

# Eye on Penn State



Toni Morrison is a Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize-winning American author, editor, and professor. Her novels are known for their vivid and dynamic themes and are centered often times around intricate African-American characters. Among her best known books are *The Bluest Eye*, *Song of Solomon*, and *Beloved*. (Photo courtesy of grimfundango.com)

## Novelist Toni Morrison To Receive IAH Medal

*Special to The Lion's Eye*

Toni Morrison, winner of the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, the 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature, and recipient of the 2000 National Humanities Medal (among numerous other awards), will receive the 2010 Institute for the Arts and Humanities Medal for Distinguished Contributions to the Arts and Humanities. Prof. Morrison follows a distinguished line-up of former IAH Medal recipients: Salman Rushdie (2006), Daniel Libeskind (2007), Mario Vargas Llosa (2008), Emanuel Ax, Yo-Yo Ma and Itzhak Perlman (2009).

The Medal ceremony and Toni Morrison's public lecture are scheduled for Wednesday, April 7, 2010 at 8:00 p.m. in Eisenhower Auditorium on the University Park campus. Prof. Morrison is known to be extremely selective in the engagements she accepts, so this is indeed an unprecedented and unique opportunity to have her among us. Please encourage students, colleagues, friends, and members of the extended community to attend her free public lecture.

The IAH Medal for Distinguished Contributions to the Arts and Humanities was established in 2006. Awarded annually, the purpose of the Medal is to honor individuals whose work has helped define the best of our times and, by bringing such individuals to campus, to stimulate a dialogue that reaches beyond traditional disciplinary limits. Medal recipients are individuals whose presence on campus helps raise the level and tone of the intellectual and artistic life of the university. The Medal recognizes the accomplishments of those individuals whose work in the arts and in the humanities has furthered public awareness of the importance of scholarship, literature, and the arts and has reached a wide public audience while maintaining the highest standards of scholarship, creativity, and originality. The Medal was commissioned by the IAH in 2005 and designed by medalist and Penn State alumna Jeanne Stevens-Sollman, recipient of the 1999 Saltus Award for Signal Achievement in the Art of the Medal. Presentation of the IAH Medal is made possible by generous support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Additional details on Prof. Morrison's visit will be announced in due course, but for now please mark your calendars and plan to join us on April 7 for a very exciting evening!

## Brandywine Campus Promotes Undergraduate Research With New Membership

*Special to The Lion's Eye*

## University's Strategic Plan Already Proof Positive

*Special to The Lion's Eye*

University Park, Pa. -- Just seven months after its launch, Penn State's strategic plan is already making headway in a number of key areas identified for improvement.

Rodney Erickson, executive vice president and provost, said leaders of some of the plan's strategies have provided a mid-year progress report that includes details of progress in several targeted activities, including assessing student success; reorganizing program administration; expanding the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center's reach in Centre County; improving research opportunities for undergraduates; and finding the appropriate balance between centralized and dispersed support services, to name a few.

"We are moving forward on a number of levels and working to expand access to Penn State programs through technology," Erickson said. "We are looking at faculty and staff productivity and looking for ways to reduce the rate of increase in our health care costs."

Recently adopted, the strategic plan, at <http://strategicplan.psu.edu/index.php> online, outlines seven goals that will guide the University community over the next five years and beyond. Thirty-eight strategies have been established as a way to reach these overarching goals.

The goals and some of the progress reported to date follow:

**Enhance student success** -- A student transitions steering committee has been formed to study how the student transition process can be made seamless. Additional activities include increasing information to Penn State students changing campuses or other transfers to University Park. A University Park visitation day is being planned for April for students in their first year at the campuses who intend to enroll at University Park for their junior year.

**Advance academic excellence and research prominence** -- The College of Medicine and Penn State Hershey Medical Center have several major initiatives to increase research and clinical capabilities: the Regional Medical Campus planned for University Park, the Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute and the Northern Appalachia Cancer Network, Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, scheduled to begin construction in 2010, Penn State Hershey Rehabilitation Hospital, currently under construction, and the Clinical and Translational Science Institute, implemented by the College of Medicine in partnership with colleges and institutes at University Park.

**Realize potential as a global university** -- The University Office of Global Programs has been restructured and new student exchange programs have been approved in four countries, with six more possible new programs under review.

**Maintain access and affordability and enhance diversity** -- Since June 2009 more than \$17 million in additional funds have been raised toward the "Ensuring Student Opportunity" component of the capital campaign.

**Serve the Commonwealth and beyond** -- Outreach is establishing a Video Based Learning Network to better serve adult learners. The network will aggregate students across the campus system and leverage faculty capacity to serve learners across the Commonwealth. Eleven campus locations have been identified, with a goal of having five campus locations readied during the first half of 2010.

**Use technology to expand access and opportunities** -- Efforts continue to increase World Campus enrollment. A common set of course delivery standards have been established

In an effort to expand its efforts to promote more engagement with and recognition of undergraduate research, Penn State Brandywine recently became an institutional member of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR). The new relationship is designed to assist the campus with its continued development and support of undergraduate research.

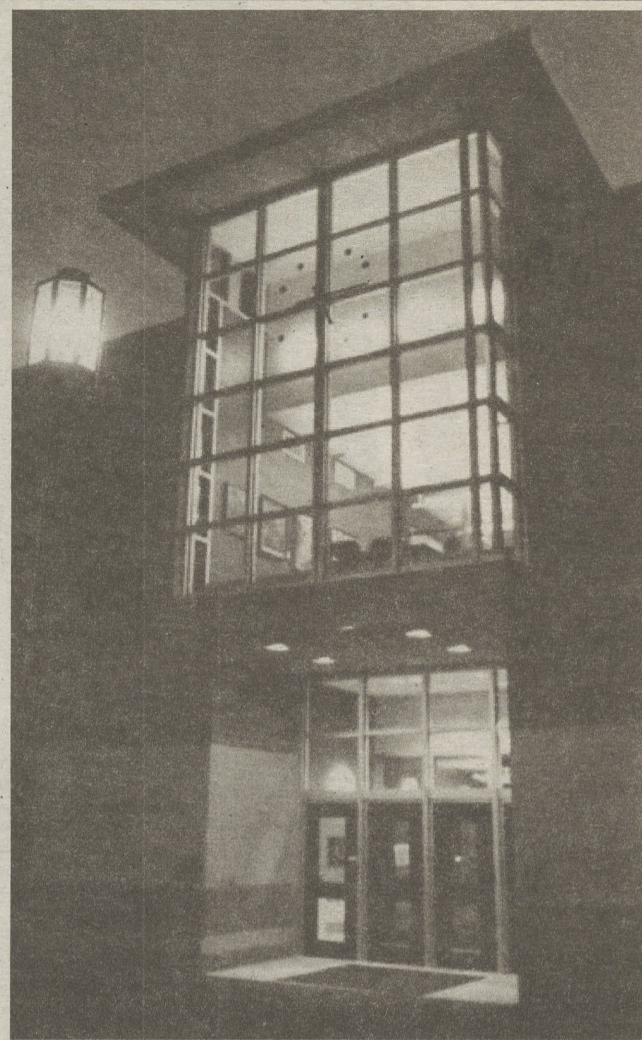
Benefits of this relationship include special opportunities for faculty professional development in re-

search and curriculum, opportunities for the campus to add its voice to the national policy debate, priority notices of CUR institutes and other events and reports on the status of undergraduate research, among many others.

Associate Professor of Earth Science Laura Guertin currently serves as the chair of the Geoscience Division of CUR and on CUR's Executive Board, and Professor of English Phyllis Cole was recently named coordinator for undergraduate research at the

campus. "CUR and its affiliated colleges, universities and individuals share a focus on providing undergraduate research opportunities for faculty and students at all institutions serving undergraduate students," according to its Web site. Nearly 600 colleges and universities are Institutional CUR Members.

For more information on CUR, visit <http://www.cur.org/about.html> online.



The Tomezsko Classroom Building at Penn State Brandywine was dedicated in 1998 and is named after Edward S. J. Tomezsko, former campus executive officer, who led the campus from 1986-2005. The building contains computer classrooms, seminar rooms, faculty offices, and reception and study space. (photo courtesy of Penn State University)

to ensure a consistent look, feel and functionality across all online courses. One centralized Student Technical Support (Help) Desk has been created; the number of budgetary and revenue sharing models is being decreased to reduce complexity and to increase transparency for participating campuses and colleges; and new online programs are being identified.

**Control costs and generate efficiencies** -- Penn State Hershey will open a new clinical practice site in Centre County in 2010. This practice will increase the number of providers in the region and enable Penn State to offer an increasingly robust set of wellness and prevention benefits to its community. The increase of future University health care costs will be reduced through changes to employee benefits that continue into retirement for those hired starting in January 2010.

"We are looking to be more productive and looking for ways we can remain sustainable financially, environmentally and in every way," Erickson said. "We need to be able to advance knowledge, keep up with expectations for a high-quality educational experience and control costs."

Faculty and staff who have suggestions about how we can be more efficient, cut costs and maintain quality are encouraged to submit their ideas at [http://www.psu.edu/president/pia/strategic\\_planning/efficiencies/](http://www.psu.edu/president/pia/strategic_planning/efficiencies/) online.

Implementation of the strategies in the current plan has just begun. Progress reports will continue to be shared with the University community, according to Erickson. For more information on progress, go to <http://www.psu.edu/president/pia/features/Issue126.html> online.