



Dear Tusculum family,

We are grateful to you for reading The Pioneer Press! This is an excellent source of content for faculty, staff and students.

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President's Perspective

For Christmas, one of my daughters gave my wife Starr and me a record player. I guess she thinks we are older than we actually are, when we actually grew up in the golden age of cassette tapes.

Because she bought us one record to go with it, we now have one record. It doesn't take too long for a new record or a new song to become an old one.

As I think about the new year, I have thought about the record player. As we enter our third year with COVID-19, it definitely feels like a broken record that just keeps playing the same song over and over. But we do have hope we will emerge from the pandemic this year, and it will finally end as all others have. Much in our lives is cyclical and seasonal.

At the same time, much in our lives is purposeful and meaningful. Each new year gives us a fresh start and a renewed focus. We are not locked into old patterns because God gives us hope and a new song. Psalm 96:1 reminds us to “sing to the Lord a new song.” This year, new students will arrive on campus, and graduates will begin a new phase in their lives. This year, we get to learn new information, gain new skills and build new relationships.

Go Pioneers!

Dr. Scott Hummel

Word of the Week

“He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.” – Psalm 40:3 NIV

Photo of the Week



Trenton Gibson drives to the basket as part of a dominating performance Saturday, Jan. 8, against Catawba College. Gibson, a graduate student who plays guard, finished with 20 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists to become the first player in Tusculum men's basketball history to record two triple-doubles in a career. The Pioneers won 85-73 to continue their strong season. The team is now 9-4. Photo from the Office of Athletic Communications

Face coverings now required indoors

Because of the spread of the coronavirus' omicron variant and it being highly contagious, Tusculum has reinstated the previous policy on face coverings. All individuals must wear face coverings indoors in our buildings when physical distancing cannot be guaranteed.

This change went into effect Thursday, Dec. 30. Signs have been placed in buildings across campus to remind all Tusculum family members of this policy. If you are alone in your office, you are not required to wear a face covering, but you should have a face covering with you at all times.

We look forward to conditions improving with the coronavirus so we can remove this face covering requirement.

Potential changes in course structure for the first two weeks of the semester

In light of the spread of the omicron variant, faculty members have permission to adjust the instruction method used between Tuesday, Jan. 18, and Friday, Jan. 28, for classes designated to be held in person.

All instructors will post their course delivery plan **by Monday, Jan. 10**, on the Canvas course site. Students should be sure to check their Canvas sites regularly for updates from their professors.

Faculty members do not need to receive approval for your instruction method during these two weeks, but they must inform their dean.

Administrators will carefully monitor available data about the coronavirus and determine on Monday, Jan. 24, whether changes to instructional delivery methods will extend into the week beginning Jan. 31.

Housing and dining services will resume for the spring semester according to the original schedule.

We appreciate your understanding. The university is focused on the safety and well-being of every Tusculum family member and is taking that into account in its decision-making process.

Coronavirus update

Fifteen students and four employees are positive. Seventy-eight percent of employees and 28 percent of students are protected.

Tusculum is delaying the rollout of the full version of our prepared Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Emergency Temporary Standard vaccination-or-testing policy for faculty and staff until the U.S. Supreme Court makes a conclusive ruling. We expect this ruling within a matter of days, if not hours.

Since the ETS would have additional and broad-reaching impact for every employee at later phases, we are deferring at this time so we can understand the court's guidance because the regulation might change.

So far, Tusculum has asked employees to voluntarily submit their COVID-19 vaccination status via the link below. **To remain in good faith compliance with the federal government, employees are now required to submit vaccination status (along with necessary proof, such as a vaccination card).**

If you have already submitted this information, thank you. If you have not responded to this survey, please do so using the link below.

<https://go.tusculum.edu/forms/employee-covid-19-survey/>

The federal regulation and our policy do not apply to students, but we still encourage them to complete the student survey about their coronavirus protection status. That link is:

<https://go.tusculum.edu/forms/student-covid-19-survey/>

Should you develop coronavirus symptoms, be diagnosed or be identified as a contact, you must immediately inform the appropriate group at Tusculum.

- Students need to email the Office of Student Affairs at studentaffairs@tusculum.edu or call the COVID-19 hotline at 423-636-0500.
- Employees must contact the Human Resources Department at humanresources@tusculum.edu or 423-636-7345 (extension 5345 on campus) as well as their supervisor.

Dr. Ramona Williams retiring after successful 38-year career

Since the summer of 2019, Tusculum has been blessed with the stellar service of Dr. Ramona Williams as our vice president of enrollment management and financial aid.

Throughout her time at Tusculum, Dr. Williams has been a valuable contributor as a member of the Executive Cabinet. She has also provided excellent oversight of our communications and marketing operations for nearly two years.

However, family obligations and other matters that require more of her time and attention have caused her to reflect on her priorities. As a result, Dr. Williams has chosen to retire, effective Friday, Jan. 28. She will remain active in professional endeavors – but at a more leisurely pace that will enable her to focus primarily on her family.

“We will miss Dr. Williams greatly, but we applaud her decision to dedicate more time to assisting family members, who should always be at the forefront of our minds,” Dr. Hummel said. “At the same time, we will remember her commitment to Tusculum, her relentless efforts to keep enrollment strong in spite of the dynamics associated with the coronavirus and her respect toward everyone in the Tusculum family. We will also recall the joy she exhibited and her wonderful and frequent laugh, which always brings a smile to people’s faces.”

Tusculum was fortunate to attract Dr. Williams, who brought 35 years of higher education experience to the table when she came to the university. During her 2 ½ years at Tusculum, she and her team have built and maintained strong relationships with school systems and created compelling messages about the value of a Tusculum education. She has also shared her expertise and provided valuable guidance as a member of several Tusculum committees and task forces.

“It has been a privilege to collaborate with our outstanding faculty members, who work tirelessly to help our students succeed,” Dr. Williams said. “I have also been honored to partner with dedicated staff members and administrators, who support our students with the programs and services they need. But

most of all, I have enjoyed sharing with prospective students and school systems how Tusculum can transform lives by providing an exceptional educational experience.”

As Tusculum conducts a nationwide search for Dr. Williams’ successor, the Offices of Admission and Financial Aid will report to Doug Jones, vice president of athletics and university initiatives. The Office of Communications and Marketing will report to Dr. Hummel.



Dr. Ramona Williams

Campus health clinic reopens Jan. 19

The Ballad Health Tusculum University Clinic will reopen Wednesday, Jan. 19, and will operate on a different schedule during the spring semester.

The clinic will be open Mondays and Wednesday from 8-11:30 a.m. and Thursdays from 1-3:30 p.m. Ballad Health operates the clinic, and Alice Lawson, a nurse practitioner and an assistant professor of nursing at Tusculum, is the care provider.

Services at clinic include:

- Treatment for colds and flu, including fever, sore throat and cough
- General dermatology care
- Care for Infections, such as those in the sinus, eye/ear and urinary tract
- Management of chronic conditions
- Preventive care/wellness exams
- Specialist referrals
- COVID-19 tests
- Flu vaccinations

No appointment is necessary. Patients can self-pay or use their health insurance. Students can apply for payment aid, if necessary. If you come for a COVID-19 test, please note that you will also need to be seen by a provider.

The clinic is located in Room 008 on the ground floor of the Meen Center.



Alice Lawson checks a patient's blood pressure.

Opening dates for the Tusculum cafeteria and Chick-fil-A

Students who have already returned to campus have access to the Tusculum cafeteria during regular hours starting today.

The Chick-fil-A on campus will reopen Tuesday, Jan. 18, the first of classes for the spring semester.

The staffs in both facilities have worked hard to prepare for your arrival and look forward to serving you with delicious food during the spring semester!

First snow of the year arrives at Tusculum!

Tusculum experienced its first snowfall of the season last week, and it painted a pretty scene on the Greeneville campus! In addition to the photo below, you can view [this gallery of images taken by Jared Rowland](#).



Snow adds an extra touch of beauty to the Thomas J. Garland Library.

Tusculum athletics adds two new coaches

The men's volleyball team and the women's lacrosse team have new coaches as they prepare for their upcoming seasons.

Bryan Buckius was named as the head coach of the men's volleyball team, and Jenna Agostino is the new women's lacrosse head coach. You can read more about his selection in this [news release](#), and you can learn more about her in this [news release](#).

We welcome Coach Buckius and Coach Agostino to the Tusculum family! We also wish their teams tremendous success during the spring semester!



Bryan Buckius



Jenna Agostino

Office of Communications and Marketing welcomes new web developer

The Office of Communications and Marketing is pleased to introduce its newest employee – Jared Rowland – who is now serving as the front-end web developer.

Rowland began his service as a Tusculum employee Monday, Jan. 3, and has already hit the ground running. He has tackled some of the Tusculum website projects submitted through the [branding request form](#) and will continue working on that list. As he becomes more settled, he will proceed with other elements of the website redesign that were on hold while we participated in the search for this position.

While Rowland is new to the staff, he has been a proud member of the Tusculum family since 2018. He is a senior at Tusculum, who is scheduled to graduate in May with a Bachelor of Arts degree in art and design, with a concentration in visual communication design.

He was on the team of students who filmed footage used in “The Napoleon Hill Foundation, Making the World a Better Place,” a 30-minute feature, which aired on Blue Ridge PBS in 2021. Lanna Monday, an assistant professor of art and design, produced and directed the documentary. He also provided layout for a special edition of INformed People Magazine about that foundation. In addition, he participated and exhibited during the university’s Academic Symposium in the spring.

Rowland works in the office directed by Jim Wozniak. The Office of Communications and Marketing is also engaged in a search for a graphic designer to succeed Brooke Wedding, who accepted a position with another company.

If you have a marketing need, be it a graphic design project, website initiative or communications message, submit it through the [branding request form](#) for evaluation and completion. The Office of Communications and Marketing is pleased to assist. Please do not submit these requests via email. Once the office receives the request, personnel there enter it into the project management system. Those who make a branding request are included as part of the project completion process.



Jared Rowland

The Pioneer Press is the university's primary communications vehicle

In an effort to consolidate information you can use in one location, Tusculum has designated The Pioneer Press as the primary communication vehicle.

Many people have shared concerns generally about the glut of email they receive from multiple sources. The Pioneer Press is designed to alleviate the communications element of that by providing one-stop

shopping for the latest information about what is happening at Tusculum. The Pioneer Press is issued every Monday, except during the Christmas break. During the summer, the Press is issued every other week.

To submit an item for The Pioneer Press, please use the [branding request form](#). Please provide sufficient time for a request to be processed, considered and completed.

Periodically, because of the urgent or special nature of a matter, we will still send a separate email to the Tusculum family. However, those are intended to be an exception to the rule.

One future project the Office of Communications and Marketing will undertake is to archive editions of The Pioneer Press and make them available to the Tusculum family, most likely through the Pioneer Portal.

Submit changes to the website campus directory

The Office of Communications and Marketing is updating the [campus directory](#) on the Tusculum website.

Last week, the office removed Tusculum faculty and staff members who are no longer with the university. The office wants to be sure it did not overlook anyone, so if you see someone on the list who is no longer a university employee, please submit a [branding request](#). The adjustment will be made.

If you do not see a current employee on the list, please advise the Office of Communications and Marketing via a branding request. Faculty and staff members should also review their own listing and submit a branding request with any needed changes.

Thank you for your assistance.

Institutional Advancement team member earns GEM Award

One of the final orders of business before the two-week Christmas break for the university was the announcement by Dr. Hummel that Nicole Rader had been selected as the December recipient of the President's GEM Award.

Dr. Hummel delivered the news during the President's Coffee Friday, Dec. 17. Here are some of the comments nominators shared about Rader, who serves as Tusculum's director of alumni engagement and special events.

"Nicole is a vital part of every event that takes place at Tusculum. Many do not understand the amount of time, effort and energy she spends behind the scenes. Homecoming 2021 would not have happened without her planning and ability to adapt to change. She was presented with new obstacles due to the pandemic and has continuously rose to the challenge! No matter how busy or stressed, Nicole will always find time to encourage and engage with everyone on the Tusculum campus!"

“As a co-worker, Nicole always finds the time to answer work questions and/or help explain a complicated process for the fourth time with no frustration with me! She is the queen when it comes to knowledge about all of her jobs, her meticulous detail and organization for events is second to none, and the warmth, the care and Southern charm she gives to each and every person – whether it is peers, donors or even someone she doesn't know – is ever-present. She doesn't work just 8 to 5; she works 24 hours a day. (And if she could, she would add another 12 hours to the day.). If not working physically, she will be thinking and planning in her head. Even her family is sometimes involved in supporting her through the events by helping behind the scenes.”

“Nicole seems to be everywhere! She tirelessly supports all facets of campus life and alumni endeavors. And all that she accomplishes is done with enthusiasm and a smile on her face. The pride she has for our campus and community is evident. She is a champion for all things Tusculum!”

This is a well-deserved honor for Rader, and we congratulate her for this recognition! She succeeds Denise Burns, who was chosen for November.

We are accepting nominations now for the January GEM recipient through [this form](#). The deadline to submit is noon Wednesday, Jan. 26. Dr. Hummel will announce the winner during the President's Coffee at 9 a.m. Friday, Jan. 28.



Nicole Rader

Department chair co-authors entries in encyclopedia

Dr. Sabrina Reed, chair of Tusculum's Sport Management Department, recently co-authored entries about mentoring and groupthink for a professional publication.

Her work appears in the Encyclopedia of Sport Management, which is being published this month. She co-authored the two topics with Dr. Hailey Daehnke, a former assistant professor of sport management at Tusculum.

The 330 entries in the encyclopedia cover managerial, finance, marketing, technology and organizational behavior topics, as well as communication, legal, historical, sociological and strategy topics related to the sport industry. The encyclopedia also offers references and recommended reading for those seeking more information on the topics.

These entries are the latest external work published by Dr. Reed. She and Tim Wilson, associate professor of sport management at Tusculum, teamed with Dr. Chris Croft, an assistant professor of sport management at the University of Southern Mississippi to write an article for the Journal of Managerial Issues about beach volleyball's growth. The article appeared in the publication's fall 2021 edition.



Dr. Sabrina Reed

Graduation provides a reunion for one department chair

Normally, one would associate Homecoming with the opportunity to reunite with someone special from a person's academic past. For Dr. Chuck Pearson, chair of the Natural Sciences Department at Tusculum, that opportunity presented itself at the December graduation.

In his role as a department leader and faculty member, Dr. Pearson attended the graduation for the College of Science, Technology and Math, but the ceremony also included the College of Education. One of the Master of Arts in teaching graduates was Bryce Ruis, the son of John Ruis.

Dr. Pearson explained that he attended Hilliard Middle-Senior High School in Florida from 1983-89, and the vice principal at that time was John Ruis. Later, John Ruis served as superintendent of the Nassau County, Florida, school system for 24 years.

During graduation, Dr. Pearson was able to speak with John Ruis and take a picture with the father and son.

“It is truly remarkable how connections from across generations bring together those of us who are geography separated,” Dr. Pearson said. “It was a blessing to be at graduation.”



Dr. Chuck Pearson, right, stands with John Ruis, left, and Bryce Ruis. Photo courtesy of Dr. Chuck Pearson

Central Ballet Theatre presenting “Beauty and the Beast”

If you seek high-quality entertainment on campus at the start of the semester, you should consider attending one of the upcoming performances of “Beauty and the Beast” by Central Ballet Theatre.

Performances will take place in the Marilyn duBrisk Theatre inside Annie Hogan Fine Arts Center. Dates and times are:

- Friday, Jan. 28, 7 p.m.
- Saturday, Jan. 29, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- Sunday, Jan. 30, 2 p.m.

Students are eligible to attend for free but must reserve their tickets using their Tusculum email address. Faculty and staff members receive one free ticket but must use their university email address as well when ordering seats. Please email Jennifer Hollowell, director of Tusculum’s Center for the Arts, at jhollowell@tusculum.edu.

Attendees must wear face coverings.

In case you are missing Christmas already ...

The Christmas season is wonderful, and if you wish it were back, we provide this reminder and showcase the creativity one staff member used to celebrate it in 2021.

In the photo below is Terri Conduff, admissions communications manager, who used a Tusculum pennant as the skirt for the tree in her office. She also used Tusculum stickers and thumb drives as ornaments and other additions to the tree!



Terri Conduff and her tree

Reminders

- The Office of Campus Safety has openings for students to serve as campus safety officers. No experience is required, but qualifications to be hired vary. If you are interested, please contact Jon Gresham, chief of the Office of Campus Safety, at jgresham@tusculum.edu or 423-787-8318.
- Starting with the spring semester, we are switching to a new, online bookstore model in which faculty will submit course material information through a portal and students will place orders through a school-branded online bookstore website. Students will receive physical textbooks by mail and digital courseware by email. To learn more, please read [this message](#).
- Students who are interested in being a Student Support Services or ARCHES participant and faculty and staff members who know of a student who would qualify for these programs can email sss@tusculum.edu or ARCHES@tusculum.edu.

- The Faculty and Staff Chili Cook-Off will be held Thursday, March 17, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. in the Pioneer Arena lobby. The event's theme will remain "Chili Around the World." Further details will be forthcoming.
- RightNow Media provides faith-based video content through its website. You have free access to more than 20,000 videos via your phone, iPad, computer or television. All you need to do is click this link, <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/TUSCULUMUNIVERSITY>, and sign up for an account, which will give you free access to all of the video content. You will then be ready to embark upon your spiritual journey. These videos are available as a gift from Tusculum thanks to donations from alumni and friends of the university.

Events and activities

Faculty and staff

Wednesday, Jan. 12, noon, Zoom; The Pioneer Pathway Task Force

Thursday, Jan. 13, 9 a.m., Zoom; Operation Success Committee

Community

Monday, Jan. 10, 5:30 p.m., Annie Hogan Byrd Fine Arts Center; Great Literature Alive, Well, & Playing in Greeneville, Tennessee, class

Athletics

Tuesday, Jan. 11, 7 p.m., Pioneer Arena; men's volleyball team vs. North Greenville University

Wednesday, Jan. 12, 5:30 p.m., Mars Hill University; women's basketball team vs. Mars Hill University

Wednesday, Jan. 12, 7:30 p.m., Mars Hill University; men's basketball team vs. Mars Hill University

Friday, Jan. 14, and Saturday, Jan. 15, all day, East Tennessee State University; indoor track and field teams at ETSU Invitational

Friday, Jan. 14; Saturday, Jan. 15; and Sunday, Jan. 16, all day, Orlando, Florida; cheerleading squad at UCA/UDA National Championship

Saturday, Jan. 15, 2 p.m., Coker University; women's basketball team vs. Coker University

Saturday, Jan. 15, 3 p.m., Ball State University; men's volleyball team vs. Ball State University

Saturday, Jan. 15, 4 p.m., Coker University; men's basketball team vs. Coker University



The men's volleyball team begins play this week with a home match against North Greenville University and a road match against Ball State University. In this photo from last season, Taylor West completes a dig during a match in Pioneer Arena. Photo from the Office of Athletic Communications

Athletic contests can change. Be sure to check the schedule on the [athletics website](#) for revisions.

Faculty and staff birthdays

- Monday, Jan. 3 – Julie Martin
- Tuesday, Jan. 11 – Devin Underhill
- Wednesday, Jan. 12 – Eric Gschwind
- Sunday, Jan. 16 – Carol Hicks

Go Pioneers!