

Reflections from president of Millersville University



Daniel Wubah, president of Millersville University.

It is hard to believe that my first Thanksgiving as president of Millersville University has already come and gone.

As we celebrated Thursday, my wife, Judith, and I took a moment to reflect and give thanks to the students and their families along with our alumni, faculty and staff for all they do to make our university a great place to study, work and visit. We are truly thankful that we live in a safe and peaceful community where we care for and support one another.

Additionally, we are grateful for the business and community leaders who believe in and contribute to our mission of providing diverse, dynamic, meaningful experiences to inspire learners to grow both intellectually and personally to enable them to contribute positively to local and global communities. Their private support and advocacy for the university ensures that Millersville remains accessible and affordable to all deserving students.

As we prepared for Thanksgiving last week, business leader, philanthropist and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced that he was donating \$1.8 billion to his alma mater, Johns Hopkins University. Bloomberg wrote in *The New York Times* that his gift “will be used as financial aid for qualified low- and middle-income students.” One of the goals of this gift is to increase the percentage of Pell Grant recipients at Johns Hopkins from 12 percent to at least 20 percent by 2023.

With about 34 percent of current Millersville students being Pell Grant recipients, I wondered what 1 percent of this historic gift would do for our students. I have no doubt that such a gift would provide scholarships to a greater number of students at our university and hence create a

greater impact on the community. As it is, the gift likely will contribute toward widening the gap between an elite institution and all other universities.

But in taking an inventory of our connections with numerous business and nonprofit partnerships that are making an impact in our community, I realized how blessed we are to be in Lancaster County. For example, through the university's partnership with SCORE Lancaster-Lebanon, more than 55 Millersville students are being mentored through a grant from the Lancaster County Community Foundation's BB&T Economic Growth Fund. And our Watershed Education Training Institute partnered with the Lancaster Conservancy and Stroud Water Research Center to prepare students for watershed research, advocacy and conservation.

Millersville students are caring and compassionate. From training service animals to participating in the United Way's Day of Caring, our students provide more than 15,000 service hours to various nonprofits and organizations. Additionally, our faculty and students opened doors and hearts to children of migrant workers; our Migrant Education Program has the largest enrollment of the five service regions in Pennsylvania. This initiative provides support for K-12 students, extended day programs and summer school.

Our world-class faculty encourages our students' participation in internships and hands-on learning opportunities to not only further academic engagement but to provide relevant, real-world experiences that will translate to employment.

I am thankful for the hundreds of Lancaster County and central Pennsylvania businesses and their leadership for connecting with nearly 2,000 Millersville University students this year.

Through our Office of Visual & Performing Arts, we are proud to be Lancaster County's pre-eminent cultural arts destination. Our Winter Visual and Performing Arts Center on campus and Ware Center in Lancaster city host more than 600 performances, events and activities annually.

In fact, Judith and I are looking forward to next weekend's "Glorious Sounds of the Season" concert. From symphony orchestras and choirs to jazz ensembles and glee clubs, nearly 30 performance groups will share the stage to benefit Millersville University students.

Along these lines, I am very pleased to share with the community that our current fundraising campaign, Imagine the Possible, has raised \$20.8 million toward its overall goal of \$32 million by June 2020. By contributing to our campaign for student success, our community is ensuring that we will remain affordable and competitive.

Additionally, as a result of this effort, Millersville students will further gain first-hand experiences to be key contributors in the workforce and civically engaged in the community.

Thank you, Lancaster County, for all that you have given me, my family and the university over my first few months at the 'Ville. With your help, I look forward to growing current partnerships, launching new initiatives and working together to make Millersville University an exceptional higher education model of student success.

Daniel A. Wubah, Ph.D., is the 15th president of Millersville University. He came to Millersville from Washington and Lee University, where he the provost and also the senior adviser to the president.