Chances are good that, sometime in your life, you’ve been asked, “Where did you go to college?” For graduates of Bloomsburg University, we see this question as a compliment and recognition of the talented students who earn their degrees here.

We are Bloomsburg University and we are expanding our footprint in both higher education and in our physical community in northcentral Pennsylvania. Here are a few of the memorable moments that have helped bring Bloomsburg to the forefront this year.

- Bloomsburg University launched a new general education program, MyCore, emphasizing the connectedness of disciplines, knowledge and skills. MyCore recognizes the achievement of general education outcomes both inside and outside the traditional classroom and across university divisions.
- The university established a new School of Health Sciences and expanded its nursing partnership with Geisinger Health System, one of the largest healthcare providers in central and northeastern Pennsylvania.
- Bloomsburg’s digital forensics program has been recognized as a national leader in the forensics industry. The program, one of only four in the country, offers seven unique courses not offered elsewhere. Dr. Scott Inch, professor of mathematics, computer science and statistics and developer of BU’s forensics program, was awarded TechQuest Pennsylvania’s Technology Educator of the Year award.
- Bloomsburg launched an innovative new program, Bachelor of Applied Science in Technical Leadership, the first of its kind in Pennsylvania. The program, taught by Bloomsburg faculty at Lehigh Carbon Community College, addresses the growing demand in the Commonwealth for employees with a combination of technical and professional skills.
- The university set all-time records for both alumni engagement and financial support.

The credit for these accomplishments goes to our motivated and eager community, working collaboratively to define our place and the university’s future.

Bloomsburg University is home to nearly 10,000 students. Our four colleges offer opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, experiential learning experiences and undergraduate research on an attractive 280-acre campus.

I invite you to read this report and visit our website to learn more about who we are. See why Bloomsburg University really is a great place to be you.

Sincerely,

David L. Soltz, President
Bloomsburg University
Just what is the value of a college education? What do students really learn that will make them valuable to potential employers and help them live fuller lives?

MyCore, a complete revamping of the university’s general education program, focuses on showing student achievement and learning — inside and outside the classroom.

While study after study shows a college degree is the surest path toward higher-paying careers, almost five years ago Bloomsburg University’s faculty began looking at whether there was a better way to document the skills, experience and knowledge that students receive while earning their degree.

The answer was MyCore, a complete revamping of the university’s general education program that kicked off in the first semester of 2012. MyCore focuses on showing student achievement and learning — inside and outside the classroom — in a quantifiable way.

In addition to course credits, students are now required to earn 40 general education points that correspond to the 10 goals. Many of these points can be earned within classes; for example, the skills demonstrated in a literature course can count toward points earned for showing the ability to ethically use information, says Jonathan Lincoln, vice provost and dean of undergraduate education, academic affairs. Points can also be earned for approved work outside the classroom, called co-curricular learning experiences.

Patty Beyer, chair of the General Education Council, says MyCore allows students to take the initiative with their education and for faculty to be creative. “It opens up the possibility for students to do things that are more meaningful and interesting to them,” she says.

One of MyCore’s strengths is that it’s set up so that programs can be added and changed according to the needs of students. Other schools are taking note and information about MyCore has been presented at some national conferences, Lincoln says.

“At MyCore’s heart are 10 educational goals Bloomsburg graduates are expected to be able to demonstrate:

- Communicate effectively in writing, oral presentation and visual argument.
- Find, evaluate and ethically use information using appropriate technology.
- Apply critical analysis, quantitative reasoning, and problem-solving skills.
- Apply knowledge from the humanities and other disciplines to analyze the implications of diversity among human groups, their histories, cultures and the plurality of human experiences.
- Demonstrate knowledge of natural sciences principles, concepts and methods.
- Demonstrate knowledge of social sciences principles, concepts and methods.
- Apply knowledge from the arts and humanities to analyze, evaluate or participate in the artistic and literary traditions of our diverse world.
- Demonstrate basic communication skills in a second language.
- Participate in physical activity and evaluate the consequences of health decisions.
- Exhibit responsible citizenship.

General Education

Redefined

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With an eye toward enhancing the education of students, as well as providing additional medical services to the surrounding community, Bloomsburg University has created a new School of Health Sciences. The school will be part of the existing College of Science and Technology and will encompass many of its disciplines, such as audiology and speech pathology; medical imaging; exercise science; and nursing. By grouping the health-related fields into a new school, the university will be better able to meet the needs of students seeking careers in the medical industry and provide increased services to the community.

“A lot of these programs are directly related to providing health care services,” says Richard Angelo, acting associate dean of the College of Science and Technology. “We’re living longer, the baby boomers are aging, and they have certain expectations about the way they want to live and the care they want to receive.”

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Health Matters

Bloomsburg’s planned expansion comes at a time when the demand for people in many of these health care-related fields is expected to explode. According to a recent Bureau of Labor Statistics career report, audiologists will see a 37 percent growth rate in their field by 2020; athletic trainers, 30 percent; speech language pathologists, 23 percent; and registered nurses, 26 percent.

“Health care jobs are expected to grow faster than any other industry — roughly 22 percent, or 3.2 million new jobs, by 2018,” according to the job search site Monster.com. “As baby boomers age and Generation X has children, health care professionals will become more in-demand than ever.”

Bloomsburg University already is home to a Speech Language and Hearing Clinic. As part of the School of Health Sciences, the university may consider opening clinics in areas such as cardiac rehabilitation or obesity, which would provide experience for students and become a valuable community resource.

The university and Geisinger Health System, which recently merged with Bloomsburg Hospital, also are discussing more ways to work together. The university already partners with the health system in areas such as the Geisinger School of Radiologic Technology, which accepts up to 10 Bloomsburg students each year, and the master’s degree program to educate nurse anesthetists.

Bloomsburg’s nursing program also will expand this fall through an agreement with Geisinger that will allow students to complete course requirements for their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the health system’s main campus in Danville, Pa. Twenty nursing students will take classes and gain clinical experience in the first year; the enrollment will grow to 40 in the second and succeeding years, says Michelle Ficca, chair of BU’s nursing department.

The agreement not only will allow Bloomsburg to accept more nursing students — currently the program averages 1,000 applicants for 80 available slots — but it will also help Geisinger meet its need for highly trained nurses who have earned bachelor’s degrees.

Special consideration will be given to students from the region surrounding Bloomsburg, with the goal of graduating nurses who will remain in the area. The same approach is being taken with BU’s nurse practitioner program.

“We’re meeting the need for more primary care providers when we have more local students in the nurse practitioner program,” Ficca says. “We are trying to grow our own and make health care the number one priority in the area.”

MAJORS: Bloomsburg’s health-related programs include speech pathology (above), exercise science (below), audiology, clinical athletic training, medical imaging and nursing.

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This could be a crime scene.

Police at a crime scene find a smartphone and need to see the data inside. Authorities download a video message, purportedly from a terrorist leader, and want to verify when it was made and other details. To make their case, prosecutors require files that a suspect in a criminal investigation has tried to erase from his computer.

These are just some of the critical and often top-secret tasks undertaken by graduates of Bloomsburg University's digital forensics program, the only one of its kind in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. As computers and smart devices permeate many facets of modern life, Bloomsburg's graduates are in high demand for employment with law enforcement, government agencies and contractors concerned with the nation's defense.

In a case of real life imitating art, Scott Inch recalls a 2005 meeting of the Mathematics, Computer Sciences and Statistics Department when he and other faculty were asked to come up with innovative programs. “What about that stuff they do on CSI (Crime Scene Investigation)?” someone suggested. Inch, who studied criminal justice at a community college before turning to mathematics, volunteered to see what he could do. What Inch did was lead a small group of faculty to write a course of study for the budding field of digital forensics that turned him into a nationally recognized expert.

Employers snap up the program’s graduates, routinely offering starting salaries of around $75,000.

Employers finally realized they can ask for a bachelor’s degree in digital forensics and there would be people who qualified.

-- Scott Inch

Employers finally realized they can ask for a bachelor’s degree in digital forensics and there would be people who qualified.

“We hit at the right time,” says Inch, professor of mathematics, computer sciences and statistics. “Employers finally realized they can ask for a bachelor’s degree in digital forensics and there would be people who qualified. Once news of our major started to get out there and a couple other institutions started bachelor degree programs, the job market really changed.”

What separates Bloomsburg’s program from most is that students first learn the basics about computers, information storage and raw data in the hexadecimal system, which turns the 1’s and 0’s computers read into a system with additional letters and numbers easier for people to read.

Students study a variety of sophisticated computer tools designed to crack encryptions or restore deleted files. Finally, in Advanced Topics, students extract evidence from a sample, preserve it for use in court and write an expert report.

They defend their findings during a mock trial in which Inch acts as the ultimate hostile defense attorney, questioning their every move. “They get an appreciation of how complex and hard and messy a real case is,” he says, adding that the course’s workload is so intense it’s not unusual for students to sleep at the lab.

The approach paid off. Inch, who earned his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Bloomsburg before getting a doctorate from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, says he was proud when a couple of graduates told him a secret information recovery course put on by a big defense contractor covered material they learned as sophomores.
Alumni Engagement

One of Bloomsburg University’s biggest strengths is its alumni — and this ever-growing pool is engaging with the school and current students as never before.

Not only have alumni stepped up with generous donations that provide critical support for the university’s quality programs and initiatives, but successful Huskies are also helping students prepare for careers by providing internships and job shadowing opportunities, participating in professional mixers and sharing their professional experiences.

The inauguration of President David L. Soltz in 2008 marked a more organized approach to fundraising and alumni engagement at Bloomsburg University.

“There was a more formal effort to engage volunteers, build our networks and raise funds for specific priorities as directed in the university’s strategic plan,” says Erik Evans, vice president for University Advancement. “You have to engage people first in meaningful tasks that benefit the students. Much of our engagement is related to career exploration and, as more volunteers become involved with our university, often that leads to increased giving.”

Alumni have responded to their engagement with the university with gifts, including:

■ Surpassing the $2 million target for First and Goal: A Scholarship Campaign for football scholarships.
■ Raising more than $700,000 in Sutliff Hall classroom sponsorships since completion of the facility’s $10 million renovation in spring 2012. The building is the home of the College of Business, Department of Instructional Technology and Department of Economics. Funds will be used for scholarships, internships, faculty development and other priorities. Both the “First and Goal” and Sutliff Hall campaigns are part of the university’s upcoming comprehensive capital campaign to be announced in 2015.
■ A $2 million commitment received in February 2012 from philanthropist Susan McDowell of Selinsgrove, Pa., to establish the McDowell Institute for Teacher Excellence in Positive Behavior Support within the College of Education. This gift marked the largest donation in the Bloomsburg University Foundation’s history.
■ A $1.67 million gift from Terry Zeigler ’76 and his wife, JoAnn Schultz Zeigler ’77, to establish the Zeigler Institute for Professional Development (ZIPD) within the College of Business. Terry Zeigler is president and CEO of Datacap Systems, which develops and markets electronic payment interfaces that enable cash register and business system providers to add electronic payments to their systems.

You have to engage people first in meaningful tasks that benefit the students.

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As public resources grow tighter and state support becomes harder to count on, Bloomsburg is finding other ways of financially helping students. Alumni and friends of the university have responded with financial gifts for scholarships, programs and facilities.

Lynda Michaels, director of Alumni Affairs, says the Zeigers’ gift (see sidebar at right) is a good example of an ongoing program that brings alumni and students together. Every fall, successful alumni return to the university as presenters and mentors for the ZIPD Business Conference, where they share their experiences on topics ranging from basic professional skills to entrepreneurship.

Other alumni engagement programs emphasize taking students into the workplace to explore careers. For example, the Sophomore Experiential Learning program allows students to shadow someone in their field for 20 hours. Alumni also host one-day field trips, as a half-dozen graduates and their colleagues at the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network, Allentown, Pa., did for 38 students in November 2012.

“Our alumni like the chance to build a support network for students and add value to the education they are receiving,” Michaels says. “They are reconnecting with their alma mater in a meaningful way, and many times it turns out they want to share not only their talent and expertise, but their finances as well.”

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Companies are looking for a way to help valued employees develop into the leaders that can help them grow.

Seeing the need, Bloomsburg University partnered with Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) and the Lehigh Career and Technical Institute to create a new Bachelor of Applied Science in Technical Leadership program. The program's first 16 students enrolled for fall 2012.

Under the program, up to 60 community college credits can be transferred into the Bloomsburg program. Students finish their final 60 credits for the bachelor's degree by completing a mix of online and in-classroom instruction, either full- or part-time.

Instead of traveling to Bloomsburg’s campus in Columbia County for the classes, BU professors teach the evening courses at the community college. High school students at the nearby technical institute may dual-enroll at LCCC to earn college credits and after graduation, they can opt to join the workforce as they complete their four-year degree.

At LCCC, the program builds on more than 30 associate degree programs, including chemical technology, biotechnology, graphic design and health information technology. The goal is to partner with other community colleges around the state and bring Bloomsburg University to their campuses, giving workers an easier, more cost-effective option for completing their bachelor’s degree.

The Bachelor of Applied Science in Technical Leadership program is geared toward teaching critical supervisory skills, such as how to lead teams, including those at remote locations; conflict resolution in the workplace; small group communication; and intercultural communication. The program is also authorized to receive federal workforce retraining money.

“Our goal is to provide people with two things,” says Vincent Basile, the program’s director. “One is the credential of a bachelor’s degree, which in many organizations is necessary for advancement. Second, the program is designed to develop a range of competencies necessary for those first-line leaders within their fields.”

Basile says he’s talked to roughly 400 employers about the program and the feedback has been enthusiastic. He’s also talked to the students at the technical school.

“Career and technical education was not previously seen as a viable pathway to college,” Basile says. “But now, students can begin to work and continue their education on a part-time basis. They can receive an associate’s degree and then a bachelor's degree, all while earning an income, so they are left with little or no educational debt.”

An advisory board made up of industry representatives will help ensure that the program continues to offer curriculum that has real value in the workplace as it grows.

“This is a program that is going to fill a void and a need in the commonwealth,” says Tom Fletcher, associate vice president and dean of extended programs. “Bloomsburg, as a public institution, is saying we recognize those needs and we want to offer a solution that is flexible and affordable.”

Students can begin to work and continue their education ... while earning an income, so they are left with little or no educational debt.

Preventing First-Line Leaders

Blacksburg University Profile

Blacksburg University of Pennsylvania is one of the 14 public universities in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. It was founded as the Bloomsburg Literary Institute in 1839.

Enrollment: About 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

Programs: 54 undergraduate programs and 19 graduate programs.

Faculty: Nearly 400 full time, most with doctoral degrees.

Campus: 262 acres, 54 buildings, a short walk from downtown Bloomsburg. Seven modern residence halls and three apartment complexes on campus, six dining facilities, student union, recreation center, university store, library and intercollegiate sports facilities.

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