MEET MIKE REED
Penn College’s new president
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Conferences

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High-stakes travel

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Blazing the collegiate trail

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Up for the challenge

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Learn more about the track at magazine.pct.edu/testtrack and more about the team at www.pct.edu/baja.
The college has held Middle States accreditation since 1970. Evaluators found that the college met all standards for accreditation and requirements of affiliation, and the team had no accreditation; speaks to students, faculty, staff and administrators; and makes a recommendation about whether to reaccredit.

Penn College’s commitment to hands-on education aided area nonprofit organizations, as two sections of electrical construction students contributed nearly 400 hours of work, saving the YWCA, Sojourner Truth Ministries and the Avis Area Recreation Association labor expenses. “Students – as a result of this course – receive a true sense of the types of jobs and challenges they will encounter as graduates,” said Joseph R. Raup, instructor of the field-experience course. “We’re dealing with real jobs for real clients with real deadlines.”

A building construction technology student is the first graduate in Penn College’s alliance with The Robin J. Lenfest Foundation Inc., which funded a $1.8 million scholarship program for underserved populations in southeastern Pennsylvania. The distinction belongs to Isaiah S. Robinson, of Philadelphia, who received an associate degree in building construction technology in May and began working in the field the following week.

Penn College Magazine
First group of four-year mechatronics apprentices graduates

The first cohort of Penn College’s four-year registered apprenticeship program in mechatronics graduated in 2022. In order to successfully graduate from the full mechatronics program, the nine apprentices completed four one-year modules: mechanical components, industrial electricity, fluid power and programmable logic controllers.

Each module requires 144 hours of related technical instruction and 2,000 on-the-job training hours, the latter of which is overseen by each apprentice’s respective employer. Those companies are responsible for paying the apprentices and providing that hands-on learning environment, while Penn College provides the related classroom instruction.


BRIDAL PATH LEADS BACK TO CAMPUS

Pennsylvania College of Technology’s Schneebeli Earth Science Center holds such a special place for Elizabeth M. Getchen that, when it came time to arrange her wedding flowers, no other venue could come close to honoring the occasion.

Getchen holds associate degrees in floral design/interior plantscape (2007) and ornamental horticulture: landscape technology emphasis (2009) – and obtained permission to return to the Allenwood-area campus in advance of her nuptials.

She married Ian J. Mowatt on May 21 near Salladasburg.

“When it was time for me to graduate (from South Williamsport Area Jr./Sr.) high school and start college, like most people, I had no clue what I wanted to do. Also, my dad was not well, and I needed to be close to home to help him,” Getchen explained.

She flipped through the Penn College catalog “what seemed a million times.”

“I am so thankful that I went with the floral design program. The ESC is just what I needed in my life. Who else can go to college and be outside all day long?” Getchen said.

She fondly recalls horticulture faculty members Dennis E. and Christine A. Fink, and Dennis P. Skinner, for their student-centered passion and empathy. Dennis Fink, the college’s 1997 Master Teacher, retired in 2012 and passed away the following year; his wife was a part-time instructor. Skinner retired in 2019.

“Like I mentioned, my father was ill, so I had missed a lot of class to take him to doctors’ appointments, but they were understanding,” she said. “Mr. Skinner was great, always having so much fun in his classes and labs.”

Getchen returned to one of those labs, the floral room, over several days in May, along with bridesmaid Vanessa R. (Atherton) Harman ’08, who she met in floral design class.

“Words will never describe how the ESC actually makes me feel. Life wasn’t easy for me while I was going there. It was my comfort blanket, a safe place where I didn’t have to think about what was actually going on in my real life.

“I met a lot of wonderful people from the different programs there, and I couldn’t have asked for a better college experience.”

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Elizabeth M. Getchen ‘07, ‘09 makes a sentimental return to the Earth Science Center to arrange her wedding flowers.

Smiling through her pre-wedding to-do list, Elizabeth M. Getchen ‘07, ‘09 makes a sentimental return to the Earth Science Center to arrange her wedding flowers.
IT’S JUNE, AND HAILEE HARTMAN ’19
is in Charleston, South Carolina, beginning a new job at her fifth hospital in 18 months. And while everything around her is unfamiliar, Hartman is prepared, calm and focused. The stakes are much higher now, but her preparation and mindset echo the approach Hartman took during her standout soccer career at Pennsylvania College of Technology.

“I think I’m a good travel nurse because I can adapt to new situations,” Hartman said. “My soccer background provided me the necessary skills to be able to adapt quickly to changes. When I played, I compartmentalized the game; now I compartmentalize the shift. That’s how I get through it.”

Hartman’s preparation and mindset also helped her become the most prolific women’s soccer player in program history. From 2014 to 2017, Hartman helped Penn College to three postseason berths and a conference final appearance. Individually, Hartman collected three all-conference selections and ended her career as Penn College’s all-time leader in goals, assists and points.

“With every year my desire to be better, my preparation and my self-analyzing mindset echo the approach Hartman took during her standout soccer career. Hartman was her desire to be better, her preparation and her self-analyzing mindset echo the approach Hartman took during her standout soccer career,” said former Penn College head women’s soccer coach John James.

Penn College’s all-time leader in goals, assists and points.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAILEE HARTMAN

“Hailee was ‘raised as a baby nurse’ in oncology and hematology,” Hartman said. “I think I’m a good travel nurse because I can adapt to new situations,” Hartman explained. “I noticed that travel nursing was trending in March 2020, right when the pandemic started,” Hartman explained. “Obviously it’s a quicker way to make a little more money, but there are other valuable reasons to start travel nursing. It really helps prevent burnout because you’re only in one place for a short amount of time. You get to change facilities and have to learn new systems and people every few months, and you’re able to take a few weeks off in between jobs.”

Hartman eased into travel nursing by taking a job at a facility in nearby York and commuting from her home in Lancaster. She later took a position at a facility near a family home in Maryland, then in Pittsburgh, where she had friends and family. Then she traveled farther. She worked for three months in Greensboro, North Carolina, in February and began work in Charleston at the end of June.

At each stop, Hartman advances the ball during a Penn College match. She ended her Wildcat soccer career as the college’s all-time leader in goals, assists and points. She was “raised as a baby nurse” in oncology and hematology, first by chance, since it was one of the few open positions, then by choice, when she decided to stay in the unit because she found the work “rewarding and mentally stimulating.”

After about a year and a half at Lancaster General, Hartman noticed a trend in travel nursing. Travel nurses typically work for an agency that places them at facilities that are suffering from a staffing crisis. Most placements last two to three months. Nurses can choose their best fit – which can include location, discipline and sometimes even the salary range.

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It's obvious from your background that you were drawn to a career in education at a young age. What sparked that interest?

For as long as I can remember, helping others, competing and working through challenges have inspired me. I was fortunate to have quality teachers, coaches and mentors, and their impact sparked an interest in working in the helping profession. In addition, I spent a great deal of time with my oldest brother and sister-in-law throughout my high school years. My sister-in-law was, and still is, a quality leader, working effectively with groups and engaging with adolescents and adults working through extraordinary complexities triggered a dual interest in teaching and counseling.

Prior to joining Penn College as an assistant dean in 2014, you were a well-established secondary school leader and administrator. What prompted you to seek an opportunity in higher education?

I'm very proud of what we accomplished at Williamsport, SciTech and Williams Penn and enjoyed my experiences in secondary schools. My interest in higher education emerged through a partnership with Penn College when I served as principal at Williamsport. Our team worked hard to develop relevant partnerships with colleges and industry, and we promoted applied technology education on our high school campus. Williamsport College became an ideal partner in establishing several dual-enrollment courses for college-ready students and development opportunities for teachers.

The partnership with Penn College provided me an in-depth look at the extraordinary work happening on campus. The culture and mission of Penn College aligned to my personal beliefs, and when an assistant dean position opened, I took a risk – seeing it as an opportunity to make meaningful contributions while enhancing my professional learning.

When were you first exposed to Penn College, and what was your initial impression of the institution?

As a high school leader in the Harrisburg area, I knew that Penn College was a quality institution dedicated to applied technology and boasted an impressive placement rate. When I toured campus for the first time, I was truly blown away by the faculty and staff expertise, the labs, and industry partners used to advance student development.

What have been the most impactful changes you've experienced at the college?

It's difficult to rank because there have been multiple advancements. But I believe three of the most impactful changes have been the development of the Center for Career Design and the creation of College Relations, the reorganization of Academic Affairs, and the evolution of Workforce Development.

Placing Institutional Advancement, Corporate Relations, Alumni Relations and Career Services all under College Relations has created dynamic synergy and has yielded extraordinary results for students, industry and the college. The three-school model in Academic Affairs has improved collaboration between faculty and staff, enhanced operational efficiencies, and streamlined resources for long-term sustainability planning.

Increasing apprenticeship opportunities and industry training and working collaboratively with faculty have led to expanded reach for Workforce Development – meeting workforce needs and advancing our mission.

How have your previous roles at the college prepared you for the presidency?

I was fortunate to serve in a wide range of roles at Penn College, and the collective experiences will be invaluable as we strategically lead our team forward. Serving as an assistant dean and dean provided a unique opportunity to work closely with a large group of faculty and students to advance a subset of programs and lead a school. It also afforded me the chance to teach a couple sections of upper-level coursework. Being immersed with our faculty and students provided a comprehensive, hands-on understanding of our culture and how our mission and strategic plans are implemented, showing both our strengths and opportunities for growth.

Overseeing academic operations expanded my knowledge of our comprehensive budgets, building project planning and the entire academic portfolio. It afforded me the opportunity to work and learn with additional faculty and staff and understand the necessary interconnections of all college divisions. Serving as provost extended my engagement with all college divisions and academic programs. Working daily with the president, dealing with assessment and grants, and being involved with corporate partners and our Board of Directors – coupled with the aforementioned roles – have enhanced my understanding of our culture, strengths and opportunities for growth.

What appealed to you about becoming president of Penn College?

The role of president provides an opportunity to make a more impactful difference for our students, community and workforce. The talent density on our campus is exceptional. I look forward to building on our collective strengths and evaluating what systems need to be modified to accelerate our growth and advance our mission.

How do you plan to serve Penn College?

As the college’s leader, I will leverage existing strengths and resources to enhance the college’s growth and development. Our faculty and staff are truly exceptional. Our campus is exceptional. It’s a special place where extraordinary work happens every day. It’s a special place for students, faculty and staff to grow and thrive. I’m very proud of what we accomplished at Williamsport, SciTech and Williams Penn and enjoyed my experiences in secondary schools.

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What makes Penn College unique in the competitive higher-education landscape?

Our relevance, industry connections, hands-on approach, faculty expertise and alumni success make us truly unique. We offer a full college experience and degrees that are in extremely high demand. Our graduates are placed on a faster trajectory for long-term success. We shouldn’t be shy expressing how exceptional we truly are and the positive impact our graduates make throughout the commonwealth and beyond.

What are the most significant challenges facing the college?

Enrollment, staffing and infrastructure present significant challenges and our greatest opportunities for improvement.

Regarding enrollment, industry needs more highly skilled graduates, and the return on investment from a Penn College education is extremely high. A few steps we need to take to bolster enrollment include:

- Strategically build stronger connections with high school teachers and parents.
- They are major influencers on higher education decisions, and our successful graduates are keenly aware of how a Penn College degree can accelerate professional advancement.
- Enhance diversity on our campus.

We need to expand recruitment and retention efforts with high school teachers and parents. They are major influencers on higher education decisions, and our successful graduates are keenly aware of how a Penn College degree can accelerate professional advancement.

- Enhance diversity on our campus.
- Industry drives our program offerings, and quality industry relationships always have been, and always will be, essential to our success. We will continue to recruit industry and academic experts to teach, revise and advance our programs.

Can you characterize your leadership style?

Team-focused, collaborative, goal-centered, transparent and transformative. The talent and passion on this campus are extraordinary, and the best ideas emerge when various points of view and data are used to advance opportunities and solve complex challenges. Engaging stakeholders is important to maximize our collective expertise, innovate and modify systems to move our institution forward.

- Expand stackable credentials to degree opportunities.
- With staffing, there are employee shortages across the nation, particularly within the high-demand fields aligned with our degrees. Our campus experts are routinely recruited to return to industry. Most of our employees choose to work at Penn College to make a difference and develop the next generation of tomorrow makers.

We need to ensure we keep our team members actively engaged in thought-provoking challenges and decision-making processes. We also need to keep working to recruit a more diverse employee population to best prepare our students to enter a global workforce.

As for infrastructure, there are many rapid and radical changes and innovations happening within industry, and we must continually adapt our labs, technologies and equipment to ensure our faculty and students remain on the leading edge. We need to strategically maximize our capital and continue to partner closely with industry.

How much influence should industry have in shaping the college’s academic offerings?

Industry drives our program offerings, and quality industry relationships always have been, and always will be, essential to our success. We will continue to recruit industry and academic experts to teach, revise and advance our programs.

Let’s say you bump into a student prospect during your travels. How would you describe Penn College to them? Why would you tell them to enroll?

Industry needs more Penn College graduates, and we are a direct pathway to success. We are innovative, creative and relevant. We deliver transformative, hands-on education with personable faculty experts, small class sizes and a long list of industry partners. We are what college should be – a full experience to develop highly skilled thought leaders. The result is a 96.2% placement rate with alumni enjoying sustainable careers that include salaries well above the state and national averages.

How do you plan to collaborate with faculty and staff to meet collegewide objectives?

I strongly encourage two-way communication, and I get out of my office as much as possible to purposefully engage with our stakeholders. Interactions through divisional rounds, coffee and conversations, department head program leader meetings, and shared governance and councils have yielded multiple mission-focused ideas that have helped maximize opportunities and prioritize planning. As president, I will expand engagement opportunities to include a wider range of stakeholder groups.

What role should alumni play in the college’s future?

I have a genuine appreciation for our alumni, and many are extremely successful leaders in their chosen fields. Our alumni offer invaluable input on what worked well on campus to help them advance, and they provide hands-on insight on emerging trends within their respective fields. These direct perspectives are essential for program advancement and recruitment for our next generation of tomorrow makers.

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There’s that exploratory switch to solid food, not to mention the wobbly steps between a steadying coffee table and a parent’s waiting arms. Oh, and don’t forget preschool play dates and kindergarten tears. Or an exhilarating crush on a theretofore-unnoticed classmate, the rush of independence that accompanies a learner’s permit and the flush of pride when landing a perfect summer gig at the end of senior year.

The next chapter for some – higher education – can bring a double debut: A student leaves home for an extended time and, in many cases, is the family’s collegiate trailblazer.

Equally paved with elation and potholed with hurdles, that path is closely monitored by a vigilant lineup of advocates at Pennsylvania College of Technology. Recently joining the institution’s bullpen of resources is the LEAP Center, which holistically helps first-year and transfer students “learn, evolve, adapt and prepare” for their introduction to campus life.

**COMMON THREADS**

Staff at the center, headquartered – both symbolically and conveniently – in the Davie Jane Gilmour Center at the gateway to the college’s main campus, provided a sampling of “rock stars” who have navigated the first-generation minefield without losing sight of what initially drew them to Penn College. While each arrived with a unique back story, there are common threads in the tapestry they weave: drive, focus, satisfaction, hope, involvement in student organizations – and the presence of mind to score big when playing whatever hands they’re dealt.

“I was always good at school, but it was never something I loved to do for eight hours a day for my K-12th grade years,” radiography student Brielle C. Moon said of her attraction to an associate-degree major. “When I was looking at colleges I wanted to apply to, four-year colleges were not on my list. Penn College has so many two-year programs, it made it so easy for me to find a field of study that I was interested in.”

Among the challenges faced so far, the Lewistown resident said, are the demanding science-based classes required for her program.

“Being a first-gen college student, you are often beset with feelings of ‘Am I good enough to be here?’ ‘Can I make it?’ or ‘I have no idea what is going on.’” Christie A. Bing Kracker, director of Penn College’s LEAP Center and a first-generation college graduate

I took intro to Physics and Anatomy and Physiological Survey this past year and they were amazing, but also a stretch for me,” Moon said. “I love that the Tutoring Center is open and has so many resources to help in any class. The degree that I will get at the end of my years here will help me get a very good job with great benefits. “Penn College has an amazing reputation when it comes to preparing students for success in the real world. I can honestly say that, so far, I have been thriving here and cannot wait for my next couple of years.”

Like so many of the college’s tomorrow makers, Melina K. Petrick, a dental hygiene student from Falls Creek, saw the merit of a hands-on learning environment when choosing where to expand her knowledge and skill set. But she also took notice of the school’s “friendly and beautiful” atmosphere marked by water fountains, flowers and art, and said she admired the hard-working college employees who make campus such a conducive environment for student success.

“Although I had a great first year of college, I did encounter difficulties along the way,” she said. “As I transitioned from high school to college, I had to adjust my study habits. I learned to make a study schedule so that I had enough time each day to review material. I also...
used the ‘active recall’ method to achieve productive studying. 

Among the campus’s “top-notch resources” for students, she said, one site saw more of her than others. “The Tutoring Center staff is excellent at explaining things in a variety of ways,” Petrick said. “There’s also a broad selection of study materials. For example, I had the opportunity to use the detailed anatomy models and (organs from) cadavers, which helped me learn a lot of information quickly!”

LIFELINES, HOME AND AWAY

Another first-generation student – Taryn A. Zimmerman, of Lock Haven, who is also enrolled in dental hygiene, points to her parents with pride and gratitude for providing an opportunity they didn’t have, as well as their support “every step of the way.”

“I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for them,” she said. “I am greatly motivated to make them proud!”

Once she decided to go to college, her selection was an easy one. “I chose Penn College because it was close to home and I liked the small class sizes. The staff takes the time to get to know you, and you get a chance to know your peers,” Zimmerman said. “I also really enjoyed the thought of ‘hands-on experience,’ and the instructors have real-world experience in your major, so they know what is required for the industry.”

State-of-the-art equipment and an acknowledged high job-placement rate following graduation – no mere talking points for a national leader in applied technology education – helped to seal the deal.

 Rough spots can and do crop up, however, and Zimmerman shares her peers’ ability to power through adversity. “The main challenge I have encountered in the transition from high school was learning to study and teach myself,” she recounted. “College is more individualized work, whereas, in high school, everyone works together.”

Another stumbling block was learning the importance of time management, and – yet again – a familiar lifeline was manifest.

“The Tutoring Center has helped me significantly and worked with me, day in and day out, until I received the grades I wanted. The LEAP Center and my adviser have also been a huge help. They are always reaching out and looking to help in any way possible. They really take notice of the little things and help the first-year students greatly!”

With the wisdom of someone who’s been there, she offers this advice to other first-generation students: “Stick with it. It gets tough sometimes, but do not give up. Use resources such as the Tutoring Center and reach out to your professors. Your professors are there to help you and guide you. Also, make friends! They are your family through the same thing you are, so use one another to your learning advantage.”

Lex R. Yocum, of Watstown, who already earned an associate degree in architectural technology and is working toward a bachelor’s in building science & sustainable design: architectural technology concentration, knew about Penn College from friends and family (sister Latricia is in the physician assistant program) and attended a summer Architecture Odyssey camp during high school.

“The idea of being able to imagine a structure in my mind, designing those ideas on paper and in various programs, and then having the idea physically created has always been fascinating to me,” he said.

“In addition to small class sizes and the instant feedback he gets from the faculty in his major, Yocum has “benefited tremendously” from his Career Services interactions – particularly in perfecting his resume and offering confidence-boosting mock interviews.

“Additionally, I have utilized the makerspace a few times for various class projects, such as the laser cutter and 3D printers. This has been a huge help when it comes to getting projects completed, specifically when the printers or cutter in the architecture lab are occupied. Anything you can think can be done in the makerspace, which is a huge help.”

ONE GIANT LEAP

Inner strength sustained another Watstown resident, Kayleen A. Finan, when she determinedly worked through the competitive pre-stage to the full physical therapist assistant program.

“February was a hard time – and knew that this was the career I wanted for myself,” she said. “I focused on my studies and made sure to keep free time for other activities, as well. Throughout my first year, I spent a lot of time visiting animals because I feel they help tremendously with stress.”

Some of that stress was attributed to the workload.

“I knew coming in it would be more, but that also means putting more time in and studying differently than I did in high school,” she said. “The LEAP Center and FYE (a required First Year Experience class) helped with different ways of studying. The professors also will give strategies to study for their exams.”

Finan has availed herself of the center, which provides first-year students with an academic adviser and a LEAP adviser to aid in smooth passage.

“LEAP has made it easy, to know that I have someone there to help me if I needed it throughout the first two semesters,” she said.

“Help” also takes the form of knowledgeable and empathetic friends, such as Penn College President Michael J. Reed, the youngest of 10 children who were all college graduates, including a decades-long stint in Student Affairs.

“Moreover, sustainability and green architecture are two topics we have delved further into, which has furthered my motivation. This allows me to incorporate new concepts into my design work to ensure modern architecture is ecofriendly, while still being aesthetically appealing. Each semester reinforces the vast impact architecture has on everyone’s lives and the critical role I can play in ensuring designs are safe and sustainable.”

years after graduation.

“Being a first-gen college student, you are often beset with feelings of ‘Am I good enough to be here?’ ‘Can I make it?’ or ‘I have no idea what is going on,’” Bing Kracker said. “During this past year of transition for me, I could occasionally feel those same types of questions floating through my thoughts. It was important to find other first-gen colleagues or those with similar life journeys for me to connect with and find support.”

Working with students to help them transition into Penn College was also a way for her to ease any concerns, she noted.

“I was able to demonstrate that, what I may have been missing in specific knowledge about Penn College processes, I made up for in transferrable skills and genuine desire to help students succeed. Much like my first year of college, I found ways to connect with others, reaffirm my belief that I did belong here, and that I had a lot to contribute to help move this campus community forward.”

“I don’t believe we outgrow our first-gen identity and how it shaped us; we continue to integrate it into who we are today and into how we navigate new transitions,” added Bing Kracker, who is brainstorming a number of campus events to raise awareness of first-generation students. “I believe it will be particularly in the admissions process and during that crucial metamorphic period following high school or transfer.

“I think that I am successful in work and in life because of the support I received as a first-gen. It helped develop a sense of resilience in me for all the transitions that life brings.”

Dental hygiene student Taryn A. Zimmerman is motivated to make her parents – who are providing an opportunity to her that they did not have – proud.

Photo: Taryn A. Zimmerman

Melina K. Petrick, a dental hygiene student, adjusted her study habits from high school to college, drawing on campus resources.

Photo: Taryn A. Zimmerman

Brielle C. Moon says that she is thriving, with the help of on-campus resources, despite the demanding science courses required for competitive entrance into the radiography major.

Photo: Derrick M. McCombs

Melina K. Petrick, a dental hygiene student, adjusted her study habits from high school to college, drawing on campus resources.

Photo: Derrick M. McCombs

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Devin Boyd-Joseph says he didn’t really get to know his classmates until he set foot on the Fish Real Estate Leadership Challenge Course. It was the sixth week of classes in Fall 2021, and the Hanover resident joined with other automotive technology: Honda PACT students at the outdoor venue on the south edge of campus.

“Up to that point, it felt like we barely knew each other, but out there, we got to know each other – more than in the classes. It was nice learning about everybody, communicating, and getting to know about our different lives and backgrounds,” Boyd-Joseph said. “It was different from team building I’d done in the past.”

Nearly 400 students engaged in team-building exercises during the 2021-22 academic year at the new Challenge Course. A diverse array of academic majors took advantage of the unique offering, as did student organizations, athletics teams and a range of college departments. The current academic year will no doubt see renewed enthusiasm and increased engagement at the hands-on enterprise.

“The course presents an opportunity for members of our campus community to step outside of their comfort zone by engaging in challenging and fun leadership and team-building activities,” said Brenda Wiegand, associate director of academic operations and a course facilitator.

Featuring nine elements ranging in physical difficulty, the 14,400-square-foot Challenge Course focuses on collaboration and problem-solving, explores leadership and communication concepts, and encourages self-discovery and team growth. Strengthening relationships as well as self-confidence are key outcomes, and those resulting benefits follow participants off the course into their classrooms, labs and lives.

“I encountered course participants across campus after their sessions and learned that some of the skills they applied during their experience (communication, respect, collaboration, support) continued to influence their work and peer groups long after the challenge course event,” said Rob Cooley, associate professor of anthropology/environmental science. Cooley initiated and shepherded the Challenge Course after witnessing countless transformational experiences among students on study-abroad expeditions and in his Outdoor Recreation as a Therapeutic Tool course. During a Spring 2019 sabbatical, he researched and consulted with Tony Draus, of EdVenture Builders in Bloomsburg, and the duo brought the vision to life – with the added expertise of faculty and students in architecture and building construction technology and Penn College General Services employees. Boosting the endeavor financially were Brent and Daria Fish, who generously gifted support to honor the memory of Brent’s father, William H. Fish. It’s been a true team effort that has resulted in a ripple effect of infinite opportunities.

“It was special for me to see participants experience in real time the surprising, unexpected personal insights that come from challenge and team-building experiences,” Cooley said. “I really appreciated seeing groups coalesce during their experience. Individuals would arrive at the course for their program as individuals, standing alone and looking at their phone, or chatting in groups of two or three, but leaving in larger groups, laughing, talking about what just happened.”

Other faculty have taken notice, scheduling Challenge Course sessions for their students.

“It was wonderful watching the students connect outside of the classroom and clinic environment,” said Bridget E. Motel, dental hygiene instructor. “I saw them encourage each other as they worked together to navigate the course obstacles and complete the unique problem-solving exercises. Students developed their leadership, teamwork and critical thinking skills in a fun, friendly environment.

Both first- and second-year students truly enjoyed this experience and appreciated the opportunity to interact!”

Joe Tavani, instructor of automotive technology: Honda PACT, says he sought out the Challenge Course for his students as a way to infuse a teamwork component into what is otherwise a fairly solitary career field.

“In the automotive business and, in general, a lot of trades, you’re not in a teamworking situation; you’re doing your job solo. For the most part, you’re alone in your day, and if you lose focus, you make mistakes. I thought the Challenge Course would contribute to their learning, in seeing how other people’s points of view help in solving problems,” Tavani explained.
With the outdoor venue launching during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Challenge Course offered additional healthy benefits.

“The Challenge Course was a place where positivity and fresh air eased the stress from masking, COVID-19 and the world, and allowed people to just be their best selves, pushing boundaries, learning about others, and making authentic connections with people in their major, team or group that they might not have ever really engaged with otherwise,” Cooley said.

Jorden Graham, a human services & restorative justice student from Williamsport, concurred: “I was excited to be outdoors and get to know my peers’ smiling faces. What surprised me was the experience of learning different working styles. We each applied our unique key strengths as a cooperative force, which was fun and enlightening. The pressure of a challenge allows you to see a vulnerable side of people but also highlights their inner strength.”

The Challenge Course has also adeptly stirred laughter into the learning. “Everyone worked together through laughter and collaboration,” said Samantha Theriault, a dental hygiene student from Taylor. “Even those who came with apprehension left with a team spirit and enjoyed their time! Taking time to build relationships with my classmates outside of the classroom benefitted our relationships from that point on.”

Starting each session with icebreaker games and evolving into activities requiring physical support between participants, the Challenge Course creates experiences where the individual’s and team’s success and physical safety depends on the participants collaborating directly and intentionally.

“As a facilitator, I have found that one of the most impactful parts of the course is the opportunity to debrief activities with participants,” Wiegand said. “Through these reflection activities, it’s easy to see the value the course provides. Some of the comments I hear participants say are: ‘I can’t believe I just did that!’ ‘No one has ever cheered for me like that before,’ or ‘I didn’t realize I could lead.’”

WILDCAT WALK
Get your group to safely traverse multiple lengths of cable without falling off. There are trees and poles between the stretches of cable, which help, but moving between trees can be challenging. Communication and trust are key to success here.

Z STEPS
Similar to the Wildcat Walk, but this activity uses planks instead of rope. The added challenge here is that trees or poles are off limits as supports.

COMMITMENT BRIDGE
This is a trust-building activity. Team members pair up and stand facing each other at the intersection of two cables strung into a “V” shape. The pair holds hands or locks arms and shuffles outward on the cables as the cables get farther apart. As the participants progress along the widening V, they will lean increasingly on each other.

TIRE TRAVERSE
A very physical element. The goal is to get your group across the course from one tire to the next without touching the ground.

TRIANGLE TENSION TRAVERSE
This is a low-profile but challenging station! It begins easily, but the difficulty is increased quickly as participants traverse.

TEAM NITRO CROSSING
Teams swing across an imaginary canyon using one rope and four platforms. The basic rule of this station is that the hazard will consume the life support tools (rope, platforms) if participants let go or stop touching those items.

PORMAN WALK
This tightrope-like activity involves a two-line bridge with one rope as a handrail.

MULTILINE
This element involves dangling support ropes that are hung at various heights and lengths. Your team will climb these ropes simultaneously.

PORTHOLE
Everyone has to escape a sinking ship via the porthole to the lifeboat. Team members will pass through a tire with some added difficulties.
When the Roger & Peggy Madigan Library opened in 2006 near the college’s main entrance, it became a campus destination. In addition to offering extensive library facilities and collections, the 1,000-seat facility incorporates an art gallery that hosted its 50,000th visitor in 2022, college archives, a virtual reality studio, a café, and the Center for Career Design, filling the nearly 105,000-square-foot space.

Namesakes: The late Roger Madigan was a state senator and a member of the college’s Board of Directors. Peggy, his wife, was a longtime supporter of libraries and literacy.

A 60-seat computer lab is one of two on the library’s second floor. It is also the location of the Wildcat Den, home of the college’s esports team.

Rooms remain vital, but the library has other useful items available for checkout. For class, students can borrow laptops, chargers and cables, calculators, drafting tables, cameras, building plans, and such specialty tools as a thermal imager, data logger, and moisture meter. For fun, students can create with the library’s markers and colored pencils, unwind with video games and consoles, try robotics using the library’s dipole antennae, and even combat the winter blues with light therapy lamps.

Southeast corner of Hagan Way and College Avenue

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For more than 100 years, Pennsylvania College of Technology has been empowering students to earn an applied technology education—one that leads to success in the global marketplace. Thanks to alumni, corporate partners, employees, parents and friends, a new generation of Tomorrow Makers with real-world experience will fill industry demand for a highly skilled workforce.

True to the college’s hands-on approach to education, the Legacy Campaign for Penn College was a collective commitment to the future. Upon announcing her 2022 retirement, President Davie Jane Gilmour launched campaign efforts, inviting all hands in to empower students to create the world we want to live in.

“The most memorable experience in Spain was standing in front of Catedral de Granada. It quite literally took my breath away. Architecture has this unique ability to impact people’s emotions. What is it about architecture that allows us to express the beauty of feeling and emotion? That is what inspires me. I want to be able to answer that question with my own design. I want to create a space that drives emotion.”

Diana M. Gaglione ‘22
architecture & sustainable design

“Receiving a scholarship has only made me more committed to finishing my degree, using my skills in the software industry and making all the people who took the time out to invest in my future proud.”

Malcolm Lampkin ‘21
software development & information management

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**1950s**

Norman R. Hope ’59, radio and television repair, retired from IBM in East Rochester, New York, where he was hired upon graduation as a service/ maintenance technician. He retired after 32 years as a functional manager of equipment maintenance. He has been retired for 30 years living in Malbourne, Va., with his wife of 59 years.

 Kenneth Bolig ’73, civil engineering technology, retired from Geisinger as a senior facilities coordinator. He resides in Jersey Shore.

 John Hitchfiddle ’73, electronics technology, retired in 2019 as a senior hardware control engineer for Toshiba (Toshiba Mitsubishi-Electric Industrial Systems Corp.). From 1978 to 2019, he held electrical design engineering positions with GE in Erie and Salem, Va., GE Toshiba in Salem and TMEIC in Roanoke, Va. He resides in Buchanan, Va.

 Kenneth J. Ritter ’73, service and operation of heavy construction equipment, is retired. He resides in Cranberry Township, Pa., and has been married for 43 years and has two children and four grandchildren.

 Michael F. Hausmanner ’74, electrical construction, is retired and resides in Jersey Shore.

 Deborah A. (Bower) Dawes ’75, ornamental horticulture technology: floriculture, is a pre-service elementary school teacher and semi-retired owner of Hopp’s Herbal Garden Nursery. The nursery produces wetland and riparian native plants that are delivered to local, state and federal agencies, including the NZP Fenc and Coeur d’Alene Tribe, for restoration of salmon and native habitat near the Northwest’s rivers, streams and lakes. She operates the nursery with her husband and son, along with six employees. She also has a grown daughter. They have resided in Princeton, Idaho, since 1977.

 Michael Keller ’75, automotive technology, is retired and serves as president of Atlantic Caicos Corp., and has won various construction project specialty awards. He resides in York.

 Michael J. McNamara ’76, broadcasting technology, is a horticulturist for Spring Golf Club Golf. He holds a certificate from DuPage Horticultural School, and is a 2nd class amateur and a bachelor’s in agriculture from South Dakota State University.

 John P. Koehler ’76, electronic technology, worked for 25 years in electronics and electronics résultats and control. He retired 10 years ago to pursue a career in real estate. He is married and has two children.

 John H. Geigle ’77, electronics technology, relocated to Florida in 2019 and enjoys a retirement lifestyle there.

 John H. Herrick ’77, agriculture technology: floriculture, is a retired servicemember. He resides in Fort Myers, Fla.

 Kenneth A. McDowell ’77, electronics technology, is a retired service/operation manager for Luminetix Technologies Inc. He resides in Edmond, Okla.

 John J. Fillo ’78, construction equipment, is a construction project manager for H&J Smith Construction Inc. He resides in York.

 John E. Smith ’78, electronics technology, is a field service supervisor for Sanyo/Hitachi/Television. He resides in Arcadia.

 John V. Spence ’79, electronics technology, is an electrical construction superintendent with standard electrical systems. He resides in Coral Springs, Fla.

 John H. Clouse ’80, electronics technology: mechatronics, is a senior maintenance technician at General Electric. He resides in Erie, Pa.

 John M. Czaja ’80, electronics technology, is a retired service manager for Oak Ridge Electric Cooperative. He resides in York.

 John W. Sager ’80, electronics technology, is a retired electrical technician. He resides in Hagerstown, Md.

 John G. Smith ’80, electronics technology, is a retired service manager for Oak Ridge Electric Cooperative. He resides in York.

 John T. Cline ’80, construction equipment, is a retired service manager for Oak Ridge Electric Cooperative. He resides in York.

 John M. McGaughey ’80, electronics technology, retired in 2010 after a 36-year career in the aerospace industry. He resides in The Villages, Fla.

 John P. Ritter ’80, electronics technology, is a retired service/operation manager for H&J Smith Construction Inc. He resides in York.

 John W. Johnson ’80, electronics technology, is a retired service manager for Oak Ridge Electric Cooperative. He resides in York.

 John H. Hensley ’80, construction equipment, is a retired service/operation manager for H&J Smith Construction Inc. He resides in York.

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 John A. Smith ’80, electronics technology, is a retired service manager for Oak Ridge Electric Cooperative. He resides in York.

 John M. Davis ’80, electronics technology, is a retired service manager for Oak Ridge Electric Cooperative. He resides in York.

 John H. Heggenstaller ’81, electronics, physics, drafting, is retired, and resides in Prescott, Ariz.

 John E. Schaefer ’81, construction equipment, is a retired service manager for H&J Smith Construction Inc. He resides in York.

 John A. Miller ’81, construction equipment, is a retired service manager for H&J Smith Construction Inc. He resides in York.

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Andrew J. Miller ’04, civil engineering technology, is a field service representative for Kubota Tractor Corp. He helps Kubota dealer technicians with services related to large ag tractors, hay equipment and construction equipment.

Susanna (Thomas) Storong ’03, physical assistant, is the chief clinical officer for High Plains Community Health Center. She manages nine medical, three dental and five behavioral health providers. She holds a doctorate in Medical Science and resides in Lamar, Colo.

Lee J. Gautier ’04, diesel technology, is a mechatronic systems technician for Levan Machine and Inc. He resides in Fleetwood.

Randy Mason ’04, architectural technology, is a senior CAD designer for Perley Halladay Associates, a design/build contractor for cold storage facilities. He resides in Kennett Square.

Andrew J. Miller ’04, civil engineering technology, is a field service representative for Kubota Tractor Corp. He helps Kubota dealer technicians with services related to large ag tractors, hay equipment and construction equipment.

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Randy Mason ’04, architectural technology, is a senior CAD designer for Perley Halladay Associates, a design/build contractor for cold storage facilities. He resides in Kennett Square.
Chesnya L. Cherelus ’16, nursing, is a travel registered nurse for Aya Healthcare. She resides in Elmira, N.Y.

Matthew Jurdice ’16, accounting, is senior manager, fulfillment center optimization, for Chewy. He resides in Fort Myers.

Jessica (Wiegand) Layre ’16, business administration: marketing, is an assistant registrar for the University of Pittsburgh. She resides in Pittsburgh.

Christopher Rutledge ’16, web and interactive media, is a web developer for the Philadelphia Eagles. He resides in Philadelphia.

Benjamin Thayer ’16, residential construction technology and management, is a residential building inspector for National Property Inspections West Branch Valley. He resides in Williamsport.

Bradley G. Willis ’16, heating, ventilation & air conditioning design technology, is a systems application engineer for Johnson Controls. He was president of the Central Pennsylvania chapter of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers from 2019 to 2021. He resides in Harrisburg.

Chelsea M. Zimmerman ’16, dietetic technology, received her registered dental hygienist for Heartland Dental. She resides in Williamsport.

Timothy P. Baier ’17, aviation maintenance technology, is a mechanic for Pine Tree Motors. He resides in Ebensburg.

Stephanie M. (Puckly) Bilz ’17, welding and fabrication technology, is a senior welder/weld supplier liaison for BAE Systems. She resides in New Bloomfield.

Kanita D. Bombay ’17, physician assistant, is a pediatric critical care physician assistant for WellSpan Health-York Hospital. He resides in York.

Garrett D. Cornelissen ’17, welding and fabrication technology, is a senior manufacturing engineer for Rivian, launching the body manufacturing line for the company’s first all-electric truck and SUV. He is part of the Penn College Mentor program and resides in Fletcher, N.C.

Noah L. English ’17, landscape/horticulture technology: plant production, is the owner of Red’s Plant Health Care LLC. He resides in Bloomington.

Cameron Porter ’17, heavy construction equipment technology: technician emphasis and operator emphasis, is a field service technician for Komatsu America Corp. He is a member of the Central Mountain High School Career Technical Education Advisory Committee and a volunteer for Penn College’s diesel technology CTE competition. He is married with two children and resides in Mill Hall.

Brittany Terpstra ’17, web and interactive media, is the associate director for Digital Services for Wilkes University. She resides in Wilkes-Barre.

Mark Dumas ’18, heavy construction equipment technology: technician emphasis and operator emphasis, is an equipment operator for Glenn’s Lawn Service. He resides in Abington, Md.

Madison Janouchowski ’18, emergency management technology, is a general merchandise and tool specialist/marketing coordinator for The College Store, Penn College. She resides in Montoursville.

Jonathan R. Norris ’18, forest technology, is a graduate research associate at West Virginia University, where he manufactures equipment for asphalt road building, aggregate processing and concrete production. He completed a bachelor’s in wood science technology from WVU in 2018 and is pursuing a Master of Science in forestry. He resides in Morgantown, W.Va.

Andrew Smith ’18, aviation technology and applied management, is a lead passenger service manager for Atlas Air. He resides in Wilkes-Barre.

Logan Tate ’18, plastics and polymer engineering technology, is an engineering program manager for Altirnna Plastics. He resides in State College.

Makenzie E. Witter ’18, heavy construction equipment technology: operator emphasis, is a project manager intern for HBR. She is continuing her education toward a Penn College degree in construction management and resides in Bellefonte.

Rebecca J. (Brown) Anderson ’19, plastics and polymer engineering technology, is a quality engineer for C&J Industries. She resides in Cochranston.

Megan Finnen ’19, forest technology, is a forest technician for the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources. She resides in Sweet Valley.

Eric Grish ’19, electrical technology, is a CNC repair technician for Hardinge Inc. He resides in Elblann and welcomed his first granddaughter in July 2021.

Kyle Remigio ’19, automotive technology and applied management, is a service manager for Cicco BMW of Williamsport. He resides in Williamsport.

Troy Stair ’19, welding and fabrication engineering technology, is a weld master for Blake’s Welding. He works at Astar Industries, which manufactures equipment for asphalt road building, aggregate processing and concrete production. He resides in Williamsport.

James Patrick Dailey ’20, building construction technology, is a quality control technician for Cicco BMW of Williamsport. He resides in Williamsport.

Christian Peters ’20, business administration: sport and event management, is the assistant team administrator for Major League Soccer team Real Salt Lake. He resides in South Jordan, Utah.

Kate M. Ruggiero ’20, aviation technology, is an aircraft paint specialist for Duncan Aviation. She resides in Rockford, Ill.

Christopher B. Thomas ’20, electronics and computer engineering technology, is an automation specialist for MiteqInc. He resides in Pleasant Gap.

Ethan L. Arnett ’21, forest technology, is a field project engineer for Baker Concrete Construction. He resides in Laurel, Md.

Hayley Bauer ’21, accounting, is a member of the accounting staff of Lea Ann Pleasnger CPA LLC in Lock Haven. She resides in Mill Hall.

Jacin M. Wolf ’21, landscape/horticulture technology: plant production, is a landscape supervisor for Huntingdon Valley County Park and Forest. He resides in Bellefonte.

Rebecca J. (Brown) Anderson ’19, plastics and polymer engineering technology, is a quality engineer for C&J Industries. She resides in Cochranston.

Michelle R. (Bever) Smith ’21, business administration management, is a teller for First National Bank. She resides in York.

Catherine Weatherman ’19, engineering design technology, is an exhuostion engineer for CardinalSys Inc. She works in quality assurance and has a hand in tool design and modification, tool building and design development, process improvement, and working with new technology. She resides in Ringtown.

Jadyn N. Wolf ’21, landscape/horticulture technology: plant production, is a technician for the University of Maryland. She resides in Montgomery County, Md.

Dwayne Habsowicz ’21, individual studies, is a human resources specialist/compensation analyst for Penn State. She resides in Bellefonte.

David H. Jamison ’21, information technology: network specialist, is a system administrator for Intercyplce. He resides in Bellefonte.

Tyler Kropinski ’21, software development & information management, is a software engineering associate for Lockheed Martin. He resides in Philadelphia.

Kaitlyn M. (Young) Clark ’20, industrial technology management, is an automation specialist for MiteqInc. He resides in Pleasant Gap.

Ethan L. Arnett ’21, forest technology, is a field project engineer for Baker Concrete Construction. He resides in Laurel, Md.

Hayley Bauer ’21, accounting, is a member of the accounting staff of Lea Ann Pleasnger CPA LLC in Lock Haven. She resides in Mill Hall.

Jadyn M. Wolf ’21, landscape/horticulture technology: plant production, is a technician for the University of Maryland. She resides in Montgomery County, Md.

Dwayne Habsowicz ’21, individual studies, is a human resources specialist/compensation analyst for Penn State. She resides in Bellefonte.

Katie (Kelley) Ingle ’14, dental hygiene, was welcomed a son on Nov. 1, 2019. They reside in Allentown.

Jessica Frank ’13, graphic design technology, married Dan Nickel ’13, heavy construction equipment technology. In October 2019, and they welcomed a son, Eric, in May 2021. They reside in Fallston, Md.

Tanya Austin ’13, medical laboratory technology, married Matthew ‘12, culinary arts technology. In June 2021, they welcomed a daughter, Anna, in Battle Creek, Mich.

Ashley (Arvin) Knight ’08, business administration: marketing, welcomed a daughter, Avery, on Aug. 23, 2021. They reside in Fallston, Md.

Amy (Dibble) Chervinsky ’10, automotive technology, married Dan Nickel ’13, heavy construction equipment technology. In October 2019, and they welcomed a son, Eric, in May 2021. They reside in Fallston, Md.

Tanya Austin ’13, medical laboratory technology, married Matthew ‘12, culinary arts technology. In June 2021, they welcomed a daughter, Anna, in Battle Creek, Mich.

Casey Weaver ’15, nursing, welcomed a daughter, Mina, in April 2021. They reside in Bloomsburg.

Stephen Wozniak ’15, business administration, welcomed a son, Brayden, in August 2021. They reside in Watertown.

Noah L. English ’17, landscape/horticulture technology: plant production, married Becky Duigan on July 9, 2021. They reside in Bloomsburg.

Brittany Terpstra ’17, web and interactive media, married Andrew Smith ’18, aviation technology and applied management, on Sept. 25, 2021. They reside in Wilkes-Barre.

Jordan Courter ’17, ’18, applied health studies: occupational therapy assistant, married Christopher Rutledge ’16, web and interactive media, on June 4, 2021. They reside in Philadelphia.


Sabrina Topovich ’19, and Joshua Maring ’19, both grads of engineering design technology and members of the archery team, got married May 15, 2021.

Kaitlyn M. Young ’20, health information management, married her high school sweetheart, Grant Clark, on June 19, 2021. They reside in Grottoes, Va.

Alyssa Haueisen ’21, occupational therapy assistant, married Kyle Ramigio ’19, automotive technology and applied management, on Sept. 25, 2021. They reside in Watertown.

In Memory

Michael J. DiRaimo, former member, Board of Directors, age 66, on July 29

George Walter Reed Jr., former member, Corporate Advisory Board, age 89, on Feb. 21

Steve Sleboda, member, Foundation Board of Directors, age 79, on Aug. 29

Robert Schell Ulrich ’87, retired associate professor of English, age 91, on Jan. 31

Mary Jane West, retired associate professor of English and economics, age 98, on March 17

Students are focused on the learning at-hand in this machining lab photo from the Penn College Archives. Can you identify these Wildcats, or anything else about the image? Email all educated guesses or concrete IDs to magazine@pct.edu.
by Sarah K. Patterson, graphic designer/project coordinator

Let me be clear: A journaling practice is something I do every day. I started writing daily in 2011 and have every day since. I am good with routine commitments. I am fine with the mundane practice of recording and reflecting; however, I don’t know if that makes me an expert. But since I have been at it, let me tell you my approach, some of the benefits and methods to keep a journal. There is not one way!

method

WHY
Some reasons for keeping a journal:
> Reflecting on the day.
> Recording events.
> Working out problems.
> Experimenting with writing styles.
> Cultivating a sense of wonder.
> Clearing your mind.
> Being more present for yourself and others.
> Storytelling for yourself.
> Taking a break from screens.
> Storytelling for yourself.
> Experimenting with writing styles.

EXAMPLE
> Date/weather (sun, clouds, breezy, icy, blistering, etc.: conditions and high temp).
> Start anywhere—a chronological order of the events of the day, perhaps.
> Did something funny/ ridiculous happen?
> What’s a knot you want to unravel?
> Writing a letter to someone you care about.
> What are you building?
> A recent challenge.
> A big, heavy book will be discouraging/inconvenient to
> Work out problems.
> A color.
> Prompts.
> A color.

HOW
Tools needed:
> blank book.
> pen or pencil.
> Find the tools that make you happy. Like a single book that will fit a whole year of daily journal entries.

TIME
Be honest with yourself:
> How long would you like to devote to your daily journaling?
> My daily practice is short: five-ten minutes.
> When I draw and journal: 30 minutes.

FREE WRITING
Write about whatever you feel like. This is only for you, and you don’t even need to read it.
1. Have your journal and pen/ pencil ready.
2. Set a timer for five minutes.
3. Warm up your hands by rubbing them together for a few moments.
4. Start writing.
5. At the five-minute mark, close your journal and set it aside.

YOUR JOURNALING FOR THE DAY IS DONE.

FILL IN THE BLANKS
Consider listing making as a way of noticing or clearing out thoughts.
1. Have your journal and pen/ pencil ready.
2. Set a timer for three minutes.
3. Items can be single words or phrases.
4. Use your list for future journaling prompts.

PROMPTS
What can you go right?
What do you notice?
What’s a knot you want to unravel?
What are you building?
What are you relaxing?
What’s a new story you can tell?

A recent challenge.
What was your best time of day?
What’s a knot you want to unravel?
What did you have for breakfast?
What is your best time of day?

WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING?

WHAT ARE YOU UNRAVELING?

WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING?

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