

Points of Pride

May 2025



Celebrating Achievement

IUP will honor Lt. Col. Barry D. Gasdek '64, a 2015 winner of the Distinguished Alumni Award, with the **Doctor of Public Service honorary degree** at its May 10 commencement ceremonies; **1,457 students** have completed requirements for their academic degrees. IUP will hold three ceremonies to honor the graduates.



Lt. Col. Barry Gasdek '64 **gifted \$50,000 to the proposed college of osteopathic medicine**. Gasdek has been a long-time supporter of a number of IUP initiatives, including supporting students who are veterans. His gift follows an announcement of a **\$25,000 anonymous gift** to the proposed college. IUP has secured more than \$32 million in private and government funding for the initiative. Once established, the college of osteopathic medicine is expected to generate \$79 million in annual regional economic impact.

External Accolades Higher Access, Higher Earnings

IUP graduates are earning higher salaries than their peers, according to the Carnegie Foundation and the American Council on Education. IUP is the only member of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education selected for the **"Opportunity College and University-Higher Access, Higher Earnings"** designation, which recognizes institutions with graduates who earn salaries that are 50 percent above (or more) than their peers in similar fields and that also provide access to students that reflect the communities that they serve. IUP is also the only university in Pennsylvania to hold the Carnegie Foundation's R2 ranking and the "Higher Access, Higher Earnings" designation, and one of only 19 public universities in the nation with the R2 classification and "Higher Access, Higher Earnings" designation.

Best Graduate Schools

IUP has been selected for U.S. News & World Report's **Best Graduate Schools** rankings, with IUP's graduate criminology program ranked in the top 34 programs in the nation. Editors also recognized IUP's graduate programs in education, English, speech-language pathology, fine arts, clinical psychology, and psychology. The Best Graduate Schools rankings in these areas are based on two types of data: expert opinion about program excellence and statistical indicators that measure the quality of a school's faculty, research, students, and post-graduate outcomes.

Proposed College Of Osteopathic Medicine Moving Forward

During the Western Pennsylvania Regional Rural Health Summit on April 16 hosted by IUP, President Michael Driscoll announced that an anonymous donor—who is a first-generation IUP graduate from Indiana County—has **gifted \$1 million to IUP** for its proposed college of osteopathic medicine.

On March 25, IUP and Torrance State Hospital **formalized a clinical training affiliation agreement** for students at IUP's proposed college of osteopathic medicine. Valerie Arkoosh, secretary of Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services, presented remarks during the event. The event celebrated IUP's 12th signed clinical training affiliation agreement.



President Driscoll and Miko Rose, founding dean of the proposed college of osteopathic medicine, were featured on Our Region's Business, a news show jointly produced by the Allegheny Conference and Pittsburgh's WPXI-TV. The segment is available on the Our Region's Business website.

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania is funding a statewide research study to determine the commonalities of physicians who commit to and stay in rural health care practice. The survey was developed by Rose and IUP's Applied Research Lab. The ARL will analyze the study.

Points of Pride

May 2025



Alumni Giving Back

An IUP graduate raised in Torrance, Westmoreland County, has established a scholarship for IUP students to honor her late mother. Gwen Miller, a 1960 elementary education graduate from Westmoreland County who makes her home in Chester Springs and Florida, has made a gift to IUP to establish the **Rosalie Howard Memorial Scholarship**. Howard was a native of Cambria County.

Creating Opportunities For Professionals Interested In Special Education

IUP is offering a special accelerated program for individuals interested in obtaining a special education teaching certification. IUP's Annah Hill (Department of School Psychology, Special Education, and Sociology) secured the \$99,330 grant for the program from the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network, part of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Honoring Our Own

Alumni and friends were recognized during the university's annual Celebration Weekend. The 2025 Award of Excellence for Volunteer Leadership was presented to five members of the IUP community in four categories: **Donna McCrea Griffith '74, M'77**, Award of Excellence in Volunteer Leadership for Advancement Support; **Blane Dessy '73**, Regional Impact Award; **Kaylee Becker-George '25**, Aspiring Alumni Award; **Rhonda Luckey and Alan Luckey '87, M'89**, Affinity Service Award.



Seven alumni were honored with 2025 Distinguished Alumni Awards on April 5: **Thomas A. Baker '05**, a global leader

of the low-carbon energy and infrastructure sector; **Dave Bluemling '85**, a fiduciary expert representing foundations, trusts, and estates; **Danielle Mashaw Brown '93**, senior vice president and chief information officer for Whirlpool Corporation; **Michael Burton '74**, Busch Gardens senior veterinarian (retired) and star of The Wildlife Docs; **Donta Green '10**, CEO of the Trade Institute of Pittsburgh and football coach at Westinghouse High School; **Everette Penn D'00**, professor of criminology at the University of Houston, Clear Lake and executive director of Teen and Police Service Academy; and **Kimberly Bender Steinhauer '85**, president and CEO of Estill Voice International.



Celebrating Research

Research At The Capitol

Parker Bradley and Symia Taimuty-Loomis, standout undergraduate student researchers, were selected to participate in the **2025 Undergraduate Research at the Capitol** event. Bradley, a chemistry major from Stewartstown, presented his research poster, "Photochemical Studies of Anticancer Ruthenium-Platinum Bimetallic Complex Adsorbed on Montmorillonite Clay," and Taimuty-Loomis, a psychology major in IUP's Cook Honors College from Mars, presented "Evaluating the Effects of Psilocybin on Mental Health Disorder Symptoms in Recreational Settings."



Points of Pride

May 2025



Women In STEM Summit

IUP's Annual **Women in STEM Summit** featured keynote presenter Bonnie Anderson '80, a 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award winner, and 2023 honorary doctorate recipient and veteran diagnostics industry leader and cofounder, chairwoman, and CEO of PinkDX, Inc., an early-stage diagnostics company focused on addressing unmet medical needs for women. The Summit also featured the presentation of the Dr. Patricia Hilliard Robertson Memorial Scholarship for Outstanding Female Science Student Award to Anna Cutshall, a biology major and business administration minor.



Second Annual AI Summit

A total of 192 students, faculty, and staff attended the **second annual IUP AI Summit**, sponsored by the IUP Center for Scholarly Communication in IUP's Research and Innovation; 70 attendees earned digital badges for completing three or more sessions.

Supporting Students

Compliance Management International (CMI), a global provider of environmental, health, and safety services based in Lansdale, gifted **\$15,000 in scholarships to students in IUP's Safety Sciences and Environmental Engineering programs**. Students were selected by a committee from CMI based on a competitive application process. Scholarships ranged from \$5,000 (Leadership Scholarship) to \$2,500 (Health and Safety Scholarship and Environmental Studies Scholarship) and general scholarships of \$1,000.

Creating Healthcare Professions Pathways

IUP's Meigan Robb (Nursing) and Lei Hao (Allied and Public Health) secured **\$808,454 in grant** funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to enhance access to dual enrollment for qualified high school students. IUP's program will focus on creating initiatives for dual-enrollment students that support a clear pathway to high priority occupations in a health-related field.

Academy Of Culinary Arts Long-Range Plan Moving Forward

Work is underway to raze unoccupied buildings at six addresses on the 100 block of West Mahoning Street in downtown Punxsutawney, part of IUP's **Academy of Culinary Arts long-range facilities plan**. The demolition of these buildings will allow for the construction of a new educational and multipurpose culinary facility on West Mahoning Street adjacent to the Fairman Centre.

Accreditation Affirmed

IUP's Criminal Justice Training Center has received **Training Academy Accreditation** from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. The Center remains the first and only municipal police training center in Pennsylvania to achieve this designation.



Applied Research Lab Working With Altoona Curve

IUP's Applied Research Lab is **collaborating with the Altoona Curve** on a research project to analyze attendance rates for Altoona Curve baseball games.

New Leadership



Larry Wakefield, who has more than four decades of experience in higher education budget planning and analysis and business affairs, joined the IUP community on March 24 as the interim vice president for the Division of Administration and Finance.

Points of Pride

May 2025



Celebrating 150 Years

IUP will celebrate **150 years of excellence and impact** during the 2025–26 academic year as it marks its sesquicentennial. IUP's "official" 150th birthday is May 17, 2025; the university (then Indiana Normal School) opened for its first 10-week term on May 17, 1875, with 80 students, which grew to 150 by the end of that first week. To fully involve students in the celebration, the sesquicentennial celebration will officially launch in August with the IUP Crimson Carnival on August 23; IUP's first day of classes for the fall semester is August 25. Information on the 150th is found on the IUP 150 website (iup.edu/150).



Talons Up



Kasha Stokes broke both the IUP and Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference **all-time record in the 200 backstroke** with a time of 1:58.70 at the NCAA DII Swimming Championships in March. By breaking her own record in the event by nearly six seconds, Stokes also earned All-American Honorable Mention laurels.

Gem Crittenden was named the **Most Outstanding Swimmer** at the PSAC Championships in February.

The IUP **men's golf program qualified for the 2025 NCAA DII Atlantic/East Super Regional**, marking a record 28th consecutive regional appearance. Action runs from May 8 to 10 at Whispering Woods Golf Club in Erie.