



## MOUNT NETS NEARLY \$900,000 GRANT FOR SCHOLARSHIPS SUPPORTING OHIO'S STEMM TALENT

The University was awarded a grant totaling \$881,496 via the 2024 fiscal year funding round of the Choose Ohio First (COF) program, which aims to strengthen Ohio's workforce in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine (STEMM).

The COF program is designed to increase competitiveness in STEMM programs and to increase the number of STEMM educators. The Ohio Department of Higher Education supports Ohio's colleges and universities by providing funding to innovative academic programs. Participating colleges and universities then provide scholarships to students who wish to pursue STEMM fields or who strive to become STEMM educators.

Mount Union, as a participating university and a grant award recipient, aims to increase scholarships and access for financially disadvantaged students from Ohio to advanced practice health careers. A special focus will be placed on the University's graduate programs in physician assistant studies, physical therapy, and the new Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) in Family Nurse Practitioner, which recently received final approval from the Higher Learning Commission. As part of the program, these new COF scholars will focus some of their coursework on studying Ohio-specific critical healthcare

concerns, disseminating their knowledge to peers across all disciplines.

"The COF scholarship funding will also accelerate our efforts to mitigate the significant staffing shortages of physicians in regional ERs by continuing to produce physician assistants who serve in that setting, and by attracting students to our new, first-in-Ohio MSN ER nurse practitioner program in the fall of 2024," said Dr. Sandra Madar, interim co-vice president for academic affairs and dean of the College of Natural and Health Sciences (see related story on p. 5).

Mount Union has already received more than \$700,000 from previous COF funding rounds that have gone toward increasing access for underrepresented students from Northeast Ohio wishing to pursue majors and careers in STEMM. This includes bolstering existing partnerships with Akron North High School and Alliance High School and supporting neighboring school districts in Stark and Summit counties.

Included as part of these efforts is a focus on providing "gap funding" to students from these local high schools wishing to study STEMM related disciplines at the University. This would help make a Mount Union education possible for students of all backgrounds.

## MOUNT UNION LAUNCHES NEW SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE AFFORDABILITY FOR INCOMING STUDENTS

In an effort to make the college experience more affordable, Mount Union recently announced its Campus Visit Award, which is available to all new students beginning in the 2024 Fall Semester.

The award is given to any student who schedules and attends a campus visit or admission event and subsequently enrolls at Mount Union. Those eligible students will receive \$1,000 each year for a total of \$4,000 over a four-year period, aiding in providing an accessible education to students of all backgrounds.

In an effort to further support students who need financial assistance, the University is also offering a grant totaling \$2,000 to every student who is admitted to Mount Union and completes the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

First-year and transfer undergraduate students who are admitted to Mount Union in the fall of 2024 or later will receive the \$500 FAFSA Filer Grant upon completion of the FAFSA. The grant is renewable for up to four years, or \$2,000 in total, if the FAFSA is completed each year.



## MOUNT UNION ACKNOWLEDGED BY NUMEROUS REGIONAL AND NATIONAL RANKINGS BODIES

Mount Union is proud to be named one of the Best Colleges in America by “Money” for 2023. Mount Union’s distinguished four-star rating is in part due to nearly 99% of its students receiving some form of financial aid and its awarding of more than \$36 million in grants and scholarships each year. The University is one of only 15 higher education institutions in Ohio to earn a four-star rating or higher.

For the third time, the University has been named to the 2023 Transfer Honor Roll by the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society for its dynamic pathways to support transfer students. The Transfer Honor Roll is determined by 40 key metrics related to the support and success of transfer students, including college cost and financial aid, campus life for transfers, admission practices, and bachelor’s degree completion. Mount Union was one of only eight institutions in Ohio and 208 across the nation to earn a place on the Transfer Honor Roll.

Mount Union also has been named the top small employer in Ohio as part of Forbes’ inaugural listing of America’s Best Small Employers. The University was ranked number 39 in the nation out of an initial pool of 10,000 businesses, with the 300 highest-scoring businesses making the final rankings. Forbes defines these companies as employing between 200 and 1,000 individuals.

Continuing the tradition of excellence, the University has once again been cited by U.S. News and World Report’s Best Colleges Rankings for the 33rd consecutive year. Mount Union climbed an impressive 12 spots in the Top Performers in Social Mobility ranking from U.S. News. The ranking measures how well schools graduated students who received federal Pell Grants, with Mount Union ranking 55th among all regional universities in the Midwest.

Continuing its dedication toward sustainable practices, Mount Union was once again named to The Princeton Review’s Guide to Green Colleges for 2024. Mount Union is one of 522 institutions across the world to receive this recognition.

The University’s online Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree program has been named the number one online education program in Ohio and is tied for the best online education program among private institutions in the United States by U.S. News and World Report for 2024.

## MOUNT UNION, LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE CREATE IN-DEMAND ASSOCIATE TO BACHELOR'S DEGREE PATHWAY

Mount Union and Lorain County Community College (LCCC) have entered into an articulation agreement for an associate to bachelor's degree pathway.

Under this new agreement, any LCCC student who completes an LCCC associate degree (Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Arts, or Associate of Science) is guaranteed admission to Mount Union to pursue a bachelor's degree, provided they meet all Mount Union admission requirements. There are additional admission requirement criteria for the nursing, music, and theatre degree programs.

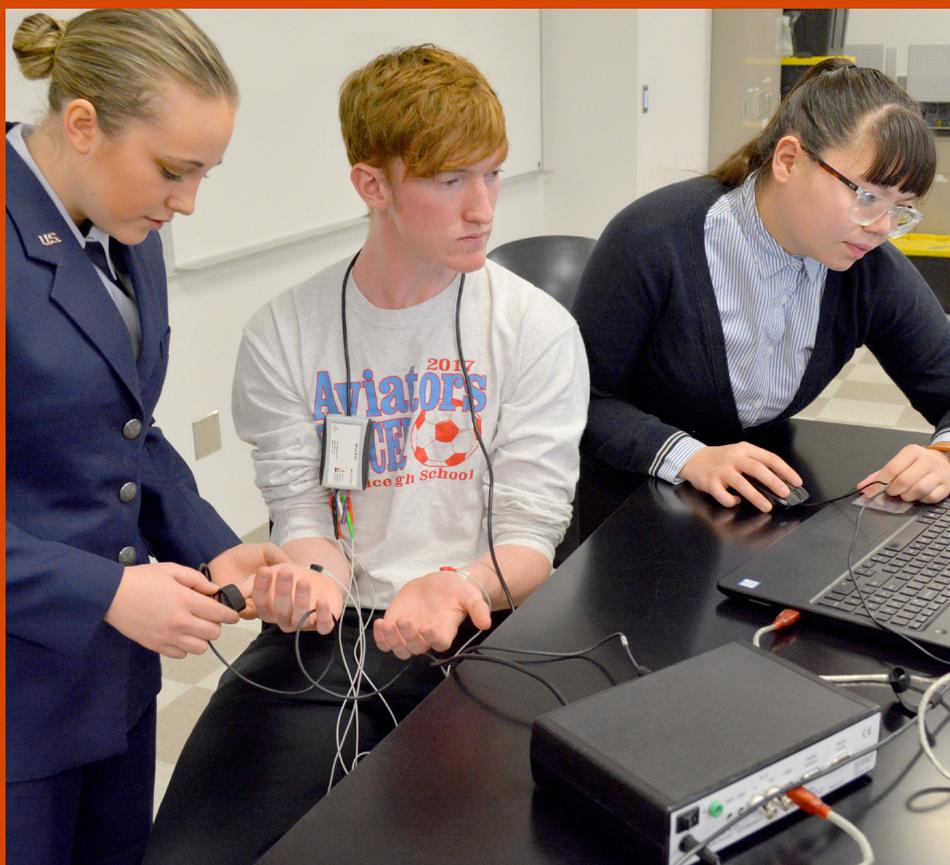
"It is important to recognize those who graduate with an associate degree and celebrate their remarkable academic accomplishments," said Dr. Bryan Boatright, interim co-vice president for academic affairs and University registrar. "By creating this associate to bachelor's degree pathway, we not only recognize their hard work but also want to be a part of their continued educational experience here at the University of Mount Union."

## MOUNT UNION TO ADD NEW ATHLETIC PROGRAM IN WOMEN'S WRESTLING

The University's Board of Trustees has approved the addition of women's wrestling to the intercollegiate athletic program. The team will start competition in the fall of 2024.

Women's wrestling is one of the fastest-growing sports at the high school and collegiate levels and is expanding rapidly among Division III, Ohio Athletic Conference (OAC), and other Ohio colleges and universities. Mount Union's program will be developed under the leadership of Ryan Riggs, head men's wrestling coach, and Clay Wenger, who has been named the institution's first head women's wrestling coach.

At the collegiate level, women's wrestling is currently offered at 169 institutions competing in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, and the National Junior College Athletic Association, per data provided by the Women's Collegiate Wrestling Coalition website. It became an NCAA emerging sport in 2020-2021, and Mount Union's team will become the 60th Division III program and the fourth in the OAC.



## BIOMEDICAL, COMPUTER ENGINEERING EARN ACCREDITATION

The University of Mount Union is pleased to announce that its programs in biomedical engineering and computer engineering have earned accreditation from the Engineering Accreditation Commission of Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). All four majors in Mount Union's School of Engineering are now accredited by ABET, with its programs in civil engineering and mechanical engineering earning initial accreditation in 2015. Opportunities in experiential learning, team competition, internships, and research are provided to students, which have led to 100% job placement and acceptance in top-ranked engineering graduate programs.



## MOUNT UNION MEETING INDUSTRY DEMAND WITH NEW MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Building upon the success of its highly ranked Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, the University has announced the addition of a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree to its academic offerings. The program has been approved by the institution's Board of Trustees and recently received final approval from the Higher Learning Commission.

The MSN degree offers a concentration in Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), a 46-credit-hour program that can be completed in as few as two years. This ensures that the opportunities for nurses who are seeking to advance their careers are accelerated and bridges the current primary care practice gap.

With the Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting that more than 30,000 new advance practice registered nurses will be needed each year through 2031, Mount Union's MSN program will help meet the surging workforce demand.

Mount Union is one of only 17 programs across the country to pair an Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP) certification with its MSN degree program. This unique complement enhances nurses' skill sets and opens the door for more career opportunities. Those who have previously earned an FNP can also earn this certification as a standalone offering.

"The addition of the ENP credential will allow our advanced practice nurses to meet the growing demand for practitioners in emergency room settings, as physician shortages in this area increase," said Dr. Sandra Madar, interim co-vice president for academic affairs and dean of the College of Natural and Health Sciences.

Mount Union has worked hard to fill the region's nursing shortage. The nursing program also offers a Second-Degree Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree and a three-year accelerated nursing program for first-time college students.



## DR. WILLIAM CUNION NAMED VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Dr. William Cunion has been named vice president for academic affairs at the University. Cunion, who served as a faculty member and administrator at Mount Union for more than a decade, will return to campus after serving in administrative roles of increasing responsibility at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) since 2014.

Cunion currently serves as the academic dean of Tri-C – East, a role he began in 2019. In this position, he serves as the primary academic leader on the campus and has been highly involved with various external partnerships. He is also responsible for the administration of academic courses at the Eastern Campus. His success as the academic dean at Tri-C led to his appointment as interim president of the Eastern Campus from August through December of 2021. Prior to serving as academic dean and interim president of Tri-C – East, Cunion was the campus' associate dean of liberal arts (2014-2019).

Cunion began his higher education administrative career at Mount Union, serving as the associate academic dean from 2010 to 2014. During this time, he provided oversight for the entire University curriculum, supervised numerous administrators and program directors, and provided leadership and coordination for the overhaul of the college curriculum. He also taught a range of courses in American government and basic statistics for social science, first as an assistant professor of political science (2003-2009) and then as an associate professor of political science (2009-2014). He served as chair of the Department of Political Science as well as its internship director and was the recipient of Mount Union's prestigious Great Teacher Award in 2006.

A native of Massillon, Ohio, Cunion earned a B.A. degree from Xavier University, an M.A. degree from Ohio University, and a Ph.D. degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, all in political science.