerly held by Bill Balint, who retired from IUP in August.



IUP's Office of International Education has been successful in helping a 15th international student secure an Emergency Student Fund Award from the Institute of International Education Emergency Fund. Sylvia Mukasa, a student in IUP's doctoral Counselor Education and Supervision program from Nairobi, Kenya, was selected for the scholarship.



ACADEMY OF CULINARY ARTS PROJECT FUNDING APPROVED

The State System Board of Governors approved \$500,000 for construction costs for the Academy of Culinary Arts academic building replacement project in the 2024-25 capital allocations budget. This funding will continue the progress on the Academy of Culinary Arts' long-range facilities plan, approved in March 2022 by the council, including constructing a 45,000-square-foot educational and multipurpose commercial facility in downtown Punxsutawney. The project also includes demolishing properties gifted to IUP adjacent to the Fairman Centre.

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ALUMNI LOYALTY AND ACHIEVEMENT



Col. Stephen G. Abel '73, U.S. Army (retired), a 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, recently gifted more than \$30,000 to IUP. The funding will support the Veterans Assistance Fund, which he established at IUP in 2014; IUP's ROTC program; the Fund for IUP; the IUP Office of Alumni and

Friends; the Dean's Innovation fund in three IUP colleges: the College of Education and Human Services; the College of Arts, Humanities, Media, and Public Affairs; and the Dr. John J. and Char Kopchick College of Natural Science and Mathematics. His gift also supports the history program in the Department of History, Political Science, Philosophy, and Religious Studies and the geography and regional planning program in the Department of Anthropology, Geospatial and Earth Sciences.



Jay Althouse '73, M' 75, donated \$25,000 to IUP to support the music program and students planning a career in music education.



Concurrent Technologies Corporation of Johnstown company has donated analytical chemistry equipment valued at more than \$142,000 to the Madia Department of Chemistry, Biochemistry, Physics, and Engineering.

Four graduates were honored with the 2024 IUP Young Alumni Achievement Award: Brianne Lenhart '16, M'17, events manager at Wyndemere County Club in Naples, Florida; Donte Palmer '09, founder of Squat for Change and Ninth Grade Scholar Advisor, SEO Miami in Miami, Florida; Casey Ryan '12, founder and principal of Ryan Blueprint Group, New York City; and Dr. Mark Smith '11 founder and CEO, Macroscopic Solutions, East Hartford, Connecticut.

RANKINGS AND ACCOLADES

IUP earned the Open Doors 75 Seal of Excellence for its 75 years of collaboration with the international Open Doors program, the only long-standing, comprehensive information resource on international students and scholars in the United States and on U.S. students studying abroad for academic credit. IUP began hosting international students in 1949.

National rankings and recognitions continue for IUP, most recently:

- *U.S. News & World Report's* "2025 Best Colleges" ranking and the magazine's "Top Public Schools" listing.
- *The Wall Street Journal* and College Pulse, one of America's Best Colleges 2025.
- Five graduate programs ranked as best in the nation by Intelligent.com.
 - o Online master's in health services, ranked seventh in the nation.
 - o Online master's in criminology, eighth.
 - o Online master's in nutrition, 13th.
 - o Criminal Justice master's, 29th.
 - o Online master's in educational technology, 39th.
- 2024 All In Silver Seal Democracy Challenge and Most Engaged Campus for College Student Voting Award.

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CRIMSON HAWKS SOAR!

The IUP women's volleyball program secured its second Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) Championship in school history on November 23 – the program's first title since 2002. IUP defeated host and top-seeded Gannon in four sets, earning an automatic bid into the 2024 NCAA Division II Atlantic Region Tournament in December. Nyla Birch received PSAC Tournament Most Valuable Player honors for the Crimson Hawks. IUP advanced to the NCAA DII Atlantic Region Semifinals, falling to Wheeling in five sets.

JUST ONE MORE STEELERS LEGEND AT IUP

IUP's Holistic Health Club hosted former Pittsburgh Steelers great and Vietnam War veteran Rocky Bleier for "Overcoming Obstacles & Becoming Your Best Self," a free event open to the community. The student-organized club focuses on programs to help students discover different aspects of health and wellness.