



# The GA-ZETTE

MARCH-APRIL 2021 *The Campus Newspaper for Penn State Greater Allegheny* VOLUME 7



**ONE YEAR LATER...**  
**Pandemic Stories**  
**From PSUGA**



**Page 18**

Almost Normal	Page 2
An Anti-Racist Campus	Page 4
Distinguished Professor Retires	Page 5
The Crossing Bridges Summit	Page 8
New Student Lounge & More!	Page 14
90 Seconds Under the Blue Umbrella	Page 23

# STATE OF CAMPUS, SPRING 2021: Slowly heading toward normalcy



## NATHAN REGA

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One year after the initial COVID-19 lockdown, the Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSUGA) community continues to follow pandemic precautions, including wearing face masks on campus and attending socially distanced or remote classes.

“We are continuing to follow the same protocol as well as random testing being ongoing,” Director of Student Services and Engagement, Lorraine Craven, stated, “We have not heard anything regarding vaccination requirements for future semesters.”

Dr. Jacqueline Edmondson, chancellor and chief academic officer, is hopeful that campus will be returning to nor-

mal in the near future, citing the low number of positive cases PSUGA has seen, according to the [COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

“Barring some terrible thing happening, the plan is for the fall of 2021 to look like the fall of 2019, where everybody’s back together and we’re on campus for classes and clubs and organizations,” Edmondson said.

Health Service Coordinator, Jennifer Ross, agreed with Edmondson.

“The cases have been very low here at GA and that is a testament to all students, staff and faculty following the guidelines,” she said. “I hope that with vaccinations increasing and all continuing to follow the guideline, we may soon have some sense of normalcy.”

This comes after President Joe Biden’s March 11 announcement to urge states to make all American adults eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations by May 1.

“Because of all the work we’ve done, we will have enough vaccine for all adults in America by the end of May,” Biden said during his address to the nation.

“That’s months ahead of schedule, and we are mobilizing thousands of vaccinators to put the vaccine in one’s arm.”

While there is currently no expected vaccination requirement on campus, students are encouraged to receive their shot when it becomes available to them.

“I was hesitant, but the benefits outweighed the risk,” Ross said.

“Being vaccinated not only protects yourself but also your family and friends.”

In the spirit of returning to normalcy, Edmondson announced plans to host an in-person commencement for Spring 2021 graduates on May 8 in accordance with University policies.

“Our Wunderley Gymnasium is a venue that can host our commencement aligned with Pennsylvania Department of Health guidance,” Edmondson explained.

“We will need to remain flexible and continue to follow public health guidelines. We are prepared to adjust plans, if necessary, based on changing virus conditions or changes in public health guidelines,” she added.

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(Continued from page 2)

While plans are not finalized, there will be limits to the number of guests permitted. All guests will be required to wear face masks and maintain physical distance per the [University's guidelines](#) and procedures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

"The ceremony will look a little different than it did in the past. For example, we won't have the platform party, the faculty who sit up on the stage," Edmondson added. "But at least we'll be able to meet in person and congratulate each of our graduates."

Additionally, PSUGA's commencement will be [live-streamed](#) to provide a virtual option for those who can't attend in-person. A University-wide virtual commencement will be held on May 9 at [virtual commencement.psu.edu](#).

With finals only a month away, Penn State is once again reimplementing its opt-in [alternative grading system](#) for the Spring 2021 semester to support students who may be facing academic challenges due the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Students are strongly advised to speak with their advisors when making the decision to use alternative grades.

Students returning to PSUGA for the Fall 2021

semester will have the opportunity to enroll in a new social work major.

"We'll be able to register students in the bachelor of social work degree in the summer and fall. I'm really excited about that," Edmondson said. "We hired Dr. Christopher Robinson to be our first social work professor and he brings a wonderful experience to the degree program. I'm excited about him joining our faculty, then joining our campus community."

Edmondson hopes the degree offering will attract a diverse population of students. She added that the social work program will be special, as Greater Allegheny is the first and currently only Penn State campus to offer the major.

"We will be collaborating with other campuses that may want to offer some of the courses that are in that degree program," she explained. "But for now, we're the only campus offering it."

While the PSUGA community will continue to mask up for the remainder of the Spring semester, Fall 2021 may bring the normalcy everyone craves.

"I'm really looking forward to having everyone back on campus again in the near future," Edmondson said. "Each day it feels like we're getting closer and closer to that reality. We've certainly turned a corner here."



## SPRING 2021 IN-PERSON COMMENCEMENT

Tickets are required for graduates and their guests who will attend the in-person Spring 2021 Commencement, planned for Saturday, May 8, 2021 at 1:00 P.M. in the Wunderley Gymnasium.

Students will receive an email to their Penn State account before April 15. The email will contain specific information concerning the ticket reservation process.

No one without a ticket will be permitted to attend or participate in the ceremony.

If you have any questions about [commencement](#), please email the Spring 2021 Commencement Planning Committee at [marketing-psuga@psu.edu](mailto:marketing-psuga@psu.edu).

PennState

# MASK UP OR PACK UP

WEAR A MASK

PHYSICALLY DISTANCE

WASH HANDS

QUARANTINE IF EXPOSED

LIMIT TRAVEL AND VISITORS

FOLLOW TESTING PROTOCOLS

# PSUGA'S TASK FORCE ON RACIAL EQUITY & JUSTICE

## Creating an anti-racist campus

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News Editor

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Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSUGA) is working to create an anti-racist campus with its Task Force on Racial Equity and Justice component of its Crossing Bridges Summit signature program.

The task force was proposed last summer by Dr. Jacqueline Edmondson, chancellor and chief academic officer, to combat racism and promote social justice on the Greater Allegheny campus.

The task force, consisting of faculty, staff and students, is led by Dr. Johnathan White, assistant teaching professor of history. It consists of two subcommittees covering curriculum and also faculty and staff development, to ensure all members of the campus community develop an understanding of racial justice, racism and its impact on society.

An initial short-term goal of the task force is to establish faculty and staff workshops and a required first year course on understanding and remedying racism. The committee's ultimate goal is to provide policy recommendations in areas of social justice



*Dr. Johnathan White teaching class, pre-pandemic and racial equity.*

White expressed his observations in his colleagues and the campus community since the implementation of the task force. He said one of the biggest advantages the team has is the campus community's eagerness to make a difference.

"In doing this work we all put a mirror up to ourselves, so as a teacher you think, let me look at my own syllabus, and say where are the biases I see," White said. "When I'm in class, am I practicing equity?"

"I want us to be the generation where people look back and look at this contingent at Penn State and say these people made it hard for racism to breathe," he added.

White's experience as an educator and student has prepared him to lead the task force into its

purpose.

"I went to a Black college in Atlanta. We were taught to be woke. So, I developed my social consciousness there coming out of undergrad," White said. He completed his graduate work at the University of Pittsburgh and contributes this part of his education to his current broader understanding of social justice.

"Going to Pitt doing my graduate work, I worked with the Black historians there who were looking at oppressed groups, and that helped me understand the nature of power in a more global sense. Sometimes as a Black man you just focus on the micro and the things that affect me," White said.

His time in graduate school provided him with the opportunity to apply the knowledge he learned

in undergrad. He addressed how getting down to the grassroot level and listening to people's stories has made his teaching practices more applicable to his students.

"When you have a chance to walk out and see many of the conditions that many of these people are faced with, you begin to understand it can't be that they're just lazy," White said. "It forces you to think deeper and also see the humanity."

White also obtained his understanding of the challenges oppressed groups face because of his experience as a Black man raised in an impoverished community. This has been a driving factor in his work as an activist, educator and historian.

"As a professor, I've tried to make my teaching be able to stand alongside oppressed people and be responsive to the things I've seen in my community work," White added.

For more information and upcoming announcements about the Task Force on Racial Equity and Justice visit the [Crossing Bridges Summit website](#).

Everyone is encouraged to participate by emailing White at [jjw18@psu.edu](mailto:jjw18@psu.edu).

# MONTECINOS LEAVES LASTING IMPRESSION ON STUDENTS, CAMPUS, GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

## Distinguished Professor retires after more than 30 years at Penn State

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For more than three decades, Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Verónica Montecinos, has been guiding Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSUGA) students not just in the classroom but in global education and undergraduate research. As the Spring, 2021 semester winds down its final weeks, Greater Allegheny bids a retirement farewell to Montecinos as one of its most cherished and longest-serving professors.

Montecinos' career spans work in the classroom and in government and community service. She began her career at Penn State as an assistant professor of sociology in 1990 after having served in a variety of non-teaching positions, including as a researcher at the Ministry of Labor in Chile and as a consultant for international organizations on topics related to democracy, social policy, gender inequality, and education.

Montecinos began her teaching career at the Catholic University in Santiago, Chile and she

also taught at the University of Pittsburgh while completing a Ph.D. in sociology and a Masters in political science. She also obtained her Master's in Sociology from the University of Pittsburgh.

Montecinos' dedication to education has been recognized with numerous accolades and recognitions. In 2019, Penn State named Montecinos a Distinguished Professor in

recognition of her outstanding academic record and expertise in the areas of gender and politics.

In 2017, along with Associate Professor of English, Dr. MaryEllen Higgins, Montecinos was awarded the General Education Integrative Studies Seed Grant from Penn State's Office of General Education. The pair was awarded for their course, SOC 290N--

Cinema and Globalization. This course explores how films reflect (and in some cases attempt to explain, promote and memorialize) the emergence and transformation of global social phenomena.

Students also recognized the impact that Montecinos has had on the campus as she received the Penn State Alumni Student Award for Excellence in Teaching and was a Penn State Teaching Fellow in 2013.

Dr. Jaqueline Edmondson, chancellor and chief academic officer, spoke highly of Montecinos dedication and work ethic.

"Dr. Montecinos founded the Teaching International program which is intended to educate students about global regions and global concerns, and her legacy is the program's ongoing impact on students, staff and faculty," Edmondson said.

The Teaching International program brings nationally recognized scholars to PSUGA to share their knowledge with the campus community.



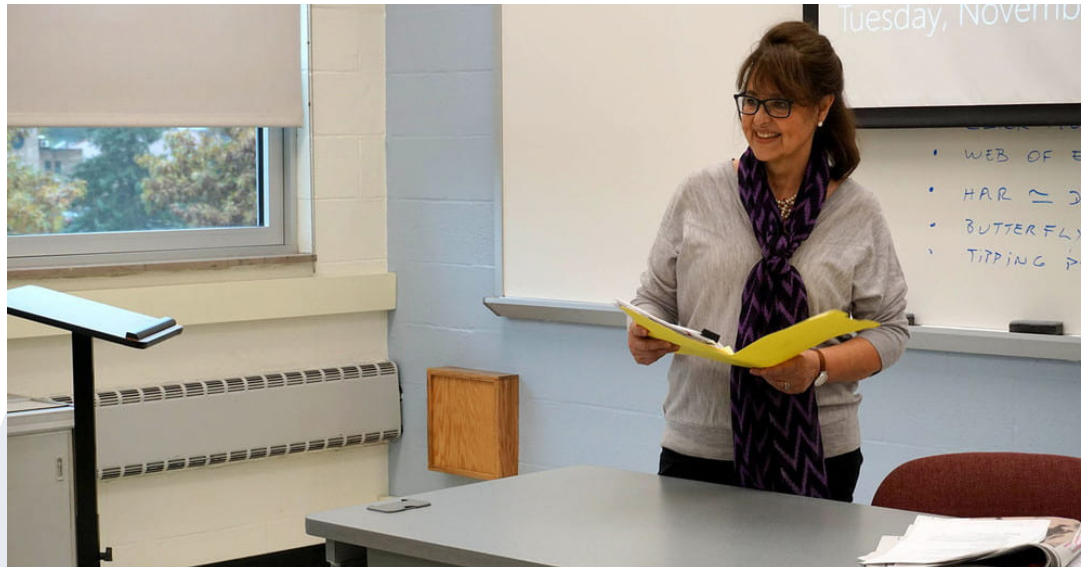
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The program also has a research component, where students' complete programs focused on a global theme or issue. The program was established to "internationalize the curriculum."

"The idea came from reading about the worldwide anti-war mobilizations of 2003. I thought campus students should have more opportunities to learn about world affairs from a historical and comparative perspective," Montecinos said.

"We started in January of 2004 with Teaching Haiti. The country was celebrating 200 years of independence and we planned a series of learning activities that included course assignments, student research projects, a campus play, invited speakers, an exhibit of Haitian paintings, films and more," she added.



**Distinguished Professor, Dr. Verónica Montecinos, teaching class, pre-pandemic**

She reminisced on her most memorable moment from the program's beginnings.

"Some had questioned the relevance of focusing for a year in the study of a small country. However, by February, the importance of understanding the history of Haiti and its contemporary circumstances was clear. President Aristide was ousted and forced into exile amid political violence," Montecinos said.

What Montecinos loves most about teaching is sharing her enthusiasm for the study of social and political events.

"The crisis in Haiti led the news for several weeks. Its bicentennial was talked about not just at our campus, but across the international community," she added.

Montecinos will always be remembered for her hardwork and dedication to the PSUGA campus.

She left with a few final words of wisdom for students, faculty and staff.

"I have no advice. Yet, in my experience, academic life becomes richer and much more interesting when collaborating with people from other disciplines," Montecinos concluded.

Penn State Greater Allegheny will truly miss Dr. Verónica Montecinos and all she has given to enrich the campus community.

## ACE: WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER!

The [Center for Academic and Career Excellence \(ACE\)](#) is committed to enhancing quality of life for students by providing access to services and resources that address food insecurity, housing insecurity and mental wellness. The ACE program is designed to support first-generation college students, low-income students and students with disabilities.

### Contact ACE and Schedule an Appointment:

A member of the ACE office staff will be available by virtual appointment during normal business hours Monday – Friday using Zoom, Microsoft Teams and email. If you are not available to meet during normal business hours, we will make every effort to accommodate your request. **Schedule an Appointment through [Microsoft Booking](#).**

### Virtual Office Information:

**Erica Willis, ACE Director**

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# PSUGA GOES GLOBAL THROUGH TEACHING INTERNATIONAL

## April features global health & democracy focus

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Penn State campuses are unique. Some are nearly on a lake. Others sit at the top of a hill. Still others are part of a downtown metro environment.

The Greater Allegheny Campus, for example, is the campus of friendly faces that makes it more like a home. Along with the sylvan green space, the campus has the most diverse student population of any Commonwealth campus. The close-knit faculty and staff bring fresh ideas and many events and workshops that help to broaden the minds of everyone who is here, whether on ground face-to-face or in a virtual environment, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With or without the pandemic, the global perspective continues in helping to bring programming to the campus through Teaching International. Each year there is a different theme and a geographic region or country that complement each other through a variety of programs, lectures and events. The Teaching International (TI) program

was founded in 2004 by Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Dr. Verónica Montecinos, who recently retired after 30 years at Penn State Greater Allegheny. The program is currently coordinated by a team of faculty, staff and students and led by Associate Professor of English, Dr. Mildred Mickle.

Mickle says the idea for Teaching International “gets students and faculty to focus and understand the global world in which we live.” Sadly, the pandemic changed this year’s TI events to all remote for safety reasons, so Mickle managed to work through ZOOM.

It isn’t the normal Ostermeyer Room setting as in past years, but it is still sufficient so everyone can join in the events of TI and experience new people and places from remote locations.

“Any faculty, staff, and student can participate in Teaching International,” Mickle said.

“It is a campus collaboration. Faculty across disciplines participate in a variety of ways: suggesting programming ideas; working with the campus sustainability program;

presenting lectures and theatrical productions,” Mickle said, in addition to “paintings, drawings, photos, business topics, science-related research, and so on,” she added.

Despite the challenges with the pandemic and having to present the TI program through a virtual platform, Mickle was excited to see many students and faculty participate.

“The people who participate tend to leave with newfound lessons that will help them later down the road,” she said. “In the case of (the) health and democracy (theme) this year, people can learn the ways of mental and physical health and learn about democracy differences.”

Mickle added, “We go to great expense with the workshops and lecturers to bring to the campus, whether in-person or remotely...what folks can take away is a better understanding of how to relieve stress, or the many uses of art or cultural art. They can even understand the academic perspective with the lecturers, too,” she added.

Some of the activities this year featured belly dancing, tai chi and yoga. Originating in ancient

India, dating back to around 3000 BCE, yoga focuses on the physical, mental and spiritual practices and disciplines that embraces a balance between the mind and the body.

“Yoga is both a global and sustainable use of stress relief of the body, the mind and the spirit,” Mickle said. “It’s an activity...that helps strengthen the mind.”



Mickle and her team will soon convene to plan for the 2021—2022 year of Teaching International when, once again, the cultures of the world will be a focus on the quiet, family-like campus of Greater Allegheny.

Teaching International programs are scheduled during Common Hour, through ZOOM, through a link that is provided to attendees after they register for the workshops through [Engage](#).



Panelists, clockwise from top left to right: Dr. Johnathan White (moderator), Dr. Kathi R. Elliot, Dashawna J. Fussell-Ware, Raven Davis, Dr. Stella Onuoha-Obilor.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS TO BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH

### Third installment of PSUGA's Crossing Bridges Summit

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Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSUGA) presented its third installment of its campus signature community project--the Crossing Bridges Summit's (CBS) speaker series, entitled "Psychological Perspectives on Black Women's Health," a discussion on the mental health outcomes experienced in Black people in their diverse areas of work.

The Summit - part of the campus' mission to bridge the racial divide in Pittsburgh and the region by engaging the campus with local, regional and national experts on ini-

tiatives that engage the broader community in eliminating racism and promoting racial equity - went virtual this academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and it was livestreamed by WPSU, Penn State's public media station.

Panelists for this session included Raven Davis, enrollment unit supervisor, Allegheny County Health Department; Dr. Kathi R. Elliot, CEO, Gwen's Girls; Dashawna J. Fussell-Ware, doctoral student fellow with the nonprofit, Steel Smiling; and Dr. Stella Onuoha-Obilor, vice-president, clinical quality at Highmark Health. Moderator was Assistant Teaching Professor in His-

tory, Dr. Johnathan White.

White addressed that the 2019 University of Pittsburgh's "[Inequality Across Gender and Race Report](#)" indicated that wellbeing can be measured by the absence of disease or infirmity, physical fitness, and access to healthcare but that it also includes emotional stress.

The discussion began with the topic of weathering and the stress of racism that brings about physical and biological impact to Black women's health and the impact on birth outcomes for Black women and their children.

Coined by Dr. Arline Geronimus, a researcher at the University of Michigan, weathering is the constant stress of

racism and may lead to premature biological aging. It may also impact birth outcomes for Black women and their children.

Geronimus observed that African American women face different biological outcomes and premature biological aging compared to their white counterparts.

White engaged the panelists by asking them if they could "share with us the psychological and physiological stressors" they observe in their work.

"There are a lot of people walking around saying oh yeah I'm fine; I'm doing really good for myself; I'm not stressing about anything; and the *(Continued on next page)*



(Continued from page 8)

reality is that if you are Black or of African descent, unfortunately, that's just not true,"

Fussell-Ware said.

Fussell-Ware's work is dedicated to promoting the mental health wellness of Black and brown Pittsburghers. She oversees youth programming at Steel Smiling, an organization focused on eliminating barriers and the stigma involving mental health care.

"You see it in our youth. They're experiencing racism at school. They're watching it on these videos that are constantly repeating on CNN, MSNBC and Fox," she said. "They're constantly exposed to that. So, even if they're home life and school is perfect, the impact of seeing people that look like you, murdered, beat down by police officers, beat down by vigilantes, is mentally exhausting," Fussell-Ware added.

Mental illnesses may influence and even cause physical and biological distress, according to Fussell-Ware. "That sadness, depression, and anger can lead to physio-

logical effects such as suppressed appetite. If you're not eating because you're sad that has reverberating consequences throughout the rest of your body."

The traumas Black people are exposed to are often viewed as strength, when in actuality they can have long lasting and even fatal consequences, where the psychological impact of being a victim is part of a system of ongoing oppression, according to Elliot.

"People would use the term resistance, and it would frustrate me because there's conditions that we shouldn't even have to be facing to be resilient about," she said.

"Until we continue to have courageous conversations like this and talk about some of not just the issues but solutions, we will continue seeing some of the same manifestations of the racism that exists," she added.

Davis spoke from the perspective of a social worker who has witnessed the impact of the pandemic on children, and the stress it causes mothers.

"When I look at the youth I work with, you think about kids whose steady meals and mental

health services might have come from school," Davis said. "Those things not being in place any longer or having to take place at home, when you are trying to work and manage multiple children, has definitely been a disservice to kids and making sure that they have all they need," she added.

Onuoha-Obilor brought the perspective of the medical field and provided an insight into how health care providers can prevent and resolve some of the unfortunate mental health outcomes addressed in the University of Pittsburgh's report. She addressed how one in five Americans have a mental health illness, but there is still a stigma on having one.

"For people who have mental health illnesses, understanding how and where to seek healthcare can be particularly overwhelming. It's not only because these illnesses are linked to physical conditions. There are also underlying factors," she said.

Onuoha-Obilor addressed the social and financial barriers that may stop a person from seeking or receiving healthcare. She emphasized the

importance of establishing resources that will eliminate these barriers, providing a safe and sustainable environment, and making sure people have access to them.

"Then you have to understand how you will link them to the resources, in the communities that will give them sustainable, improvement," she said. "However, caring for the body, and even the mind it doesn't stop the mental issues, or stop the stressors that they have because you have to understand how the environment is effecting this individual's condition."

The event, which opened with Senior BioBehavioral Health major, Ke'ira Williams, presenting a spoken word honoring the power of Black women, closed with a robust question and answer session and a call for continued discussion and a focus on next steps.

To attend the final event in the Crossing Bridges Summit speaker series - "Political Influences on Black Women's Health" - on Apr. 15 and to watch archived recordings of previous events go to <https://www.watch.psu.edu/crossingbridges/>.

# THE CROSSING BRIDGES SUMMIT

BRIDGING RACIAL DIVIDES IN THE MON VALLEY

# AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AT 30

## Past, present, future

**SARA PAYO**

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*The following is part one of a two-part series by Sara Payo, senior communications major and recipient of Greater Allegheny's 2021 Dedication to Diversity and Inclusion Student Award.*

Looking through the lens that was 2020, people have witnessed the world through multiple, difficult events. In the United States alone, there were celebrations of historical anniversaries: from the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote; to the overdue revival of the civil rights movement after grieving the hundreds of lives lost from decades of systemic, racial violence; all while living through a global public health pandemic. These experiences are utterly life-changing and unforgettable.

One event of significance that was briefly celebrated, but overshadowed, was the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush on July 26, 1990, which

provided “equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities.” The law made it a federal offense to discriminate against individuals based on their disability.

Prior to the ADA being enacted, there were similar pieces of legislation submitted to Congress but all failed to be passed. It took a group of activists and advocates, including individuals living with disabilities, in March of 1990, to leave their mobility aids, such as wheelchairs and scooters, to crawl up the Capitol building steps in Washington, D.C. to make an impact.

This physical demonstration came to be known as the “Capital Crawl,” which proved just how crucial the ADA was to the public and that it must be passed. It is often seen as the pivotal moment that brought the ADA to passage.

What followed were years of revisions, amendments, and additional legislation that would enable individuals with disabilities to have access to opportunities in all aspects of their lives. The ADA not only applies to jobs and workplaces but also “state and local government services [...] and public accommodations and commercial facilities.”



**“Capital Crawl” photo from Action for Access by Tom Olin. Courtesy Easter Seals blog on the 25th anniversary of the ADA (2016)**

It defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.”

The significance of the ADA anniversary shows just how short a period of time the law has been in place, the benefits it brought to Americans, as well as the need for improvements and continued advocacy to sustain the disabled community well into the future.

The ADA, as it is enforced by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), primarily focuses on the physical aspects of accessibility and the productivity of individuals with disabilities based on how they contribute to society. Even with these enforcement efforts and mandates, it still falls on the disabled community **(Continued on next page)**

*(Continued from page 10)*

to educate those not following the ADA and to advocate for improvement when they encounter barriers.

Siobhan Brooks is the disability services coordinator at Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSUGA) where she says the campus does its best to “guarantee program access so that all barriers are removed to ensure equal opportunity for everyone.”



Brooks said that the campus wants to make sure that students can be successful and that the importance of the ADA for students, staff and faculty is critically important on what the campus has done to be accessibility-compliant.

“Access is everything, and I think you want everybody to have an opportunity to thrive and flourish in any environment, regardless of any type of ailment,” she said.

The ADA not only assists with the academic accommodation but also making sure establishments are safe for people with physical disabilities. “That’s a big emphasis in

it as well,” Brooks said.

And where does Pittsburgh fit into this picture from the past 30 years until now? As one of the most livable cities in America, Pittsburgh is known by a few different names: “Steel City,” “City of Bridges,” and “City of Champions.” Many efforts have gone into improving life for Pittsburghers over the years, but it still leaves the disabled community behind in multiple ways.

Those who work within the Pittsburgh disability community illustrate the importance of the ADA as well as its weaknesses and that improvements still need to be made here and across the globe. Libby Powers, a research assistant in Assistive and Rehab Technology at the University of Pittsburgh, was born with her disability and uses a mobility aid to assist her as she works with other individuals with disabilities in the community.

“The ADA has impacted my life greatly as an individual with a disability who is also a part-time-to-almost-full-time-wheelchair user,” Powers said. “It gives me the ability to go to work and be a contributing member of society in multiple ways and ways that I choose.”

Powers said the ADA “has allowed me to become more equal to the rest of the world and to

not let just the fact that I have a disability impede the way that I participate with my able-bodied counterparts...we’re the ones with the lived experiences of inequality, of stereotypes, of stigmas.”



Powers said that “Pittsburgh’s a small but big place too.” She added, “That’s another great example: the ADA has opened doors for individuals to maneuver and participate in their own lives - through service animals, through letting those types of services be in effect to help the individual be an active participant in their own life.”

Aprilynn Artz is a licensed professional counselor and president at Connection: Counseling & Consultation Inc, a local organization that provides counseling, coaching, and additional services within the greater Pittsburgh area. Artz said that the ADA is “important because all people should have equal levels of opportunity... equal treatment and equal access.”

Recently Artz, who is

also the director of Quest Therapeutic Camp of Pittsburgh and works with children and adults living with a broad range of disabilities, became aware of how certain things are not accessible at camp.

She referenced the experiences of two campers with disabilities. Artz said she learned about many instances of inaccessibility for those in the deaf community from the translator of a child who is deaf and uses sign language to communicate.

Camp staff had to navigate challenging situations for another child who uses a wheelchair when they went on field trips in the community. Artz said, “It wouldn’t just be easy,” when they had to go around the outside of a building just to get inside, or had trouble finding an elevator.



On another trip, Artz said they rented a karaoke room in Oakland. “We didn’t even think about it, and when we got there, it was up steps.”

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# PITT GRADUATE TALKS EXPERIENCE WITH ADA



(Continued from page 11)

“With both of those people, I became more and more aware of the ways in which certain things aren’t accessible, and only really realize it when you’re in that other person’s shoes. It’s not something people go around thinking about,” Artz added.

Elizabeth Rudzki is a graduate student researcher at the University of Pittsburgh. Rudzki, identifies as disabled and uses a service animal to assist her. Rudzki said that the ADA “acknowledges and makes law...that people with disabilities are people deserving of the same basic access rights and

equity of life as everyone else.”

Rudzki recalled situations differently when she travelled outside of the country. “When I went to Germany and Poland, which do not have anything equivalent to the ADA - and even Canada - I often experienced access issues such as access to public transit [where they] may not have an elevator to reach the platform level.” She added, “In Poland, I was not protected in taking my service dog with me anywhere besides public government buildings, and was at the goodwill of everyone else which was, unfortunately, not common.”



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## SPRING 2021 FINAL WELLNESS DAY

Wednesday, Apr. 7 Physical & Environmental Wellness



**PennState**  
Greater Allegheny

Penn State Greater Allegheny presents the  
2020-2021 Crossing Bridges Summit

### Summit Talk: Date and Time Change

Our April Summit Talk will now take place on  
**Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 4:35 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. ET**

[REGISTER FOR THURSDAY'S SUMMIT TALK](#)

Be sure to join us earlier in the day for

### Political Influences on Black Women's Health

Thursday, April 15, 2021  
3:00 p.m. ET

[CLICK TO WATCH OUR LIVE EVENT](#)

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# SGA GOES HYBRID FOR SPRING AMID LOW STUDENT MEETING ATTENDANCE

## Call for elections for next academic year

**CHEYENNE HENNEN**  
Contributing Writer

[csh5384@psu.edu](mailto:csh5384@psu.edu)

While some could attend virtually through ZOOM, officers for the Greater Allegheny Student Government Association (SGA) held its first in-person meeting in more than a year as it continues to meet every two weeks to talk about its role and obligations to the campus community.

In spite of disappointing low student attendance at the meeting, SGA officers continue to work to find ways to help students engage during remote learning, finding support for mental health services, and plan for campus events, like unity talks focusing on identity and activism, ice cream socials, and elections for the next academic year.

Interim SGA President, Sidney Przybylski, also invited University Park government leaders to visit with the campus during a recent meeting to discuss student governance from the overall University perspective. President of University Park's CCSG (Council of Commonwealth Student Governments) Hibah Akbar, and Vice President,

Akash Viramgama, joined via ZOOM to explain the relationship between campus SGA organizations and the CCSG and its work on behalf of all Penn State students.

Greater Allegheny's Disability Inclusion Series, also sponsored by SGA, was held throughout the month of March, and an Advocacy and Accessibility event is scheduled for April, at a date to be announced.

"Really try to attend the events that are sponsored by SGA," Przybylski said. She also encouraged students to step up and run for an elected board position for next academic year.

An ice cream social will be held during Common Hour on Apr. 14 in the Student Community Center in order to promote the elections and to register interested students to be on the ballot for the elections being held on Apr. 23.

"Joining SGA will look good on your resume," Przybylski said, adding, "Come and get some ice cream!"

Several board positions are open for interested students. Election forms for SGA will be posted on the organization's Engage



*The new Student Government Association logo. Image by SGA Interim President Sidney Przybylski.*

page at <https://psugreat-allegheny.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/sga>.

Other SGA-sponsored activities that students can be on the lookout for during the last month of the semester are events to celebrate Earth Day, with plant making and other outdoor activities.

"Look out for vegan and vegetarian options and try one of those at the Café throughout the month," Przybylski added.

Finally, Przybylski unveiled a new SGA logomark she designed, featuring a drawing of a goat to symbolize the goats that have become synonymous

with the campus and its sustainability initiatives.

SGA will continue to hold hybrid meetings for the rest of the semester during Common Hour, with the next one scheduled for Apr. 9 and the final one of the year on Apr. 23, when SGA elections will be held and new officers sworn in.

Przybylski invites all members of the campus community to attend—in person in Room 120 in Frable, and through ZOOM at: <https://psu.zoom.us/j/3809792968>.



# FRABLE RENOVATIONS ENTER FINAL PHASE

## New student lounge & more coming Fall 2021

**NATHAN REGA**

Editor-in-Chief

[nrr5191@psu.edu](mailto:nrr5191@psu.edu)

The Frable Building's second floor renovations have entered their final phase, with construction anticipated to finish this summer. Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSUGA) students, staff and faculty can expect to enjoy the many improvements and exciting new spaces these renovations will bring in the Fall 2021 semester.

If you've been attending any in-person classes on the second floor of Frable, you've probably

noticed the temporary construction barrier installed just outside the elevator and center stairwell. Maintenance Manager, Adam Homer, notified campus via email that "this barrier will isolate half of the floor to allow for the continued renovations and improvements in Frable."

David Denardo, director of finance and business, listed several quality of life and safety improvements that will be made during this time, including: abatement of any remaining asbestos; expansion of the building sprinkler system; renova-



**The temporary construction barrier installed on the second floor of the Frable Building.**

tion of all existing classrooms, labs and existing restrooms; and the addition of a new unisex ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) restroom.

The physics lab will be greatly improved as well, with the addition of a new office space for Associate Professor of Physics, Dr. Beth Lindsey, and the creation of an access point to the storage closet from the Frable hallway.

"If Dr. Lindsey is teaching a class and an adjunct professor comes in to prep for their class next, in today's age you'd have to go through the classroom and disrupt class to go into the storage to prep for the next lab," Denardo explained. "In the future, you're going to be able to go into those space independently."

**(Continued on next page)**



**Illustrations of projected Frable student lounge by Franklin Integrated Interiors**



**Current Student Community Center game room**

*(Continued from page 14)*

“I’m really excited for the renovations,” Lindsey stated. “I think the new prep room will be a much nicer and more useful space than the old prep room, and I’m looking forward to having my office immediately adjacent to both the prep room and the physics lab.”

Finally, in what’s likely the most exciting change for students, is the ad-

dition of a new student lounge in Room 220. The lounge will feature an area for students to “hang out and relax” with a TV; a “tech” or “media bar” with charging stations for phones and other devices; and privacy areas for students looking for a quiet space to study or relax.

“We think that this is going to be a highly utilized space,” Denardo explained. “That’s why we talked with the Student

Facilities Fee Committee, who’s helping fund this lounge with the student facilities fee that you guys pay.”

Denardo believes that the campus really needed student collaboration spaces.

“When I got to campus, the amount of people that I saw sitting on the floor to find an outlet to charge their phone or laptop or sit with their buddy was crazy to me,” he said. “So we’re really trying to create some of these spaces so that when students have a long day and they need the plop down or they need to charge, they don’t have to sit on the freaking floor,” Denardo continued. “And I think this will be one of the coolest places on campus when it’s done.”

While not in Frable, more exciting renovations are planned to be

made to the game room in the Student Community Center. Denardo explained there will be a four screen TV set up with an X-Box, Playstation 5 and Nintendo Switch. Storage spaces will be available for students to safely place their belongings while they “hang out and play games with friends.”

Denardo says these spaces, along with the Ostermayer Lab Building, are all expected to be in use for the Fall 2021 semester.

“Our students deserve the same experience as people who get to go to Main,” Denardo said. “And I think all these spaces and Ostermayer could be on Main Campus and fit in perfectly fine. So, I think all these renovations are giving our students the experience of Main Campus facilities in McKeesport.”



**Illustration of projected SCC game room by LGA Partners**

# VOTE "BOB" FOR STUDENT SENATOR TO PENN STATE'S FACULTY SENATE!



That's Bobur Rakhmatullaev, Sophomore, from Greater Allegheny!

Bob wants to represent you and your interests for the next year. He is one of five student candidates from across the state who are vying for one of two open positions on the Senate, and, students, he needs your vote now!

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Voting already opened on March 29 and it closes at Noon on April 16. **Click on the following website link to cast your ballot:** <https://sites.psu.edu/nominees/>.

## TEACHING INTERNATIONAL & SUSTAINABILITY

### Common Hour Events:

- Wednesday, Apr. 7      Bellydancing
- Tuesday, Apr. 20      Art Workshop
- Tuesday, Apr. 27      Tai Chi

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## Student Research and Creativity Conference Spring 2021

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9:30a-2p

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# FIREARMS RESEARCH STUDY CONCLUDES

## Significant gun ownership among undergrads

**CHEYENNE HENNEN**  
 Contributing Writer  
[csh5384@psu.edu](mailto:csh5384@psu.edu)

A campus-wide survey regarding relationships between individual's knowledge and attitudes towards firearms and fire-arm policy and how that affects one's confidence in the police, has been conducted across the Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSUGA), Altoona and Dubois campuses.



Dr. Katherine McLean, associate professor of

criminal justice at PSUGA, is satisfied with the response and the results, while still being reviewed, and provided some interesting findings.

PSUGA pulled the largest number of student responses, with 295.

"Very pleased by that," McLean said.

McLean and her colleagues from the other campuses plan to compare these results with a survey on campus carry policies previously conducted at Penn State Altoona to see how the results between students and the public differ.

From the overall results, "38% of undergraduates that participated in the survey currently own a gun," McLean said.

These results were



Image by [Brett Hondow](#) from [Pixabay](#)

shocking despite individual beliefs towards the right to carry or own a gun. The majority of those students who took the survey were Caucasian and African American.

This survey was part of a course-based undergraduate research experience. "Simultaneous with this formal survey, we were doing a pedagogical study to see the impact of research participation on the students in the class,"

McLean said.

She and her colleagues also submitted a paper with their findings..."looking at how students perceived the research project."

McLean is currently working on another study with a group of students, while she and her teaching colleagues are wrapping up the survey and writing several papers on gun policies at K-12 schools.

## DURING THE DARK TIMES



The coronavirus has transformed our lives and all levels of government have taken significant steps to address the pandemic. These changes highlight your need for meaningful, accurate information about government action, and transparency is more crucial than ever. Our reporters use public access laws to shine a light so you can understand what's happening, have a voice in your government and hold public officials accountable.

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As the news media industry celebrates Sunshine Week recognizing the importance of access to public information, we thank you for your continued support and patronage.

**Newspapers provide sunshine in the darkness.**



# OPINIONS... FROM WHERE WE SIT



*Pandemic precautions have made The Café Metro an unusually quiet place. Photo by Katrina Shields.*

## ONE YEAR LATER...

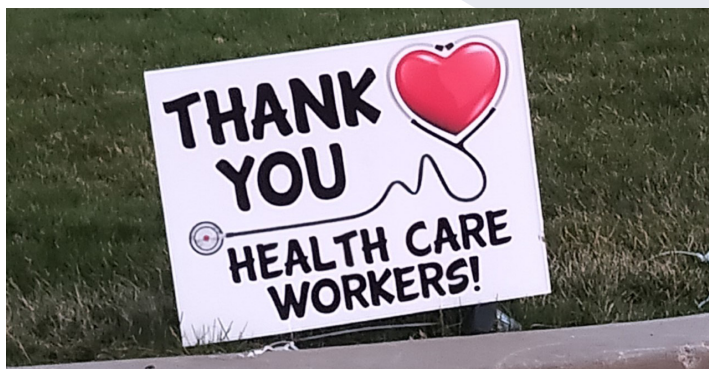
### PANDEMIC STORIES FROM THE PSUGA COMMUNITY

**Sidney Pryzbylski, Interim SGA President**

“Basically, I haven’t been out of the house except for school since when we went into quarantine. We do all of our groceries as pick ups and we only went out to a store maybe once or twice in November.

“My family has Google Duo-ed for all family events like Christmas and Thanksgiving. Me and my aunt Facetimed to make buns instead of doing them together like we usually do. I remember for Easter last year I was just grateful to have found a ham and toilet paper.

“I am enjoying online because I can sit in my bed but it’s also super stressful having high level classes in that format because it’s so easy to get bogged down and procrastinate.



“I’ve gotten a majority of my family and friends - that I would’ve been seeing constantly - vaccine appointments. They’ve all gotten their first dose except a couple who are hesitant. I scheduled seven people and myself so I’m basically the vaccine whisperer.

“Other than that, I’ve just been hunkering down and wearing my mask. My mom works from home, my brother’s school just got shut down for COVID cases because they tried to send 1600 kids back for five days (that lasted three days) and my dad manages a construction site so he doesn’t see a lot of people.

“Basically we’re trying to keep ourselves and our immediate family’s exposure to a minimum and doing everything we can to stay safe. None of us have gotten the ‘rona’ so knock on wood it stays that way.”

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The staff and management of *The GA-ZETTE* welcome Letters to the Editor by writing to [nrr5191@psu.edu](mailto:nrr5191@psu.edu).

Please include your full name, PSU email, address and phone number to verify.

Missing contact information will result in non-consideration of your article.



### Haley Snyder, Senior, Psychology

“I contracted COVID from my cousin after attending my first family function in months.

“I felt like I had a different symptom everyday and it was exhausting. Fatigue was a symptom I had all day everyday.

“It took me a long time to feel better and once I felt like I should have recovered I called my doctor and was sent to the emergency room. They ran quite a few tests and it was determined I had multiple blood clots in both my lungs.

“I had to opt out of the softball season which is my final season and it was heartbreaking. I have also faced financial hardship because of the medical bills.

“I’m still recovering but it won’t go away overnight. I am reminded everyday that I had COVID and it is still affecting me.”

### Nicholas Scott Smith, Junior, Information Science & Technology

“I really have not had any bad experiences with COVID, except for anxiety. No one in my house contracted it (that we know of). My grandfather and great uncle contracted it, and both of them survived.

“Well, after March of last year, I felt more detached from the world than usual. Instead of dining out and attending the typical in-person classes, I had to always eat at home and attend ZOOM classes. Whenever I wanted to leave my house, it would be for car rides, and/or to take a walk at the park.

“I was not that worried with COVID to begin with but my anxiety only increased as time went on. I actually felt mildly sick a few times, and it turned out that it was likely a result of how worried I was.

“The three grandparents that I still have around are all fully vaccinated now. One of them was contacted by St. Clair Hospital, another of my grandparents booked an appointment at Heinz Field (I believe). My dad got my other grandparent a vaccine appointment at a store in Florida, where this grandparent lives.

“Some states already reopened (too soon, perhaps?), and I believe a “normal-ish” lifestyle is only a few months away. Enough vaccines will be around by May to vaccinate almost all adults. If all of these openings are clinched in a timely manner, life may be normal by the fall semester.

“It is more likely that I will get Pfizer [vaccine] instead of Johnson & Johnson. I actually only want the first shot of the Pfizer vaccine, though, because the first shot is actually 80% effective after three weeks. I am not at a very high risk, and it may not be worth



going back just for 10-15% more efficiency. Also, the effects of the second vaccine are worse.

“I withdrew from PSUGA because of the stress of everything going on, and to re-evaluate my major. I am going to speak with somebody from Bender Consulting, and I hope to be back at PSUGA (actually on campus) this fall, perhaps with a new major! I am looking forward to finally seeing people from outside of my close circle!”





**Dr. Jacqueline Edmondson,**  
*Chancellor & Chief Academic Officer*

“I’m really proud of our campus community and how people came together and worked really hard to continue the education mission of our campus and worked really hard to sustain a sense of campus community under some really extraordinary circumstances.”



**Dr. Johnathan White,**  
*Assistant Teaching Professor of History*

“I’m teaching remotely so I’m pretty safe from COVID. Yet, there are days I want to go outside and move freely in society without restrictions. This season will pass though. I pray daily for the health and safety of my loved ones and for the Penn State community.”

**Jennifer Ross,** *Health Service Coordinator*



“My role this year has been very different. I really didn’t know how I was going to do my job working from home. My job was helping students with immunizations, insurance, making and getting to appointments and assessing and providing the appropriate care.

“This past year, it has been more about ensuring students had what was necessary to continue their education. Whether it was ensuring that housing was appropriate to stay, if a student was either a positive COVID case or a close contact, or making sure they had everything they needed: food, medicine, access to their classes.

“I would call all students in quarantine or isolation daily just to check in, not only on their symptoms and to ensure that they had all they needed, but mostly to check on their mental status. It gets very lonely being by yourself for 10 to 14 days with nowhere to go and seeing no one. It really could affect the student more mentally than physically. So, I was always there to provide them with the necessary support they needed to get through these difficult times.”

## TO VACCINATE... OR NOT TO VACCINATE?



**Dr. James Jaap,** *Teaching Professor of English*

“Of course it will help. Infections are down across the country, and things are now getting back to something resembling normalcy. We are now having an in-person graduation in May! For the good of this world, we need to follow the CDC guidance and get the vaccine when it is available.”

**Jodi Petro,** *Café Metro Team Member*

“Yes, I plan to get vaccinated. My husband had his first shot and he had no problems. I’m waiting for the next group to qualify.”



**Monique Peterson,** *Administrative Support Assistant, Athletics*

“I have not received the vaccine yet. I would like to get the vaccine to slow the spread of COVID-19. I know people who have passed away from COVID-19 and now there is hope.

“It would be really nice to get back to some normalcy in life. I know people who have received the vaccine and they are doing well.

“However, I am unsure of some of the side effects that I have seen in family and friends. One friend has hives all over her body. Another family member had a horrible reaction and had to go to the hospital, now she is doing well. I would like to do research on each shot to see which one is best for me.”



**The Marion children, Parker and Mila, attending school virtually**

*Melissa Marion, Director of Monongahela Valley Hospital Foundation and her husband, Brett Marion, Registered Nurse, Operating Room at Jefferson Regional Medical Center, on caring for patients during the pandemic and on their two children having to attend school remotely this past year.*

### **Melissa Marion**

*Director of Monongahela Valley Hospital Foundation*

“I miss my friends and family as an adult...I miss the teachers in our school being able to hug their students. I miss hearing about what the kids talked about at lunch. It’s not a normal elementary school setting for sure. I know the kids have to be missing all of this.

“We see the impact this virus has had on everything firsthand. This has not been easy for hospitals at all. I know how hard our nurses and support staff are working right now. I really, really encourage everyone to do everything they can to minimize the risk of spreading COVID.”



**Brett Marion poses in front of the cover of Marvel's Heroes True Nurse Stories comic book from Allegheny Health Network (AHN)**

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# 2 DAYS WITH FRIENDS... 14 IN QUARANTINE

**AUSTIN MOSSELLEM**  
Contributing Writer

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It was a beautiful fall weekend in late September. The leaves were changing as I made the hour-long drive to Indian Lake, just a few miles past the Flight 93 Memorial in Somerset. Five of my closest friends were already there waiting for me to arrive.

We really could not have asked for better weather. The weekend itself was your typical weekend at the lake. Late night fires, afternoon wakeboard sessions on the water, although still very cold given the time of the year, golf, and just a good time full of great memories.

We left the lake Sunday afternoon and returned home to our normal lives. I awoke Wednesday morning (three days later) drenched in sweat, running a fever of 102 degrees. My phone vibrated only to show a text from one of my



friends who was at the lake. It read, "Do you have a fever?" I remember thinking "Oh no." I sent some texts out to the guys who were at the lake that weekend and unsurprisingly, we all came down with a fever on the same day.

My mom came to my door shortly after I talked to my friends. Her reaction to the news was "Oh s\*\*\*, Austin."

Rapid tests from two of my friends were positive and they revealed the COVID virus. I never received a COVID test. If we were together all weekend, and all became sick on the same day with the same symptoms, one

positive test was enough to convince me that, well, we had it.

So, the hard news had sunk in at this point, I had the virus that is currently tearing through the world's population. What came next you might ask? Immediate quarantine as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

After the third day, my fever broke and the only lingering effects at that point were some light headedness and some pain behind my eyeballs. However, that is typical for someone who is dehydrated and sick. I still barely got out of bed that day.

The saddest day for me during this whole adventure was day four. I completely lost my senses of taste and smell. Morning coffee tasted like hot water. Ramen noodles were just noodles. No flavor.

No matter how hard I sniffed at my food, I could not catch a single whiff of any form of scent. These two senses did not return

until late November, nearly two full months after I originally lost them.

A week later, I began to attend classes again remotely via ZOOM. However, I remained in quarantine for the full 14-day isolation period to be sure I did not expose myself to others while I was still contagious.

After two weeks of quarantine, the first thing I did was give my mom the biggest hug. Being able to make physical contact with another human for the first time in 14 days was such a rejuvenating thing.

My post-COVID thoughts: I followed CDC guidelines after I became ill. But I am one of the lucky ones. Be cautious of the choices you make. Not only are you looking out for your own health, but also for the people around you.

Do the right thing. No one else in my household became ill and I was never in contact with anyone outside my immediate family.

## ATTENTION ARTISTS!

...And photographers too! **THE GA-ZETTE** wants to showcase your talent!

We are seeking student artists and photographers to add to our team. Your skills can help to improve Greater Allegheny's campus newspaper while adding to your personal portfolio.

Those interested should contact **THE GA-ZETTE** at [ga-zette@PennStateOffice365.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:ga-zette@PennStateOffice365.onmicrosoft.com) or Professor Rosemary Martinelli at [rum31@psu.edu](mailto:rum31@psu.edu).



# 90 SECONDS UNDER THE BLUE UMBRELLA TIMELY TOPICS FROM AROUND CAMPUS

MADASON PORTER-GIBSON | Contributing Writer | mnp5208@psu.edu

“Do you think it is important that all dependents are now qualified for a stimulus check?  
Why or why not?”

## **Nicole Covelli, Senior, Accounting**

“Yes, I think it’s important. Teenagers who are becoming adults are also hit with a hard time right now. Some teenagers are unemployed and are looking for jobs. Some parents even require their older children to pay rent to help provide for their household. For young people finding a job, getting a job, and paying for life, in general, is difficult, so yes, it is very important.”



## **Austin Livsey, Freshman, Aerospace Engineering**

“Yes, I think it’s really important for dependents to receive a stimulus check. Many people are not working right now, but I think it would be beneficial if those dependents who are adults could personally receive a stimulus check. It would help them get on board for paying for college, like me. It would help if I got my stimulus check because COVID set me back financially, but parents who are receiving extra money for their kids is very important.”

## **Angie Nylander, Junior, Criminal Justice & Security Risk Analysis**

“I feel that it is important for dependents to get this money. Many people are going to college, and throughout the pandemic, many people weren’t able to work as much. This stimulus check can take some of that financial burden off of them because this money can help pay for books and paying off their student loans.”



## **Akmalbek Abdukhalikov, Sophomore, Chemical Engineering**

“I think it’s important because college is not cheap and this money can help students out a lot with their tuition and books, so yes, I think it is really important. I’m glad that my parents are receiving extra money because I am a dependent, and if I need the money, they would be more than willing to pay for what I need. ”

## **Alex Myers, Sophomore, Forensic Science**

“Yes, it is important. It feels good to know that dependent young adults can get a stimulus check through their parents. College students needed the money because they are paying thousands of dollars worth of debt. Personally, I want the stimulus check for myself because who knows what my parent will do with the extra money, but overall, it’s a good thing. ”



# PANDEMIC CREATES FISH FRY FIASCO

## Dedicated volunteers keep tradition going



**Volunteers bread fish at Mary, Mother of God Parish**  
**RILEY PERCIAVALLE**  
 Staff Writer  
[rup70@psu.edu](mailto:rup70@psu.edu)

Lent plays a very important role in Christian and Catholic churches across the Pittsburgh area. It's a tradition at local fire halls and social societies, too, every Friday, with people volunteering to make fish sandwiches and side dishes to feed not only the church parishioners but others in the community, as well.

However, with the COVID-19 virus still active, it has been difficult for some churches to keep their fish fry going.

Yet one church in the

McKeesport area—Mary, Mother of God Parish—continues its seventh year of operation in its Corpus Christi Social Hall, but with some obvious changes.

According to long-time church volunteer, Susan Olson, the pandemic has changed how the food is cooked, sold and distributed in the community. She said that the lack of in-person dining has been the most troubling issue.

“This year, we are not allowing anyone to come into our social hall and sit to eat,” Olson explained, “so we set up a grab-n-go.”

She added that the

menu options were limited because they were not taking specific orders, as they would with in-person dining. “We cannot have any parishioners prepare meals for each week’s fish fry,” Olson said. Instead, Olson said that a regular small group of volunteers made the food.

The idea of limiting the menu for this year’s fish fry was related to the limit of having 25% capacity in the social hall. In the past, many volunteers would come to pinch the pierogis and prepare the fish “yet now with the pandemic it’s another story,” she said, adding that with the many hands-on people, only twelve volunteers made the effort every Friday to prepare food and various sauces needed for each fish fry.

Olson also explained that two main side dishes everyone was happy to see was the haluska and the pierogis. In the Church’s first week of the fish fry, Olson said that they only prepared and sold fish with some mac-n-cheese as a side.

“They were so many people who wanted something else other than mac-n-cheese,” she said.

“After our first Friday, we added french fries to the menu, since so many wanted fish

sandwiches and fries with their meals.”

When they tried to make haluska in the following week at the request of patrons, the church did not have enough manpower to present it.

“After getting our group of volunteers, we noticed we had enough time on Sunday to make the dough for the haluska in addition to fries and the mac-n-cheese,” Olson said.

“Our haluska became the biggest seller yet. We do appreciate all the customers who come for the limited menu,” she added.

The Mary, Mother of God Fish Fry started in 2014, after the Pittsburgh Catholic Diocese started merging churches. The merger was the result of combining six churches in the McKeesport area.

All the churches helped to make the fish fry possible, with many volunteers cooking and serving food. **(Continued on next page)**



**Grab & go fish fry line**



(Continued from page 24)

However, due to the pandemic rising over a year ago, there were issues with churches and fire halls having their fish fry events, so they stopped around early March, 2020. That sudden change last year made Olson and her volunteers think differently on how to plan for fish fry season.

“We went into planning this year to have only have fish and (one) side, but as previously mentioned it has been growing with many others coming back for our food.” Olson was glad to see many of her friends from the kitchen grabbing their food to go.



A full year of the pandemic rages on, giving people time to think about a way to appreciate the life we have locked away at home. Yet during this time of the fish fry after one year, all seems fine minus the restrictions.

“We do have a lot of older folks here. Most of them from the Ladies of Charity had opted out due to COVID. They didn’t want to risk anything, so we had them do baked good items ready to go,” Olson said.

“Even the older parishioners delivered some of the baked good without no contact from us.”

Olson continued to explain that high schoolers helped with the fish fry, while keeping socially distant.

Although having issues with many churches not doing fish fries, the Mary, Mother of God focused on the customers more than anything. They wanted the satisfaction from the people who came and bought their food during the pandemic.

Susan Olson’s experiences of one year into the pandemic with the fish fry, was focused on the basics of staying safe and keeping the guidelines up

and running around the kitchen.

With enough patience and perseverance, the Mary, Mother of God Parish Fish Fry will continue to please others with their wonderful meals for years to come.



*Fish Fry Coordinator, Susan Olson. Photos courtesy of Olson*

## INTERMISSION AT TRUST ALMOST OVER Pittsburgh Cultural District to reopen later this year

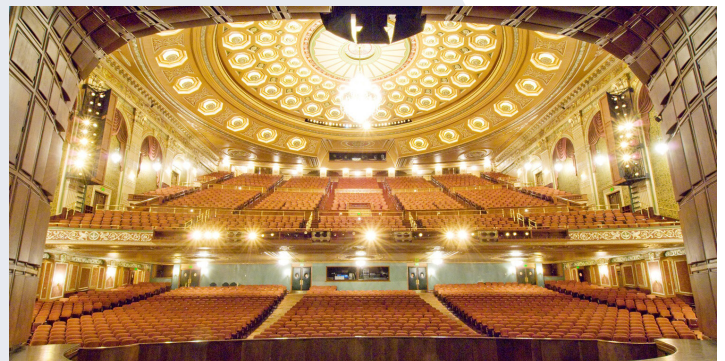
**TROY FERGUSON**  
Entertainment Editor  
tdf5134@psu.edu

Ever since COVID-19 interrupted the art scene here in Pittsburgh in March 2020, performing arts enthusiasts have longed for the day when the theater lights would again welcome audiences.

In a statement released recently by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust: “If there is one thing we have learned about art over the last year, it is that nothing can replace the joy of being together and sharing these

experiences. We are truly hopeful about our plans moving forward, as we continue digital offerings in tandem with soft re-openings of our (performance) venues.”

The PNC Broadway Across America series will happen in September with the production of “Hadestown.” In the meantime, the Trust has many different virtual events to attend, such as ever-popular Liberty Magic Shows, which have occurred periodically during the pandemic this past year.



*Benedum Center for the Performing Arts*

Kevin McMahon, Trust president and CEO, said in a statement: “Safety of our guests, artists, and staff is paramount in all of this, which is why we are slowly but surely building towards full-scale gatherings in the Cultural District.”

When performances begin again, as always, Penn State Greater Allegheny students can receive discounts to a variety of Trust performances by visiting [trustarts.org](http://trustarts.org) to get more details and tickets.

# 21 YEARS OF DIY MUSIC CULTURE

## Mr. Roboto Project celebrates anniversary during year long pandemic hiatus

**NATHAN REGA**

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“I don’t think any artist feels a connection to huge venues... You know what I mean?” Indigo Baloch remarked during a phone conversation. “They’re going to be like, ‘no, I loved this dirty, punk venue that I played in Pittsburgh when I was a nobody.’”

Baloch was referring to The Mr. Roboto Project, an all-ages, do-it-yourself (DIY), non-profit music venue and show space located in the Penn Avenue Arts and Commercial District in Garfield, where she volunteers on its board as the public relations director.

The Roboto, which started out in Wilkensburg in 1999 before moving to Penn Avenue in 2011, celebrated its 21st anniversary in November. Baloch explained that they “had had all sorts of ideas planned for how to celebrate, but unfortunately, of course, COVID got in the way.”

Over its years of operation, The Roboto has held a number of acts from performers that were just starting out. Past performers include bands and artists like Anti-Flag, Against Me!, Death Cab



**Mural at The Mr. Roboto Project**  
Photo courtesy of [The Roboto on Instagram](#)

for Cutie, Modern Baseball, Mitski, Kississippi, Adult Mom, and many more.

“We’ve been so lucky to have artists that have blown up but have come back and continue to want to play Roboto, even though they could be getting way larger venues,” Baloch said as she was reminiscing of past shows. “And it means so much to us to have that kind of connection with bands and that they have this tenderness for our space.”

Although The Roboto has had its share of big names, it continues to be a DIY space, focusing its support on grassroots, independent artists and giving them a space to start out.

“A lot of these artists don’t have labels... [They] are just people that are making music and recording it in their basement or

something. And we love having a space where we can support those kinds of artists, because it can be hard [for them] to get into larger venues,” Baloch explained.

“These are acts that are not going to be selling out huge venues yet... and I say yet, because I think so many of them have the potential to, but they need a place where they can get their footing and Roboto can offer that.”

And while the venue is easily considered part of Pittsburgh’s punk rock scene, The Roboto offers a wide variety of acts that stretch beyond even just music.

“We’ve also had performance artists, we’ve had poets, comedians, you name it and pretty much every genre of music you can think of,” Baloch listed. “I think we’ve even had short plays.”

The front half of The Mr. Roboto Project also functions as an art gallery for local Pittsburgh artists to display and sell their work. This is a huge benefit to the artists as The Roboto does not take any commission from their art and, before COVID-19, its location allowed them to gain exposure during First Friday events. As its name suggests, First Friday is a monthly art crawl along Penn Avenue, held on the first Friday of every month.

“It’s a really magical night where you can walk down the street and all these galleries have their doors wide open,” Baloch described. “You can experience so much art in such a brief amount of time and it’s really something so beautiful.”

Even though it has just turned 21, there will not be any drinks served during shows held at The Mr. Roboto Project. Describing itself as a safe space, The Roboto is a dry venue, not allowing the use of drugs or alcohol on its property. This also allows The Roboto to operate as an all-ages venue.

“I can’t tell you how many times I’ve had parents come with their kids  
**(Continued on next page)**

(Continued from page 26)

that are in high school that are coming to play a show here, and say, 'I'm really happy that a space like this exists because my kid can play on a stage with their band and grow their audience and feel validated in their artwork, but I know that they're safe,'" Baloch said. "They're not going to be in a house basement show where there's going to be a ton of booze or something."

Beyond being an all-ages venue, The Roboto's choice to remain a dry venue also makes it a safe space for anyone struggling with sobriety.

"They know that they can come into this space and they don't have to worry about feeling uncomfortable. You know, they don't have to worry about drunk people stumbling around all over them and triggering them," Baloch explained. "They know that they're coming into a space that respects their boundaries."

The Roboto's seriousness about creating and maintaining a safe space extends beyond just its own venue. Before COVID, events have been held at The Roboto to benefit its community and give its members tools and training to make it a safer space.

Baloch described an event held on Valentine's Day 2020 when it

partnered with Prevention Point Pittsburgh, a harm-reduction organization. They provided sessions of Naloxone training, walking guests through steps on how to identify and help someone who has overdosed.

Another example Baloch gave was past events The Roboto has done with Pittsburgh Action Against Rape, where they held info sessions on helping survivors of sexual assault.



*The stage at The Roboto, pre-pandemic*

"Unfortunately, there's a lot of history in music scenes of assault, so it's something that we take pretty seriously," Baloch stated. "If you feel unsafe, you can reach out to us. If there's a person there that you feel unsafe with, we're always there for people."

"We take that pretty seriously, which is why we've done those kinds of events because we want to keep our space a space where people can feel safe

and supported and know that they're coming into a space that respects them and wants to keep them well."

The events and shows held at The Roboto are made possible by volunteers. As a non-profit organization, all revenue made by The Roboto is used to cover its rent, utilities and operation. All volunteers, including the board of directors, freely give their time to maintaining the space.

due to its small size and lack of an outdoor space, is unable to hold events for the time being. Fortunately, they have been able to find support that has kept them from closing permanently for the time being.

"We've just been raising money through [compilation albums](#) and t-shirts," Baloch explained. "Different organizations in Pittsburgh have very kindly done little fundraisers for us which is greatly appreciated."

There's still no projected date for reopening The Mr. Roboto Project. However, anyone interested in attending future events or volunteering their time or donations can contact The Roboto through Facebook or Instagram.

"It's just so much more about community than any large venue could be," Baloch said about The Roboto. "And that's what makes it so special."

Anyone can help show support for The Mr. Roboto Project by following it on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or their [website](#).



Donations through [Patreon](#) will provide access to exclusive livestreams, behind-the-scenes content, early access tickets, and more.

# CULTURE, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



## PITTSBURGH TAKES CENTER STAGE AT MUSIC'S BIGGEST NIGHT DURING PANDEMIC

**TROY FERGUSON**

Entertainment Editor

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First there were the Billboards and then the American Music awards. Then came music's biggest night, The Grammys, which took place on Sunday, Mar. 14. It took place a little later in the year because of the global pandemic.

But the delay didn't stop Pittsburgh from having connections at music's biggest awards show, with Dan+Shay and Mister Rogers being recognized with a Grammy.

Just like all the other award shows that happened during these uncertain times, things were different. The set-up of the 63rd reminded me of a banquet. All the stars were socially distant, sitting at their tables

and wearing their very fashionable masks. My favorite thing about this night, besides the music, was seeing all the different masks my favorite celebrities were wearing. The masks matched their outfits which I thought was stellar.

This was the third year in a row for Dan+Shay winning Best Country Duo/Group Performance. Speaking with PEOPLE from a backstage press room at Sunday's event, Pittsburgh native, Dan Smyers, called the win for "10,000 Hours," the duo's song with Justin Bieber, an "incredible" feeling, explaining, "Every year winning a Grammy is like the coolest thing in the entire world."

"It's Such a Good Feeling: The Best of Mister Rogers," won the award for best historical

album. The 23-song collection, released in February 2020 by Omnivore Recordings, is made up of favorites from the Pittsburgh-made television show, which ran from 1968 to 2001, including "Won't You Be My Neighbor," "You Are Special" and "Today Is a Very Special Day."

As the anticipation leading up to The Grammys, I was so excited to see the performances. I think one positive thing about this global pandemic was that the performers have become very creative with their performances. My personal favorite was Taylor Swift. She had a very busy quarantine.

The pop star released not one, but two, albums during 2020: "folklore," an album which got her Album of the Year, and

her album, "Evermore." Her performance showcased the strong storytelling in her music. I was so excited to hear her perform this music live.

On top of Swift's performance, I also really enjoyed Harry Styles' performance. "Fine Line" is such a great album. I loved watching him perform his hit song, "Watermelon Sugar." He really does know how to perform. He kept me engaged it was so fun.

Then there was also Cardi B's and Megan Thee Stallion's performance. They got some hate for their performance because of the content of their song. I think that they know how to perform and their song was a hit.

On top of all the great performances, many awards were given.

*(Continued on next page)*

(Continued from page 26)

The legendary Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande won Best Pop Duo and Performance. Dua Lipa also won Best Pop Vocal Album. History was also

made that night when “Queen B” Beyonce took home four awards: Best Music Video, Best Rap Song, Best Rap Performance, and Best R&B Performance. The four awards gave the widely

talented Beyonce a total of 28 Grammys in her lifetime.

The night was filled with so much love and hope. Having award ceremonies like this really brings people together

because music is such a beautiful thing that connects with everyone.

Looking forward to the next awards show—the Oscars, on Apr. 25.

## DEMI LOVATO SHARES HER TRUTH VIA YOUTUBE

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On Mar. 23 Demi Lovato released two episodes out of four of her honest documentary, “Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil.” New episodes of the four-part program will arrive on Tuesdays for the next two weeks via the star’s YouTube channel.

I was so looking forward for her to tell her truth. There were many stories going around on what happened the night of her near-fatal drug overdose in 2018. I always knew that Lovato was a warrior, but she is stronger than ever. As I review this, know that this article contains spoilers to the documentary, so read at your own risk.

Lovato has always been open about her struggles with mental illness, an eating disorder, and chemical addiction. She revealed her unhappiness because her former management team was policing her food that led her to relapse into her eating disorder and addiction. I

think it is very dangerous to monitor someone’s food intake if they’re in recovery from an eating disorder. She did not like the way she felt, so after a photoshoot, she picked up a bottle of red wine and got in touch with a drug dealer.

I think some people may not realize that when an individual overdoses, there can be some after effects. She revealed that she had three strokes, a heart attack, organ failure, and when she awakened from everything, she was legally blind. She had five to ten more minutes to live until her assistant

came in and found her.

One scene from the documentary made me choke up. Her younger sister, Madison De La Garza, went to the hospital to see her older sister. When Lovato opened her eyes, Madison came in to let her sister know that she was there, but Lovato looked her in the eyes and asked her who she was.

It is so ironic because when she went into treatment in 2011, Lovato’s parents said she would no longer see her sister if she didn’t get help. Fast forward to after the overdose, she couldn’t see her baby sister...literally. This

scene was so intense and so emotional to witness.

Another emotional incident that many people do not know is that the night she overdosed, her drug dealer sexually assaulted her and left her for dead. When I heard that, my heart sank. Not only does she have to heal from the drug overdose, she also had to heal from the sexual trauma she endured.

I am so happy that Demi Lovato is healthy and happy, as was evident in her performance at President Biden’s virtual inauguration where she and health care workers performed to the song, “Lovely Day.” As a long-time fan, I was so excited for her to speak her truth. She is such a strong woman. There are two more episodes airing for the docuseries that air the next two Tuesdays on Lovato’s YouTube channel.

Lovato is also sharing her story the best way she knows how—with music. Demi Lovato’s seventh studio album, “Dancing With The Devil... The Art of Starting Over,” released last week.



## THE KELLY LIBRARY'S RECOMMENDED MOVIES FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

### [Battle of the Sexes](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/22080679)

<https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/22080679>

### [Chisholm '72: Unbought & Unbossed](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/31502065)

<https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/31502065>

### [Daughters of the Sexual Revolution](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/25792618)

<https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/25792618>

### [Hidden Figures](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/19572364)

<https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/19572364>

### [Jackie](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/19199798)

<https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/19199798>

### [Joan Jett: Bad Reputation](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/25808155)

<https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/25808155>

### [Mary Queen of Scots](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/26100284)

<https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/26100284>

### [RBG](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/31182528)

<https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/31182528>

### [Reflections Unheard:](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/28056077)

### [Black Women in Civil Rights](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/28056077)

<https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/28056077>

### [Wonder Women!:](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/9362441)

### [The Untold Story of American Superheroines](https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/9362441)

<https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/9362441>

THE KELLY LIBRARY PRESENTS



# SCATTERGORIES MADNESS

April 7th | 12:15 PM to 1:15 PM

Please join the library for a virtual Scattergories tournament and a chance to win a \$25 Amazon gift card.

Please Register Here: <http://bit.ly/3vYBTGn>

Tournament will be held at the following Zoom link  
<https://psu.zoom.us/j/98608764596>

## UNCONVENTIONAL DRIVE-IN BECKONS COVID-WEARY THEATER GOERS

Old mill site showcases film favorites  
this spring, summer

The townships and boroughs surrounding the Greater Allegheny campus were home to the mills and blast furnaces that produced the steel that drove business for decades in the 20th century. Steel built the world and Pittsburgh was at its heart. Most of those sites are now shuttered or transformed into industrial parks—and during the pandemic, COVID-19 testing sites.

Now, those mill sites are adding another purpose to their heritage—drive-in movie sites—and the sites are beckoning Pittsburghers to come to the shadows of their old blast furnaces.

Rivers of Steel, a Homestead-based non-profit that focuses on the heritage of steel and Pittsburgh's 20th-century domination of the industry, is using the Carrie Blast Furnaces site for its "Carrie Carpool Cinema." This drive-in movie-style experience offers curated films—many filmed in Pittsburgh or have Pittsburgh at its plotline—along with coordinated programmatic activities, concessions for purchase, and mini-tours of the National Historic Landmark steel sites.



The series will run one weekend a month April through October. The series launches the weekend of Apr. 16 with August Wilson's "Fences" and "The Dark Knight Rises." Short films by Braddock filmmaker Tony Buba will also be screened as a preview to both features.

The summer will feature coordinated programmatic activities, including a "Hot Metal Happening" in July and a post-film ghost tour in October.

Feature film tiles for the full series are listed at <https://riversofsteel.com/carrie-carpool-cinema>. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$8 for children ages 4 through 17.

Tours of the blast furnace sites are available for additional fees and the Fudge Farm Food Truck will be on site selling concessions for moviegoers. Social distancing protocols will be in place for the safety of guests and staff.



# SPORTS & ATHLETICS



*Penn State Greater Allegheny's Men's Baseball Team at their season opening game. Photo courtesy Dr. Jacqueline Edmondson, chancellor and chief academic officer.*

## PSUGA 2020-2021 BASEBALL SCHEDULE\*

### MARCH:

DATE	OPPONENT	RESULT	DATE	OPPONENT	RESULT
Sat. 13	<b>Penn State Mont Alto</b>	L, 2-1	Sat. 27	Penn State Beaver	W, 11-1
	<b>Penn State Mont Alto</b>	L, 6-5		Penn State Beaver	W, 12-1
Wed. 24	Penn State Fayette	L, 13-3	Tue. 30	Penn State Du Bois	L, 14-4
Fri. 26	<b>Penn State Beaver</b>	W, 18-8			

### APRIL:

DATE	OPPONENT	RESULT	DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Sat. 3	Penn State New Ken.	W, 9-1	Tue. 13	<b>Penn State Beaver</b>	3:00 PM
	Penn State New Ken.	W, 11-3		<b>Penn State Beaver</b>	5:30 PM
Sun. 4	<b>Penn State New Ken.</b>	W, 11-2	Fri. 16	Penn State Du Bois	6:00 PM
	<b>Penn State New Ken.</b>	W, 10-1		Penn State Du Bois	8:00 PM
		TIME	Sat. 17	<b>Penn State Du Bois</b>	12:00 PM
Sat. 10	Penn State Fayette	12:00 PM		<b>Penn State Du Bois</b>	3:00 PM
	Penn State Fayette	2:00 PM	Tue. 20	Penn State New Ken.	4:00 PM
Sun. 11	<b>Penn State Fayette</b>	12:00 PM	Fri. 23	<b>Penn State Mont Alto</b>	5:30 PM
	<b>Penn State Fayette</b>	2:00 PM	Sat. 24	Penn State Mont Alto	1:00 PM
				Penn State Mont Alto	3:00 PM

*\*Home games, played at Pullman Park in Butler, PA, listed in bold.*



**Korie Morton-Rozier, Director, Athletics**

“We let fans at the games as long as they wear a mask and can stay socially distant. We have plenty of room at the softball and baseball fields.”





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