

Millersville's College of Business opens for first semester

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Students stand at the entrance of McComsey Hall, the location of Millersville University's new College of Business. PHOTO/IOANNIS PASHAKIS –

During Daniel Wubah's first year as president of Millersville University, he noticed a trend among the school's enrollment: a significant number of incoming students were enrolling as business majors – accounting, finance, marketing and management.

"I was looking at our data in terms of enrollments and it became clear to me that the biology department, and our two departments in business, were a third of our undergrad enrollment," he said.

The university offered the two business programs for years, expanding from one economics major. Now, seeing a need for an externally directed business program under a College of Business, Wubah saw the need for a fifth college at the university.

"The president expressed to us that we had a quality business program, but that we kept it under a bushel basket, it was a stealth program," said Doug Frazer, interim dean of the new College of Business and a professor at the university for 40 years.

With the majors under one college, Millersville could grow its programs under a strategic plan focused on enticing a student body already interested in business, and filling the need for business leaders in the region, Wubah said.

Some of that groundwork on a college of business was completed years prior. Millersville planned to create a business school last decade, but shelved the plan when the Great Recession hit.

Now, seeing a rise in demand, the university hired a consultant to create a proposal.

By July 1, the school established an advisory council of local business leaders and alumni and opened the College of Business with both the Accounting and Finance, and Marketing and Management majors as its first offerings.

The two majors are considered the standard on most campuses, Wubah said. In the future those majors could be split into four separate programs, he said.

“We are starting from the base and we will build all of these areas so they can stand on their own,” Wubah said, adding that there will be an emphasis on building programs that work collaboratively with other programs such as the college’s Sports Administration major that offers students classes in education, marketing, law, management and research.

Millersville was one of two state universities in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education that did not have a college of business. Cheyney University also lacks a formal business college.

Despite the commonality of business colleges, Wubah said, Millersville will make the college unique by focusing on its undergrad program and putting a master’s program on the backburner.

Millersville is also in talks with Harrisburg Area Community College and Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology to offer business classes to graduates of either school. Wubah said the hope is for Millersville to help individuals working in trade industries to build enough business acumen to start their own businesses.

“As a student graduates from Harrisburg Area Community College and Thaddeus Stevens (College of Technology, Lancaster), we know they will have a job waiting for them,” he said. “For the students, the goal is that they graduate in a trade, like plumbing and through us they find the skills they need to establish their own company.”

Lancaster County has 22,000 students in higher education and 7,800 of those students attend Millersville. With a third of Lancaster’s students, Wubah said, it is partially up to Millersville to feed the city with its next generation of entrepreneurs.

“Having a local university make this expanded commitment to business education will only help to grow the availability of qualified candidates for High and all businesses in our community,” said Karen Biondolillo, a member of the College of Business’ advisory council and CFO of East Lampeter Township-based High Industries.

