Widener Announces Commencement Speakers

John Lippincott, former president of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and Dr. Martin E.P. Seligman, director of the University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center, will deliver the commencement addresses at Widener University on May 15 and 16.

Students who are receiving master’s or doctoral degrees will graduate at 9 a.m. on May 15, and undergraduates who are receiving bachelor’s or associate’s degrees will graduate on Saturday, May 16. Both ceremonies will take place in the Bown Garden behind Old Main. Students, parents, alumni, and faculty and staff can participate in social media dialog leading up to commencement using the hashtag #widener2015.

Lippincott will present the address for the graduate commencement, and Seligman will present the address for the undergraduate commencement. Both will receive honorary doctor of public service degrees from the university during the ceremonies. Rev. James L. Ley, the Archdeacon of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, will also receive an honorary doctorate of public service degree during the graduate ceremony.

“John Lippincott and Martin Seligman are accomplished leaders at the forefront of their fields, and we look forward to having them share their experiences and wisdom with our graduating students,” said Widener President James T. Harris III. “In addition, Reverend Ley’s commitment to the community and social justice is an inspiration for all of us and a value that we strive to instill in our students before they graduate.”

As president of CASE, Lippincott has helped schools, colleges, and universities around the globe strengthen their alumni relations, communications, fundraising, and marketing operations. He was named to the position in 2004, and was the longest-serving president in the organization’s history before retiring in January.

As director of the University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center, Seligman is also director of the Master of Applied Positive Psychology Program. He was president of the American Psychological Association in 1988, during which one of his presidential initiatives was the promotion of positive psychology as a field of scientific study. He is a leading authority in the fields of positive psychology, resilience, learned happiness, depression, optimism, and pessimism. He is also a recognized authority on interventions that prevent depression and build strengths and well-being.

Continued on page 2
Commencement, Continued from page 1

Ley is currently the vice chair of Chester Eastside Inc. and president of the advisory board of Episcopal Place at Park Row, a low income housing project in Upland, PA. He is a member of the Chester branch of the NAACP and the Chester Swarthmore Leadership Institute. He works closely with Widener on the Community Based Learning Strategic Planning Taskforce, The Bonner High Impact Strategic Planning Committee, The Presidents Community Advisory Board, and frequently guest lectures and provides administration, professors, and students tours of Chester as seen through the lens of social justice.

Learn more about Lippincott, Seligman, and Ley in the full news release about commencement.

For a complete list of commencement events and related news, view the university’s commencement web pages.

Distinguished Alumni to Share Words of Wisdom at Law School Graduations

New Jersey Supreme Court Justice Lee Solomon, ’78, will serve as speaker for Widener Law Delaware’s 41st commencement, to be held Saturday, May 16 on the campus green. Alumnus and social media influencer Glen Gilmore, ’92, will be the speaker for Widener Law Harrisburg’s 24th commencement, to be held Sunday, May 17 at The Forum in the Harrisburg state capitol complex.

Solomon will address approximately 220 Delaware graduates.

Solomon is the first Widener Law Delaware alumnus to reach the New Jersey Supreme Court bench. He was appointed by New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie for a seven-year term and sworn in as an associate justice in June 2014. He previously served as a Superior Court judge and as president of the Board of Public Utilities. Then-Gov. Jim Florio appointed him to fill a vacancy in the New Jersey General Assembly in 1991. He served until 1995, then moved on to work as Camden County prosecutor. In 2002, Christie—then serving as U.S. attorney for New Jersey—appointed Solomon first deputy attorney for southern New Jersey. He began serving as a Camden County Superior Court judge in 2005. He spent five years on the bench, then moved to the Board of Public Utilities, and finally returned to the Camden County Superior Court bench in 2011.

Gilmore will address approximately 80 Harrisburg graduates.

Gilmore was named a Forbes Top 50 “social media power influencer” two years in a row. He is the author of Social Media Law for Business and contributing author to Strategic Digital Marketing. He provides customized training to members of the Fortune 500 and is recognized as a top influencer in social business, content marketing, wearables, and The Internet of Things. He teaches social media law at Rutgers School of Business and maintains a law practice in Hamilton, NJ. He served as mayor of Hamilton for eight years and is a former municipal prosecutor.

Widener Law Harrisburg Marks 25th Anniversary

Widener Law Harrisburg recently celebrated 25 years with a party featuring a live band, plenty of food, and a wine tasting. About 100 alumni, current students, faculty, and staff attended to reconnect and reflect on their involvement with the school.

Widener University President James T. Harris III spoke at the reception, recognizing the law school’s impressive stats. It has graduated 3,334 students, and there are 3,285 Widener Law Harrisburg alumni practicing in 45 states plus Washington, D.C., and the Virgin Islands.

Today, Widener Law Harrisburg has 245 students, 19 full-time faculty members, 30 adjunct professors, and three emeriti professors.

Harris warmly recognized the first vice dean of the Harrisburg Campus, Professor Emeritus John L. Gedid, who was in attendance, calling him the “Ben Franklin” of the law school for his many years of visionary leadership during Widener’s start-up phase. Among other innovations, Gedid founded the Law & Government Institute, now the Harrisburg Campus’ signature program.

Points of Pride...

Learn more about the Law & Government Institute and Widener Law Harrisburg’s 25th anniversary at the university’s commencement web pages.
Austin Duckett, director of Student Engagement, started his career in higher education nearly 13 years ago. As an undergraduate student at Lycoming College, Duckett found his passion for student affairs. He became the assistant director of Leadership Development and Student Activities at Ursinus College before pursuing his master’s degree in higher education counseling and student affairs at West Chester University, where he also worked in the Office of Residence Life and Housing Services.

Duckett's main interests are working with students in leadership development and mentoring, so he sees his current position at Widener as a perfect fit for him.

"I wanted to come into the role and have direct contact with students," Duckett said. "One of my personal philosophies is to always help students reach their potential, even though they may not think they can make a difference themselves at the time," he said.

One of Duckett’s first areas of focus was helping reinvent the Widener Activities Council to what is now the Pride Activities Council.

The change in the name and concept of the Pride Activities Council stemmed from a brainstorm session held with the prior year’s Executive Team. Once the students developed the idea, Duckett provided the administrative support needed to help the organization reach the next level. He strategically marketed the new brand to incoming students and changed the perception of the organization among upperclassmen by hand selecting engaged and enthusiastic student leaders to work with on key programming and marketing initiatives.

Duckett’s efforts were honored last week during the Student Leader Awards hosted by the Office of Student Life, where the Pride Activities Council won the coveted award of Student Organization of the Year.

Duckett also manages the Alternative Spring Break program and is often on campus during the weekends, as he is charged with developing the late night and weekend programming initiatives for the Pride Night Program Series.

He is currently gearing up for the New Student Orientation Program this summer by selecting and training all of the CREW leaders who assist with orientation in June through August.

One of his favorite Widener moments is watching the excitement of the new students as they say farewell to their parents and begin to connect with the CREW Leaders and others in the Widener community.

EnvironMentors Coming to Widener

Widener University’s culture is rich in civic engagement. In keeping with this tradition, Dr. Mary Gozza-Cohen, assistant professor of education, and Dr. Nadine McHenry, professor of education, investigated the EnvironMentors Program as yet another means of reaching the university's civic engagement goals.

After reading about the program in a scholarly journal, McHenry invited interested Science Teaching Center faculty to join her on a trip to D.C. in May of 2014 to learn more about the environment-based mentoring program. After speaking with EnvironMentors directors and coordinators, the group decided to start a chapter on Widener’s campus and will begin working now through the end of June in conjunction with the STEM Academy and Chester Education Foundation to select the first cohort of high school students and Widener University faculty mentors to participate beginning in the fall of 2015.

The goal of EnvironMentors is to have researchers from various backgrounds work with local high school students to become proponents of the environment in their respective communities. Each chapter works toward this mission—and Widener’s will be no exception.

Gozza-Cohen and McHenry, along with their graduate assistant, will motivate high school students in the Chester, PA, community to learn skills that will allow them to take action in preserving their environment. Students will design research projects with the help of faculty mentors and complete these projects using Widener labs and research facilities. They’ll gain exposure to college campuses and processes that will help prepare them for their next academic step.

The Widener EnvironMentors chapter will be housed in the Science Teaching Center.
Patrick DeArmey chose Widener Law for the strength of its environmental law program, and this year he’s been a key part of a unique public service collaboration between the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic and a nonprofit environmental organization based on the Delaware Campus.

DeArmey has logged about 30 pro bono hours working on a compliance sweep project that holds businesses and industry accountable for excess pollution. In the process, he has honed research and writing skills, and expanded his knowledge of the Clean Water Act and intricate discharge permits.

“It’s been important to me, for whatever I want to do in the future, to know how this process works,” said DeArmey, a third-year law student from Carroll County, MD. “I’ve gained these skills so I can make a difference.”

The clinic has partnered with the Mid-Atlantic Environmental Law Center—housed at Widener Law in Delaware—on the Upper Potomac Compliance Sweep. DeArmey has worked with attorney Hannah Leone, the center fellow and clinic Director and Associate Professor Kenneth T. Kristl, researching discharge permits for businesses and industries within the Upper Potomac region. The region comprises Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

First they searched Environmental Protection Agency online records to determine which businesses have permits to discharge into geographically relevant watersheds. From there they formulated Freedom of Information Act requests of the states—which are charged with enforcing the discharge permits—to view reports that detail the amount of pollution being discharged. Permits are typically held by industrial parks, chemical companies, coal companies, and waste water treatment plants.

Tracking and enforcing permit compliance is a massive job for the states, which may prioritize differently or not track permits as closely as many feel is necessary, Leone said. “That’s why our work is so important,” she said.

DeArmey and Leone analyzed the data and put it into charts, looking for patterns in the pollutants. Then they shared the charts with the Potomac Riverkeeper—the client on the project—to review and elect how to proceed. DeArmey said the clinic so far has sent warning letters, notifying polluters they are being monitored and advising them to get in compliance.

“It’s been very enlightening on how the whole process works,” he said. “I’ve been able to see all the groundwork that goes into it, and I’m doing something that makes sure people are following the rules and what they agreed to do.”

Kristl, who also serves as executive director of the Mid-Atlantic Environmental Law Center, said the sweeps have provided students like DeArmey with a valuable learning experience that contributes to protecting the environment.

“We seek to prepare students for practice by having them engage in and learn from the real, practical steps an attorney takes to serve a client—exactly what Patrick had the opportunity to do,” Kristl said. “That it also protects the Potomac River watershed and its environment allows Patrick and other clinic interns to have a real, positive impact on the environment while learning these valuable skills.”

Campus Snapshot: Air Force Visitors

Widener recently welcomed members of a French-speaking Mobility Support Advisory Squadron of the U.S. Air Force based in New Jersey. Capt. Patrick Sheehan (Civil Engineer), Master Sgt. Sarah Balian (Interpreter), Master Sgt. Spencer Northington (Fuels), Technical Sgt. Will Davis (Command Post), and Technical Sgt. Bryan Smith (Survival Specialist) shared their experiences using French in a variety of postings in Africa. The group had lunch with students in French 303 and gave a presentation to two political science classes. Finally, they talked with members of Widener’s ROTC Program, international relations students, and French students.
Faculty Fellow Corner: Save the Date for the Bridge Week Unconference May 11
By Dr. Angie Corbo, associate professor of communication studies and faculty fellow

Bridge Week has been a collaborative week where faculty colleagues have participated in structured programs prior to commencement. In previous years, a variety of formats including keynote speakers, peer-led sessions, and working sessions have afforded the opportunity for faculty development. Most notably, faculty have left the Bridge Week with innovative ideas for teaching and learning.

A new format for Bridge Week will tap the richness of our faculty on Monday, May 11, 2015. The “Unconference” format will call for discussion leaders to dialogue with campus colleagues in a collaborative, more unstructured format. “The unconference format allows those present to control the agenda” according to Dr. Sharon Meagher, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Meagher first introduced this format to the A&S faculty last August.

“The unconference turned out to be one of the best collective experiences we have ever had as a college. It gave the faculty a chance to really talk to each other about topics we chose—topics we care about as a faculty. New ideas and initiatives came out of the break-out sessions, as well as an exciting new energy and cooperative spirit,” said Dr. Sarah Roth, A&S vice chair.

The organization for the sessions at the 2015 Bridge Week Unconference will come from participants who share common ideas on discussion topics. Faculty and staff facilitators will help with the logistical organization, but the participants will create the agenda on the day of the conference. The format becomes intuitively organized as common interest topics emerge. In addition, the discussion points of each session will be available through Google Docs. The discussion topics can be shared among faculty and referenced at a later date.

The day provides a great deal of flexibility where the faculty can discuss issues to address the needs and interests of those present. The A&S faculty proposed some ideas in advance of the August 2014 Unconference, but topics emerged organically. There will be three session rounds to engage faculty in different topics. The format invites active and scholarly engagement and an opportunity to introduce new partnerships among colleagues.

Learn More
Learn more about Bridge Week, including how to register and a tentative schedule of events, in the “Two-Week Peek” on page 8.

Bio Student Earns Grant to Attend Botany Conference

Senior biology major Alicia Butko is one of only 12 undergraduates from throughout the U.S. to receive a grant from the PLANTS program (Preparing Leaders and Nurturing Tomorrow’s Scientists: Increasing the diversity of plant scientists), which will fund her participation in the BOTANY 2015 meeting July 25–29, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

The grant will cover all of Butko’s expenses to attend the meeting, and the PLANTS program, which is funded by the National Science Foundation and Botanical Society of America, will provide her with a graduate student mentor with whom she can discuss and analyze the content presented throughout the meeting sessions. Butko will also deliver her own talk on the research project she completed her senior year with Dr. Kate Goodrich, associate professor of biology.

Butko and Goodrich created a natural guide for use by freshmen in Biological Concepts I and II courses to help them identify plants in the Taylor Memorial Arboretum in Chester. “We thought that this guide would be useful to the students in these courses who visit the arboretum,” said Butko. “It assists them in analyzing, identifying, and understanding what plants they come across. It also helps faculty teaching the course whose expertise is not necessarily botany.”

In addition to the natural guide, Butko also created a collection of voucher herbarium specimens, which involved pressing plant samples to see their morphological features.
Last Tuesday, 11 Widener students paid a visit to the Pennsylvania State Capitol for Student Lobby Day, hosted by the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania. This is the third year students have participated in this event.

Political science students and Political Engagement Committee members, along with Dr. Gordon Henderson, professor of political science, and Dr. Wes Leckrone, associate professor of political science, advocated for an increase in funds for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship program, which was successful in obtaining $5 million in middle-class scholarships last year. The group met with a number of local legislators, including Sen. Dominic Pileggi, Rep. Thaddeus Kirkland, and Lt. Gov. Mike Stack.

Three environmental science students, along with Dr. Loyd Bastin, associate professor and chair of chemistry, met with other legislators to advocate for a severance tax on natural gas and suggest uses for that money.

In addition to Student Lobby Day, on April 14, nearly 20 Widener social work students attended Legislative Advocacy Day in Harrisburg hosted by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. Students participated in a General Assembly to discuss legislation impacting the social work profession and social service delivery.

Student Project Day on Friday, April 24 showcased the culmination of students’ learning over the past academic year, and often their entire Widener career. Many of the projects also showcased the connections Widener students made with the city of Chester during their time on campus.

In communication studies, the team of seniors Devon Fiore, Alexander Harm, and Emma Litwiller partnered with the Chester Community Improvement Project and East Gateway Triangle on a rebranding and promotional campaign, which included the development of new logos and a revamped social media presence for both groups and a new website for the Chester Community Improvement Project, a community housing development organization that targets abandoned and vacant properties.

The business team of seniors Michael Bennett, Bryan Clayton, Carissa Harris, Caitlin Horan, Charles McCue, Abigail Sauer, and Alyssa Wiggins, partnered with Chester native Devon Walls to develop a business plan for a new coffee shop in Chester that will sell WU Brew and other products from Golden Valley Farms and its affiliate, Artisan Exchange.

“This project helped further bridge the gap between Widener and the city of Chester,” said Walls. “The students erased everything from their heads they thought they knew about Chester and got to know the city and its people for themselves. As this project progressed, the coffee shop became just as much theirs as it is mine.”
For the first time ever, students of the Widener University Communication Studies Department presented an athletics event—Widener Coaches and Athletes of the Year. The event was held on Wednesday, April 22 in the Schwartz Athletic Center Media Room. The inaugural award winners were—Head Coach of football Mike Kelly (Male Coach), Head Coach of men’s and women’s swimming Katy Peterson (Female Coach), senior wide receiver Anthony Davis (Male Athlete), and junior shortstop Alie Alkins (Female Athlete).

Each of the first-year winners were honored and humbled to be able to represent Widener and their respective teams. When speaking of Coach Kelly, Davis became emotional as he noted how his first-year coach was a father figure to him and brought the football team together as one big family.

The nominees for each of the awards were chosen and then voted upon by members of the Student Athlete Coordinating Committee represented by athletes on each of the sports teams the Pride sponsors. The communication studies students who constructed this entire event were Anthony Jackson, Jaclyn Marshall, and Brianna Wylie—a junior forward on the Widener women’s basketball team.

Noteworthy

Andrew Miller, a junior computer science major; Ismael Sarmento, a freshman computer information systems major; and Justin Spedding, a junior computer science major, represented Widener with a fourth-place finish at the Consortium for Computing Sciences in Colleges Northeastern Region Programming Competition held April 17–18 at the College of the Holy Cross. They competed against 29 other teams from the Northeast and solved five out of six problems. No teams solved all six problems. Also at this event, Miller and Spedding presented the research poster “Design and Implementation of Steganography and Steganalysis Techniques,” and Noella Noel, a freshman computer science major; and Tulsi Patel, a sophomore biomedical engineering and computer science major, presented the poster “Exploring Extracurricular Activities to Enhance Retention and Recruitment of Women into Computing Disciplines.” Dr. Yana Kortsarts, associate professor of computer science, served as the faculty adviser for both groups of presenters.

Dr. Ross Steinman, associate professor and chair of psychology, presented the paper “Culture Priming and Consumer Choice” at The Clute Institute 2015 International Business Conference held March 22–26 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was awarded “Best Paper in Session.” At the conference, Steinman also served as chair of the Marketing Session.

Widener University has landed seven CUPPIE Awards this year presented by CUPRAP, the organization of College and University Public Relations and Associated Professionals.

Winning entries included:

- **Gold** for postcards category for Widener Law Online Compliance Program Postcards
- **Silver** in the photo-other category for Widener Partnership Charter School Series
- **Silver** in the print cover category for Widener Law Magazine’s Fall 2013 “Grit” Cover
- **Honorable mention** in the feature article category for “Writing Wrongs, Mentoring Youth, Redeeming Souls”
- **Honorable mention** in the creative headline category for “Writing Wrongs, Mentoring Youth, Redeeming Souls”
- **Honorable mention** in the wild card category for “Peace of Mind” and “Sexuality Matters” Student-Written Columns
- **Honorable mention** in the in-house magazine category for Widener Law Magazine Fall 2013 “Grit”

Spotlight on Sports: Widener Coaches and Athletes of the Year

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Pictured from left to right are Justin Spedding, Ismael Sarmento, and Andrew Miller.
Two-Week Peek
A Look at the Next Two Weeks in Widener Events

Wednesday, April 29
12 p.m. Pennsylvania Women’s Forum “Mean Girls: All Grown Up;” Harrisburg Campus, Administration Building, A180
12:30–2 p.m. Retirement Plan Town Hall; Delaware Campus, Vale Courtroom
3–4:30 p.m. Retirement Plan Town Hall; University Center Webb Room
4–5 p.m. Graduate Student Commencement Information Session; Founders Hall, Room 109
4–6 p.m. Graduating Class Picnic; Delaware Campus, Campus Green
5–6 p.m. Undergraduate Student Commencement Information Session; Founders Hall, Room 109
5–6:30 p.m. Debate with Democratic candidates in the race for Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice; Harrisburg Campus, Administration Building, A180
6 p.m. Gender and Women’s Studies Film Screening: Lion’s Den; Freedom Hall, 122

Thursday, April 30
2:30–4 p.m. Retirement Plan Town Hall; University Center Webb Room
4:30–5:30 p.m. Undergraduate Student Commencement Information Session; Founders Hall, Room 109
5–6:30 p.m. Debate with Republican candidates in the race for Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice; Harrisburg Campus, Administration Building, A180
6–7 p.m. Graduate Student Commencement Information Session; Founders Hall, Room 109
7:30 p.m. Iain Moyer’s Faculty Recital; Kapelski Recital Hall

Friday, May 1
11 a.m.–12 p.m. Retirement Plan Town Hall; Harrisburg Campus, Administration Building, Room A180
11:30 a.m.–1 p.m. Student Farewell for President Harris; University Center, Atrium

Bridge Week Unconference
May 11
Faculty are encouraged to attend the Bridge Week Unconference on May 11 in University Center.

What is an Unconference?
This is a highly participant-driven conference format. Participants develop the agenda and engage in peer-to-peer discussions on mutual topics of interest.

Why an Unconference for Bridge Week?
The Teaching Learning and Assessment Bridge Week Advisory Group recommended the unconference format to actively engage Widener faculty in framing their faculty development experience on their topics of interest. Faculty can propose topics, facilitate sessions, and participate in peer discussions on chosen topics. These activities take place on the day of the unconference event.

What do I need to do?
First, sign up to attend. There is little or no preparation required to participate in the Unconference. Simply start thinking of topics, whether its successful teaching practices or cross-campus collaborations.

Tentative Unconference Agenda:
9–9:30 a.m. Networking Breakfast
9:30–10:15 a.m. “Wall Setting” for Developing the Agenda
10:30–11:15 a.m. Session #1
11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m. Session #2
12:30–1 p.m. Lunch
1–1:45 p.m. Session #3
2–2:30 p.m. Sharing What We Learned

8:30 p.m. Stargazing; Widener Observatory

Monday, May 4
8:30 p.m. Stargazing; Widener Observatory

Wednesday, May 6
6 p.m. Faculty, Staff, Donor Reception for President Harris; Bown Garden

Saturday, May 9
8:30 a.m. Free mock LSAT exam; Harrisburg Campus, Administration Building, A180

Monday, May 11
Bridge Week Unconference

Tuesday, May 12
1–4 p.m. Safe Space Ally Training Day 1; Quick 108 (e-mail mmdavis@widener.edu to reserve a spot; Must attend both training sessions)

Wednesday, May 13
1–4 p.m. Safe Space Ally Training Day 2; Quick 108 (e-mail mmdavis@widener.edu to reserve a spot; Must attend both training sessions)
6–9 p.m. SBDC Seminar: First Steps; Widener SBDC

Commencement is approaching. Get all related news on the commencement web pages, and remember to use #widener2015 when talking about the big day!