Welcome to our first issue:

Dear Parents,

As the proud parent of both a recent Penn State Alumnus and a currently enrolled student, I’ve experienced first-hand the range of emotions that go along with trying to choose a college. My wife and I wondered how our boys, who relied on us for almost everything in what seemed like just days ago, were going to fare in a world of freedom and responsibility. Which school would be best for them? What questions need to be asked? What should we expect from admissions, financing, registering, and scheduling processes?

One of the great things about Penn State New Kensington is that many of us have gone through the same process, and we understand what it is like to be a parent of a college bound student. That is why I am absolutely delighted to be introducing this newsletter for parents of prospective students. We will answer the questions you should be asking as you and your college-bound child search for the best fit school.

This newsletter is just one example of how serious we are about going the extra mile for our students and their families. I hope you find the newsletter helpful as you engage in the college search process. And, I’d like to thank you for considering Penn State New Kensington. We believe that when your son or daughter meets our award winning faculty, top rated staff, and terrific students, they’ll want to be a part of our family. We believe you’ll be impressed enough with our supportive environment and ability to prepare students for success that you’ll breathe just a little easier.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kevin Snider
Chancellor
Accent on Academics: Small Business Managers Certificate
Penn State New Kensington was recently approved to offer the certificate program in Small Business Managers (SMBUS), which prepares students for starting or working in a small business. Students will gain an outstanding educational foundation on which to start a small business and keep it running. This program also prepares students for working in a small business or large company that needs managers who can perform several roles and manage various aspects of business. Credits can be used towards our associate and baccalaureate degrees in business administration.

This 19-credit academic certificate consists of six courses and is open to all Penn State New Kensington students. For registration information, contact: Mary Dubbink, Campus Registrar at (724) 334-6041 or mtd13@psu.edu.

Student Spotlight: Spring Break service trip to Puerto Rico
Ten students and two staff members traveled to Puerto Rico during Spring Break 2015, but perhaps not for the type of spring break trip that comes to mind for most people.

The group flew to San Juan for a “hybrid” community service project that combined working with environmental issues as well as underserved communities. They assisted with rehabilitating a mangrove (a group of trees that grow along shorelines and in swampy areas) and with a literacy initiative. Students logged boxes of donated books so that they could be shipped out to those in need.

“I learned such appreciation for the little things I take for granted in my own home,” says Kelcey Harris, a sophomore from Mt. Lebanon majoring in agriculture and extended education. “The best part of the projects (was seeing) the smiling, appreciative faces of the people in the community we helped. That made me love what I was doing for them every minute while I was there.”

Student Input: How to support your student
Ben Lesko (‘16 IST)

“At first I thought living with my parents while in college was going to be rough. Between my schedule for school and social time, and the schedule they believe I should have, we didn’t always see eye to eye. Eventually we sat down and talked about things, and how we could compromise to make it work, which we did, and we found the balance. Which is kinda what college is about right? Learning to balance your life, school and do well to succeed as a college student. Best advice I could give to a commuter student living at home -- talk with your parents, keep them in the loop, and talk to them about college. It might make their day!”

Parent to Parent: What to expect and how to help your student succeed
Fred Muhhuku, parent of Samantha (‘14 BET, ‘16 ENGR) and Sandra (‘17 PNG), international students from Uganda

The thought of sending my daughters, Samantha and Sandra Muhhuku, so far away for their studies gave me sleepless nights. There was no doubt in my mind about the decision itself as I was convinced they would acquire a world class education which would enable them to ably compete in the job markets and eventually turn them into useful world citizens. But there were, nonetheless, fears and uncertainties. My daughters had never been anywhere outside East Africa. The situation was made doubly difficult for me because I did not have the financial means to escort them up to the College, get a feel of the situation and at least help them to settle in. Following were some of the questions going through my mind: Will they find their way around the College for their studies? I had no clue how big or complex the campus they were going to was. How will they cope socially? I was not worried about coping academically, provided they had no social issues disturbing them. I was apprehensive about bad peer influence, like drugs, alcohol, etc. Would there be people/staff to guide, advise and counsel them?

Soon enough, however, my fears were put to rest. First there was the VIP reception at the airport by a College official, accompanied by a telephone call to assure me that they were in safe hands. This was the most important call in my life! For all practical purposes, this call put to rest most of my worries! Staff of the International Student office continued to look after the girls way beyond the call of duty – like taking them out to meals and inviting them to their homes. Academic staff helped them with scheduling classes and related issues, and also invited them into their homes. My daughters were definitely at home at Penn State, NK, and they quickly integrated into the system and rapidly excelled in their studies.

On my part, I maintained regular contact with them by skype and phone and talked them through any issues they might have. I also maintained contact with college staff as well as their LandLord to get their feedback on the girls’ welfare. This close contact with the children is essential in keeping the bond and minimizing the tendency to be swayed by negative forces. I am eternally grateful to all the people at NK who have made my girls’ stay there a fruitful and memorable one.