

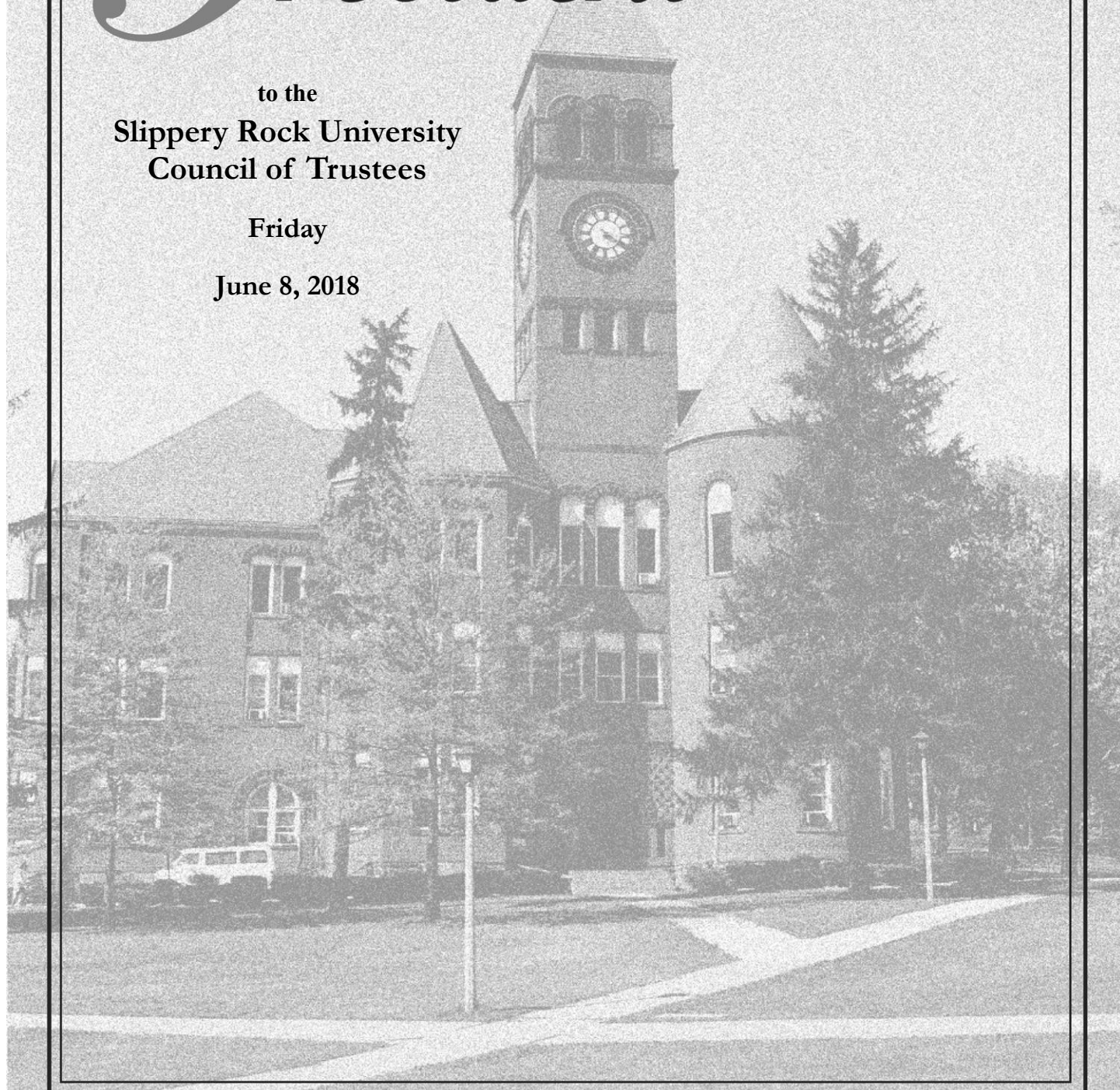
# REPORT OF THE

# *President*

to the  
Slippery Rock University  
Council of Trustees

Friday

June 8, 2018



# Slippery Rock University

Council of Trustees

President's Report

June 8, 2018

A year has passed since I began my interim presidency at Slippery Rock University. I promised we would continue onward and upward, and that we have done, with growing enrollments, new programs, a revamped liberal studies program in prospect, more participation in co-curricular opportunities, a cadre of success coaches, even greater financial stability and an improved infrastructure with which to reach out and friend raise and fundraise, and we have continued to earn accolades that run the gamut.

Our vision to be, among other things, a caring community, has been pursued vigorously. Often with the Interim First Lady, Cheryl, I have had meaningful interactions with thousands of students and hundreds of employees (often involving food). I have felt the pulse of the University, and set about improving the student and employee experience, as well as taking time to get to know people better and have some fun along the way. We have also had the pleasure of meeting more than a thousand alumni either on campus or further afield. Learning about their successes has made me even more aware of the impact SRU has on people's lives.

Throughout, we have held true to our values and priorities, pursuing quality, being student-centered, enhancing diversity, acting ethically, increasing sustainability, promoting wellness, and so on.

As C.S. Lewis once said, "Isn't it funny how day by day nothing changes, but when you look back everything's different?" Perhaps, so. Reflecting on this past year, I do believe things at SRU have continued to change for the better in our service to students and the commonwealth.

Since my last report, I am very proud to note that the University administration, working with students, student organizations, faculty, staff and the President's Commissions, has approved and implemented a new policy that allows students to choose a first name, instead of their legal name, to identify themselves on certain campus documents and systems.

This option was developed to respond to the needs of international students, transgender people, gender non-binary and others who choose the use of a middle name, Anglicized name, nickname or a name that better represents their gender identity as their first name.

Legal names will continue to be used for legal documents and systems, including official transcripts, payroll documents and financial aid and scholarship documents. D2L, the University's online learning management system, is being modified to accept chosen names by the fall 2018 semester.

We often talk about the importance of "hands on learning" and providing opportunities for students to translate what they've learned in the classroom to the real world.

Nothing could serve as a better example than the actions of several "real life heroes" this semester. As reported by University Communication and Public Affairs' Justin Zackal...

"I'll Be There For You" is the theme song to Frantzi Schaub's favorite television show, "Friends." The junior theatre major was even wearing a "Friends" sweatshirt when his heart stopped during his acting class. But thanks to his friends — and few new ones working as first responders — Schaub is alive today because people were there for *him*.

"It's crazy to think I died and someone was there to give me a second chance," said Schaub, a resident of Slippery Rock who was born in Haiti and raised in Beaver Falls. Schaub now wears a replacement "Friends" sweatshirt because his previous hoodie was extracted after he went into cardiac arrest March 20 at the Maltby Center Theater."

That's when Samantha Dyer, a sophomore dual major in biology and theatre from Corry, and Samantha Balaj, a junior exercise science major from Akron, Ohio, sprang into action. Balaj immediately called the SRU Police and then started CPR, a skill she had learned in class, while Dyer stayed in contact with the police.

SRU Officer Trevor Buckley arrived within minutes with an automated external defibrillator ready to go. Buckley immediately shocked Schaub and resumed CPR and was joined, minutes later, by SRU Officer Wayne Cochran who used a mask with a one-way valve to administer two rescue breaths.

Seven minutes after Buckley arrived, first responders from Slippery Rock Volunteer Fire Company, EMS and Lt. Brian Hoak of the Slippery Rock Borough Police arrived and transported Schaub to Grove City Medical Center. He was transported later that evening to UPMC Presbyterian Medical Center in Pittsburgh, where he was diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy and had a pacemaker implanted.

Six days after the incident, Schaub returned to class, grateful, as are we, for the knowledge and skills his fellow classmates and the SRU Police used to save his life.

Two of the nation's top six health and physical education National Teachers of the Year are demonstrating daily the skills they learned at SRU.

The Society of Health and Physical Educators of America named Jody Duff and Johanna Wininsky as 2018 SHAPE America National Teachers of the Year.

Duff, a 2006 SRU graduate with a degree in health and physical education teaching, won the award for adapted physical education, while Wininsky, a 1997 SRU alumna with a degree in dance, was honored in the dance education category.

At their July 12 meeting, the PASSHE board of governors will publicly honor SRU's women's field hockey team and Courtney McQuaid for demonstrating their skills at the highest levels.

The **field hockey team** recorded the highest cumulative grade point average among NCAA Division II squads to earn the 2017-18 National Field Hockey Coaches Association/Zag Sports National Academic Team Award. The team's cumulative GPA of 3.71 after the fall 2017 semester was the highest team GPA in program history.

Courtney McQuaid, a redshirt junior from Saltsburg, captured the national championship in pole vault at the NCAA Division II Track and Field National Championship with a jump of 3.95 meters and was named first team All-America. This marks the second straight first team All-America finish for McQuaid, who finished fifth at the national meet during the indoor track and field season back in March. She is the first female in SRU history to win a national

championship in the pole vault and the sixth overall national champion in women's outdoor track and field.

As you will read in the accolades at the end of my report, these two accomplishments highlight the many awards earned by SRU student athletes. We are so very proud of their performances on the field and in the classroom.

Shortly after the last COT meeting we learned Slippery Rock University is one of 30 national finalists for the Department of Defense's Employer Support Freedom Award. The award, established through the DOD's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program, is the highest recognition given by the U.S. government to employers for their support of employees who serve in the National Guard or Reserves. More than 2,300 employers were nominated for this year's award. Joining SRU among the finalists are Amazon, Barclay's, Prudential and the State of Nevada, to name a few. A national board will select and announce the 15 recipients of the award in mid-June with the award to be presented by the secretary of defense.

This distinguished recognition leads a cadre of additional accolades the University received including:

- Earning a "Mark of Distinction" from Second Nature for setting and demonstrating high-performance climate change goals in our move toward carbon neutrality.
- Being selected by Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection to receive the prestigious 2018 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. SRU was selected for its Healthy Planet, Healthy People Environmental Summer Camp and Community Project Incubator that helps high school teachers and students create environmental stewardship projects.
- Being named a Military Friendly School by Victory Media, a veteran-owned company that assists individuals in the transition from active service to civilian life. SRU, which earned a "Gold Award," was recognized for its best practices and support for post-military students.
- Being recognized as a one of the Top 25 best online colleges in Pennsylvania by SR Education Group, a leading education research publisher founded in 2004.
- Being named a "Top Online College" in Pennsylvania by OnlineColleges.com, coming in at No. 5 on a list of 50 state institutions.
- Being included as a "Best Public Colleges and Universities" for 2018 by CollegeConsensus.com. SRU, ranked No. 98, was the only institution from Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education to make the Top 100.
- Having our master's degree in health informatics ranked among the nation's top 50 programs by bestcolleges.com.
- Being ranked as a "Best Regional University-North" for 2018 by CollegeConsensus.com. SRU, ranked No. 49, was the only institution from Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education to make the Top 50.

Spring at SRU brings with it the University's Annual "Celebration of Excellence" month during which we honor the many achievements of our students, faculty and staff. While space precludes me from listing all honorees, I would like to highlight a select few.

This year's event marked the occasion of presenting the inaugural President's Awards for Civic Engagement.

The winner of the President's Student Civic Leadership Award, which recognizes an individual student or student organization that models a deep commitment to civic responsibility and

leadership, was the Student Nonprofit Alliance. The SNA, a student-run nonprofit organization, has integrated civic engagement into the University experience by choosing a public issue to address for one week each semester and hosting events around issues such as mental health, poverty, homelessness and hunger. The SNA has worked with community agencies such as the Butler County Department of Human Services to receive funding for a youth leadership program called "SPEAK UP," as well as a program for adults with intellectual disabilities called "We Belong Together."

The winner of the President's Civic Engagement Ambassador Award, recognizing an individual or group from SRU's faculty or staff that has advanced the University's civic mission, was a trio of three faculty members from the recreational therapy program: Betsy Kemeny, assistant professor; Colleen Cooke, professor; and Deborah Hutchins, assistant professor and chair of the Department of Parks, Conservation and Recreational Therapy.

The winner of the President's Community Partner Award, recognizing a community-based organization that has improved the community through a reciprocal partnership with SRU, was the Human Services Center, a mental health treatment provider in New Castle.

Aaron Cowan, associate professor of history, was presented with the President's Award for Scholarly and Creative Achievement. And, Debra Pincek, executive director for academic and student affairs resources, and Brian Ringler, semi-skilled laborer for grounds and services, were both presented with the President's Award for Outstanding Service.

As is customary, I will end my report by sharing a sample of the many accolades earned by our students, faculty, staff and alumni.

## STUDENTS

- **Jennifer Bauer**, a senior biology major from Tionesta, received the 2018 Outstanding Student Award from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania University Biologists for her exceptional academic performance and research, including her study of lichen species that was published last year in the peer-reviewed journal *Evansia*
- **Makenzie Herbinko**, a junior safety management major from Allison Park, received the Bechtel Corporation Impact Scholarship for Safety and Health, a \$10,000 award; and **Tyler Vanchure**, a junior safety management major from Dubois, received the \$1,000 Lancaster County Industrial Safety Council Scholarship, from ASSE, the world's oldest professional safety society, with more than 36,000 members who represent occupational safety professionals.
- **Mathew Heffelfinger**, an exercise science major from Allentown, and **Maureen Walsh**, an exercise science major from Hermitage, were named the Outstanding Senior Man and Senior Woman by the SRU Alumni Association.
- **Collin Darby**, a junior from Trafford; **JJ Ollio**, a senior from Shaler; and **Anderson Novalin**, a senior from York; were all named to first team Google Cloud Academic All-District honors and will advance to the national ballot for the Google Cloud Academic All-America Team.
- Baseball standout **Tyler Walters**, a Sagerstown senior, was named a second team All-American by the American Baseball Coaches Association. The honor was his third All-America accolade of 2018, making him The Rock's fourth consensus All-American (ABCA, NCBWA, D2CCA) since 2009.
- Slippery Rock University redshirt junior **Courtney McQuaid**, Saltsburg, captured the NCAA Division II national title in the pole vault and sophomore **Maddy Marshall**,

Mentor, Ohio, claimed seventh place to earn first team All-America honors at the NCAA Division II Track and Field National Championships. McQuaid becomes the first female in SRU history to win a national championship in the pole vault and becomes the sixth overall national champion in women's outdoor track and field.

- **Chris Anastas**, a junior pitcher from Monaca, was named the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Baseball Champion Scholar. A Secondary Education major, Anastas currently maintains a perfect 4.0 GPA.
- **Tyler Walters**, a Sagerstown senior catcher/first/baseman, was the PSAC West Athlete of the Year.
- **Abraham Mow**, s freshman third baseman from Milford, Delaware, was named the PSAC West Freshman of the Year.
- **Emily Bitka** a senior Lacrosse goalkeeper from Amherst, New York, was named the PSAC Women's Lacrosse Athlete of the Year and named to the first team All-PSAC team.

## FACULTY/STAFF

- **Colleen Cooke**, a professor of parks, conservation and recreational therapy, recently graduated from the Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor's Humor Academy and became a Certified Humor Professional.
- **Cassandra Eisenreich**, instructor of music, was awarded the Modern Band Higher Education Fellowship through Little Kids Rock, a nonprofit organization that supports music education.
- **Vaughn Bicehouse**, assistant professor of special education, recently had his article, "Tailor Teachers Use Personality Style and Multiple Intelligences to Help Students Thrive," published on The EvoLLLution, an online newspaper for information and opinion about non-traditional higher education.
- **Molly Mercer**, associate vice president for finance, chaired the Grove City Rotary Club's ethics symposium, which was attended by 180 high school students. The program, using guidelines followed by Rotarians around the world to make ethical decisions, encouraged students to think about their decisions and how the choices they make can impact their lives and the lives of others.
- **Jennifer Nightingale**, associate professor of business, was the keynote speaker at a seminar for academic professionals hosted by Microsoft Ireland Operations in Leopardstown, near Dublin. Nightingale, who was traveling with a group of SRU students for a weeklong study abroad program, was invited by Microsoft to speak to a group comprised mostly of business professors and lecturers from colleges and universities near Dublin about integrating Microsoft Dynamics into their curriculum.
- **Allison Brungard**, the STEM and electronic access librarian at Bailey Library, recently presented a poster session at the Electronic Resources and Libraries annual conference. The presentation, titled "Should You Add URLs? Linked Data in Library La La Land," highlighted the benefits of adding linked data to machine-readable cataloging records to allow data to be shared across multiple platforms.
- **Jeananne Nicholls**, professor of business, was elected to the board of directors for The Education Partnership, a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit organization that provides school supplies to students and teachers in southwestern Pennsylvania. Nicholls is the only representative from a higher education institution on the 14-member board.
- **David Champion**, professor of criminology and security studies, won the 2018 Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences Founders Award.

- **Jeff Messer**, head baseball coach, was selected as the PSAC-West Division Coach of the Year.

## ALUMNI/FRIENDS

- **Justin Brown**, a 2011 public relations and communications graduate; **Kevin McNair**, a 2011 marketing graduate; **Felicia McKinney**, a 2014 psychology (bachelor's) and 2016 student affairs in higher education graduate (master's); and **Matthew Vannoy**, a 2009 second education graduate; were named Outstanding Recent Graduates by the SRU Alumni Association.
- **Jeff Smith**, a member of Slippery Rock University's council of trustees, has been elected to a two-year term as president of the Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees.
- **Julia Igims**, a 1997 Slippery Rock University graduate with a degree in special education and elementary education, has been named a semifinalist for the 2019 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Igims teaches in an intensive support classroom at the Marzolf Primary School in the Shaler Area School District.
- **Malic Williams**, a 2015 Slippery Rock University graduate with a degree in theatre, starred in the Prime Stage Theatre Company's recent production of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" at the New Hazlett Theatre Center for Performing Arts in Pittsburgh.
- **Lisa Johnson**, a 1995 Slippery Rock University graduate with a bachelor's degree in health services, received the "Excellence in Representation Award" from the United Way of Bradford. Johnson is the CEO of Bradford Ecumenical Home Inc., a church based, non-profit senior community in Bradford.
- **Samantha Finigan**, a 2014 Slippery Rock University graduate with a degree in adapted physical activity, was honored as one of five "Larry's Hometown Heroes" at an annual event hosted by KDKA Radio morning host Larry Richert to honor Pittsburgh-area individuals who give back and make a difference in their communities. Finigan is the director of outreach for the Three River's Rowing Association, a membership organization that offers rowing and dragon boating programs for people in the Pittsburgh region.
- **John Drozdowski**, a 2016 Slippery Rock University graduate with a degree in criminology and criminal justice, was recently sworn in as a Millcreek Township police officer during a ceremony at the Millcreek Township Municipal Building in Erie.
- **Calahan Young**, a 2017 Slippery Rock University graduate with a degree in recreational therapy, has been named to the U.S. men's goalball national team for a second straight year.
- **Raymond Omer**, a 1993 Slippery Rock University graduate with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and environmental education, was recently hired as the superintendent of the West Middlesex Area School District.
- **Jermaine Truax**, a 2008 Slippery Rock University with a master's degree in sport management, was named the director of athletics and recreation at Bucknell University effective July 1.

As I prepare to return to my role as provost, I want to sincerely thank all those who work so hard each and every day to make SRU a great place at which to learn, live and work.

Now it is time to pass the baton to President-elect William Behre. I know the entire campus joins me in welcoming him to SRU in July and supporting him in every way we can.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip Way  
President