

! THE POINT

FALL '23

A PUBLICATION OF POINT PARK UNIVERSITY

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Point Park alums shine on local newscasts around the country **PG. 6**



From the President

As I jot down these words, the atmosphere in downtown Pittsburgh is vibrant. The sun is out, the streets are bustling, and preparations are underway at Point Park University for the upcoming Fall 2023 semester.

Since assuming the presidency at Point Park University, my focus has centered on expanding our University community. To sustain growth, we must continue fostering an inclusive environment that embraces everyone, including our alumni.

Our graduates leave here equipped for successful careers, and we take immense pride in the accomplishments of our alumni. Each year, you serve as the cornerstone upon which we build when new students arrive on campus to join the Point Park family.

Your connection with this campus extends well beyond your graduation. You're an integral part of our extended family, and we encourage you to maintain contact and pay us a visit. On Page 6, you'll have the pleasure of

meeting Stephanie Schmader '98, the newly appointed President of the Point Park University Alumni Association. Stephanie offers practical suggestions for staying connected.

We're keen on involving our alumni in shaping Point Park's future. This is why we engaged the Alumni Association in discovery sessions during my initial weeks as interim president and throughout our strategic planning. Alumni who participated in these sessions shared their perspectives on our strengths, areas for improvement, and their vision for the University's success.

This fall, we'll unveil the final iteration of our five-year strategic plan. You can expect to hear from us soon with comprehensive details about the plan and opportunities for continued discussions and engagement.

Serving as the ninth president of Point Park University is a tremendous honor, and I'm eager to guide us toward the future. I invite you to remain actively connected as we navigate this journey together. ●



“Each year, you serve as the cornerstone upon which we build when new students arrive on campus to join the Point Park family.”

Dr. Chris W. Brussalis



Connect with your extended Point Park family!

NONDISCRIMINATION, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY INITIATIVES:

This policy affirms Point Park University's commitment to nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and the pursuit of diversity. Point Park University does not discriminate on the basis of: sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, age (40 years and over), ancestry, individuals with disabilities, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, height, weight, genetic information, marital status, caregiver status or familial status, in the administration of any of its educational programs, activities or with respect to employment or admission to the University's educational programs and activities.

This policy is in accord with local, state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Pittsburgh Human Relations Act. Inquiries regarding these regulations and policies, or complaints, should be referred to Point Park's vice president of human resources, phone number 412-392-3952. Complaints of discrimination can be filed via the Incident Reporting Form online at PointPark.edu/IncidentReport; and will be processed by the University Office of Compliance and Integrity according to Point Park's policy on discrimination and harassment. Complaints may also be emailed to oci@pointpark.edu

Inquiries regarding Title IX and the Title IX regulations should also be referred to the University's Title IX coordinator. The Title IX coordinator may be reached at oci@pointpark.edu, 412-392-8190, or 201 Wood St., Student Center, Room 104D, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. A Title IX incident report can be filed via the Incident Reporting Form online at PointPark.edu/IncidentReport

TALK TO US

The Point wants to hear from you. Send your comments and suggestions to alumni@pointpark.edu or drop us a note at:

Point Park University
Office of University Advancement
201 Wood St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

ON THE COVER

Lindsey Watson '13 and Josh Frketic '11 work together at WKBN in Youngstown, Ohio.

Contents



2 ALUMNI CORNER
Class Notes, Alumni
President's Message,
Giving, Alumni Profiles

PLUS: Point Park
University Inaugural
Homecoming &
Family Weekend

10 EVENTS
Picklesburgh 2023

12 FACULTY HIGHLIGHT
Divine: Point Park
Assistant Professor
Choreographs
International Ballet

Make it a POINT
to support Point
Park students
with a gift to
the Pioneer
Fund or Bison
Scholarship Fund.

Visit www.pointpark.edu/give

Email alumni@pointpark.edu

Call **412-392-8096**

Or scan the QR code:



14 ATHLETICS
Point Park Athletics
Enjoys Success On
and Off The Field
in 2022-23

16 ARTS
New Season of
Pittsburgh Playhouse
Brings World Influences
to its Stages

18 UNIVERSITY NEWS
Kiesha Lalama named
new leader of the
Pittsburgh Playhouse

PLUS: Why I Give:
A Conversation with
Jack Tomayko

Alumni Corner

CLASS NOTES

Point Park Alums Make Their Mark



Monae Findley '20 '22, a graduate of Point Park University's broadcasting and MBA programs is the founder and CEO of Plants for Skin, a sustainability-focused cosmetics and skincare company. Monae recently opened a storefront on Butler Street in Lawrenceville. "My decision to open my store in Pittsburgh was inspired by the deep sense of community I experienced while studying at Point Park," she said. "The vibrant and diverse culture of the city, coupled with a personal connection to the community, made Pittsburgh the ideal location for a business centered around communal growth and sustainability."

Broadway actor **E. Clayton Cornelious '98** is playing the role of Paul Williams in the first National Tour of *Ain't Too Proud - The Life and Times of The Temptations*. Cornelious is also a co-producer of the Broadway hit new musical *New York, New York*. "Thank you to Point Park for motivating me and preparing me for my career. Point Park has more tools than many other schools. I have seen from personal experience that Point Park students are the most prepared in all aspects of the business when starting a career," Cornelious said.



Josh Croup '18

earned his second Emmy Award for his work at WTVG in Toledo. Croup also won awards at the Ohio Associated Press Media Editors ceremony in several categories. "Point Park gave me the opportunity to get hands-on experience from day one. The faculty and mentors I got to work under at Point Park helped develop my skills to make sure I was as prepared as possible to work in this industry," Croup said.



Point Park baseball alum **Nick Beardsley '21** is back in professional baseball for the third year in a row. Beardsley, who pitched for Point Park from 2016 to 2021, was signed by the Staten Island FerryHawks on July 1. The FerryHawks are in the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball, regarded as the sport's top independent professional league. Beardsley, a right-handed pitcher, earned his first professional victory on July 6, throwing 6.2 shutout innings against the Lexington Counter Clocks.



John Spare '17, who earned an M.F.A. in Screenwriting and Playwriting at Point Park, wrote the screenplay for “Condition of Return,” a 2023 feature film being released into theaters and starring AnnaLynne McCord, Dean Cain and Natasha Henstridge. “I can’t stress enough how my experience in the M.F.A. program has not only helped me become a better writer, but also helped me gain a position with an amazing company, Foster Web Marketing,” Spare said. “The ability to learn how to take and give notes to fellow writers was very eye-opening. Discovering how to incorporate theme, symbolism, relatable protagonists and the various methods to help create a memorable story – literally from a germ of an idea – is still something I utilize in all areas of my life and work.

Lindsey Watson '13 of WKBN in Youngstown was recently named *Best News Anchor* in the Ohio Associated Press Media Editors Competition. “Attending college in Downtown Pittsburgh is such an exhilarating experience. The entire city is your campus. The vibrant energy, rich cultural diversity and an abundance of opportunities create a dynamic learning environment that is both inspiring and unforgettable,” Watson said.



Dr. Aspen Mock '18, a graduate of Point Park University’s Leadership and Administration program and an English Language Arts educator at Forest Hills Junior-Senior High School was named a 2023 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year nominee. “I would recommend Point Park University’s Leadership and Administration program because it is an opportunity to empower lifelong learners along their leadership journeys, shaping their paths so they can make profound contributions in their fields,” Mock said.



ALUMNI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
Join the Fun!

Greetings Point Park Alumni! I am thrilled to begin my service as the President of the Point Park University Alumni Association. It is my pleasure, along with our Alumni Board of Directors, to represent you – a community of more than 30,000 – who proudly call themselves alumni.

My sincere gratitude to Nyx Melody '15 for their leadership over the past three years as president. They maintained engagement through the pandemic, facilitated the development of our board's guiding principles, and breathed energy into our committee structure. They have certainly left an impact, and I am excited to build on their foundation.

Being a member of the Point Park alumni community comes with an overwhelming sense of pride for our beloved alma mater. One of my top priorities is increasing our outreach to – and connection with – our alumni. The Office of University Advancement at Point Park is your one-stop-shop for all things alumni related. Here are a few things you may not know about:

- A monthly alumni e-newsletter is sent out on the first working day of the month. If you are not receiving it, check your spam filter (mine got caught there initially!). If you still don't see it, contact the office and let them know.
- Events are hosted for alumni in the Pittsburgh region and around the country. If you are not receiving mail from Point Park, email your address to the office to ensure you are invited to events in your area.

- Alumni can reach out to the office for a campus tour, an Alumni ID, and much more. Check out the website for more information: www.pointpark.edu/alumni

If you have any questions or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out to the office at alumni@pointpark.edu or 412-392-8096. Please also engage with us on our social media channels to stay abreast of the latest Point Park happenings and to share your memories and updates with fellow alum!

This fall, we look forward to celebrating the extraordinary accomplishments of alumni and faculty. Whether you graduated last year or 50 years ago, we hope to see you at Homecoming & Family Weekend, September 29 - October 1. We have lots of fun, exciting activities in store including Point Park Night at the Pirates, tours of campus and The Pittsburgh Playhouse, and recognition of the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Recipients and beloved faculty who have retired over the last few years. To see the schedule of events and register, visit www.pointpark.edu/HFW2023.

I invite you to come along with us for the exciting year we have ahead. Whether you attend an event, consider joining our alumni board of directors, follow along on social media, or come back to campus for a tour, we hope to connect with each one of you!



Stephanie

Stephanie Schmader '98
B.S. in Business Management
President, Point Park University
Alumni Association
AlumniBoardPresident@pointpark.edu



Point Park University held a special event for alumni and donors earlier this year in the Pittsburgh Playhouse to mark the premiere of the student-led production of "Newsies."

GIVING
Make an Impact!

One of the most significant gifts you can make is one without limits on its use and the Pioneer Fund and Bison Scholarship Fund serve that purpose. Gifts to the Pioneer Fund are directed to the University's greatest need, while gifts to the Bison Scholarship Fund are awarded to deserving students. Generosity in the form of unrestricted support allows us to alleviate financial challenges for students, renovate learning spaces, and support experiential learning.

Interested in talking to someone about other ways you can support Point Park philanthropically? From issuing a Day of Giving Donor Challenge, to establishing a scholarship, to remembering Point Park in your legacy planning, so much is possible. Contact us by emailing alumni@pointpark.edu or calling 412-392-8096.

Making your gift is easy!

ONLINE
Visit www.pointpark.edu/give

OR

BY CHECK
Send your contribution by check, payable to Point Park University:

Point Park University
Office of University Advancement
201 Wood St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222



Keep in touch, and learn how your gift can impact the lives of Point Park students! >>



Alexandra Bell '24

"Point Park is the perfect place to experiment with fun projects and career-building. For anyone looking to be seen and heard in an environment where creativity is cultivated, Point Park is for you."



Shivansh Waleacha '23

"Point Park is one of the most welcoming environments I've ever experienced. You can be from anywhere, from any background, and feel like you are a part of something bigger than yourself at this school!"



Sherlyn Harrison '21

"My experience is that Point Park invests in hard-working, professional students who have busy lives with families and careers. At Point Park, you do not have to sacrifice your life and work to complete a degree because Point Park promotes academic excellence while focusing on student needs."



ALUMNI PROFILES

Broadcast Alumni Shine in the Local Television Industry Throughout the Country

BY ERIN K. YUDT

From the tri-state area to Maine, Point Park broadcast alumni shine throughout the local news television industry.

Lindsey Watson, originally from Beaver Falls, graduated in 2013. Watson always knew she wanted to be an on-air news reporter.

“It has always been my dream to report the news on TV,” said Watson, currently an evening anchor at WKBN in Youngstown, Ohio. “Whether someone would ask me what I wanted to be when I grew up at 5 or 15, it was always the same.”

Watson attended a broadcast and media workshop at Point Park the summer before her senior year of high school, where she met fellow alumni and current WKBN coworker Josh Frketic.

“I knew right then and there that Point Park was where I wanted to be,” Watson said. “It’s a reporter’s dream.”

Watson joined U-View, the student-run campus television station, as a freshman and worked on every show the station produced, which at the time included Daybreak, a morning news-style show, and Sideline, a sports news show.

“I jumped in right away and did everything I could,” Watson said. “A lot of campuses do not let you work for the studio until you’re a junior, which is not only what makes Point Park stand out, but what prepares us for working in the industry.”

AARON MYLER

'16

“Point Park gave me a realistic view of the industry. Broadcasting can look very glamorous from the outside, meteorology can look like just standing in front of a screen, but there is so much work behind the scenes. I knew that coming in, and I think my work ethic from school landed me the jobs I’ve had.”

Bernie Ankney, Dean of Point Park’s School of Communication, agrees that early hands-on experience is what sets Point Park apart from other universities.

“I believe that our program is one of the best in the country, and our alumni lead the industry here in Pittsburgh,” Ankney said. “Our goal is for students to become leaders by their sophomore year, so they get that hands-on experience right away, whether through U-View, The Globe, WPPJ and in-class experiences. ... We want students to be involved in their campus media all years of college and build that professional portfolio, so they are ready when they graduate.”

Watson said some of her favorite memories from college are from working at the TV studio, as it also was her work study, and that she still keeps in touch with the close friends she made through U-View. She had two internships, one at KDKA and one at WPXI, during her time at Point Park and even wrote for The Globe, the student-run campus newspaper. Watson found classes like Journalism Law and Ethics, and On-Air Performance to be the most helpful.

“No matter how hard they were, law and ethics were easily the most helpful classes. The SPJ (Society of Professional Journalists) code of ethics is forever taped to my desk,” Watson said. “Also Josh [Frketic] and I still say phrases to each other all the time that our on-

air performance teacher said to us. The mechanics of the industry were drilled into us, and we got thick skin from the start.”

Watson was recently named Best News Anchor in the Ohio Associated Press Media Editors Competition and is among the 2023 Mahoning Valley Young-Professionals Club’s 25 under 35, which celebrates standout community professionals and volunteers under 35 years old.

Frketic, a McKees Rocks native, was recently promoted to morning news anchor at WKBN after eight years as a sports reporter. He started out as a multimedia reporter at WKBN, even covering weather at one point.

“Point Park prepared me to be able to be a jack of all trades,” Frketic said. “From classes to being involved in U-View and WPPJ, doing sideline

reporting with the sports teams, they were the building blocks for my future.”

While Frketic struggled for a few years to find a full-time job after graduation in 2011, he is glad he stayed in a smaller, local broadcast market.

“You can do a lot of good in a lot of smaller places. It’s not always about the top 25 markets,” Frketic said. “You never know when a story can occur or when you can make a difference. We as a smaller market can do the deeper digging, and that’s what matters to our community.”

Aaron Myler, a 2016 Point Park graduate from Plum and a meteorologist for WTRF News Center Maine, has similar feelings.

“No matter where I have been, it has been such a rewarding career,” Myler said. “Every day is different. You never get bored.”

After attending community college for two years and looking for the best journalism schools in the state, Myler decided to pursue broadcast journalism at Point Park. Being a junior did not stop him from obtaining leadership roles at the University, as he co-hosted U-View’s Entertainment on Point and did weather for Daybreak, which is where he found his passion for meteorology.

“Point Park gave me a realistic view of the industry,” Myler said. “Broadcasting can look very glamorous from the outside, meteorology can look like just



LINDSEY WATSON

'13

“A lot of campuses do not let you work for the studio until you’re a junior, which is not only what makes Point Park stand out, but what prepares us for working in the industry.”



SIERRA TUFTS

'15

“Having professors that are doing the things they are teaching you every day was one of the most helpful things. They work with the current equipment and know the current market best.”

standing in front of a screen, but there is so much work behind the scenes. I knew that coming in, and I think my work ethic from school landed me the jobs I've had.”

Sierra Tufts, a Union City native and 2015 Point Park graduate, is currently at WANE in Warsaw, Ind., and finds that having professors in the field to be the most helpful thing from Point Park.

“Having professors that are doing the things they are teaching you every day was one of the most helpful things,” Tufts said. “They work with the current equipment and know the current market best.”

Larry Miller, a 2010 graduate from

Baltimore, Md., and Virginia Beach, Va., is a morning anchor for WUSA in Washington, D.C., and found physically being and working in the Pittsburgh media market was one of the most helpful things before fully entering the broadcast industry.

“Pittsburgh is easily one of the most competitive news markets,” Miller said. “There’s no better place to go for broadcast journalism in Pittsburgh than Point Park.”

Miller feels the “demands and expectations were high” but that his school experience prepared him to be “a journalist for all platforms committed to getting the facts and truth.”

“It will forever be ingrained in my mind that whatever I say has to be fact, to always be right, and to always be a constant student,” Miller said. “The faculty did give extreme preparation, but

JOSH FRKETIC

'11

“You can do a lot of good in a lot of smaller places. It’s not always about the top 25 markets. You never know when a story can occur or when you can make a difference.”



when I look back, I can say that I was not unfamiliar and unprepared when I came across similar situations.”

Miller’s station recently won several Emmy Awards for their reporting in 2022, including one Miller helped with that covered home appraisals and how Black owner’s homes were being severely underappraised.

“We got invited to the White House as they were passing some legislation as a result of our reporting, and I got to

interview the secretary of housing and development,” Miller said. “The power of storytelling is why we do what we do.”

Miller also has recently completed a year-long fellowship in South Africa, further investigating housing issues throughout the world. ●

Erin K. Yudt is a senior at Point Park University and editor of the school’s student-run newspaper, The Globe.



LARRY MILLER

'10

“I believe that our program is one of the best in the country, and our alumni lead the industry here in Pittsburgh.”

BERNIE ANKNEY, dean, School of Communication

“Pittsburgh is easily one of the most competitive news markets. There’s no better place to go for broadcast journalism in Pittsburgh than Point Park.”

Join us for the inaugural Point Park University

Homecoming & Family Weekend

This will be a jam-packed three days of activities on campus and throughout Pittsburgh for all ages and interests. There is a \$20 registration fee per person, and some events have an additional cost. Registration is required, as space is limited for some events. Questions? Contact us at alumni@pointpark.edu or 412-392-8096.

Find more details by visiting www.PointPark.edu/HFW2023.

Friday, Sept. 29

Athletics Golf Outing 9 a.m. Shotgun Start Cedarbrook Golf Course \$640 Foursome | \$160 Indiv. Sponsorships Available

The four-person scramble benefits our high-achieving 18 varsity teams and more than 400 student-athletes. Funds raised support ongoing programming needs such as uniforms, travel expenses, and facility enhancements.

President’s Welcome
5:30 p.m. Doors | 6 p.m. Remarks
Join us as Dr. Chris W. Brussalis welcomes alumni and families back to campus! Whether it has been one month since you

dropped your student off or 50 years since you’ve been a student, we would love to see you.

Point Park Night at PNC Park 6:35 p.m. First Pitch | \$50

Everyone is invited to Point Park Night at PNC Park as the Pittsburgh Pirates take on the Miami Marlins. Tickets include a Pirates/Point Park branded bucket hat and all-you-can-eat nachos, hotdogs, popcorn, and pop.

COPA Performances | 7:30 p.m.
You will not want to miss these performances by our incredibly talented Conservatory of Performing Arts students in the Dance and Theatre Departments.

Saturday, Sept. 30

Alumni Mimosa Brunch 10 a.m.-Noon | \$10

Featuring the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Awards and a Celebration of Faculty who have recently retired. *Space is limited at this event.

Alumni Athletic Games 10:30 a.m. | Greentree Ballfields | Baseball and Softball

Former Point Park baseball and softball team members are invited to play. All are invited to cheer them on!

Pioneer Fun Day 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Bring your Point Park Pride to the streets and enjoy food trucks, student entertainment, and activities for the littles and young at heart.

Happy Hour & Open House 3-6 p.m.

Connect to the Point Park of today and yesteryear! Learn about current student organizations at Point Park and talk with our incredible faculty and staff.

Pioneer Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony 5 p.m.-7 p.m. | Lawrence Hall Ballroom | \$25

By invitation only. Reception & Dinner. Celebrate the Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2023. The year’s honorees are listed below with the years they played at Point Park:

- » Tom Birko, Baseball, 2010-14
- » Shane Lucas, Men’s Soccer, 2008-11
- » Ashley Morran, Softball, 2011-14

COPA Performances | 7:30 p.m.
You will not want to miss these performances by our incredibly talented Conservatory of Performing Arts students in the Dance and Theatre Departments.

Java & Jazz | 8-10 p.m.

Warm up with coffee, hot cocoa and dessert, and wind down from the day’s activities while listening to some great Pittsburgh jazz.

Sunday, Oct. 1

Send-off Brunch 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Enjoy brunch in the dining hall with students before hitting the road!

Picklesburgh 2023

EVENTS

Picklesburgh moved to Boulevard of the Allies for 2023, running the hugely popular festival right through the heart of Point Park University.





1



2



3



1 The University's Village Park, located at the Boulevard of the Allies and Wood Street intersection, was a hub of activity for the July 21-13 event, and Point Park was a Signature Sponsor.

2 Point Park's student-run music label, Pioneer Records, assisted in scheduling live music acts for the event.

3 The University opened up the lobby of Academic Hall as a meeting place for alums and special guests, offering a chance to mingle and take a break from the heat.

Divine

FACULTY HIGHLIGHT
Point Park Assistant Professor
Choreographs International Ballet

The Gwangju Uprising is the subject of a new ballet choreographed by Jae Man Joo, assistant professor of ballet at Point Park University and a recipient of the Princess Grace Award for Excellence in Choreography.

Entitled *Divine*, the ballet commemorates the Gwangju Uprising, a response to the installation of a military dictator who implemented martial law in the city of Gwangju on May 18, 1980. The uprising saw the arrests and killings of hundreds of Korean citizens. The Gwangju uprising is known in Korea as

May 18 and has since been established as a National Day of Commemoration.

Divine was performed by the Gwangju City Ballet in July at the Gwangju Culture & Art Center in South Korea.

“I was born and raised in Gwangju so it is a very special city to me,” said Joo. “The Gwangju Democratization Movement, as the protest came to be known, remains an indispensable and unforgettable part of the history of Korea.”

According to Joo, the uprising is perfectly expressed in the body language of dance.





“Even though this work is specifically about an event in South Korea, the themes of racial discrimination and the suppression of human rights are universal throughout the world.”

Jae Man Joo, assistant professor of ballet

“My goal for this work is to embody the feelings of loss, sorrow and hope, and ultimately to help us reach consensus through choreography, direction and movement,” Joo added.

The Gwangju City Ballet was founded in Gwangju, South Korea, in 1976. As one of only five professional ballet companies in South Korea, the company performs a repertoire which includes many full-length narrative ballets such as *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *La Sylphide*, *Don Quixote* and *Coppelia*. The company has continuously been supported by

Gwangju Metropolitan City, the sixth-largest city in South Korea.

Joo has hopes that he can someday bring *Divine* to Pittsburgh and to his ballet students at Point Park University.

“Even though this work is specifically about an event in South Korea, the themes of racial discrimination and the suppression of human rights are universal throughout the world,” said Joo. ●

Rehearsal photos courtesy of Jae Man Joo





ATHLETICS

Point Park Athletics Enjoys Success On and Off The Field in 2022-23

BY KEVIN TAYLOR, DIRECTOR OF ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

The Point Park University athletic department notched another successful year in 2022-23 – both on the field of competition and in the classroom.

The Pioneers' teams won a share of seven conference championships, with several programs enjoying some of their best seasons. Academically, the department GPA for all student-athletes was 3.27.

“This past year was a banner year for Point Park Athletics,” said John Ashaolu, Director of Athletics. “We are truly blessed to have tremendous student-athletes and a team of great coaches and staff. Our student-athletes define grit and resilience on a daily basis and take on the challenge of pursuing excellence in the classroom and in competition. I am excited for us to continue to grow as an athletic department into the future.”

Point Park athletics had 10 different teams place either first or second in the River States Conference in 2022-23. That retained the RSC All-Sports Commissioner's Cup for a third year in a row and the sixth time in school history.

In the classroom, the Pioneers had 15 of their 18 sports teams with a team GPA of 3.00 or higher for the year. Many of those were well above that mark with 10 teams at 3.30 and above.

The Point Park **volleyball** team engineered an undefeated conference record at 17-0 RSC. That earned the Pioneers a trip back to the NIAA national tournament for the first time since 2016 and the right to host the RSC Championship.

The **women's soccer** team went undefeated in RSC play as well with a 9-0-1 record. The Pioneers won the RSC regular-season championship, notched 10 wins for the first time since 2018 and reached the conference semifinals.

Point Park **women's cross country** won its fifth RSC Championship in eight years to punch its ticket to the NIAA national meet. It was the first conference title since 2019 when the team won three in a row.



The **men's and women's track and field** programs continued to dominate the RSC with the men winning both the indoor and outdoor conference championships, while the women won indoor and placed runner-up in outdoor. The Pioneers also enjoyed their highest number of NAIA national qualifiers.

Men's basketball posted a 23-7 record for its first 20-win season in 16 years. That put the Pioneers in second place in the RSC East Division and into the conference semifinals. It was just the seventh 20-win season in program history.

The Pioneers **baseball** team won its 28th conference championship. The team earned its seventh trip to the NAIA national tournament in the last 11 years and were just one round shy of another NAIA World Series.

Point Park **softball** took a second-place finish in the RSC East Division before making a run to the conference semifinals. **Women's basketball** and **men's soccer** both made a return trip to the conference playoffs and earned postseason home games.

The Point Park **esports** team enjoyed its best year since being established in 2020. The program fielded competitive

teams in Rocket League, Valorant and League of Legends while stepping up its video and broadcast production.

In **competitive dance**, the Pioneers placed third at NAIA regionals and just missed qualifying for NAIA nationals for the fifth time in six years. The **competitive cheer** team – along with **men's cross country** and **men's and women's golf** – all had solid seasons within the conference with young rosters ready for the future.

Point Park had 11 student-athletes earn NAIA All-American status during 2022-23. The most for the department in more than a decade included Stephanie Rivera-Pacheco from volleyball, Alyssa Campbell from women's track & field, Jo Valrie from men's basketball, Jared Campbell from baseball, Delaney Mackey, Katlyn Busch, Nina DiBacco and Anna Fitzgerald from competitive dance and Jakob Blatnik, Daniel Jacobs and Daimere Stephens-Stewart in men's track and field.

The Point Park athletics coaching staff pulled in many accolades as well. Tim Creamer, in his second year as men's and women's track & field and cross country head coach, was named RSC Coach of

the Year three times during 2022-23. Other RSC Coach of the Year honors went to Bridget Bielich in her fifth year as volleyball coach and Kelly Raddar in his first year as women's soccer coach. Destiny Tucker was named RSC Volleyball Assistant Coach of the Year.

It was a year of several new faces as head coaches. In addition to Raddar joining the staff for women's soccer, it was new men's basketball coach Kevin Reynolds who led a 13-win turnaround from the year before, Dave Scarborough coming on board to lead women's basketball to a playoff victory and Cameron Williams coming on in men's soccer to lead the program back to the postseason. Later in the year, Gabe Bubon was brought back as men's women's golf head coach, a post where he won five conference championships from 2009-17.

"I am extremely proud of the hard work and dedication of our student-athletes, coaches and staff for a great year," said Ashaolu. "Our student-athletes have been charged with winning on the competition field, in the community, and most importantly in the classroom and they've done so admirably." ●

ARTS

New Season of Pittsburgh Playhouse Brings World Influences to its Stages

Spanish, Asia Pacific and Japanese cultures come to the Pittsburgh Playhouse stages this fall with a diverse and compelling season of dance, music and theatrical performances.

“This season, we’re excited to be expanding and digging deeper into music, dance and theater informed by other cultures and featuring exceptional global performers,” said Garfield Lemonijs, Artistic Director and Dean of the Conservatory of Performing Arts.

This year, the Playhouse will welcome Noche Flamenca, a New York based troupe mixing ballet and flamenco in a new work based on the oeuvre of Francisco de Goya; Drum Tao, the premiere group of Japanese drummers; Rennie Harris Puremovement, Philadelphia-based hip-hop and street dance company; and Small Island Big Song, first nations artists and musicians from island nations of Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean; as well as bringing back local favorite, the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra’s Holiday Concert, produced in collaboration with MCG Jazz.

“It’s always a thrill to see our amazing students working alongside some of the best professionals in the world today,” Lemonijs said. “The experience of performing with the caliber

of talent coming to the Playhouse this year is one that our students will likely benefit from for the rest of their careers.”

Playhouse Presents highlights for the coming season include:

**October 27, 2023:
Noche Flamenca
Searching for Goya**

Inspired by the transformative drawings and paintings of Francisco de Goya, Noche Flamenca’s new work references the prolific Spanish artist’s response to the political turmoil and injustices of 18th and 19th century Spain, echoing

the ignorance and conflict prevalent in our own time. Choreographed by Artistic Director Martin Santangelo and award-winning principal dancer Soledad Barrio, Searching for Goya features a company of dancers, singers and musicians whose mastery of flamenco stretches the boundaries of the art form with a theatricality that engages the audience and takes them on a journey through Goya’s imagination.

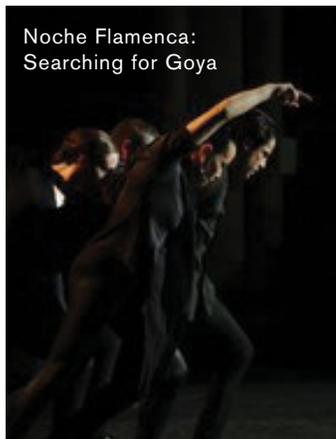
**December 21, 2023:
Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra
Holiday Concert**

When the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra formed in 2010, it was decided a Holiday show would be a programming must. Now, the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra Holiday Celebration has become a tradition for families all over the Greater Pittsburgh region as a way to take a break from

the busy prep of the Season. For this performance the musicians of the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra render a new treatment on Holiday classics and turn the Holiday Season into a unique celebration.

**January 27, 2024:
Drum Tao**

Established in 1993, with a dream of creating the best show in the world using Taiko drums (Japanese drums), the instrument which has a very rare and unique variety of sound expressions. Drum Tao set their base at Oita, Japan and started creating their own music, stage set-ups, and costumes to produce their one and only world of entertainment. Many talented artists and staffs gathered to join this creation from all over the world and this is why Drum Tao can make the peerless and the most modern “Japanese entertainment.”



Noche Flamenca:
Searching for Goya



Rennie Harris:
Rome and Jewels



Drum Tao



Small Island, Big Song

February 8, 2024:
Rennie Harris: Rome and Jewels

Honoring Rennie Harris Puremovement's 30th anniversary, legendary choreographer Rennie Harris returns to The great city of Pittsburgh PA with his classic work, *Rome & Jewels*. Set in the streets of Philadelphia, the Bessie Award-winning production is a story of fear, love, and triumph, rooted in the traditions of Hip-Hop and street dance. "The Basquiat of the U.S. contemporary dance scene" (The London Times), Harris reinvents a timeless tale to embody the diverse African-Diasporic traditions of the past and to pave the way for innovative storytelling through dance.

March 29, 2024:
Small Island, Big Song

Framed in a theatrical narrative amongst panoramic visuals of the artist's homelands, the audience experiences a musical journey across the breadth and into the soul of island nations of Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean, meeting an ancient seafaring ancestry and confronting the impacts of climate change head on, as the performers and youth ambassadors share their island's voice supported through the cinematic sequences. Drawing on a roster of respected first nation artists, the concert features musicians performing irresistible oceanic grooves to soulful island ballads engaging audiences from huge festival stages to intimate theatres. ●

Conservatory Dance Company

Fall Dance Concert

October 4–8, 2023: The Conservatory Dance Company presents a concert featuring works by Crystal Frazier, Christopher Huggins, Matthew Neenan, and Paul Taylor. Presented in partnership with Violins of Hope.

Fall Student Choreography Project

November 1–5, 2023: See the dancers of tomorrow onstage today. The Student Choreography Project showcases the depth and breadth of talent on display within the Conservatory Dance program, featuring the cutting-edge, fresh work of the top young artists in the country.

Contemporary Choreographers

December 13 – 17, 2023: The Conservatory Dance Company presents a concert featuring works by Jess Hendricks, Justin Myles, Yoshiaki Nakano, and Mike Tyus.

Faculty ChoreoLab

February 14 – 18, 2024: This annual concert shines a light on the Point Park Conservatory Dance Faculty and the artists for which they are renowned.

Spring Student Choreography Project

March 13 – 17, 2024: The continuation of the Student Choreography Project. New choreographers design the show and new dancers take the stage, demonstrating the strength and versatility of Point Park University's students.

Spring Dance Concert

April 17 – 21, 2024: The Conservatory Dance Company presents a concert featuring works by George Balanchine, Bob Fosse, Martha Graham, and a collaboration with MCG Jazz on jazz music and dance.

Conservatory Theatre Company

Closer Than Ever

October 18 – 22, 2023: Maltby and Shire's *Closer Than Ever* is a riveting song cycle exploring the everyday struggles of love and life in the modern world. The songs of Richard Maltby, Jr., and David Shire (*Big*; *Starting Here*, *Starting Now*; *Baby*) are brimming with brilliance for which these theatre giants are known. Each song is its own story with its own characters to complete that story—ranging on topics from unrequited love... to aging... to a personal history of three college friends growing apart.

≈[Almost Equal To]

November 15 – 19, 2023: How much do you earn? Who do you serve? In Jonas Hassen Khemiri's recent play *≈[Almost Equal To]* we encounter a number of people who are colliding with the economy surrounding them. Martina dreams about growing her way out of the contemporary economic system, Mani want to crush it. Andrei is looking for a job, Freja is seeking revenge. They all invest money in postage and pine nuts, fake bubbles and perfumes, strollers and utopias. Everyone seems invaded by numbers. How are we, our eyes, our words, our bodies affected by the economic system that surrounds us? *≈ [Almost Equal To]* is a funny and brutal play that tries (and fails?) to give the audience a maximized entertainment value for every dollar invested.

The Mystery of Edwin Drood

December 6 – 10, 2023: Charles Dickens final unfinished novel inspired Rupert Holmes to write this hilarious, lighthearted whodunit of a musical. Singer-songwriter Holmes recorded the Billboard No. 1 Hit, "Escape (The Pina Colada Song)" before turning to musicals. That should give audiences an idea of the fun tone of the musical, which starkly

contrasts a more ominous style in the novel. *Drood* is presented as a show-within-a-show, where the Music Hall Royale—a wonderfully crazy Victorian theatre company—puts on Dickens' novel. Dickens unfinished work is finished with one of multiple endings decided by an audience vote. A must-see for theatre-goers seeking an amusing, family friendly production.

Intimate Apparel

February 21 – 25, 2024: In 1905 New York City, Esther, a black seamstress lives in a woman's boarding house sewing "intimate apparel" with buyers ranging from rich white patrons to black prostitutes. As women marry and leave the boarding house, Esther is caught dreaming of a husband and a life where she runs a beauty parlor with the money she has been saving. Will dreams and love win out in this drama written by two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Lynn Nottage?

Rent

March 13 – 17, 2024: *Rent* is a rock musical with music and lyrics by Jonathan Larson loosely based on Giacomo Puccini's opera *La bohème*. It tells the story of a group of impoverished young artists struggling to survive and create a life in New York City's East Village in the thriving days of Bohemian Alphabet City, under the shadow of HIV/AIDS.

The Winter's Tale

April 10 – 14, 2024: *The Winter's Tale*, one of Shakespeare's final comedies, has elements of tragedy, disguises, and startling transformations. The jealous King Leontes falsely accuses his wife Hermione of infidelity with his best friend, and she dies. Leontes exiles his newborn daughter Perdita, who is raised by shepherds for sixteen years and falls in love with the son of Leontes' friend. Perhaps best known for his most challenging stage direction, "Exit, pursued by a bear."

University News

PITTSBURGH PLAYHOUSE

Lalama '95 named Managing & Artistic Director of Pittsburgh Playhouse

Kiesha Lalama, M.F.A., a 1995 graduate and professor of dance, has been appointed managing and artistic director of Point Park's Pittsburgh Playhouse.

"We are thrilled to welcome Kiesha to this exciting new role at the Pittsburgh Playhouse," said Ted Black, senior vice president of Institutional Advancement and Strategy at Point Park. "Kiesha's creative vision is a recognizable brand in Pittsburgh and we believe her energy, focus and creative know-how will be a tremendous asset to the Pittsburgh Playhouse."

With this appointment, said Black "we wanted to swing for the fence in how we see the Playhouse growing, not only in terms of audience numbers, but in its regional and national reputation as a destination for exceptional, must-see performances."

Lalama will work in collaboration with Garfield Lemonius, M.F.A., dean and artistic director of the Conservatory of the Performing Arts. ●



PITTSBURGH PLAYHOUSE
POINT PARK UNIVERSITY

INNOVATION

Center for Media Innovation Establishes Citizen Reporting Academy

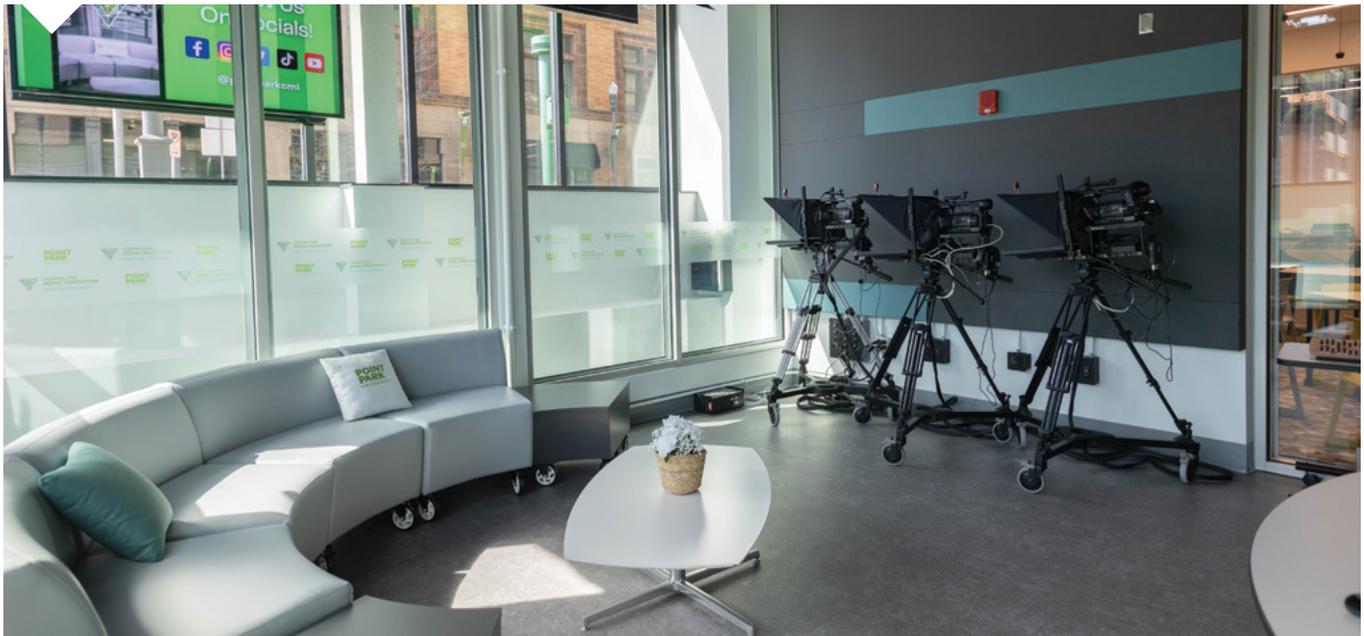
Kicking off this fall, the Citizen Reporting Academy, a fully online certificate program, is the Center's latest effort to combat media deserts - areas of the country

left without local media to cover communities - and empower citizens to fill those gaps. The Academy is being done in partnership with Point Park's School of Continuing and Professional Studies, and in partnership with Trib Total Media.

"Our goal is to empower citizens to fill in some of the coverage gaps in their communities, but we also want to partner with news organizations as they look to expand their reach into vulnerable communities," Conte said. "We are seeking to complement

the work of traditional journalists by recognizing the effort citizens already are making and giving them to the tools do a better job."

The Trib is providing scholarships to the first cohort of the program and several Trib employees will be teaching courses. Those who complete the program will have the opportunity to be paid for any stories they write that are approved for publication on the Trib's TribLIVE Local sites. ●



ACADEMICS

Psychology Students Contribute Chapter to Professional Association Handbook

In Point Park University's Department of Psychology, faculty and students frequently collaborate on research together, publishing their work in a variety of industry journals.

Professors Robert McNerney, Ph.D., and Autumn Redcross, Ph.D., recently worked with students Hannah Felix,

Tatyana Johnson and Samuel Merhaut to author a chapter about community psychology for the American Psychological Association Handbook of Humanistic and Existential Psychology. Each student wrote about their distinctive experiences with the application of community psychology, an approach that explores the social and cultural influences on mental health and well-being across communities, including prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness, to gain a better understanding of human experience and behavior.

"I hope that our work shows not only the need for community resources and support but also the power of that

"I hope that our work shows not only the need for community resources and support but also the power of that community and caring connection."

Hannah Felix, psychology student

community and caring connection," said Felix, who wrote about her experiences working within the realm of peer support and radical mental health for the publication. ●



CAMPUS

Point Park Police Department Officers Honored

President Chris W. Brussalis recently met with Point Park Police Department officers to honor them for work this year to keep the University's area of Downtown Pittsburgh safe. Dr. Brussalis and Jeffrey Besong, Associate VP of Public Safety and Chief of Police, presented the officers with certificates recognizing their efforts.

"The work our officers do to protect our campus and the surrounding area is so important to our mission," Dr. Brussalis said. "It is absolutely critical that all members of our campus community feel safe. This extraordinary work deserves recognition."

On Feb. 25, 2023, the West Penn Building's left front entrance door had been shattered by what looked to be a bullet. Officer Steven Wellington reviewed CCTV footage from both Pittsburgh Police Real Time Crime and Point Park University. It was determined that an individual inside a vehicle caused the damage with a BB gun. Officer Wellington reviewed camera footage from several businesses and tracked down both the license plate and the driver. He offered the individual the opportunity to pay the total amount due for the damages in exchange for criminal charges not being filed. In May, a money order was delivered to cover the damage done. "This was excellent investigative work by Officer Wellington," Besong said.

On May 7, 2023, at 1:30 p.m. during the Pittsburgh Marathon, Officer Kristina Cappello was working the Boulevard of the Allies at Smithfield Street post assignment. At this time, a runner participating in the marathon collapsed. Officer

Point Park University President Chris W. Brussalis meets with members of the school's police department.

Photo: Nadia Jones

Cappello quickly rushed to his aid and contacted Pittsburgh Paramedics. Officer Cappello noticed the male had no pulse and was not breathing, and she immediately began life-saving measures including CPR. Upon paramedic arrival, it was determined the man was experiencing full cardiac arrest and an AED was applied. Officer Cappello and other emergency personnel continued CPR until the AED was used to shock the patient. Eventually, the man was stable enough to transport to the hospital and he was able to recover. "In this case, the paramedics concluded that, without Officer Cappello's efforts, the chances of this man surviving would have significantly decreased," Besong said.

On May 9, 2023, at 12:30 p.m. Officer Jacob Pepper and Sgt. Matthew Mays were on routine patrol in the area of the Mon Wharf. At this time, they were flagged down by a woman who was in distress. She told the officers that her partner was unresponsive and about to die. The officers made their way to the rear of the Mon Wharf and located the unresponsive woman. She had no pulse, was not breathing and was experiencing opioid overdose-like symptoms. Officer Pepper and Sgt. Mays moved the female to a safe location and immediately began CPR and contacted City of Pittsburgh Paramedics. They performed several rounds of CPR and Officer William Wagner arrived with Narcan. Sgt. Mays administered two doses of Narcan to the woman and Officer Pepper continued CPR. By the time paramedics arrived, the patient was breathing and had a pulse. She was transported to Allegheny General Hospital for further treatment. "This is another situation where the patient most likely would not have survived without the quick action of Officer Pepper and Sgt. Mays," Besong said. ●

Why I Give

A conversation with Jack Tomayko, Ph.D., president of The Tomayko Group Holdings, president of the Tomayko Foundation, member of Point Park University's Board of Trustees, and a donor to Point Park.

What is your connection to Point Park University?

My association with Point Park began when I started my Ph.D. program in Health Administration at the University of Pittsburgh. Point Park College (not yet a university) initiated a contract with the Department of Health and Exercise Science to place a graduate student (through an assistantship) to oversee the fitness, intramurals and other recreational programs of the College. Since I was majoring in health administration, I was the likely candidate. I was very engaged during my tenure and enhanced the fitness activities, recreational activities, educational programming and the sports medicine program for dancers.

What led you to join Point Park's Board of Trustees?

When I was asked to join the Board of Trustees, it was an easy decision for me, because of my previous history with the institution. It was also the time when Paul Hennigan became President, and I liked the idea of joining with new leadership. I had a great relationship with Paul, and we were in concert with enhancing the cultural aspects of the University. With Paul's support, I donated numerous works of art, most notably the bronze statue by Paige Bradley that is installed in front of the dance center. I also facilitated several commissioned works of art placed selectively around campus along with orchestrating over 20 art exhibitions in the gallery facing the dance center.

What do you hope to accomplish through your philanthropic efforts?

It is a perfect fit for me to provide scholarships for theatre, dance, and cinema and choreography awards for senior dance students. It's been especially gratifying to see how the Conservatory has grown over the years and become nationally recognized. For several years, I organized a fundraiser called "Broadway Bound" to underwrite senior musical theatre students auditioning in New York, many of which landed roles on Broadway. I established a Foundation in 2015 to foster individual creativity through education and the arts.

What do you wish everyone knew about Point Park?

I believe Point Park as an institution is an undervalued asset to the Pittsburgh region and beyond. The Conservatory of Performing Arts and new Playhouse are unique cultural resources that serve the region and bring national exposure to Pittsburgh. The University and Playhouse's move to its Downtown campus in 2018 has been monumental in increasing visibility, engagement and excitement for Point Park. I plan to be a long-term supporter of the University and, through my Foundation, assist in the education and development of world class performers. ●

Photo: Kat LaBelle



POINT PARK UNIVERSITY

201 Wood Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-392-6176
PointPark.edu

KNOW A PROSPECTIVE PIONEER?

REFER A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER TO POINT PARK!

As an alum, you know best the Point Park experience. And we need your invaluable help to bring new students to campus.

If you know a promising student, or a high school we should visit, let the admissions team know: 412-392-3430 or enroll@pointpark.edu

*Your influence at Point Park can go far beyond the years you spent here.
Also learn about becoming an admissions ambassador when you contact us!*



PointPark.edu