

MUSKINGUM

U N I V E R S I T Y



July 2026

THE PRESIDENT'S PULSE



The first time I came to Muskingum University, I was a kid.

I grew up in a small farming community in south-central Ohio, where everybody knew everybody. The community felt small and familiar. The wider world felt enormous. There was so much I wanted to see, but most of it seemed impossibly far away.

When I had the opportunity to attend a summer camp at Muskingum, it felt like an expedition. I don't remember every detail of that visit. Time has a way of sanding down the sharp edges of memory. But I remember how the place felt. I remember walking across the campus and sensing that important things happened here. I remember the feeling that people cared deeply about learning, about craft, and about

helping young people discover who they might become.

Then life carried me elsewhere. I left rural Ohio. I earned degrees. I became a professor, a researcher, and eventually an academic leader. I worked at institutions of different sizes and in different parts of the country. Along the way, I met extraordinary students, colleagues, and mentors who shaped my life in ways they probably never realized.

But now, decades after that first visit, I find myself returning to Muskingum as its president. Life has a funny way of bringing you home. When people ask why I chose Muskingum, the answer is surprisingly simple.

It was the people.

During the search process, I met faculty who cared intensely about teaching. Staff members who cared deeply about students. Alumni whose faces lit up when they talked about their years here. Trustees who spoke honestly about both the opportunities and the challenges facing the University. What I found was a community that felt sincere.

In higher education, it is easy to talk about buildings, rankings, programs, and statistics. Those things matter. But nearing three decades in this profession, I have come to believe that the most important thing about any university is whether people feel known in the fullest sense of the word. Whether someone notices them, believes in them, challenges them, and cares about who they are becoming. When people experience that kind of community, they thrive. Students grow in confidence. Faculty do their best work. Communities flourish because people understand they are part of something larger than themselves. That is what I see at Muskingum.

The world around us is changing rapidly. Higher education faces real challenges. Demographics are shifting. Technology is transforming how we learn and work. Families are asking hard questions about value and opportunity. Those realities are not reasons for pessimism. They are reasons for clarity. The institutions that will thrive in the years ahead are the ones that remain true to their mission while adapting to a changing world. That means continuing to serve traditional undergraduate students while also creating new opportunities for adult learners, graduate students, and working professionals who seek the benefits of a Muskingum education at different stages of life. I believe Muskingum is well positioned to do exactly that.

We have a history nearly two centuries long. We have a mission centered on helping students think critically, grow personally, excel professionally, and contribute meaningfully to society. We have faculty and staff who invest themselves in the success of students. We have alumni who carry this place with them long after graduation.

Most importantly, we have a purpose that matters. We help people discover their potential, build meaningful lives, and contribute to something larger than themselves.

As I begin this work, my first commitment is simple: to listen. I want to hear your stories. I want to learn what makes Muskingum special in your eyes. I want to understand where you believe we are strongest and where we can be better. And then I want us to get to work together. Because the future of Muskingum will not be built by a president. It will be built by students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and friends who share a belief that this university matters and that its best days are ahead.

I am grateful for the opportunity to join that work. And I am excited for the next chapter we will write together.

I'd love to hear from you. Write to me at president@muskingum.edu. Tell me what's on your mind. Tell me what matters to you.

LIFE MORE ABUNDANT



Muskingum University Receives \$1 Million Leadership Gift to Launch Brown Chapel Renewal

Muskingum University has received a \$1 million leadership gift to support the renewal of Brown Chapel, one of the most significant and meaningful spaces on campus.



Inauguration: Save the Date

The Board of Trustees of Muskingum University is pleased to announce that Dr. Flavius Lilly will be installed as its 22nd President on Saturday, October 10th at 10:00 a.m. in the university's historic Brown Chapel, during the 104th **Magenta** Homecoming celebration.

WHERE KNOWLEDGE STILL IS HOLY



Gift To Make Things Real For the Muskie Investment Club

Thanks to a generous lead gift from Pat Fridley '76 and other enthusiastic donors from the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees, the Muskie Investment Club will now create investment strategies for a portfolio consisting of real money. Up until recently, the Club devised strategies for a theoretical portfolio – no more.



Dr. Thomas McGrath Receives Cora I. Orr Faculty Service Award

Muskingum University has named Dr. Thomas McGrath, Professor of History, as the recipient of the 2026 Cora I. Orr Faculty Service Award, recognizing his longstanding commitment to serving both the University and his colleagues.



Dr. Samantha Bennett Receives William Oxley Thompson Award for Excellence in Teaching

Muskingum University has named Dr. Samantha Bennett, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, as the recipient of the 2026 William Oxley Thompson Award for Excellence in Teaching.



Dr. Seth Barrett Receives William Rainey Harper Award for Outstanding Scholarship

Muskingum University has named Dr. Seth Barrett, Professor of Chemistry, as the recipient of the 2026 William Rainey Harper Award for Outstanding Scholarship, recognizing his commitment to discovery, collaboration, and student learning.



Muskingum University Launches New Master of Science in Nursing: Leadership and Education Program

Muskingum University is expanding its commitment to healthcare education with the launch of a new Master of Science in Nursing: Leadership and Education program.

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A Tradition Worth an Encore

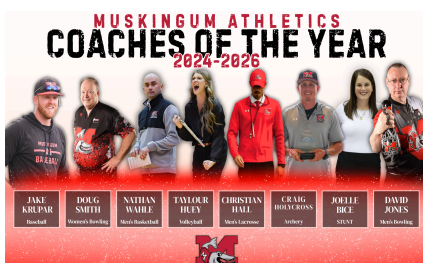
For more than 20 years, Muskingum University's Summer Music Theatre Camp has been more than a place to learn songs, choreography, and stagecraft. It has become a home for generations of young performers—a place where confidence is discovered, friendships are formed, and a lifelong love of theatre takes root.

YOUTH TRIUMPHANT



Culture First: How Muskingum Athletics Is Building Something Bigger Than Wins

Success rarely happens overnight. For Muskingum Athletics, the momentum building across campus is the result of years of intentional work, creating a culture centered on leadership, accountability, collaboration, and a commitment to developing students long after the final whistle.



Building Champions: Muskingum Athletics Celebrates Coaches of the Year

Muskingum Athletics celebrates a standout group of leaders as its 2024-2026 Coaches of the Year, recognizing a two-year run defined by conference success, national recognition, and program milestones across the department.

THY LOYAL CHILDREN



Council Connections

Behind every Alumni Council member is a unique Muskingum story. We are excited to include introductions of Alumni Council members in each **Magenta Lines**, sharing the experiences, friendships, and memories that continue to inspire their connection to Muskingum. From favorite campus traditions to the reasons they choose to give back, these stories offer a chance to get to know the dedicated alumni who are helping strengthen the Muskie community for generations to come.



Home is where the heart is:

Meet Eric Pohjala '82

For Eric Pohjala '82, choosing Muskingum was about more than finding the right college—it was about finding the right community. More than four decades later, it's still the people who define his Muskingum experience.



Four Years, A Lifetime of Impact:

Meet Laura Yoder DeCoste '94

For Laura Yoder DeCoste '94, Muskingum wasn't just where she earned a degree; it became part of who she is. More than three decades after graduation, the lessons, friendships, and experiences she gained on campus continue to shape her life.



Because of You!

As our school year comes to a close, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to every alumnus, parent, friend, faculty member, staff member, and supporter who invested in our students and our mission. Your generosity is making a lasting difference.



Muskingum Launches New \$15,500 Graduate Degree Opportunity for Alumni

Muskingum University is pleased to announce the launch of the Muskingum Advantage, a new graduate tuition benefit created specifically for Muskingum alumni.

IN THE NEWS

ICYMI: Welcome Dr. Flavius Lilly.

- Learn more about President Lilly and watch his introduction video [here.](#)

Laudations

ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND

Visit our Online [Events Calendar](#) for details on arts, athletics, lectures, presentations, and more!

Upcoming Alumni Events:

- **104th Magenta Homecoming Celebration**
Friday, October 9 through Sunday, October 11
Registration coming soon!

- **Khanna Career Connections Conference**
Friday, October 9, 12-4 p.m., Anne Steele Center
Registration coming soon!
- **22nd Presidential Inauguration of Dr. Flavius Lilly**
Saturday, October 10, Brown Chapel

Concerts:

- **Muskingum Collage Concert, October 9**, 8:00 p.m., Brown Chapel
- **Homecoming Chapel Service Chamber Singers**, October 11, 10:00 a.m., Brown Chapel
- **Zawa! Flute Duet Concert**, October 12, 7:00 p.m., Brown Chapel

Theatre: Caldwell Hall

- More Information coming soon!

Art: Louis O. Palmer Art Gallery:

- **Embracing a New Era with New Perspectives**, September 9-October 1, 2026, Palmer Gallery
Reception held **Wednesday, September 9, 3:00pm – 5:00pm**
Lecture by artists, **Wednesday, September 16, 1:00 – 2:00pm**

Athletics:

- All Fall Fighting Muskie schedules can be [found online](#).

STAY CONNECTED

- **Class Notes:** Submit a Note and Catch Up with Fellow Muskies
- **Update Your Contact Info:** What's new with you? Job, address, addition to the family? Have you retired or changed email addresses?! We want to know so we can stay connected!

FROM THE ARCHIVES



An alumna revisits her 1961 yearbook—this time on an iPad—during her 50th class reunion at Alumni Weekend in June of 2011, blending cherished memories with modern technology.

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UNIVERSITY