“Fullpipe,” photo by Jeff Morris—Winner, the Chancellor’s Prize for Best Visual Art
Greetings!

Another exciting academic year has passed at Penn State Greater Allegheny, full of faculty research, scholarship, and international travel; student academic achievements; and community outreach. As you read the stories in this edition of the Nittany Lines, I think you’ll agree that this is an excellent time to be part of Greater Allegheny.

Inside you’ll read about the travels of a faculty member who received a Fulbright Scholar award to teach in Malta and three of our staff who traveled abroad for student recruitment opportunities. You’ll receive individual glimpses into the student character and achievement here at Greater Allegheny in our Real Students, Real Stories profiles. You’ll learn about some of the campus outreach that was completed via partnerships with local businesses and organizations. And finally, several noteworthy visitors came to our campus over the past year to expand the campus dialogue on such topics as poverty, malnutrition, and urban violence.

The For the Future: The campaign for Penn State Students financial campaign is in full-swing. So far, Greater Allegheny has raised nearly $2 million toward our campus’ $4.3 million portion of the overall goal. Despite the current economic environment, I am confident that it is within our reach with the help of our dedicated alumni as well as our nurtured and new relationships with corporations and foundations. Our All That’s Jazz campus fundraiser for student scholarships is in its sixth year and promises to be another exciting success in October featuring the vocal tunes of Tamara Tunie, star of film, Broadway, and the TV show, Law & Order: SVU, along with her husband, singer, Gregory Generet.

It is our Greater Allegheny vision to always care for and advance the success of our students and communities. As the contents in this edition and future plans for this campus will show, I believe we are achieving our envisioned goals.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Curtiss E. Porter, Ph.D.
’64 – ’66
Malta

Greater Allegheny Associate Professor, Dr. Michelle Hough, recently returned from her second Fulbright Scholar award where she taught management and strategy at the University of Malta. In the Spring-Summer 2006 Nittany Lines was a story about her Fulbright experience in Denmark. The following is an interview about her Malta experience:

What led you to Malta?

Other than a smattering of Spanish, I don’t speak any other languages so there was a need to find opportunities where I can interact in English. And as much as I loved Denmark (where I went for the first Fulbright), Scandinavia in winter was COLD, so I was hoping for a warmer climate this time. Malta is very close to Sicily, and I’m part Sicilian, so that had an impact too. All in all, when I read the description of the opportunity in Malta, everything just clicked. Given the competitive nature of the Fulbright program, I was very lucky it all fell into place.

What did you like best about Malta?

The people! Malta is known for its warm, friendly people and everyone there is amazingly kind. In the Bible, the Apostle Paul is shipwrecked on Malta in A.D. 60. Acts 28:2 states “and the natives showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold.” The Maltese take this tradition of hospitality, dating back to biblical times, very seriously. It’s an inherent part of who they are and their warmth is amazing to experience.

What kinds of differences did you find between the educational systems in the U.S. and Malta?

In America, we try to cram as much into a course as possible to make sure the students are getting value for their money. In the British/Maltese system, the focus is far more on selecting a few important concepts and really working to drive those concepts home. For example, I taught a management concepts course there, and I also teach it at home. At Penn State, we typically cover the entire textbook – usually ten or twelve chapters – because we want the students to be exposed to as much material as possible. In Malta, the entire semester of management concepts focused only on the first three chapters of the book.

Testing also was very different. At Penn State, I think we do a pretty good job of recognizing that since students learn differently, they test differently too. In a given semester, my students typically have a mixture of written papers, oral presentations, quizzes, classroom interactions, and tests upon which they’re assessed. In Malta, other than one short presentation in a tutorial, the student’s grade is based almost entirely on one essay test at the end of the semester – typically they have to answer two of four questions per subject. If students don’t do well in that format, they really have a much harder time successfully passing the course.

What was the hardest adjustment?

Not having a car! When I’d get homesick, my daughters and I would launch into a discussion of what we missed most: the pets, my husband, our family and friends, Hershey’s chocolate… But the car would always top my list. Malta has a pretty good bus system but it was the day-to-day errands that got me. They don’t have super stores like we do here – everything’s very specialized – so it was hard if there were a lot of little things on my list. Back home, I’d hop in my car, make one trip to the Giant Eagle, and be done with it.

What was the most surprising thing you learned about Malta?

Malta has an amazingly rich, vivid history. So many of the world’s events have been shaped by this little island with its very strategic location! Malta boasts the world’s oldest manmade structures – a series of megalithic temples dot the island, dating to 3600 B.C. – even older than the pyramids. It was a center of vital importance to the Phoenicians, and was home for centuries to the Knights of St. John, caring for and safeguarding pilgrims during the crusades, much like its better known brother organization, the Knights Templar. Malta’s endurance in the great siege of 1565 stemmed the growth of the Ottoman Empire, thereby saving Europe from pillage and destruction. Malta was conquered by Napoleon, and was instrumental to the British Admiral Nelson eventually defeating him. In World War II, the island was considered necessary to Axis success and so bore the brunt of starvation and bombing attacks by Mussolini and Hitler. It was never taken, and became pivotal in defeating Axis operations in North Africa, and in the Allied victory. Malta has a long, complex history that has directly shaped the world around it – it packs vast historical significance into its tiny shores!

What will you miss most?

The sea. I fell in love with the Mediterranean, and was lucky to have a sea view from my apartment. Imagine every shade of blue in the spectrum – sapphire, turquoise, cerulean, teal, and everything in between. The sea was sparkling, crystal clear, and mesmerizing. As much as I love the green of Pennsylvania, I will miss Malta’s amazing blue seas.
A s part of the campus’ Teaching International, Dr. Ian G. Rawson, chairman of the Hôpital Albert Schweitzer, delivered a lecture titled, “Poverty, Natural Disasters, and Malnutrition: A Message of Hope from Hôpital Albert Schweitzer (HAS) in Haiti.”

The hospital is a model for health care organizations in developing countries, and provides health care and community health and development for more than 300,000 people in Haiti’s central Artibonite Valley.

In 2008–09, the campus displayed thirty-two works of art on consignment from the Friends of HAS, a Pittsburgh-based organization which supports the operation of the rural Haitian hospital through the sale of Haitian artwork.

Another visit as part of Teaching International was from Dr. Thomas Pogge, Leitner Professor of philosophy and international affairs at Yale University. His lecture emphasized both poverty and health issues and making life-saving pharmaceuticals affordable and accessible to all via The Health Impact Fund.

In 2008–09, Teaching International focused on Latin America and the Caribbean. The program began in 2004 to promote greater awareness of global trends and civic engagement and to broaden the students’ understanding of intercultural and international issues.

Under the direction of Dr. Jay Breckenridge, professor of theatre arts, the spring theatre production was about a young man who is bullied by other young people but becomes the village shaman thanks to his visits to the dream world and a special tree. Following the academic year’s Teaching International theme, the play, The Dream Tree: A Story of the Amazon Rain Forest, is based on a Brazilian tale, as retold by Laurence Yep in his collection of folk tales, Tree of Dreams.

Trini Reguspi and Martin de San Martin of local musical and dance group Tangueros de Ley tango in front of fellow group members in the Greater Allegheny Student Community Center as part of Teaching International.
Three Greater Allegheny staff travel abroad to explore higher education possibilities

Penn State Greater Allegheny is one of six campuses in the Penn State University system that is designated an international campus. But earning the international designation is only the beginning. Working toward furthering relationships with countries abroad and developing shared resource opportunities are initiatives that campus personnel continue to pursue to grow the international student population.

During the 2008–09 academic year, three Greater Allegheny staff had the opportunity to travel internationally to learn of the prospective opportunities for Penn State. Sarah Ma, enrollment management officer, went to China to represent Penn State in seven cities at college fairs for recruitment. October is a popular time in China for college fairs and the students came with a desire to learn about study abroad opportunities. Her language and familiarity with the culture after having lived in Beijing for eight years provided a comfort level for both Sarah and the students she met.

Being new to Pittsburgh herself, Sarah tries to create the most comfortable and welcoming environment for the international students as possible. She offers international applicants current students’ contact information so that they can learn about the campus; she advises the International Club that coordinates activities for the international students; she offers students membership to the Pittsburgh Council for International Visitors; and she utilizes technology to its fullest to maintain a relationship with the students she met.

“The in-person contact is definitely essential to building our international population, but the extent of technology that is available today offers a way to maintain the relationship-building from a distance and perhaps increases retention,” said Ma. “With programs such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, students can share experiences and build relationships that help to create a virtual referral system. The hope is that students’ friends and family will want to come to a campus where they’ll already know someone who has had a positive experience.”

Roderick Asberry, enrollment management officer, traveled to Japan, Korea, and Taiwan as a way to build student recruitment relationships, and to develop the international programs with these countries as additional assets to the Greater Allegheny campus.

“I found the trip enlightening to see the varying cultures economically and socially, said Asberry. “If the international recruitment programs could be developed, they could help evolve Greater Allegheny to become an even better international campus.”

Dr. Kurt Torell, chief academic officer of the campus, traveled to Vietnam as part of a group with The Pittsburgh Regional Alliance (PRA), the marketing affiliate of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. PRA promotes the benefits of conducting business in southwestern Pennsylvania to companies all over the world that are growing, relocating, or expanding.

The goals of Dr. Torell’s trip were to develop contacts with various higher education institutions and other relevant organizations in order to explore faculty/student exchange partnerships; international service learning and study abroad opportunities; and recruitment of prospective international students.

After meeting with personnel from the Vietnam National University, the University of Danang, and Duy Tan University in addition to the U.S. Embassy and Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Torell found a strong potential for higher education opportunities in Vietnam.

“I found this to be one of the best educational experiences I’ve had in a long time,” said Dr. Torell. “The relationships I was able to begin and the contacts I made are invaluable for future opportunities for Penn State Greater Allegheny.”
Bernie Cerasaro joined the full-time faculty as an instructor in business administration after serving as an adjunct faculty member at the campus for the past four years. She is a Penn State graduate, earning her B.A. in liberal arts and her M.B.A. in marketing. Cerasaro brings to the classroom a wealth of experience in the corporate world, serving as a consultant in the guidance and implementation of sales and marketing organization for her own firm, BCC Consulting.

Dr. Douglas M. Charles comes to the campus from a multi-year position at Penn State Erie, the Behrend Campus. Dr. Charles joins the history department as an assistant professor. He has also taught at Marietta College, tutored at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, and served as a teaching assistant at Marquette University. Dr. Charles received his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, his M.A. in American history from Marquette University, and his B.A. in history from Penn State.

Lori Hepner, assistant professor of integrative arts, received a fellowship for the The Rock Ethics Institute. Penn State’s College of the Liberal Arts selected eleven faculty members to participate in the 2009 Ethics Seminar for Faculty. The seminar supports research and teaching designed to promote ethical awareness and inquiry. She will target her 100-level course, Introduction to Photography, by way of discussion on image copyright and of digital manipulation of images in the press. Hepner also plans on expanding the discussion to include how to be an ethical consumer of images in a Web 2.0 society and of the ethics involved in the field by professional photojournalists and the stories that they cover.

Dr. Michelle Hough, associate professor of business administration, was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for the spring 2009 semester. She taught undergraduate and graduate courses in business administration at the University of Malta in Msida, Malta. (see page 3)

Dr. Clifford Manlove, associate professor of English, received approval for a sabbatical during the fall 2009 semester to conduct research on the efficacy of cinema and visual narratives as mechanisms in the colonization and post-colonial projects of Africa and the Caribbean.

Dinah Marcinik, instructor in English, received a grant from the National Science Foundation to support the Pathways to Careers in Science and Engineering program. The $9000, three-year grant is for $3000 per year to provide services to students such as workshops, lectures, résumé assistance, mentoring programs, and specialized learning assistance to help develop the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary to prepare for careers in engineering and science.


Dr. MaryEllen Higgins, associate professor of English, was awarded a sabbatical for the 2008-09 academic years to continue research on Senegalese cinema and continue her work on two manuscripts, “Human Rights in the Cinema,” (single-authored) and “Hollywood’s Africa after 1994.”

Kris Kokal, instructor in mathematics, Dr. Eric Lipsky, instructor in engineering, and Dinah Marcinik, instructor in English, were funded for a Toys ’N More grant by the National Science Foundation. The grants provide funds to support programs intended to help student retention in math, science, and engineering pursuits. The National Science Foundation provided Penn State with over $2.4 million which was distributed to various faculty and campuses who applied for these monies. (see page 12 for Engineering projects funded by this grant.)
Another Banner Year at
Penn State Greater Allegheny

It was another successful year for Penn State Greater Allegheny athletes. The women’s basketball team made the Penn State University Athletic Conference (PSUAC) playoffs for the second consecutive season, advancing to the semifinals. Freshman Rachel Halaszynski was named to the All-Conference team and was voted Newcomer of the Year. She was also named the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA) All-American Honorable Mention. Head Coach Craig Sonson was named PSUAC Coach of the Year.

The men’s baseball team completed another outstanding season, winning a school-record thirty-five games and qualifying for the USCAA National Tournament for the second consecutive season. Sophomore Craig Price was named to the USCAA All-American team. Sophomore Brandon Myers and freshman Josh Chisholm were named USCAA All-American Honorable Mentions. In softball, freshman Suzy Yandrlic was named to the PSUAC All-Conference team.

On the academic side, twenty-six Greater Allegheny student-athletes were named to the PSUAC All-Academic team by maintaining a 3.0 grade point average or better. Sophomore Charnelle Quallis was named to the USCAA Academic All-American team.

The Former Housing and Food Services Building at Penn State Greater Allegheny received a new name and function: the Fitness and Cultural Center. The Fitness Center part of the building was completed in 2005 and now the next phase for the $1.75 million renovation on the Cultural Center is underway. Plans for the building include 640 square feet of open space and high, exposed ceilings to accommodate activities such as yoga/Pilates, theater in the round, a coffee house, movies, and other student and campus activities requiring flexible furnishings. Next Architecture designed the cultural center changes. Estimated completion is spring 2010.
Freshman year of college for Yidi Li brought her from Hang Zhou, China, to Penn State Greater Allegheny and she is so glad to have made the trip.

As one of only a handful of international campuses in the Penn State University system, Greater Allegheny can recruit directly with international locations. Li remembers fondly when she met members of the admissions staff on a recruitment trip in China.

“After many e-mails with the director of admissions, I felt like I at least knew one person and have since found that the size of the campus and the friendliness of the students, faculty, and staff have made the transition a smooth one,” she said.

“I think making the choice to come to this campus over perhaps a larger one was one of the greatest things I’ve done so far,” said Li. “I have found a new confidence in myself that I didn’t have before and perhaps wouldn’t have found on a campus among thousands of other students.”

Pursuing a degree in media studies and East Asian studies, Li hopes to find a way to merge her majors into a career exploring both the theoretical and practical sides of the media between Asia and North America. She is considering graduate school to pursue this area further.

For the summer, Li applied for an internship with a Chinese television station to work on the international channel using her English.

“I find that I thrive on all of the projects, work, and activities that the campus provides for me. I actually kind of look forward to when summer vacation will be done and I can come back,” said Li.
Architecture began to interest Penn State Greater Allegheny freshman, Joshua Devine, of Pittsburgh, in his high school engineering magnet program. It was then that his fascination with the structure and systems that make up a building began to grow and he was excelling at learning them. He also pursued another one of his interests at a young age: Devine became a licensed minister at age 15.

The two paths may not have a clear direction right now, but they are two aspects of his life that Devine is interested in and proud to have followed so far.

“The ministry has taught me how to be a leader and set an example in a positive and effective way,” said Devine. “I am not sure where God is leading me and how my engineering major will tie into my ministry, but at the end of the day, I am satisfied with where He has taken me so far.”

Devine realized that his ministry has taught him to look at people from the inside out as well. The family atmosphere at Greater Allegheny sets this campus apart from others for Devine. As a Lion Ambassador, he enjoys seeing the incoming and prospective students become as excited about the campus as he was when he first came. And he enjoys learning the various stories, beliefs, and customs from all of the different students on campus as he gets to know them.

Being involved on campus has helped Devine really enjoy his freshman year of college. He realized that the leadership and social skills he developed could not be learned in a classroom. Devine was elected president of the Student Government Association for the 2009–10 academic year.
Hard work, dedication, and at least four and a half hours of physical exercise weekly make up the lifestyle of senior information science and technology (IST) student, Kostyantyn Andreyko of Pittsburgh.

After having served four years as an information manager for the U.S. Air Force, Andreyko found that the IST degree at Greater Allegheny suited well his desire to continue with his IT career. He also found the convenience of the campus as another perk to choose Greater Allegheny over other campuses.

“The short travel from my home to Greater Allegheny was a highlight for me when choosing a college,” he said. “Also, I am an adult-learner, thus I prefer a nice, quiet place to study and Greater Allegheny has many of those to offer.”

Being in a different age group than most of the other Greater Allegheny students as well as being from the Ukraine has given Andreyko a very different perspective on his college experience.

“Since I moved to the United States from the Ukraine, I do not take things for granted and just solemnly depend on my own endeavor to achieve desired goals,” he said. “Therefore, even though I tend to blend in with the best of the Greater Allegheny students when it comes to academic achievements, in reality it is much harder for a person with English as a second language to stay on top of their game.”

“So far, I have met a lot of dedicated, energetic, and passion-driven people in the students, faculty, and staff members. However, the most important thing I have learned about other people while attending Greater Allegheny is the willingness to work as a team to resolve potential obstacles and tasks, whether in a classroom environment or outside the walls of this campus.”
For Bianca Hooper of Carnegie, Pennsylvania, pursuing a degree in communications at Penn State Greater Allegheny seemed like a logical choice for her as a person. With her love of communication and the enjoyment gained from writing, reading, and speaking, she knew that the degree would fit her personality well.

Greater Allegheny offered Hooper an opportunity for a college degree with its student support service called the Academic and Career Excellence program, or ACE. This is a program which can offer financial support to first-generation college students and students from low-income families to attend a college or university.

“I want to open a low-income college preparatory school for poverty-stricken kids in the United States after I start my career,” said Hooper. “Greater Allegheny offered the ACE program and that in addition to the small family atmosphere on campus were reasons that it stood apart from others for me.”

Hooper is a Lion Ambassador, vice president of the residence hall council, member of the radio club, and she is involved in the Absence magazine. While on campus one might find Hooper in the Student Community Center hanging out or eating a meal with friends and enjoying the view from the windows, especially in the summertime. At Greater Allegheny, the diverse population helped Hooper to learn how all people are different.

“With all of the students coming from different backgrounds, I learned to respect everyone and their differences since college is about transformation,” she said.
Imagine having the opportunity to take apart children’s toys, study the mechanics of them, and then have the chance to create a toy or game of your own using what you learned. For the ten students in Drs. George Crawford’s and Eric Lipsky’s Introduction to Engineering Design class, they were able to do just that. The projects in the Toys ‘N More grant were funded by the National Science Foundation for the next three academic years.

“The idea behind the grant was to provide Greater Allegheny with the resources for creative student projects in the introduction to engineering design course,” said Dr. Lipsky. “The goal is to both encourage students who are already certain they want to major in engineering as well as provide a creative and fun angle of engineering for those students who are undecided.”

The two projects that this first-time grant funded for the class are the children’s toy project and the Lego robot dance project. The children’s toy project allowed students to create a simple toy design and test it on children ages 3 to 5 years at The Maplewood Kids Daycare center in McKeesport, Pennsylvania for feedback.

The Lego robot dance project involved sixteen robots that were purchased with the funding for our students to program to dance. The students then invited high school students to visit the campus, see the dance performance, learn the programming, and then program the robots.

“The Lego robot project is a program that is used by a lot of colleges and universities,” said Dr. Crawford. “But what makes it significant at Greater Allegheny is that it contains new and much more improved equipment from which our students can learn. If programmed correctly, the robots will dance to a beat. The students take a lot of pride in choosing the song and in the entire project when it is completed.”

Due to the smaller size of this semester’s class, only three robots were used; but, Dr. Lipsky and Dr. Crawford learned a lot about the logistics involved with a larger class size. They anticipate using twelve to fourteen of the robots in the fall when they have as many as fifty students in the program.

“We facilitate the projects and stay closely involved, but it truly is an overall student-driven experience that we have structured in the class,” said Dr. Crawford.
Last August, after losing a student to violence on the streets in Pittsburgh, an increased level of awareness of urban violence prompted faculty and staff at Greater Allegheny to take action. They decided to bring experts on the issue to the campus and create an open forum for discussion.

First, esteemed ethnographer and expert on urban inequality, Dr. Elijah Anderson, the William K. Lanman Jr. Professor of Sociology at Yale University, delivered a lecture titled, “Why are so many young black men killing each other.” His thesis, after extensive research with young Philadelphia neighborhood residents, supports that “entrenched poverty, experience with racial discrimination, and chronic exclusion from gainful employment largely account for the vicious cycle of brutality and aggression that dominates many urban streets.”

As a follow-up to Dr. Anderson’s lecture, a panel was formed to offer local perspectives on urban violence. The following individuals participated in the panel discussion in the campus’ Robert and Elizabeth Ostermayer Room, Student Community Center:

- Bomani Howze, Heinz Foundation
- Richard Garland, One Vision One Life
- Dr. Anthony Mitchell, Penn State Greater Allegheny
- Husani Thompson, Penn State Greater Allegheny student

Pittsburgh Public High School students may consider Penn State Greater Allegheny as their college of choice more often than before thanks to a partnership with The Pittsburgh Promise that allowed Greater Allegheny to hang banners in each of the public high schools to showcase the university’s name and nearby location.

Created by The Pittsburgh Foundation, supported by the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and funded through the generosity of our community, The Pittsburgh Promise dramatically transforms the lives of students and families. The Promise vows to help all students in Pittsburgh Public Schools plan, prepare, and pay for education beyond high school at an accredited post-secondary institution within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Greater Allegheny Director of Student Affairs, Glenn Beech, was instrumental in procuring the banners that are now displayed in all eleven of the Pittsburgh Public High Schools.

“This opportunity to increase awareness of our campus could lead to an increase in enrolled students through The Pittsburgh Promise,” said Beech. “Currently there are twenty-four students at Greater Allegheny who came to us through the Promise, a total of nearly $98,000 in financial assistance for the students.”
Erin Bridgen joined the staff at Penn State Greater Allegheny as the Assistant Director of Career Services as of April 1. After nearly six years of experience at the University of Pittsburgh Career Development Office, Bridgen most recently served as a career consultant. Her new position will involve employer relations, in which she will build relationships with local employers for potential internships and career programs that students may seek. She will be able to offer job preparation counseling, and career programming and exploration resources both inside and out of the classroom.

Bridgen earned her bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Criminology in 1996 and her master’s degree in Industrial and Labor Relations in 1999 both from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She lives with her husband in Arnold, Pennsylvania.

Erin Bridgen

A New Assistant Director of Career Services Brings Multiple Resources for Students to Penn State Greater Allegheny

Civic and Community Engagement is Vital Part of the Learning Experience

Relationships are one of the most important components of any learning experience. Adam Davies, a Greater Allegheny corporate communication graduate from North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, researched and expanded upon how public scholarship has grown and is beginning to sustain itself at Penn State Greater Allegheny. He incorporated in his research the volume of works from Dr. Rosa A. Eberly and Dr. Jeremy Cohen (2006) titled New Directions for Teaching and Learning. With a major in corporate communications, Davies related to the authors’ idea that the democratic experience is based on the university values of scholarship, academic discovery, and artistic pursuit.

Through a research-internship under the direction of Dr. Kathleen Taylor Brown, assistant professor of communications, Davies was required to research the questions, “Who, in your opinion, is a noteworthy figure from your discipline that has positively contributed to the betterment of society?” and “How has civic and community engagement impacted both the broader world and you personally?” Davies focused his work on Eberly and Cohen, as they both are experts in the field of communications. His work has been submitted to The Pennsylvania Communication Association’s publication, The PA Scholars Series for consideration for publication in the peer-reviewed journal.

Davies also compiled an anthology of works from Greater Allegheny faculty and students titled Reflections on Civic and Community Engagement, which consists of twelve short essays from the disciplines of communications, psychology, information science and technology, history, Spanish, sociology, and philosophy. The anthology applies to the requirements for both the campus’ civic and community engagement minor and the corporate communication minor’s introduction course.

Davies said, “Civic and community engagement is vital, and the life experience of the Penn State student should be tied to the community. Real learning occurs when students can freely express and exchange their opinions and ideas with their community.”
Absence: A Celebration of the Arts

Absence: Penn State Greater Allegheny’s Literary & Art Magazine is a yearly publication of the best creative works submitted by students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Advising Absence are Dr. Clifford Manlove, associate professor of English, and Lori Hepner, assistant professor of integrative arts. For a free copy, contact Dr. Manlove at ctm10@psu.edu. For the 2009 issue, 262 submissions were received—more than any previous year; less than thirty percent of these could be published. For the first time, the magazine has reached 100 pages and is soft-bound rather than “saddle-stitched.”

A Celebration of the Arts is held each April featuring literary and visual art published in the magazine, live music, and screenings of short films. This year, the Chancellor’s Prize for best literary art was presented to A.J. Howells; for best visual art to Jeff Morris (see photo); and for best short film to Dan Butler. A second place prize for literary art was awarded to Alyssa Fine; and for visual art to Stephen Borsch. First place winners earn $250 scholarships; second-place winners each received $100 scholarships. The Chancellor’s Prizes were established in 2006 to promote an active arts community.

Fall and Spring Commencement

Dr. Mary Preuss, a member of the Penn State Greater Allegheny faculty since 1989, addressed the graduates at the fall 2008 commencement. Currently a professor of Spanish and comparative literature, she has traveled extensively in Mexico and Latin America. Her research has focused on the Mayan civilization in Mexico and Guatemala where she has recorded, transcribed, and translated ancient oral literature in an effort to preserve the stories of the Yucatec-Maya language and heritage for future generations. Dr. Preuss currently chairs the Foreign Language Department at Penn State Greater Allegheny and is the representative from our campus to the College of Liberal Arts at University Park.

Dr. James B. Stewart, professor of labor studies and employment relations, African and African American studies, and management and organization at Penn State University was the keynote speaker at the spring 2009 commencement ceremony. He previously served as Vice Provost for Educational Equity. He joined the Penn State faculty in 1980 as an assistant professor of economics and director of the black studies program. Stewart joined the Penn State Greater Allegheny faculty in 2001 after twenty-two years at University Park. At Greater Allegheny he has taught business, African American studies, and science and technology courses. He is also the chairman of the board of Blueroof Technologies, a not-for-profit organization that has initiated a major redevelopment effort in a McKeesport neighborhood focusing on the provision of smart housing for the elderly and disabled. Dr. Stewart retired in 2009 after thirty years with the University. He will remain involved with campus through community programs.
Anthony “Andy” Holtz became the Director of Development at Penn State Greater Allegheny effective March 23. Holtz came to Greater Allegheny from his position as Vice President of Development at the Allegheny Conference on Community Development in Pittsburgh.

Holtz earned his master’s degree in public management and policy in 1990 from Carnegie Mellon University and his bachelor’s degree in political science from Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana.

Holtz’s previous experience includes organizational fundraising, personnel management, project management, and analysis, process, and system design. He is the treasurer-elect for the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Western Pennsylvania Chapter.

Holtz comes to the campus just as the University’s current fundraising campaign, For the Future, swings into high gear. The campaign seeks to raise roughly $1.6 billion in support for scholarships, faculty development, and the student-faculty interactions so central to a Penn State education.

“It is an exciting time to join the Greater Allegheny family,” Holtz said. “The current economy has helped to draw more richly deserved attention to the need for education and scholarship money to support it, and I am looking forward to working to help advance both.”

To learn more about For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students at Penn State Greater Allegheny, visit ga.psu.edu/giving.

Profile of Mark Gruskin:
From Student to Penn State Greater Allegheny Advisory Board President

Mark Gruskin remembers fondly the years spent here as a student at the former Penn State McKeesport. He enjoyed his stay in the residence hall and found it to be so beneficial for his transition to college life at the University Park campus.

Looking at the Greater Allegheny campus today, he can see how much the campus has grown and changed. In the 1970s, Gruskin studied computer science and the Wunderley Gymnasium and Ostermayer lab were under construction. The majority of the philanthropic-named buildings were not yet named.

Because there was no four-year degree option then, Gruskin spent two years here and then transferred to University Park. His fond memories and his ties to Western Pennsylvania having grown up in Churchill were two of the reasons Gruskin decided to become a member of the Penn State Greater Allegheny Advisory Board in 2003.

After graduating at University Park, Gruskin remained there to pursue and complete his M.B.A. in 1979. It was at Penn State that the Ford Motor Company recruiters found him, and he was hired to work on the dealer initiatives side of the company. His last position was as manager of FORDSTAR dealer communications network providing data communication and technical training applications for dealers when he retired in 2006.

While working at Ford, Gruskin was also an adjunct faculty member at the University of Michigan, teaching business and finance courses. After retiring, Gruskin decided to pursue his doctorate degree in finance and began his studies in the fall of 2007 at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. As he takes classes, he also teaches advanced business finance.

“There are three components to an academic career,” said Gruskin. “Research and publishing, teaching, and service. I served on the advisory board since 2003 as secretary and then vice president, to achieve the third component in my academic career.

“After forming strong ties to this campus as a student, it seemed obvious to me where to fulfill the service component.”

Another way Gruskin showed his support at Greater Allegheny was the dedication of the Gruskin Learning Center in memory of his father, John H. Gruskin.

Looking forward to his three-year term as advisory board president, Gruskin hopes to achieve a few initiatives. He hopes to continue to recruit a diverse and engaged group of board members following past president, Joe Hohman’s lead. He would like to maintain the momentum into the next academic year and staunchly support the sixth annual All That’s Jazz student fundraiser event, and continue its success.
More than 200 alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and student volunteers gathered in November to help raise money for the Penn State Greater Allegheny Student Scholarship Fund at the fifth annual All That’s Jazz event. By the end of the evening, the final tally was $56,060, which brought the overall total raised in just five years to more than $214,000.

This year’s event promises to be another success featuring jazz entertainment by Tamara Tunie, star of Broadway, various films, and the TV show Law & Order: SVU and her husband, vocalist Gregory Generet. The theme will be similar to an Irish pub and the ever-popular Blue & White boxes, silent, and live auctions will all return. Plan on attending Saturday, October 3 at 7 p.m.

Chancellor Curtiss E. Porter presents the ceremonial check along with Advisory Board member, Joe Hohman, Entertainment and Decorations Underwriter, Nancy Seifert, and Master of Ceremonies, Sheldon Ingram from WTAE-TV, for the total student scholarship funds raised at the fifth annual All That’s Jazz. The evening’s grand total was $56,060.

**Letter from Alumni Society President**

On behalf of the Penn State Alumni Society, I am delighted to report that our membership continues to make a difference all over the United States and throughout the world.

As part of the Penn State Alumni Society—a powerful network of 160,742 members—you are a member of the largest dues-paying alumni association in the world. Our mission is to connect alumni to the University and to each other, to provide valued services to members, and to support the University’s mission of teaching, research, and service. Your alumni association is committed to making Penn State better, especially for the generations of students who follow in your footsteps.

The ever-popular Penn State Greater Allegheny Creamery Ice Cream Sale was a success again this year. The annual fundraiser is just one of the many ways that you can support the alumni society.

During the economic challenges of the upcoming year, I urge you to remain connected to your University, and a good way to do that is to join your fellow Penn State alumni through local societies, chapters, and other groups. Please contact me to learn more about how you can help us to carry out our mission.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in your alma mater,

Denise Kubli

dmkubli@yahoo.com
Our country’s ability to restart its economic growth will depend on the talents and education of the next generation of leaders – college students, like those at Penn State Greater Allegheny – and their ability to anticipate and adapt to changing national and world conditions.

Penn State has undertaken an ambitious fundraising campaign to build on the tradition of excellence that has defined our University. The campaign is called “For the Future.”

Our country’s ability to restart its economic growth will depend on the talents and education of the next generation of leaders – college students, like those at Penn State Greater Allegheny – and their ability to anticipate and adapt to changing national and world conditions. The cost of preparing these students rises each year, even as support for these expenses – through grants, loans, and governmental support – declines. Families are being forced to make hard choices that weigh their children’s future against their ability to pay for it.

The For the Future campaign is Penn State’s answer to this dilemma. Overall, the campaign seeks to raise $1.65 billion by the year 2014. Greater Allegheny will raise $4.3 million of that impressive figure. The campaign has a single, clear goal: to raise $4.3 million of that impressive figure. The campaign has a single, clear goal: to raise $4.3 million of that impressive figure. The campaign has a single, clear goal: to raise $4.3 million of that impressive figure. The campaign has a single, clear goal: to raise $4.3 million of that impressive figure. The campaign has a single, clear goal: to raise $4.3 million of that impressive figure.

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The objective of this element of the campaign is to ensure that students of exceptional ability experience the best honors education in the nation. These students will receive the support they need to take their places as leaders in the changing world. At Greater Allegheny, the $375,000 raised in this element will support faculty-student research projects, the Honors Program, and internships for honors students.

Enhancing Scholars Education

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Enriching the Student Experience

The objective of this element of the campaign is to ensure that students thrive in a stimulating atmosphere that fosters global involvement, community service, creative expression, and personal growth. The emphasis on involvement is part and parcel of the University’s proud heritage as a land grant institution. At Greater Allegheny, the $725,000 raised by this element will support a suite of amenities – the conversion of the former Housing and Food Services Building into a Fitness and Cultural Center, the expansion of the campus’ global student efforts and services, service learning and leadership, endowed lectureships, increased availability of internships, campus athletics and fitness, and enhanced student support services.

Building Faculty Strength and Capacity

Recognizing that strong students can only reach their potential with the support of a strong faculty, this element will ensure that students can study with the finest teachers and researchers. At Greater Allegheny, the $50,000 raised by this element will support what Dr. Porter calls “intellectual capital” – faculty travel, research, equipment, and supplies, as well as lending additional support to faculty-student research projects.

Fostering Discovery and Creativity

The University’s tradition of cutting edge research and encouraging the spirit of discovery forms the basis of this element, in which students and faculty members come together within and across disciplines to pioneer new frontiers of knowledge. At Greater Allegheny, the $100,000 that this element will raise will support the creation of an arts endowment, the expansion and enhancement of the technological supports for learning, and an expansion to the student-community partnerships that have long characterized our commitment to the world outside of the campus.

Sustaining a Tradition of Quality

Strong faculty and strong staff come together in this element of the campaign, which will ensure that students continue to work and study with faculty whose scholarship is enhanced by continuing philanthropic support. At Greater Allegheny, the $550,000 that this element will raise will support the annual fund, the establishment and expansion of community outreach programs and K-12 partnerships, improvements to our array of workforce improvement programs and projects, and the continued growth of our economic development programs and projects.

Making Progress

To this point, Greater Allegheny has raised roughly $2 million toward these goals. Our ability to reach and exceed the goals of the campaign will depend on our outreach to corporations, our proposals to foundations, and – most importantly – staunch support from you, our dedicated and passionate alumni.
Students with the ability and ambition to attend Penn State University will have this opportunity through scholarship support. At Penn State Greater Allegheny, students thrive in a stimulating atmosphere that fosters global involvement, community service, creative expression, and personal growth. Currently 50 scholarships are awarded to eligible students at Greater Allegheny and during the 2008–09 academic year, 203 students received support. Below is a list of the scholarships offered at Greater Allegheny. In addition to this list, our students can be considered for Chancellor’s Awards, Bunton-Waller Scholarships, some Trustees Awards, and other scholarships granted through the Office of Student Aid or one of the colleges at University Park.

Cynthia A. and Arthur L. Baldwin McKeesport Scholarship
John W. Beatty Memorial Scholarship
The Beazer East, Inc. McKeesport Campus Endowed Scholarship
Verizon Endowed Scholarship in Science, Engineering and Technology
Alan and Dorothy Bober Scholarship
JoAnne E. Burley Leadership Scholarship
E. R. Crawford Trust Fund Scholarship
Duquesne Light Company-Milton F. Frable Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Penn State Greater Allegheny General Scholarship
Heritage Center Endowed Scholarship
Bruce A. Heyworth and Andrew J. Traina Athletics Memorial Award
A. C. Jordan Endowed Scholarship
Junior Order United American Mechanics
McKeesport Council 109 Endowed Scholarship
Kalich Family Student Government Leadership Award
Dr. Patricia A. Klemans Endowed Memorial Scholarship
The Latterman Endowed Scholarship
Eugene and Dorothy Lynch Memorial Scholarship
Thomas D. Mansfield Memorial Scholarship
Walter E., Sr., and Helen C. Manns Endowed Scholarship
Joseph and Anna Marie Marchesani Scholarship
Minarik Family Scholarship
Penn State Alumni Association Trustee Scholarship for Penn State Greater Allegheny
Advisory Board of Penn State Greater Allegheny Endowed Scholarship

Penn State Greater Allegheny Alumni Society Scholarship
Suzy and Jim Broadhurst Trustee Scholarship
Penn State Greater Allegheny Endowed Scholarship
Wallace and Zelda Bland and Kemp Family Trustee Scholarship
Minarik Family Trustee Scholarship
Victor J. and Joan M. Orler Trustee Scholarship
Fort Pitt Capital Trustee Scholarship
John E. and Nancy Traina Trustee Scholarship
Trustee Scholarship for Penn State Greater Allegheny
Jay and Kim Weitzel Trustee Scholarship
Thomas D. Mansfield Family Endowed Scholarship
G. C. Murphy Company Foundation Scholarship
John and Jean Neel Family Scholarship
The Frank E. Neish Endowed Scholarship
Charles F. Peters Foundation Endowed Scholarship
PNC Financial Corp Endowed McKeesport Campus Scholarship
The M. B. Peterson Endowed Scholarship
Rhodes Student Leadership Award
Dr. Edward Sichi, Jr. Memorial Student Recognition Award
Nicholas J. Skezas Memorial Scholarship
Mr. and Mrs. James South Scholarship
Huntington Bank Endowed Scholarship
The Andrew J. Traina Memorial Endowed Scholarship
The Andrew J. Traina and Bruce A. Heyworth Endowed Scholarship
Charles Virts Memorial Scholarship
Allan and Mary Ellen Wampler Scholarship
Gilbert A. Wetzel McKeesport Campus Telecommunications Scholarship
Save the Date...

All That's Jazz

Sixth Annual Benefit for the Penn State Greater Allegheny Scholarship Fund

Saturday, October 3, 2009

7:00 – 11:00 p.m.
Penn State Greater Allegheny Student Community Center

Sit back, relax, and let the dynamic jazz vocals of Tamara Tunie and her husband, Gregory Generet, sing your worries away. Enjoy an evening at the pub and experience some of Ireland’s famous, imported beer. Dine on delicious food and bid on various auctions—all for a good cause!

Tamara Tunie star of Broadway, film, and the TV show Law and Order: SVU. Gregory Generet, jazz vocalist, entertainer, and Emmy Award-winning producer.