Collective higher education investment in Luzerne County exceeds $519M

By Bill O’Boyle

Ooms said she ran a high-lead model of economic impact based on the number of professionals at Wilkes, King’s, Misericordia, LCCC, and FISW BW. She said since it is based only on current employment and doesn’t include student or visitor spending, it is a very conservative estimate of the economic impact in Luzerne County.

“Luzerne County has a number of higher education institutions which contribute so much to the region’s workforce pipeline,” Ooms said from theCollective higher education investment in Luzerne County exceeds $519 million and supports 3,147 jobs in the community with more than 700 jobs being from sectors other than higher education. Ooms said the primary driver determining if a business will locate in a region “First, they support the region’s workforce. Workforce is a trained and skilled labor force and one of the major assets of any region. In the case of higher education, the institutions which include student and visitor spending, it is a very conservative estimate of the economic impact in Luzerne County.

“Luzerne County has a number of higher education institutions which contribute so much to the region’s workforce pipeline,” Ooms said from the Greater Wilkes-Barre region.

WILKES-BARRE — Teri Ooms, executive director of the Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development at Wilkes University, said a 2018 study shows that collective higher education investment in Luzerne County exceeds $519 million and supports 3,147 jobs in the community with more than 700 jobs being from sectors other than higher education.

By Bill O’Boyle

Ooms said she ran a high-lead model of economic impact based on the number of professionals at Wilkes, King’s, Misericordia, LCCC, and FISW BW. She said since it is based only on current employment and doesn’t include student or visitor spending, it is a very conservative estimate of the economic impact in Luzerne County.

“Luzerne County has a number of higher education institutions which contribute so much to the region’s workforce pipeline,” Ooms said from the Greater Wilkes-Barre region.

WILKES-BARRE — Teri Ooms, executive director of the Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development at Wilkes University, said a 2018 study shows that collective higher education investment in Luzerne County exceeds $519 million and supports 3,147 jobs in the community with more than 700 jobs being from sectors other than higher education.

By Bill O’Boyle

Ooms said she ran a high-lead model of economic impact based on the number of professionals at Wilkes, King’s, Misericordia, LCCC, and FISW BW. She said since it is based only on current employment and doesn’t include student or visitor spending, it is a very conservative estimate of the economic impact in Luzerne County.

“Luzerne County has a number of higher education institutions which contribute so much to the region’s workforce pipeline,” Ooms said from the Greater Wilkes-Barre region.

WILKES-BARRE — Teri Ooms, executive director of the Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development at Wilkes University, said a 2018 study shows that collective higher education investment in Luzerne County exceeds $519 million and supports 3,147 jobs in the community with more than 700 jobs being from sectors other than higher education.

By Bill O’Boyle
"Every student, regardless of where they’re from, the color of their skin, the gender they subscribe to, comes here first and foremost feels like they belong on campus in a welcoming environment where they can thrive."

BLOOMSBURG — There are many practical reasons for Dr. Bashar W. Hanna to take an interest in the needs of first-generation college students.

"Many of them didn’t have a support system at home to help them navigate — first the application process, but also the matriculation and successful completion (of a degree), because most and dad never went through it," he added.

"In a larger sense, however, helping students complete their degrees and succeed in careers is a key focus for Hanna and Bloomsburg.

"We have a national epidemic, in my mind, where only 50 percent of college-bound students end up finishing a degree," Hanna said.

"I think it is a national catastrophe in the making when you have millions of students out there with some college credit, no degree, but almost all of them have loans that they cannot afford to pay back," he said.

"So we are looking at ways to ensure that students do not leave because of financial burdens," Hanna added.

"We’re working with our donors to make sure there are emergency scholarships available for students so we can remove obstacles that are not academic, and that could stand in the way of them earning their degrees." Bloomsburg also has a program known as "Professional U," which is designed to connect the student's entire educational experience with "real world" settings that will help them succeed after graduation.

His vision for Bloomsburg is a place where "every student, regardless of where they’re from, the color of their skin, the gender they subscribe to, comes here and first foremost feels like they belong on campus in a welcoming environment where they can thrive," he said.

Prior to joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty at Delaware Valley University in Doylestown from 2011 until 2016. He previously served as associate provost at Drexel University — Pennsylvania as it earned authorization to operate in this state, and earlier was associate dean of the College of Science and Technology at Temple University.

"Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at DeVry University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said.

"I think it is a national catastrophe in the making when you have millions of students out there with some college credit, no degree, but almost all of them have loans that they cannot afford to pay back," he said.

"So we are looking at ways to ensure that students do not leave because of financial burdens," Hanna added.

"We’re working with our donors to make sure there are emergency scholarships available for students so we can remove obstacles that are not academic, and that could stand in the way of them earning their degrees." Bloomsburg also has a program known as "Professional U," which is designed to connect the student's entire educational experience with "real world" settings that will help them succeed after graduation.

His vision for Bloomsburg is a place where "every student, regardless of where they’re from, the color of their skin, the gender they subscribe to, comes here and first foremost feels like they belong on campus in a welcoming environment where they can thrive," he said.

"Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University. Most recently before joining Bloomsburg, Hanna was associate provost at Drexel University Chicago.

Hanna said he had several "benchmark programs" on campus:

• Bloomsburg's nursing program has had nearly 100 percent success over the past decade, with only one student failing the licensing exam.

• "Professional U," which Hanna said has received recognition from federal officials, including certification from the Department of Homeland Security.

"That is not common for a regional public state school," he said. "Background.

Hanna earned his B.A. in biology, his master's degree in developmental biology and his Ph.D. in developmental neurobiology from Temple University.
Jim Lytle has served on president of Clarks Summit University since January 1, 2015. He first came to the school, then named Baptist Bible College, as a student in 1973.

**Presidential Profiles: Clarks Summit University**

**Name:** Jim Lytle  
**Title:** President of Clarks Summit University  
**Years in post:** 4

**Quote:** “Over the years, what I’ve seen it do for people when they are able to get what the Bible teaches and pair that with a career, they are confident, ethical people. They are the kind of employees that employers want.”

**SOUTH ABINGTON TWP.** – Jim Lytle and his wife had spent 14 years in South Africa. That’s when Lytle’s friend predecessor as president at Clarks Summit University offered him a chance to return to the school he had first set foot on in 1973. He did so in 2007, taking on the role of vice president for academics and professor of Bible and theology. Then, to his surprise, in 2008 he was appointed provost, before becoming president on Jan. 1, 2015.

Lytle earned his Bachelor of Divinity degree from BBS and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. It was while working on his Master of Divinity degree that he took a part-time position at CSU teaching “Studies in the Psalms.” Then, to his surprise, the college offered him a full-time position the next summer. For the next 14 years, he taught classes and led summer ministries. His family moved into a girls dormitory, of which Diane was the resident director. It was then that the opportunity in South Africa opened.

Lytle was happy to return to school in 2007 because he saw a chance to expand its mission. “Baptist Bible College basically prepared people for local church ministry,” Lytle said, referring to the school by its original name. “(The administration was) open to making a bunch of changes without losing its basic mission. It was a chance to make the school something it hadn’t been before without losing its what it had been.”

The school now offers more than 40 programs. Undergraduate programs include one-year Bible certificate, two-year Associate of Arts and four-year Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts degrees. Graduate studies include Master of Science in Counseling Ministries, Master of Education and Master of Arts. Seminary studies include Master of Ministry, Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Biblical Apologetics, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Biblical Studies.

Lytle has seen students excel in those courses. “Over the years, what I’ve seen it do for people when they are able to get what the Bible teaches and pair that with a career, they are confident, ethical people,” Lytle said. “They are the kind of employees that employers want. I love what the school does for people.”

And he would love to see more students take advantage of the school’s offerings. “Back in the day, when we had a more narrow mission, a lot of folks didn’t,” Lytle said. “But that has changed. “If people want our type of education, we are open to that. We want to serve our area.”

As Lytle looks to the future, he sees the school offering more online opportunities for students. He also fondly looks back on the school’s history.

In 2018, Clarks Summit University marked its 50th year in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The school was founded as Baptist Bible Seminary in 1923 in Johnson City, N.Y. It moved to its current location on Bernard Road in 1968. The school will mark another anniversary in 2019, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the construction of its main building. It originally served as a high school for boys.

It is now the central building of a campus that currently serves about 1,000 students, including 300 on-campus residents. Clarks Summit is also highly regarded for its opportunity for post-graduates. “There are people out there in a 300-mile radius looking for this,” he said.
Bringing the treats to various dorms has become a tradition for Welsh, who said it was one of her favorite times of the year.

As the 13th president of the university and the first female that has served in that role, she has worked hard to provide a spirit of diversity and positivity that serves as a springboard for future success.

“I believe that our campus is one of the most diverse in our region,” she said. “As you make your way through campus, you realize how well (the students and faculty) work together. We are very lucky.”

The university, which averages about 6,500 students, has a reputation for innovation and entrepreneurship, she said.

“We emphasize the importance of investing and collaborating with the community and the region,” she said.

Students from the Sports Management program, for example, recently spent time with the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders minor league baseball team, offering marketing ideas.

“I believe they are considering using some of those ideas,” she said. “These students do excellent work.”

Welsh believes the university’s relationship with the region is a “win-win” providing opportunities for students to interact with high quality businesses and organizations, and then to also benefit those businesses with well-trained, well-educated members of the workforce.

East Stroudsburg University President Marcia G. Welsh, East Stroudsburg University

Marcia Welsh has been president of East Stroudsburg University since July of 2012.

Name: Marcia G. Welsh
Title: President of East Stroudsburg University
Years as president: 6
Quote: “We emphasize the importance of investing and collaborating with the community and the region.”
Madeline Levy Cruz, Fortis University

By Geri Gibbons
For Times Leader

Cruz described the school as the “premier locations for occupational training in our area.” “Not everyone succeeds at traditional education. Career training allows people to find a career that can help them change their future outlook in a very short period of time,” she said, “Whether it’s Allied Health, dental, nursing, trades or CDL, our schools run a full gamut of programming for all interests that not only positively impacts the student but the community as we provide a viable and excellent workforce for northeastern Pennsylvania.”

Cruz believes the best way to learn about the opportunities the college offers is for potential students to call or stop by. “It’s so important to put a face to every student,” she said. “We care about each individual.”

Cruz said when she came to the school, she was determined to make a difference and to adequately prepare students for the work world and to benefit the community as an institution. “When I first came on board, I wanted to make sure that our schools partnered with other community organizations and employers to provide the best training possible for our students in their chosen field,” she said. “To that end, I made sure that our instructors had plenty of field experience in addition to didactic training.”

Additionally, under Cruz’s watch, the school grew its network of internship providers and clinical sites to ensure students had real-time field experience before they graduate. Cruz’s open door policy allows her to know students and to assist them in determining what best suits their needs in regard to education and career planning. “My door is always open, I love hearing their stories and knowing them as individuals,” she said. “I frequently say that my favorite day of the year is commencement because I get to experience their joy at achieving their goals, while understanding many of the obstacles they may have gone through to get to that day.”

When asked to define the environment of the school, Cruz said “friendly.” “The one thing I hear the most from both our students and visitors to the school is how friendly everyone is,” she said. “I love that people get that vibe and it opens things up for them to feel very comfortable approaching faculty and staff with any issues, concerns or just to share a victory.”

The Scranton and Forty Fort campus of the school serves upwards of 300 students.

“I think one of the best things about the environment is how we interact with our students,” she said. “The school is really a community that is committed to helping their students, students understand, and make decisions about their education and their career. It’s a strong value system that I think is unique and it’s an environment that is welcoming.”

In the seven years that Madeline Levy Cruz has served as the president of Fortis Institute’s Scranton and Forty-Fort campuses, she has seen the school grow, adapting to the needs of its students and providing the workforce with skilled employees.

BELIEVE. ACHIEVE. SUCCEED.
Phlebotomy and Laboratory Assisting
Medical Assistant • Massage Therapist
HVAC • Electrical Trades • Class A CDL Driving
CALL 1.855.445.3276 FORTIS.EDU
FORTIS INSTITUTE • 166 SLOCUM ST. • FORTY FORT, PA
Financial aid available for those who qualify. Career placement assistance for all graduates. For consumer information, visit Fortis.edu.
Serving as the school’s president and dean since 2012, only a few short years after its founding, Scheinman has been able to watch the school grow and expand from a financially troubled institution to one with several campuses. And, according to Scheinman, 2018 marked another big year of growth. “It was a really good year for the medical school,” Scheinman said, excitedly launching into a list of good news. “I could brag about the students’ success.”

Students at the medical school had what Scheinman described as a “phenomenally successful” match day, where medical students are matched with residency programs. “And there are more (residencies) locally than ever before,” he noted. The medical school had what Scheinman described as a “phenomenally successful” match day, where medical students are matched with residency programs. Scheinman said the opening of this fifth campus was going “smoothly.” The school is preparing to have 18 students starting in Atlantic City next July.

“A quarter of our students are the first generation to go to college, so for Geisinger to say, ‘We will pay your tuition, we’ll put you through medical school for free,’ I think it’s a fabulous open door for students.”

The medical school has been part of the Geisinger system since 2016, and Scheinman said the school is settling into its role as the newest part of the far-ranging system. “The integration of Geisinger has brought enormous benefit to the medical school,” he said. “Now, we have four campuses.”

The Abigail Geisinger Scholars Program provides a full scholarship to students who commit to working for Geisinger for at least two years after graduation. Currently, it is being offered to 10 students annually, but Scheinman is hoping it will be available to more in the coming years. The scholarship program is wonderful,” he said. Reach Patrick Kernan at 570-991-6386 or on Twitter (PatrickKernan).
Johnson College students ‘in demand’

President, CEO touts job placement rates, small class sizes

Johnson College President and CEO Katie Leonard says students at the small Scranton school enjoy high rates of job placement.

SCANTON — Johnson College, founded more than a century ago by a wealthy coal baron, is producing students who are “in demand.”

“Our students are in demand. Employers are basically telling me we can’t produce them fast enough,” said Johnson President and CEO Katie Leonard. “This past year, close to 60 percent of our graduating class was placed in-field at the time of graduation, many of which had more than one job offer, which speaks volumes to the type of quality student we are producing.”

Leonard added that Johnson is consistently ranked as No. 10 on the list of colleges in the nation with the highest percent of liberal arts students.

Leonard likes to refer to the school as “small and mighty.” She cites a smaller student population (460) as a strength because it allows Johnson to craft a success plan to help them achieve their goals, Leonard said.

Leonard continued: “Nobody has the kind of connection to industry that we do. Year after year — I’ve been here for over 11 years in different roles — I had the opportunity to talk to students, and when I ask them what is the main reason they chose to attend Johnson College, typically nine times out of 10, they say it’s because of our high in-field job placement rates.”

These deep roots in industry gained Johnson recognition with Forbes. This year, the school was ranked No. 29 on a list of colleges working to close the “middle gap.” This ranking was based on performance indicators such as retention, graduation, and job placement rates.

“Small and mighty” The school also emphasizes small class sizes, so there can be more focus on individual students and their advancement. Leonard likes to refer to the school as “small and mighty.” She views a smaller student population (460) as a strength because it allows Johnson to craft a success plan to help them achieve their goals., Leonard said.

Johnson’s student body has steadily increased over the years, and Leonard is hoping to have 500 people enrolled in classes by 2020.

Forbes. This year, the school was ranked No. 29 on a list of colleges working to close the “middle gap.” This ranking was based on performance indicators such as retention, graduation, and job placement rates.

Leonard continued: “Nobody has the kind of connection to industry that we do. Year after year — I’ve been here for over 11 years in different roles — I had the opportunity to talk to students, and when I ask them what is the main reason they chose to attend Johnson College, typically nine times out of 10, they say it’s because of our high in-field job placement rates.”

These deep roots in industry gained Johnson recognition with Forbes. This year, the school was ranked No. 29 on a list of colleges working to close the “middle gap.” This ranking was based on performance indicators such as retention, graduation, and job placement rates.

“Forbes. This year, the school was ranked No. 29 on a list of colleges working to close the “middle gap.” This ranking was based on performance indicators such as retention, graduation, and job placement rates.”

Leonard continued: “Nobody has the kind of connection to industry that we do. Year after year — I’ve been here for over 11 years in different roles — I had the opportunity to talk to students, and when I ask them what is the main reason they chose to attend Johnson College, typically nine times out of 10, they say it’s because of our high in-field job placement rates.”

These deep roots in industry gained Johnson recognition with Forbes. This year, the school was ranked No. 29 on a list of colleges working to close the “middle gap.” This ranking was based on performance indicators such as retention, graduation, and job placement rates.

Leonard continued: “Nobody has the kind of connection to industry that we do. Year after year — I’ve been here for over 11 years in different roles — I had the opportunity to talk to students, and when I ask them what is the main reason they chose to attend Johnson College, typically nine times out of 10, they say it’s because of our high in-field job placement rates.”

These deep roots in industry gained Johnson recognition with Forbes. This year, the school was ranked No. 29 on a list of colleges working to close the “middle gap.” This ranking was based on performance indicators such as retention, graduation, and job placement rates.
We have such a proud and distinguished past, and I look forward to helping our college move forward into a new and ever-changing future,” she said. “Most importantly, I look forward to helping our students reach their full potential, not only during their time on campus but in years following graduation.”

Brundage said the college, celebrating its 150th anniversary, has a mission consistent with the one the school was founded on over a decade-and-a-half ago.

“Our society is evolving at a pace our predecessors could not fathom. Our job as educators is to continue to develop students who have the education and skills to succeed in an ever-changing world,” she said. “We must continue to develop the transferable skills our students will need for success upon graduation. We know they must be able to think and learn, analyze, communicate, and problem-solve in this rapidly and ever-changing world of work.”

Brundage said not only is the college preparing students for existing jobs, but also providing them with “new-to-market” skills not always included in a job description.

“We must look around the corner to meet the needs and demands of tomorrow while always striving to prepare students for continuous lifelong learning, leadership and citizenship,” she said. “In short, we must transition from ‘where we are now’ to ‘where we go next’ while upholding the values that make Keystone a special place.”

Brundage said Keystone goes beyond simply providing academic knowledge, instead, it empowers students to make their dreams realities.

“We've recently added programs that go the extra mile to provide even more value as we help students achieve their goals,” she said. For example,

- Keystone Commitment is a loan repayment program that helps students pursue the careers of their choice without the constant worry of long-term debt.
- The KC Encompass program eliminates the burdensome cost of purchasing textbooks each semester.
- The Stairs to Success four-year plan enables students to develop a meaningful and timely path to academic, personal and career success.
- The long-standing Keystone Promise is a pledge that the school will prepare our students and then stand by them after they graduate.

The college has also expanded its athletic offerings. In particular, it looks forward to seeing the new varsity football team play its first game first game in 2019.

When asked what makes Keystone College stand out among other learning institutions, Brundage cites the value of its education and the spirit of community that motivates students to serve.

“We are a college that cares about each other and about our community, as evidenced by the 20,000 hours of service hours our students perform each year at places like senior citizens homes, soup kitchens, and neighborhood parks and playgrounds,” she said.
"I never had any ambitions to be a college president," Ryan said. "It wasn't on my bucket list of things to do. The journey was a long one to get where I am today."

Ryan, a Wilkes-Barre native, obtained his accounting degree from Wilkes University, then a college, in 1971 after he graduated from Coughlin High School.

"I was able to travel," said Ryan. "I was able to get a master's degree from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia.

"I was able to teach a finance course at the university because of my business background," Ryan recalled. "When I walked into the class, I felt I had just lowered the IQ of the room. It was very intimidating at first, but I really liked it. I got a taste of higher education early on and I never forgot it."

Ryan went on to get his master of divinity from the University of Toronto. Shortly after Ryan received a call from the provincial of Holy Cross.

"I got a phone call learning that the congregation was building a new business school at King's College," Ryan said. "He knew I couldn't refuse because Wilkes-Barre is my home town and that I held business degrees."

Ryan was a professor in the McGowan School of Business for 10 years before he took over as Dean of the business school.

"I really enjoyed the external part of that job, meeting alumni and starting up the business forum," he said.

The business forum is an annual event held every year in the business school that the college takes a bus load or two of students to travel to meet King's College alumni in Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and New York City.

Ryan credits his prior role as business school dean for preparing him to become King's College president.

"I was selected and I really have enjoyed the many parts of my job," he mentioned. "When I travel and get to meet alumni and hear their stories is great.

"Men and women, many of whom are first generation college graduates are able to identify with the demographic of students enrolled at the college."

Since Ryan's role overseeing the college, new athletic and academic programs have seen great growth, but he mentioned how his role can be tough.

"It's tough to mediate resource allocation because everyone has great ideas," Ryan said. 

"Saying no to a good idea because there is a better one is hard. But at the end, I make the decision what's best for the college."

Ryan credits everyone at the college for its students success.

"Everyone at the college, no matter their role has their own part of transforming these young men and women's hearts and minds," Ryan said.

"Creating knowledge and preparing these students for the future is a great asset."

Rev. John Ryan, C.S.C., King's College

By Dan Stokes
dstokes@timelcoleader.com

WILKES-BARRE — Before helping to move King's College in a new direction with athletics and academic courses, President Rev. John Ryan, C.S.C., wasn't always an educator let alone a priest.

Name: Rev. John Ryan

Title: President of King's College

Quote: "Everyone at the college, no matter their role has their own part of transforming these young men and women's hearts and minds. Creating knowledge and preparing these students for the future is a great asset."
Mark Volk, Lackawanna College

Mark Volk, president of Lackawanna College, exits his office to attend a meeting.

Mark Volk is not your average college president.

**Name:** Mark Volk  
**Job title:** President of Lackawanna College  
**Years of service:** 14.5  
**Quote:** "Higher education should be about pushing you out of your comfort zone, not surrounding yourself with ideas and opinions you already hold."  

Mark Volk is a veteran with a unique set of skills – and more – to create an optimal area college for all.

Volk found himself a pre-law/history major at the University of Scranton in 1973. It was there that one of his life’s major events occurred. "I met one of the Army ROTC instructors at Scranton one day and that began a life-changing set of events," Volk said.

"Perhaps the best part of moving from the EVP of operations to president was that I had already worked with the amazing group of leaders at the college," Volk said.

"We were blessed to have the support of both our families, but I realized that law school was not going to be possible then – and, in reality, I had far more of my life left a calling to serve as an officer in the military," he said. "Perhaps it was destiny, but I met one of the Army ROTC instructors at Scranton before ultimately retiring as a colonel.

"Imagine the impact that could have on the thought process of an education and the value of money when one can enter the workforce years earlier with little to no loan debt. We see this as one of our most impactful programs ever offered."

Lackawanna College has also expanded scalable programs in their health-care and sciences fields, and is the first college in the area to offer degrees in petroleum and natural gas technology. Listening to student requests, Volk also announced that the school now offers six different bachelor degree programs and will be unveiling an online-only RN to BSN program in January.

"After all, how many hot air balloon chasing, basejumping, vintage sniper-rifle shooting, tattooed college presidents do you know? At least one. Life is too short not to enjoy it and if I can do anything beyond my basic role of leading this fabulous college, it will be to show people that being who you are is more important than who others think you should be."

"I hope to bring to the campus the same kind of leaders at the college, so the transition into my new role was fairly easy. We already began to work on a set of priorities and continued that process."

"Being who you are is more important than who others think you should be."
That's what a community college is so important," said Leary. "We provide an opportunity for many who never imagined they would pursue a college education. But they come here and they are successful!"

Leary gives a typical example of an LCCC student — a single mother who postponed her education to care for her family. "She had a responsibility of raising her children and now wants to pursue a career so she can better provide for her family," Leary said. "She comes here and she finds a path — an area she finds interesting — and it's available at an affordable cost. That's what a community college is all about. It's a special place that literally changes people's lives."

Leary, 67, began his career at LCCC more than 30 years ago, serving as assistant director of admissions. During his career, he has served in several senior leadership positions including vice president of student development for approximately nine years. In February 2008, he was inaugurated as the sixth president of the college. He also serves as an adjunct professor of history and political science.

Leary received a bachelor's degree from King's College, a master's degree from the University of Scranton, and worked on post-graduate studies in a doctoral program at Temple University. "I've said for years, I enjoy interacting with the students, helping them to adjust to challenges they may face when attending on campus. "It's amazing to watch how their lives change while they are here," said Leary. "And we have small class sizes here, giving students the opportunity to know the faculty and connect and interact. Our faculty members are very passionate about what they do."

Leary said he is always pleased when people come up to him in the community and they credit LCCC for their success in life. He said they tell him they, too, give back to the community.

"To meet the unique needs of students, Leary said LCCC makes education and training available throughout the region, serving the community at the 167-acre main campus in Nanticoke, plus 10 off-campus sites, including dedicated sites in Wilkes-Barre, Pittston, Hazleton, Berwick, Scranton and Shamokin.

"Growth is key to LCCC and Leary said it continues. The LCCC foundation has increased from $2.5 million to $6.5 million. "That speaks to the impact LCCC is having in the community," he said."

Accomplishments

• Joseph A. Pagliuca was named the executive vice president of student services.
• Francis S. and Mary Gill Carrozza, R.N. Health Care Center opened, which also includes the Bracco Dental Clinic.
• Expansion of the Public Safety Training Institute — academic unit for the Walk of Honor.
• Partnership in communi- ty and alumni fundraising efforts for scholarships, capital and instructional equipment — foundation and alumni have grown to $10.5 million over the past 10 years; scholarship awards have grown to approximately $350,000 in scholarships awarded to students each year.
• Expanded articulation agreements and dual admissions agreements with four-year colleges and universities in the region.
• Growth of the Early College Program which serves high school students.
• Patrick J. Solano Veterans Center opened.
• Establishment of a tobacco-free campus.
• Participated in $10 million Department of Labor TAACCCT Grant to prepare students for high demand occupations.
• Partnered with Luzerne County Head Start to establish a center on campus.
• Creation of the Goldman Sachs Learning Center at the LCCC Northeastern Regional Center in Shamokin.
• E.L.L. program with Pennsylvania Board (PCB).
• Partnerships with Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance (PORA). It is for individuals interested in pursuing the Certifi ed Recovery Specialist (CRS) credential through the Pennsylvania Certification Board (PCB).

Luzerne County Community College President Thomas Leary stands for a portrait in his office on the campus in Nanticoke.

Get Ready for Success! Now enrolling for Spring Semester! Classes begin January 14, 2019

100 programs • 50%+ cost less than college • 2 years here + 2 years at college • Save more than $40,000 • Area’s most popular major

Click on the link below to view our new website.

www.luzernejcc.edu/Get-Ready-for-Success
"If I had to be working anywhere, I’d like it to be here," Persico said.

Taking on the role of the university’s 12th president in 2016 was a homecoming of sorts for Persico, a Hazleton native who attended the school previously.

She’s spent most of her life in education, working as the principal at Notre Dame High School in East Stroudsburg, Monroe County. "I feel energized by young people," she noted.

Before taking on the presidency at Marywood, though, she worked for a stint with Trinity Health in Livonia, Mich., a position that she said helped her make the transition into working in higher education.

And based on what Persico sees, she thinks higher education is changing. "It’s always been competitive, but now it’s more so," she explained. "Students want to be in-demand immediately."

In addition to this, Persico said there are more non-traditional students than ever: adult learners who want to go back to school, first-generation students who might need a bit more financial help and others. She said that Marywood is working to meet the needs of all of these students.

Part of that, she said, includes a deeper focus on what she called the university’s "signature programs" — dietetics, architecture, nursing and physician assistant courses and speech language pathology — along with the traditional liberal arts. She also said the university has been committed to adding new courses, such as an upcoming respiratory therapy program and a new professional writing course. Marywood has also been partnering with other universities and local organizations, like the Creative and Performing Arts Academy of NEPA, to bring new experiences to students.

After a recent brand research project, Marywood has a new "brand promise," which is emblazoned on the inside of the university’s magazine: "From day one, Marywood empowers students to discover their passion and realize their purpose."

She said this promise has struck a chord with alumni she’s discussed it with. “A lot of alumni have told me they found their purpose here," she said. "And, in many ways, it seems as though Persico herself has found her purpose at Marywood.

"When I was younger, I thought I’d never come back," she recalled, saying she planned to leave the region. But even though she did that for some time, she was still drawn back by Marywood’s opportunity. “It’s always good to come home.”

Reach Patrick Kernan at 570-991-4386 or on Twitter @PKernan
Not the parents set the precedent for tireless devotion to tough causes. Dad made wooden toys in his spare time, including "at least 50 trains. He would give his creations to the school with the caveat that a toy reward wasn't for the smartest kid, it was for the kid who did the most to really try that year."

Despite moving in a home of 15, mom found hundreds of hours to help others. "If there was a clothing drive, or a need to clean something up in a park, she had her own group to drop off and get the work done," he smiled. "She was the county volunteer of the year." The high-achievement soon transferred to the 13 siblings. "All nine boys were Eagle Scouts, and two girls were Gold Star Girl Scouts." Somewhere he managed to pay for a bachelor's degree at Case Western in nearby Cleveland. Thinking he would go pre-med but quickly realizing that wasn't a fit. As he reached college, his dream was physics. "It was a big thing," he conceded. It was the early 1970s and "that was a big part of where the future of the economy was going." When Good- year announced its opening a new tech center in Akron, Botzman found his first job. He also found the secret to success in any job, one he readily admits using repeatedly since. "I got to work with a lot of really smart people, many research types. My job was to find out what they were researching and try to make something of it. All I had to do was figure out what to do with all those cool ideas."

"That has served me very well in higher education, where I'm surrounded by people who are a whole lot smarter and I am."

After eight years and 12 patents at Goodyear, with a business degree earned at Kent State in his spare time, Botzman heard Mr. McGuire in 1987's "The Graduate." Botzman graduated toward one word: "Physics."

"It was a big thing," he admitted. It was the late 1970s and "that was a big part of where the future of the economy was going." When Good- year announced its opening a new tech center in Akron, Botzman found his first job. He also found the secret to success in any job, one he readily admits using repeatedly since. "I got to work with a lot of really smart people, many research types. My job was to find out what they were researching and try to make something of it. All I had to do was figure out what to do with all those cool ideas."

"That has served me very well in higher education, where I'm surrounded by people who are a whole lot smarter and I am."

After eight years and 12 patents at Goodyear, with a business degree earned at Kent State in his spare time, Botzman heard Mr. McGuire in 1987's "The Graduate." Botzman graduated toward one word: "Physics."

"It was a big thing," he admitted. It was the late 1970s and "that was a big part of where the future of the economy was going." When Good- year announced its opening a new tech center in Akron, Botzman found his first job. He also found the secret to success in any job, one he readily admits using repeatedly since. "I got to work with a lot of really smart people, many research types. My job was to find out what they were researching and try to make something of it. All I had to do was figure out what to do with all those cool ideas."

"That has served me very well in higher education, where I'm surrounded by people who are a whole lot smarter and I am."

After eight years and 12 patents at Goodyear, with a business degree earned at Kent State in his spare time, Botzman heard Mr. McGuire in 1987's "The Graduate." Botzman graduated toward one word: "Physics."

"It was a big thing," he admitted. It was the late 1970s and "that was a big part of where the future of the economy was going." When Good- year announced its opening a new tech center in Akron, Botswana
Looking back, it's easy to connect the dots that placed Davie Jane Gilmour in the position she's in today.

Gilmour is the president of the Pennsylvania College of Technology — also known as Penn College — a local and national leader in delivering applied technology education while producing what Gilmour dubs “tomorrow makers” for the future.

“We are a student-centered institution that prides itself on teaching — often by faculty with real-world experience — and hands-on learning, reflecting our unique educational mission,” she said. “Our ultimate goal is no longer to be regarded as a ‘best-kept secret’ in higher education. To me and our reputation as a ‘best-kept secret,’ that’s not our educational mission. It’s always a primary goal in our budgeting process; it is vital for our students, many of whom are the first from their families to attend college,” she said.

By Marcella Kester
For Times Leader

Davie Jane Gilmour has been the president of Pennsylvania College of Technology for 20 years.

The college offers more than 100 academic programs with varying degree options, from Baccalaureate and Graduate Science to Gaming and Simulation Programs to Nursing. It even has one of just six accredited Engineering Technology - Welding and Fabrication programs in the country. Running a college doesn’t come without its trials and tribulations, Gilmour noted, especially a college that primarily concentrates in fields students, Gilmour said watching graduates flour- ish in the workplace after graduation makes all the efforts worthwhile.

“Keeping our lab equipment and facilities up-to-date to accommodate our applied technology focus is always challenging, given the associated costs, but we continually cooperate with business and industry to assist us in that regard,” she said, explaining that while students get to learn on state-of-the-art equipment, businesses receive new graduates who already have knowledge of how to use the equipment in the workplace.

Speaking of tuition costs, Gilmour was pleased to announce that for the last six years Penn College has been able to keep tuition increases at just four percent or less. She said she does this through maximizing student scholarships, creating industry collaborations, controlling costs and more.

“Keeping tuition costs as low as possible is a primary goal in our budgeting process, it is vital for our students, many of whom are the first from their families to attend college,” she said.

Penn College is chang- ing lives using the future made by hand approach to technology education. We are not a technical college; we are a college of technology. Students get a complete education and a full college experience on the path to becoming ‘tomorrow makers’ and future leaders.”

For more information about the Pennsylvania College of Technology, visit pct.edu. The col- lege’s next open house is April 6.

L

PRESIDENTIAL PROFILES: PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Name: Davie Jane Gilmour
Hometown: Williamsport
Job, title: President, Pennsylvania College of Technology
Years of service: 20 as President; 41 with the College

Davie Jane Gilmour, president of the Pennsylvania College of Technology, has been at the school for 40 years.

Pennsylvania College of Technology

Years of service: 20 as President; 41 with the College

Davie Jane Gilmour, president of the Pennsylvania College of Technology, has been at the school for four decades.

Pennsylvania College of Technology

Years of service: 20 as President; 41 with the College

Davie Jane Gilmour, president of the Pennsylvania College of Technology, has been at the school for four decades.
Henry Lawler is the chancellor of the university branch, serving Penn State Hazleton and its surrounding community since 2007. Before taking his position with the university, Lawler taught at Adirondack Community College in Queensbury, N.Y., for more than two decades, which is where he earned his associate’s degree in math and science studies. After obtaining a bachelor’s degree, Lawler continued onto his master’s in math and science studies. He then continued onto his master’s in math before obtaining his doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction from the State University of New York at Albany.

During his tenure at Penn State Hazleton, Lawler has spearheaded the “Every Student Counts!” initiative while sitting on various faculties, increasing diversity and programming, driving campus beautification and more. For the chancellor, it’s the people of Penn State Hazleton that make his job worthwhile.

“First, I’m most proud of the incredible students at Penn State Hazleton. They are bright, respectful, diverse and engaged individuals who bring life to the campus as they follow their pathway to success,” he said. “Secondly, I’m proud of the faculty and staff at the campus because they are here for the right reasons: to help students be successful.”

Lawler and the Penn State Hazleton community have joined in the effort to revitalize downtown Hazleton through various collaborations, including partnering with local organizations to launch Hazleton LaunchBox – an innovation hub that will offer everything from academic to business and funding programs after its scheduled launch in 2019.

His efforts to reinforce community relationships can be seen through his multiple commitments to community organizations, such as the Hazleton Public Library, Partners in Education, Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce and more. The Concerned Parents of the Hazleton Area recently honored Lawler with a Humanitarian Award.

Through efforts to remain state-of-the-art and offer in-demand programs, the university has been undergoing a complete transformation over the last few years by investing in new programs, infrastructure and facilities to meet the demands and needs of its student population.

“First, I’m most proud of the incredible students at Penn State Hazleton. They are bright, respectful, diverse and engaged individuals who bring life to the campus as they follow their pathway to success,” he said, noting an upcoming Health Policy and Administration program, expanding its healthcare programs, a recent $15.5 million renovation to the Kounts building and several upcoming fitness and recreation upgrades.

Lawler said college applicants should take the time to visit with colleges and universities they are interested in attending first hand.

“I would encourage students to visit and explore these colleges and universities and to meet with faculty, staff and students to become more familiar with all aspects of the institution under consideration,” he said. “The most important thing, though, is to ask a lot of questions.”

Gary Lawler taught at Adirondack Community College in Queensbury, N.Y., before coming to Penn State Hazleton.

PennState Hazleton

Name: Gary Lawler
Title: Chancellor at Penn State Hazleton
Quote: “First, I’m most proud of the incredible students at Penn State Hazleton. They are bright, respectful, diverse and engaged individuals who bring life to the campus as they follow their pathway to success.”

Visit hazleton.psu.edu for more information, or sign up for Penn State Hazleton’s next open house Jan. 26.

Gary Lawler is chancellor at Penn State Hazleton.

Gary Lawler taught at Adirondack Community College in Queensbury, N.Y., before coming to Penn State Hazleton.
"Engineers deal with structure, and it has to be sound," he said. "You start building below ground level and go up."

But after almost two years of working in what Wafa describes as the hottest populated place on Earth, he decided it was time for a change and came to the United States to pursue further education.

Now, as the chancellor of Penn State Scranton, Wafa keeps a collection of miniature flags on display atop his conference table. Each flag is for a state that is dear to him for a different reason. Such as South Carolina, for example, where Wafa got his Ph.D. in Industrial Management from Clemson University, or Indiana where he got his first academic job at the University of Southern Indiana.

Each flag represents a building block in the foundation of Wafa's career in education and serves as a reminder of how he got where he is today.

Wafa became chancellor in 2015 and since then has been hard at work strengthening the foundation of the Penn State Scranton community.

One of the first changes Wafa worked for was in the security department. While the campus has always been secured by a campus safety team, Wafa saw room for improvement and was able to start a full-fledged campus police department. He got the campus its own police car and was even able to be the first to ride in it.

Another even more noticeable change comes in the form of the campus’s name. Until recently, the campus was referred to officially as Penn State Worthington Scranton. Popularly the campus would often be referred to as Penn State Worthington or even simply “Worthington.”

Wafa spent a year working with the university to change the name to Penn State Scranton. He believes this is better for the campus community and name recognition. By referring to the campus as anything other than Penn State, students and prospective students were undercutting the value of the Penn State degree that can be earned there.

But perhaps the change that affected the campus foundation the most was the change to one of the campus’s strategic goals.

Wafa changed one of the campus’s goals to state “Welcoming Campus.” As the chancellor, how does Wafa translate this goal into the day-to-day services the campus provides?

“It has to come from the heart,” he says. “Anyone who walks on to this campus with the hope of earning a Penn State University degree should feel welcome because we are going to go out of our way to do whatever we can to help that person achieve their dream.”

Wafa sees the community at Penn State Scranton as a family, and his passion for helping the campus community comes from the love of his own family.

He raised four children and says he has learned a lot from each one.

“One time [one of my children] had a bad experience at college I promised myself to let that happen to anyone’s child,” he said. “I felt that every student here, regardless of age, gender or background, that person is a dear one to someone, to a mother, father, brother, sister, child or loved one and I want them to love learning.”

To anyone who may be considering the next step in their academic journey, Wafa offers some advice.

“Whatever their degree might be, and whatever institution they might choose, the number one thing I’d like to emphasize is that people deserve to invest in themselves and that is through higher education,” he said. “I want to help them succeed in that journey of theirs.”
By Jerry Lynott

He’ll begin his third year as chancellor and chief academic officer in January, displaying an evident enthusiasm and looking off the energy at the Back Mountain campus.

“Higher education is fast-paced, believe it or not. There’s a lot going on,” Jones said during a recent interview.

The local campus, established in 1916, has embarked on its second century of higher learning with a firm plan in place.

“So what we intend to do over the next 10 years, the 10 years since the anniversary which started in 2016, is to create a dynamic campus with enrollment growth, a high performance organization and a first-class faculty. Those are the pillars,” Jones said.

On his campus, Jones is in the process of updating the two-year strategic plan that will cover the time period of 2020 through 2024. He is responsible for overseeing its development that comport with the overall big-picture mission of the university and fulfillment of Penn State’s land grant mission of access and affordability to students.

“I lead here on the one hand autonomously in many ways. But also we’re one university. We truly are one university. And so I’m part of the university’s executive leadership team,” Jones said.

Each month, he travels to State College to meet with deans of the colleges and other chancellors, university President Eric Barron and executive vice presidents and provosts to discuss ways the university can better serve students.

“I lead here on the one hand autonomously in many ways. But also we’re one university. We truly are one university. And so I’m part of the university’s executive leadership team,” Jones said.

“Spurred development”

A new addition is the supply chain management degree at a time when the logistics and warehouse sectors are setting up shop in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The Hazleton campus offers the program as well.

In conjunction with the Invent Penn State initiative that applies the university’s research and entrepreneurialism resources to spur economic development and create jobs, the local campus has a “I’m-in” at the THINK Center in downtown Wilkes-Barre. The campus participates in the national initiative in conjunction with the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce to mentor area students.

“(That’s) the reach of the university into our community to spur economic development,” Jones said.

If he was a student today, he would “absolutely” want to attend Penn State. But it’s been years since he graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy and he’s followed a lengthy path in the military, government and academia to Lehman Township.

“It was a decision that was based on career advancement. It was at the point in my career where I wanted to lead an institution and I was prepared to do that,” Jones said.

Prior to Penn State, Jones previously served as vice president for strategy, administration and board affairs at Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. He and wife Kristen reside locally.

Reach Jerry Lynott at jlynott@timesleader.com or on Twitter @TLJerryLynott.

PRESIDENTIAL PROFILES: PENN STATE WILKES-BARRE

Dale Jones, Penn State Wilkes-Barre leader looking to grow campus

L

EHMAN TWP. — The two years Dr. Dale Jones has been at the Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus

have gone by quickly.

Dr. Dale Jones has been chancellor and chief academic officer of Penn State Wilkes-Barre in Lehman Township for the last two years.

THEIR’S STILL TIME TO APPLY!

Visit: wilkesbarre.psu.edu
Call: (570) 675-9238
Email: wbadminmissions@psu.edu

Dr. Dale Jones, who leads Penn State Wilkes-Barre, is shown during a recent interview. The Back Mountain campus celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2016, and Jones plans to grow enrollment over the next 10 years.
While Pilarz took over as the 27th president of the university in July, this isn’t his first go-around on campus; he previously served as the university’s 24th president from 2003 to 2011.

During his previous stint as president, Pilarz said one of his main focuses was on constructing new buildings and infrastructure of which the university was in desperate need.

This time, though, the university has those things, so the focus is a bit different. According to Pilarz, the university now has a threefold commitment. The university will be focusing on building its sense of community, broadening its focus on the liberal arts and humanities and increasing its commitment to the region.

“We’re working to make our resources available to the region,” Pilarz said, specifically highlighting a new task force recently established on campus focusing on “healing, reconciliation and hope” in light of recent developments with the ongoing sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church.

Pilarz said that the university will soon be launching its new capital campaign and, unlike his previous tour of duty in Scranton, the majority of the money raised will be going toward the university’s endowment.

“What we need is to make sure we’re offering the kind of programming that can only grow through scholarships,” Pilarz said.

One specific program he mentioned is an effort to get students to work side-by-side with professors on special projects, saying that students are “hungry for that opportunity.”

“There’s enough interest in that, even if we grow it four times, we’ll still have a long list of students waiting for the program,” he said.

Pilarz is a scholar himself — a professor of medieval and Renaissance literature — and has spent time at a handful of academic institutions around the country. He was previously the president of Georgetown Prep, a Jesuit preparatory school in Maryland, before his first time as president at the University of Scranton. He also served as the president of Marquette University in Milwaukee from 2011 to 2013.

Pilarz says he plans on focusing exclusively on being president for the first year, and then plans on adding a class onto his workload.

A native of Cherry Hill, N.J., Pilarz says that he sees Scranton, especially the university community, as a second home of sorts.

“It’s about the people that are here,” he said. “What makes this place unique is the quality of the people that are here together.”

By Patrick Kernan

SCANTON — Rev. Scott Pilarz has a unique vantage point on the outlook for the University of Scranton.

Name: Rev. Scott Pilarz
Title: President of the University of Scranton
Quote: “It’s about the people that are here. What makes this place unique is the quality of the people that are here together.”

TIMES LEADER MEDIA GROUP

Jerry Lynott is the Times Leader Media Group’s reporter covering Wilkes-Barre. He began working as a night reporter in October 1988 and has covered a variety of beats. He lives on a family farm in Wyoming County with his wife, Jean, and daughter, Sarah. Jerry is a proud graduate of the University of Scranton, and the Times Leader is proud he chose to live and work locally.
Patrick Leahy, Wilkes University

Leahy, 50, will leave Wilkes at the end of July to become the new president of Monmouth University in New Jersey. Until then, Leahy is intent upon finishing some projects and continuing to improve all things at Wilkes. “What is most satisfying is how people feel about Wilkes University,” Leahy said. “The level of pride has gone up considerably since I’ve been here.”

Leahy has served as president of Wilkes since 2012, having served the previous eight years in administration at the University of Scranton. He will be Monmouth’s 16th president.

During his tenure at Wilkes, Leahy introduced 20 new academic programs, the school’s first Ph.D. program and the university’s first five patents. Leahy was instrumental in construction and renovations at the campus totaling more than $100 million. “You can see the cosmetic changes, but it’s harder to show all the other academic and program changes,” Leahy said.

Sitting in his office at Weckesser Hall, Leahy talked about the development of an online nursing program, drawing 1,100 students from 2014 to 2017. Wilkes now has an undergraduate enrollment of 2,500 and a full- and part-time graduate student body of more than 3,900. Monmouth University has an enrollment of 6,167, with nearly 5,000 undergraduates.

Faculty growth

Since 2012, Leahy said Wilkes has grown the full-time faculty from 160 members to 195 members, an increase of more than 20 percent at a time when many institutions are decreasing the number of faculty members. “This academic year alone, we welcomed 17 new faculty members to campus,” Leahy said. “And there are people on our faculty who will spend the lives here. Those individuals should have a say in the decision-making process.”

Leahy also said the Wilkes faculty has not only increased in size, but in diversity as well. “And that reflects the diversity of our students,” he said.

Nursing program

Leahy added when he talked about the success of the Wilkes University Passion School of Nursing that has achieved a pass rate that exceeds the national and state averages on the National Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). Leahy said Wilkes bachelor of science in nursing graduates taking the test between October 2017 and September 2018 achieved a 92.12 percent pass rate. That exceeds the national average of 88.5 percent and the Pennsylvania average of 82.84 percent. It also marks the highest pass rate of bachelor’s degree granting nursing programs in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties.

Work to be done

Before he leaves for Monmouth, Leahy said there are several items on his to-do list. He said there are a few capital improvement projects he wants to get started, the Raibon Athletic Complex needs a face-lift, and a new admissions/wellness center is planned. “We’ve accomplished a lot in seven years and there is still a lot to be done,” Leahy said.

Rutheenwood days ahead

Leahy said he was “quite happy” at Wilkes when Monmouth came calling. He said he has mixed feelings about leaving his current job where he has developed many solid relationships and friendships. “This is not easy for me to say goodbye to all those relationships,” Leahy said. “I wish I was excited about this new opportunity, but without considerable trepidation.”

Leahy said he and his wife had two children when they arrived at Wilkes and have added two more since becoming president. “I will always hold a special place in my heart for Wilkes for the rest of my life," Leahy said.

Reach Bill O’Boyle at 570-991-6118 or on Twitter @TLBOBoyce.

PRESIDENTIAL PROFILES: WILKES UNIVERSITY

Times Leader Sunday, December 30, 2018 19

Wilkes University President Patrick F. Leahy smiles as he talks about his seven years at the downtown school and his plans for the future.

Leahy, 50, will leave Wilkes at the end of July to become the new president of Monmouth University in New Jersey. Until then, Leahy is intent upon finishing some projects and continuing to improve all things at Wilkes. “What is most satisfying is how people feel about Wilkes University,” Leahy said. “The level of pride has gone up considerably since I’ve been here.”

Leahy has served as president of Wilkes since 2012, having served the previous eight years in administration at the University of Scranton. He will be Monmouth’s 16th president.

During his tenure at Wilkes, Leahy introduced 20 new academic programs, the school’s first Ph.D. program and the university’s first five patents. Leahy was instrumental in construction and renovations at the campus totaling more than $100 million. “You can see the cosmetic changes, but it’s harder to show all the other academic and program changes,” Leahy said.

Sitting in his office at Weckesser Hall, Leahy talked about the development of an online nursing program, drawing 1,100 students from 2014 to 2017. Wilkes now has an undergraduate enrollment of 2,500 and a full- and part-time graduate student body of more than 3,900. Monmouth University has an enrollment of 6,167, with nearly 5,000 undergraduates. Faculty growth

Since 2012, Leahy said Wilkes has grown the full-time faculty from 160 members to 195 members, an increase of more than 20 percent at a time when many institutions are decreasing the number of faculty members. “This academic year alone, we welcomed 17 new faculty members to campus,” Leahy said. “And there are people on our faculty who will spend the lives here. Those individuals should have a say in the decision-making process.”

Leahy also said the Wilkes faculty has not only increased in size, but in diversity as well. “And that reflects the diversity of our students,” he said. Nursing program

Leahy added when he talked about the success of the Wilkes University Passion School of Nursing that has achieved a pass rate that exceeds the national and state averages on the National Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). Leahy said Wilkes bachelor of science in nursing graduates taking the test between October 2017 and September 2018 achieved a 92.12 percent pass rate. That exceeds the national average of 88.5 percent and the Pennsylvania average of 82.84 percent. It also marks the highest pass rate of bachelor’s degree granting nursing programs in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties.

Work to be done

Before he leaves for Monmouth, Leahy said there are several items on his to-do list. He said there are a few capital improvement projects he wants to get started, the Raibon Athletic Complex needs a face-lift, and a new admissions/wellness center is planned. “We’ve accomplished a lot in seven years and there is still a lot to be done,” Leahy said.

Rutheenwood days ahead

Leahy said he was “quite happy” at Wilkes when Monmouth came calling. He said he has mixed feelings about leaving his current job where he has developed many solid relationships and friendships. “This is not easy for me to say goodbye to all those relationships,” Leahy said. “I wish I was excited about this new opportunity, but without considerable trepidation.”

Leahy said he and his wife had two children when they arrived at Wilkes and have added two more since becoming president. “I will always hold a special place in my heart for Wilkes for the rest of my life,” Leahy said.

Reach Bill O’Boyle at 570-991-6118 or on Twitter @TLBOBoyce.
Paid Internships and Full & Part-Time Positions

Berkshire Hathaway GUARD Insurance Companies are pleased to offer internships and entry-level training programs in areas such as Programming, Business Analysis, Sales & Marketing, Underwriting, Claims Adjusting, Customer Service, and more!

A rapidly growing $1.5 billion company, we provide college students with the opportunity to apply your academic skills to real business situations — a “must-have” component for your resume and early career development.

Don’t see your area of concentration? Contact us anyway at guard.com/careers.

We offer a fast-paced, fun, and dynamic work environment with competitive salary, benefits, retirement, and profit sharing plans. In 2018, we added over 200 new positions across the country, and our plans for expansion continue.

We are proud of our long-standing partnerships with local colleges & universities.

Office Locations:
- Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Nashua, NH
- Rancho Cordova, CA
- Northbrook, IL
- Alpharetta, GA
- Richmond, VA
- Parsippany, NJ
- New York, NY

EOE