Delaware Governor Visits Law Review Symposium Focused on Creating a More Inclusive Legal Profession


The Widener Law Review’s spring symposium drew support from high places this year when Delaware Gov. Jack Markell visited the Delaware Law School campus to help kick off the daylong event “Breaking Down Barriers: The Benefits of a More Inclusive Legal Profession.”

Markell, who made employment opportunities for people with disabilities a cornerstone of his platform when he served as chairman of the National Governor’s Association, said the school’s chosen symposium topic was apolitical.

“This is not a Democratic issue. This is not a Republican issue. What we learn when we focus on the ability, rather than the disability, is that it’s amazing what we can accomplish,” Markell said. “It’s up to us to continue to push forward for opportunities for people with disabilities in the business world.”

The program was presented by the student-run Widener Law Review and the law school in association with the Delaware State Bar Association Committee on Legal Professionals with Disabilities. Alumnus Santino Ceccotti chairs the committee and worked with the school to execute the program.

Ceccotti, a December 2006 graduate who is disabled, practices in the appellate division of the Delaware Public Defender’s Office.

“Thank you so much for being the inspiration and driving force behind this program,” Dean Rod Smolla told Ceccotti, before introducing the governor. “It means a great deal to us.”
Students from the Center for Social Work Education, the Honors Program in General Education and the Contemporary Issues in Political Engagement service-learning class spent the day advocating state elected officials in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on April 12.

The social work students attended the National Association of Social Work Legislative Advocacy Day, during which they advocated for the passage of the Clinical Social Work Practice Protection Act. The act will mandate clinical licensure for MSWs who practice independently and will add "diagnosis" to the scope of practice for LCSWs.

"Students’ participation in AICUP’s annual Student Aid Advocacy Day is emblematic of the core of Widener’s mission: civic engagement," said Julie Dietrich, director of government relations at Widener. “This opportunity exemplifies our students as leaders who possess a genuine commitment to service and change in community and further fosters their development to this end.”

The student groups spent six hours at the Pennsylvania Capitol. The social science groups split up based on their hometowns, so that each student would meet their own elected officials.

“The layout of the Capitol building initially seemed confusing, closed-off and intimidating,” said senior Nicole Crossey, a triple history, international relations and political science major. “I expected the legislators to be the same way. However, after attending the past four Student Lobby Day events, I have found the elected officials to be so welcoming and receptive to my ideas and opinions.”

Crossey joined a select cohort of her peers for the additional opportunity to meet with the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) to learn about the source and distribution of its funding.

Throughout the day, members of the Greek organizations at Widener worked in shifts to package the meals. “It was a great collaborative effort that came together under the direction of Marc Helhowski and Gabriela Mongelos as the volunteer leaders for the Greek students,” said Mielke.

Nine West was impressed by the hard work of Widener students and is already planning another event next year.

“It’s great to see so many young adults who are motivated and willing to contribute to worthy causes,” said Nine West representative Vanessa Carter.
The Office of Disabilities Services at Widener University has an open-door policy. “We want students to feel welcome here,” Director Anna Bachus said. “For students to be successful academically, it’s important for our office to get to know them and be aware of their needs.”

Disabilities Services works with students who have documented disabilities, which range from learning or physical disabilities to mental health issues and chronic medical conditions. Office staff members offer services to undergraduate, graduate and law students on all campuses, but students must first express a desire to receive support.

Bachus enjoys the interaction she has with students. “It’s why I love coming to work every day,” she said. “I thrive on it. I really enjoy being able to coach them through situations and help them be the best they can.”

Bachus joined the staff at Widener as assistant director of Disabilities Services in October 2013. She later served as interim director before becoming director in January 2015. Prior to working at Widener, she worked in Disabilities Services at the Community College of Philadelphia and in counseling at the Pennsylvania Institute of Technology.

In her role at Widener, Bachus handles all documentation approval and works closely with other campus units like the Counseling Center, Student Health Services, Residence Life and Academic Support/Coaching. “A number of disabilities are invisible, so we have to work closely with the campus community to make everyone aware of the support that is needed to help a student thrive.” She advocates that all students have equal access to their education.

“Having someone in your corner to help you problem-solve during times like this can be transformative,” she said. “I never take for granted the opportunity I have to impact students by serving in this role. It is humbling.”

Off campus, the Media, Pennsylvania, resident enjoys spending time outdoors, especially at Ridley Creek State Park, and traveling whenever she gets a chance. She is also an avid Philadelphia sports fan.

If you’d like to learn more about Disabilities Services at Widener, call 610-499-1266, or visit the office’s webpages.

The university has announced that effective July 1, 2016, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute will move from Exton to the Main Campus in Chester, and all fall 2016 OLLI courses will take place in Chester. This move is to accommodate the tremendous growth OLLI has experienced since opening in 2005. The current facilities in the Springdale Corporate Center in Exton, Pennsylvania, can no longer support the number of people who want to take OLLI courses and more in-demand programming options.

“In looking at various alternatives to address these spacing issues, we kept coming back to the most prevalent national model for OLLI programs, which are usually housed on university campuses,” said Widener President Julie E. Wollman. “Moving OLLI onto our Main Campus will allow OLLI members entrée to university opportunities and resources, such as the Wolfgram Memorial Library, the Art Gallery and the Observatory. We also hope that the presence of OLLI members on the Main Campus might lead to more intergenerational collaboration and programming with our students. As we considered our space options, it seemed obvious that we should host OLLI on the Main Campus rather than continue to lease space in Exton.”

The move of the institute to the Main Campus will also help ensure the financial sustainability of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Costs to rent the facility in Exton, combined with the annual return from the Osher endowed fund, and the revenue received from membership fees, falls well short of covering the institute’s operating costs. By housing OLLI on Widener’s campus, the university can maintain and enhance programming consistent with the financial resources available to support OLLI.

Because the university will no longer lease space in Exton, Matt Weidman as director of OLLI will move to the Main Campus and work out of the Continuing Studies Office in Kapelski Hall.

Widener will continue to offer OLLI programming at designated retirement communities in Chester County depending on instructor availability. In addition, the university is contacting some of the Chester County retirement communities to discuss transportation to OLLI classes in Chester.

The university looks forward to welcoming continuing and new OLLI members to the Main Campus in Chester this fall. A catalog of fall OLLI courses will appear later this summer at www.widener.edu/olli.
Faculty Fellow Corner—The University Planning Tool:
A Sneak Peek of the Proposed Tool
By Faculty Fellow Dr. Angie Corbo, associate professor of communication studies

Faculty deliver course content with the expectation that successful students will understand, apply and analyze the information. We have the responsibility to evaluate student performance and our own. Are we serving our students well with our pedagogical approach? Were our assignments and course expectations clearly stated to the students? How can we improve our teaching and evaluation processes to promote a culture of rigor?

Aligning teaching goals, course outcomes and assessment processes may create a more transparent learning experience for students. In the ever-increasing world of assessing institutional, unit and program outcomes, our attention may become more focused on reporting rather than planning and reflection. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Office offers resources to faculty who wish to enhance their teaching and assessment process of student learning. In conjunction with the Faculty Council Student Learning Assessment Committee (FC-SLA), the TLA Office will pilot a University Planning Tool that enables faculty to focus on the planning process that will lead to actionable assessment. This is not limited to assessment coordinators and department chairs—this University Planning Tool is meant to assist faculty in personal goal planning as well.

Sound curriculum design should include a robust plan for gathering information about student performance—what they actually learned and their level of achievement. The goal is for faculty to gather and use data for learning improvements that will be meaningful and actionable.

The Student Learning Assessment Committee endorsed and recommended a pilot plan for a university-wide planning tool adapted from templates developed by the University of Rhode Island. On Assessment Day, May 17, faculty will discuss how they are piloting the planning tool in their areas as well as the benefits and concerns about using this tool. Join us on Assessment Day, from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. in the University Center Webb Room, to learn more about this planning tool and recent assessment findings.

Campus Kudos: ‘Walk a Mile in Her Shoes’ Participants

Kudos to the 66 Widener males who participated in the “Walk A Mile in Her Shoes” event April 15. Wearing 3-inch red heels, they took part in the 1-mile march around Memorial Field to help stop rape, sexual assault and gender violence.

The event aimed to not only increase awareness of these issues, which disproportionately affect women, but to also give strength to victims. The first “Walk A Mile in Her Shoes” event at Widener was presented by Club Sports, Fraternity and Sorority Life, the Office of Student Life and the Pride Recreation Center.
You’re Invited: The Inauguration of Dr. Julie E. Wollman

Widener faculty, staff and students are invited to celebrate the inauguration of Dr. Julie E. Wollman as the 10th president of Widener University on Friday, May 13 at 2 p.m. Offices may close to accommodate attendees.

The ceremony takes place on Memorial Field behind the Old Main building on Widener’s Main Campus. Faculty who wish to take part in the processional should report to Alumni Auditorium by 1 p.m. in academic regalia.

A reception will follow immediately after the ceremony on Memorial Field from 3:30–5 p.m. If you are planning to attend this May 13 celebration, please send an e-mail to rsvp@mail.widener.edu. The planning committee would greatly appreciate your response.

Inauguration Showcase of Faculty and Student Work

Prior to the inauguration ceremony, the campus community is also invited to attend an inauguration showcase of faculty and student work on Tuesday, May 10. Faculty will engage in a symposium related to the inauguration theme Listen. Lead. Transform. at 4 p.m., followed by student research presentations and artistic performances from 5–6 p.m. These activities take place in University Center.

For more information about all inauguration events and updated information, please visit www.widener.edu/inauguration.

Announcement about Emergency Messaging

If you wonder why you may get two e-mails that look quite similar during an emergency, it is because the university employs lists in both WUMail and in Campus Cruiser to communicate emergencies. There is quite a bit of overlap in these two lists; however, the two lists are not identical, and not everyone on Campus Cruiser is on WUMail. Therefore, University Relations errs on the side of inclusion, getting the message to as many people as possible. That means that some people get duplicate messages. Similarly, if you wonder why you receive a message about an emergency on a campus other than your own, it is because Campus Cruiser does not allow us to segment out students, faculty and staff by campus. Again, we err on the side of inclusion. If you have any questions, you may contact Lou Anne Bulik, associate vice president of University Relations, at labulik@widener.edu.

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Day and Night of Sustainable Thinking

Students have recently taken the lead to promote sustainability both on campus and throughout the Chester community. As part of their Senior Capstone course, two groups of communication studies students hosted events designed to foster “sustainable thinking.”

In partnership with the Chester Writers House, led by Jayne Thompson, senior lecturer in English and creative writing, one student group hosted a nighttime event on April 6 at the MJ Freed Theater in Chester. This event featured 10 presenters—community members, faculty members and students—who discussed a range of topics from environmental justice to climate change and organic farming. The event, which was billed as part of the Chester Writers House Blue Hour Lecture Series, attracted 50 attendees.

“The goal of this evening, and the goal of all of the lectures in the series, is to bring people together to discuss the pressing issues of our time,” said Thompson. “Certainly, environmental sustainability is a pressing issue, and I am overjoyed that so many knowledgeable people volunteered their time to address this topic.”

The second student group also partnered with the Chester Writers House to host “A Day of Sustainable Thinking” event on April 9 in University Center. This event featured family-friendly activities designed to spark an interest in sustainability among youth participants from the Widener and Chester communities.

“We aimed to teach youth more about sustainability so that they can understand the concept and how they can make an impact now and moving forward,” said communication studies seniors Victoria Miller and Audrey Lee, who helped plan the event.

Young participants had the opportunity to plant seeds in biodegradable planters and color a picture designed by a Chester community artist that promoted the idea of buying local goods. Adult attendees could pick up information about green living and browse craft vendors who brought eco-friendly items, such as up-cycled clothing.

Student Sustainability Week

Widener students making up the Student Sustainability Committee most recently took steps to educate the Widener community about sustainability and contribute to sustainability initiatives during the first Student Sustainability Week. Organized by freshman biology major Iman Elkhashab, events included multiple tree plantings at sites throughout Chester, a plant wall demonstration and a rain barrel workshop.

One event examining the Flint water crisis was rescheduled due to the university power outage. It will now take place May 4 at 6 p.m. in University Center, Room A.

To learn more about sustainability efforts at Widener, visit the Green Pride webpages, which are updated regularly, at www.widener.edu/greenpride.

Students Spearhead Latest Sustainability Efforts

With the university’s campus-wide sustainability effort in mind, paper copies of the spring 2016 issue of Widener Magazine will not be printed for every university employee as in the past.

Not printing these additional copies will have the significant environmental impact of saving 54,000 pages.

The full text of the magazine is available online at www.widener.edu/news-events/magazine. (All past issues are available online in the Digital Collections of the Wolfgram Memorial Library.)

Printed editions for those who prefer one are available in four magazine racks on the Main Campus. These are located in University Center, the Kapelski Learning Center, Lipka Hall and Wolfgram Memorial Library.

Hard copies of the magazine will continue to be mailed to all alumni of the Main Campus, parents of undergraduates and donors. National surveys by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), as well surveys of Widener Magazine readers, have indicated that more than 80 percent of our alumni desire printed copies.

If you need additional copies or have questions, please contact Sam Starnes, editor, at 610-499-4246, jsstarnes@widener.edu, or visit him in Room 220 in Old Main.
A seven-member team of Widener undergraduates had a strong showing recently in the second annual Collegiate Leadership Competition. The team finished second among six teams at the competition held April 8–9 at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio.

The following Widener students represented the university in the competition:

- **Dante DiBattista**, a junior psychology major.
- **James Feeley**, a junior business management major.
- **Nicole Gilette**, a senior biology and biochemistry major.
- **Jessica Helwig**, a junior business management major.
- **Alyssa Horton**, a junior business management major.
- **Tori Remondelli**, a senior mechanical engineering major.
- **Audrey Rucker**, a sophomore communication studies major.

Biology majors **Rina Bhalodi** and **Julia Dovgy**, sociology majors **Nicolette Epifani** and **Mary Jacob** and computer science major **Indi Malam** all participated in a service activity sponsored by the Gender and Women’s Studies Program.

They discussed the movie “He Named Me Malala,” a documentary on Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai, with Girl Scout troops 5718 and 508 in Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania. The participants earned their Girl Scout 2016 Global Action Award.

The Widener University French Club was recently honored by GAED, the Guinean Alliance for Education and Development, for its dedication to public service, especially its devotion in assisting GAED to help Guinean students. **Mamadou Keita**, a 2013 French and international relations graduate and current MPA student, accepted the certificate on the club’s behalf at the GAED Third Annual Fundraising Gala in Washington, D.C. Keita, who is pictured in the center below, helped form the French Club as an undergraduate.

**Spotlight on Sports:**

Four Swimmers Earn Philadelphia Inquirer Academic All-Area Laurels

Senior education major Erin Neugebauer, pictured above, headlined a group of four Widener University swimmers who were named to the Philadelphia Inquirer Academic All-Area Teams, as voted by sports information offices at 30 institutions in the Philadelphia metropolitan area.

Joining Neugebauer on the squads were juniors Melaney Heald, a finance major, and Jeffrey Hicks, an electrical engineering major, as well as senior Andrew Madore, a biomedical engineering major. Widener was the only school to have multiple honorees for both men’s and women’s swimming.

Widener has now had 10 student-athletes named to the Philadelphia Inquirer Academic All-Area Teams through the winter season. The mark ranks tied for third with Temple University among the 30 institutions in the Philadelphia metropolitan area and only behind the University of Pennsylvania and Villanova University.

Men’s cross country runner Stephen Fortin, field hockey goalkeeper Mikayla Ninos as well as football standouts Steve Gozur, Ryan O’Hara, Blaine Price and Stacey Sunnerville received the award in the fall.
Two-Week Peek
A Look at the Next Two Weeks in Widener Events

Wednesday, April 27
Last day of classes at Delaware Law
6–7 p.m. Italian Cinema Night: *Il capitale umano* (Human Capital); Freedom Hall Amphitheatre

Thursday, April 28
Last day of classes at Commonwealth Law
12–5 p.m. Take Back the Night Clothesline Project and Self Care Activities; Kapelski Portico
2:45–3:45 p.m. Graduate Research Symposium: Poster Presentations; Lathem Hall
4–6 p.m. Picnic for graduating students, hosted by the Office of Development & Alumni Engagement; Delaware Law, campus lawn
4–5 p.m. Graduate Research Symposium: Oral Presentations; University Center
5–6 p.m. Graduate Research Symposium: Featured Presentations; Founders Hall, 109
6–7 p.m. Graduate Research Symposium: Awards Ceremony/Reception; Founders Hall
6 p.m. Take Back the Night Featured Speaker: Katie Koestner, followed by a Speak Out and candlelight vigil; Alumni Auditorium

Friday, April 29
Undergraduate Student Project Day
3:30 p.m. Baseball vs. Messiah College; Home

Saturday, April 30
1 p.m. & 3 p.m. Softball vs. Messiah College; Home
1 p.m. Women’s Lacrosse vs. Stevenson University; Home
5 p.m. Relay for Life; Memorial Field (Register)

Main Campus Lecture by Michael Smerconish

When: May 2, 1 p.m.
Where: Freedom Hall Amphitheatre

Michael A. Smerconish is an American radio host and television presenter, newspaper columnist, author and lawyer. He is also the commencement speaker for Widener’s undergraduate commencement ceremony. He has agreed to visit campus prior to commencement to speak about polarization, i.e. how we got here and what it will take to get out. Following his talk, which he titled “Stuck in the Middle with You,” he will take questions from students, faculty and staff in attendance.

Sunday, May 1
3–4 p.m. Chamber Music, Dance and Jazz Performances; Kapelski Hall Music Room

Monday, May 2
Final exams begin for Delaware Law and Commonwealth Law
11:45 a.m.–12:45 p.m. Puppies in the Pit! Widener Law Commonwealth, The Pit
1 p.m. “Stuck in the Middle with You,” a lecture by Michael Smerconish; Freedom Hall Amphitheatre
9–10 p.m. Stargazing; Widener Observatory

Wednesday, May 4
6–8 p.m. Rescheduled: Flint Water Crisis Discussion; University Center, Room A

Friday, May 6
Last Day of Classes on Main Campus
9–10 p.m. Stargazing; Widener Observatory
8:30 a.m.–3:10 p.m. Symposium: “The Military, the Law and the Constitution;” Widener Law Commonwealth, Administration Building
9:30 p.m. Residence Hall Association hosts “Late Night Breakfast;” Pride Cafe

Monday, May 9
Final exams begin for Main Campus
11 a.m.–6 p.m. Pride Activities Counsel: Relaxation Zone; University Center Atrium
4:45–5:45 p.m. Puppies in the Pit! Widener Law Commonwealth, The Pit
9–10 p.m. Stargazing; Widener Observatory