

Millersville University

University Investment in Student Run Organizations:

A Case Study

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Abstract

The learning that business students acquire within the classroom under the tutelage of their professors is invaluable. However, students often find that the application of said instruction outside of the classroom has the most benefit to them personally. While this may take the form of internships or summer jobs, student-run organizations (university sponsored organizations that give the opportunity to handle real resources) provide advantages to not only the students, but also to the university and their communities. Such examples of these organizations can be found at universities all over the country, but for the purpose of this essay, we will be focusing specifically on the organizations found at Millersville University.

Acknowledgements

I am incredibly grateful to my professors for their support throughout my academic career. Dr. Nandedkar was involved with some of the presentations that I participated in on behalf of this thesis, such as the presentation to the council of trustees, and he was also available to answer any of my coursework questions (no matter how trivial) when I was taking his classes. Dr. DiRusso, who was my academic advisor as well as my thesis advisor, always gave me sound advice and direction in my educational trajectory, and always trusted and supported me when I wanted to undertake challenging endeavors. Dr. Stewart was one of the first professors that I had in the midst of a global pandemic, and although all of our classes were online, the effort that he put into connecting with the students was something that I deeply admire- I know that I have made a lifelong friend.

I would also like to thank Dr. Marc Tomljanovich, Dean of the Lombardo College of Business. He recommended me for tutorship, encouraged me to apply for the on-campus leadership role that sparked the idea for this thesis, introduced me to contacts that led to my internship (now job), and led a study abroad trip that he encouraged me to apply for. Because of these opportunities, so many doors have opened for me that I would not have had access to without his support.

Finally, I would like to thank my support system. My mother taught me through example that a woman can do anything that she sets her mind to, and my dad has taught me to keep an open mind. My stepmother, who from the beginning chose to be an active parent in my life and never asked for anything in return, has always given me solid advice. I'd also like to thank my chosen family, my boyfriend, my friends, Hope Davis (the best business partner a girl could ask for) and anyone who lent an ear to listen to me talk about student-run organizations.

Introduction

Extracurricular activities play a crucial role in higher education by offering students opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting to engage in diverse experiences and develop essential skills (Christison, 2013, 17). These activities encompass a wide range of interests, from academic clubs to sports teams, cultural organizations, and community service initiatives. Among these, student-run organizations hold particular significance in fostering student development. These organizations provide platforms for students to take on leadership roles, collaborate with peers, and apply classroom learning to real-world contexts. They facilitate personal growth, communication skills, and critical thinking abilities; preparing students for future career success and lifelong learning. As universities increasingly recognize the transformative impact of extracurricular involvement on student outcomes, there is a growing imperative for institutions to invest in and support these student-led initiatives. This investment not only enhances the overall student experience but also contributes to the development of a vibrant and inclusive campus community.

For the purpose of this thesis, student-run organizations (SROs) will be defined as organizations composed of students sponsored by their respective universities. Under this broad umbrella, student-run organizations could technically be considered any club or school sanctioned gathering, but for our purposes, I have chosen to focus specifically on SROs within Millersville that generate or manage money, as the financial benefit to the university is one of the main considerations in creating or sustaining these kinds of organizations.

Limited resources allocated to student-run organizations compared to other university programs present a significant challenge in higher education. Often, these organizations operate on shoestring budgets, relying heavily on student dues and minimal institutional support. This

disparity in resources can have far-reaching consequences on student engagement and campus culture. Without adequate funding, student-run organizations may struggle to offer meaningful programming, host events, or provide essential resources for their members. This can lead to decreased participation, diminished opportunities for skill development, and a less vibrant campus community overall. Ultimately, neglecting to invest in student-run organizations not only hinders individual student growth but also undermines the richness and diversity of the university experience for the entire student body.

The aims of this thesis are to consider the role that student-led organizations at Millersville University play in fostering student leadership and engagement, understand the implications for enhancing the overall student experience and campus climate, and explore the potential to inform university policies and resource allocation decisions for the future. This thesis will be structured into three main sections- the benefits that student-run organizations provide to the individual student, to the community, and to the university. The primary focus of these benefits will be at Millersville University, but to provide context to the reader, there will be information drawn from similar studies and student-run organizations at other universities.

Methodology

In order to establish the importance of student-run organizations at Millersville, I chose to analyze two in particular- the Evergreen Café, and the Marauder Fund Student Investment Association (also known as the Marauder Fund). Each of these institutions is defined later in this section, but the most important uniting thread is that they share the similarity of managing real money on behalf of the university- the Evergreen Café on behalf of Millersville Dining Services, and the Marauder Fund on behalf of the Finance Department.

To establish the benefit that these organizations provides, I will use a combination of interview, literature review, and a thorough case study of the Evergreen Café. By way of interview, I aim to establish what senior level and newly graduated students have taken away from positions that they have held in these organizations. This thesis contains interviews from Hope Davis, on behalf of the Evergreen Café, and Nicolas Lopez, on behalf of the Marauder fund, in which they detailed how the leadership opportunities, relationships formed, autonomy gained, and skills learned from these student-run organizations benefited them and set them up for success following graduation. The brief literature review seeks to establish context for the student-run organizations at Millersville, including examples of student-run organizations across the United States.

Hope Davis (they/them) is a business administration major with a concentration in management, they were the student manager of the Evergreen Café the semester after I held the position, as a part of their internship. Together, we participated in many projects and presentations to the Millersville Council of Trustees, the Chancellor of the Pennsylvania Higher Education System, and the Business Association of Millersville. This interview was conducted to establish what they had gotten out of the experience of managing the student café, and how it had prepared them for life following graduation. I interviewed them on the 15th of March, 2024, in order to determine the impact of the Evergreen Café from their perspective.

Nicolas Lopez (he/him) is a recently graduated Millersville alumnus who double majored in finance and accounting. He was a senior analyst with the Marauder Fund, who now works at Align Wealth Strategies as part of the 401k team. He attributes many of his professional successes with his involvement in the Marauder Fund, and was able to give a unique insider perspective into the organization. He was interviewed on March 8th, 2024.

The majority of information used in the case study of the Evergreen Café is derived from personal experience; I worked at the student-run café for just under two years, a semester of which was spent doing research for this thesis through the Evergreen Café student manager internship (which we will discuss in detail later). This allowed me to actively run a business, and in doing so, observe the day-to-day process of a student-run organization; how the students interacted with one another, how the community was shaped, and how dining services as a whole was changed because of this enterprise.

The Evergreen Café

Background

One of the most notable examples of a successful student-run organization, and the primary focus of this thesis, is that of the Evergreen Café. After a franchising contract with the University was terminated, the department of dining services needed to find something to fill the vacuum that was created in the absence of the former licensee. The concept of a student-run café was not unfamiliar; the previous enterprise that occupied the space had done something similar in the past. But without the structure of an established corporation, the issue of responsibility, day-to-day processes, and overall functionality came into question. The chain of command, division of duties, and daily procedures were eventually developed over a number of semesters, primarily through the process of trial and error. What follows will be a brief description of the resulting structure and operations.

Daily Functions

The idea for the Evergreen Café, established in 2021, came about from a “shark-tank” style competition, where students designed and proposed ideas for what they wanted their

student-run café to look like. It is able to serve most anyone, accepting tenders of cash and credit, but the primary demographic that is catered to is that of students, with 97% of all transactions being on some form of meal plan (Table Two, 38). The menu consists of the typical drinks that one would find in a café, alongside made to order and grab and go food options. The Evergreen is located in Gordinier dining hall, and operates as a subset of Dining Services- meaning the students are able to use their meal swipes here.

Staff Functions

The typical daily functions of the Evergreen Café are usually split into four roles: host, bar, kitchen, and floater. Every typical shift has all four of these positions working simultaneously. Each of these positions has their own responsibilities for when they are on the floor, but they also have individual responsibilities when opening and closing. They are detailed as follows:

Host

Typically, new staff are first trained to fulfill the role of host, the main responsibility of which being to take orders and operate the cash register. To perform this role at maximum effectiveness, it is important that those working this shift memorize the abbreviations that represent each menu item in order to minimize the time processing each order. To maintain that every person makes each menu item the same way, it is imperative that the abbreviations are the same across the board. This individual is usually responsible for brewing the drip coffee in the mornings and preparing the front-of-house pastries for sale.

Bar

This individual's primary responsibility is making drinks on the shift, but they also must constantly clean their workspace and prepare for the next wave of orders. Being aware of the

flow of traffic and where certain lulls are allows these staff members to also keep an eye on the state of the café itself, out from behind the counter, and clean up when necessary. These actions are expected of everyone on the staff, but are uniquely suited to the person working the bar shift, as they do not have as much preparation or cleanup work to do when there is less activity.

Kitchen

As mentioned previously, the Evergreen Café serves both grab and go and made to order food options. Breakfast sandwiches, bagels, grilled cheese, and mac and cheese are just a few examples of what the person in the kitchen is responsible for preparing. Additionally, the staff member in this position is responsible for obtaining items from the dining services bakery, and preparing them for sale by doing activities like individually wrapping items, putting them into storage, and placing dates on the containers to ensure that the first in first out method is used.

Floater

This staff member is responsible for any miscellaneous task that is not covered by the other three people on the shift, like restocking, assisting when there is a rush, and cleaning both behind the counter and in the body of the café. This person is also very important at the end of the day, as they are typically responsible for beginning the closing activities while the other staff members continue to service the customers. However, as it is technically an “extra” position, when there is a lack of staff, this position is usually the first to go.

Corporate Structure

Baristas

Anyone who is not designated in some sort of managerial role is considered to be a barista, but anyone designated as a barista should be able to work any of the four previously outlined roles. Someone in this shift is considered to be general staff, and this is the position that

new hires begin at. There are opportunities for advancement and leadership from this point onward that provide skills and knowledge beneficial to the student following graduation.

Team Leads

Whenever someone on the staff proves themselves to be an exemplary employee, they are eligible to become a team lead. Team leads hold the same responsibility as ordinary staff, with the addition of having access to the keys and functioning as the highest authority whenever a student supervisor or the student manager is not around.

Student Supervisors

When someone has proven that they are able to perform well in the leadership role of a team lead, they are eligible to be promoted to the rank of the student student supervisors. Typically, these students have been employees of the Evergreen Café for multiple semesters before assuming this role, as they must be able to assume authority whenever the student manager is absent or performing other tasks.

Student Manager

The position of student manager, and the primary scope of this thesis, is a semester-long internship that aims to give students the learning experience of running a business. While this position is typically geared towards business students, there have been those with education and psychology degrees who have undertaken this role. Just a few of the items that this person is responsible for are staffing decisions, disciplinary measures, creating the schedule, inventory tracking, and creative decisions (such as decor, events, partnerships, etc). This person is always on call in a way- they are supposed to have the answers to any questions that may arise, and if a problem occurs, they are responsible for fixing it. However, the benefits that this internship

provides to the student are priceless- it gives the experience of running a business, of course, but it also introduces connections, the value of which cannot be overstated.

The Marauder Fund

Another institution unique to Millersville is that of the Marauder Fund. In this organization, students are able to manage real money on behalf of the university- researching funds and stocks within different sectors in order to capitalize on the initial investments provided by donors. These profits are then either reinvested into the fund for following semesters, or they are used for scholarships (Lopez, 2024). From the Marauder Fund website, here is a bit more about the organization.

“Approved and funded by the Millersville University Foundation in the Fall of 2017, the MF offers students an opportunity to invest and manage real money. Students learn to research investments, collaborate as a research team, apply their coursework, and present their investment ideas to members” (The Marauder Fund, 2024).

This organization also provides a number of opportunities for leadership and advancement- the members of this organization fall into the categories of junior analysts, senior analysts, vice presidents of each sector, the student CFO, and the student CEO. The analysts are responsible for conducting research for each of the five sectors: healthcare, technology, consumer, finance and real estate, and industry (The Marauder Fund, 2024). The student CEO, Student CFO, and the vice presidents of each sector all have leadership responsibilities, including delegating tasks, voting on group decisions, and presenting stock pitches to the Millersville financial committee (Lopez, 2024).

These two examples of student-run organizations within Millersville University help to demonstrate the benefits that the resulting autonomy can provide to not only the students in these

respective organizations but also to the students on the campus, to the surrounding community, and to the university itself. In this thesis, we will define those benefits, and explore the facets of these organizations that could potentially be improved upon.

Benefits to the Students

The chance to apply and thus solidify the knowledge gained from classes in the real world can be an exciting opportunity for students, and while external jobs and internships obtained after graduation are typically a student's first step out into the job market, they don't necessarily have to be. The first time that a student stretches his or her wings professionally could be provided by his or her university, either through school sponsored employment, student business associations, or partnerships with certain businesses in the area. There are numerous benefits in providing on-campus internship and organizational opportunities, such as increased student engagement (Kelley-Hall, 2011), access (Zilvinskis, 2023), and flexibility (Ford, 2023). Examples of such exist in universities across the country, as detailed in the following section, with Millersville University being no exception.

A Brief Overview of Student-Run Organizations

Student-Run Business Association

To provide background for the following case studies at Millersville University, perhaps it is best to establish context by observing the Ivy League schools that prioritize investment into student-run organizations. Cornell, Harvard, and Princeton are just a few examples of schools that participate in such programs. The Student Run Business Association (or SRBA) is a collection of student-run, university-affiliated organizations that is spread across a number of schools (Student Run Business Association, 2022). The variety within the SRBA is vast, with some schools enrolling a single business, and others enrolling several under the umbrella of their

agency. One of these groups, for example, is Harvard Student Agencies. Founded in 1957, this group is a collection of student-run businesses, consisting of everything from cleaners and dorm essentials to corporate marketing (Harvard Student Agencies, 2024). The agency boasts that through this program students learn “retail, publishing, research, advertising, engineering and more,” providing a benefit to the students, the university, and their community. (Harvard Student Agencies, 2024).

Additionally, student-run investment clubs are not a new thing; many other universities have investment clubs similar to that of the Marauder Fund. Lafayette College, for example, started its investment club in 1946 with just 3,000 dollars and is now worth more than a million dollars (Lafayette College Investment Club, 2024). Additionally, Harvard has its Alternative Investment Fund (Harvard Alternative Investment Fund, 2024) and Princeton has Tiger Investments (Tiger Investments, 2024); investment clubs that emulate similar characteristics, such as having a governing board of students who hold primary decision making power for the club, and handling real money on behalf of their respective universities. Additionally, many of these organizations boast the successes of their alumni, listing the notable careers at Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and J.P. Morgan (to name a few) following graduation (Tiger Investments, 2024). It is apparent, then, that these organizations allow students to reap the benefits of student leadership and autonomy, and Millersville was wise to establish something similar.

These university sponsored student-run businesses provide the opportunity for all students, not just those in the business department, to gain knowledge and network connections within their respective concentrations. Professors and administration can foster these

connections, which can further enhance the likelihood of placement in the student's job field, or other such opportunities.

Within Millersville University

While Millersville University is not a part of any overarching organizations like the SRBA, there are still a vast amount of opportunities for student employment. From desk jobs to tutoring to working in the dining hall, the opportunity for development and financial growth is never very far away. When considering the benefits to the student; the focus will primarily be what we have learned, and how we will be able to apply that knowledge following graduation. While financial gains are often a pleasant advantage found as a byproduct within these positions, they will be considered secondary for our purposes, when factoring in the immeasurable benefits of the educational factor. The two organizations that will be the primary focus of this thesis are the Evergreen Café and the Marauder Fund- two student-run organizations that manage real resources on behalf of Millersville University.

Student Benefits Provided by the Marauder Fund

The Marauder Fund, as defined above, is a student-run investment club. They are given real money through donations, and are then responsible for researching, creating, and monitoring stock portfolios in order to manage the return on their investments (Lopez, 2024). While the Marauder Fund offers a myriad of benefits to university students, primarily, it provides invaluable hands-on experience in the world of finance and investment, allowing participants to apply theoretical knowledge from their coursework to real-world scenarios- a common theme of many student-run organizations.

Through managing investment portfolios, students learn essential skills such as financial analysis, risk assessment, and portfolio management, which are highly sought after in the job

market. From my April 8th interview with Nicolas Lopez, he has said that his experience in the Marauder Fund was the most frequently asked-about item on his resume before eventually being hired at the wealth management group, Align Wealth Strategies (Lopez, 2024). Moreover, these clubs foster a sense of community and collaboration among like-minded peers, creating networking opportunities and a supportive environment for learning. Additionally, involvement in such clubs can enhance students' critical thinking abilities, decision-making skills, and financial literacy, equipping them with valuable competencies that extend beyond their academic pursuits, into their personal lives. Overall, the Marauder Fund serves as a platform for students to develop both professionally and personally while also preparing them for future career endeavors in the finance industry.

Student Benefits Provided by the Evergreen Café

Perhaps one of the most notable examples of opportunities provided by the Evergreen Café is that of the student manager internship. As mentioned previously, this internship gives students the opportunity to run a business, from hiring, to events, to creative decisions. This internship began in the Fall of 2021, meaning that there have been six student managers, including myself, at the time of this thesis being written. Speaking from a place of experience, the student manager internship at the Evergreen Café was a tremendous source of growth as a student, leader, and friend. Given that the work schedule is based almost entirely around the class schedule of the staff, the same groups of people tend to work together regularly, meaning that close friendships are formed- which is a double edged sword. You want to get along with your coworkers, but after rising through the ranks and becoming an authority figure, discipline becomes more difficult to navigate.

Benefits of the Student Manager Internship

Personally, I can attest to the benefits of participating in this internship- the leadership skills, connections, and opportunities I experienced as a result from my involvement are truly invaluable- but the benefits are also shared by all of the students who are related to this organization in some way. Those who partner with the Evergreen Café, from the student art initiative to Marauder Music (more on that later!) gain advantage from visibility and community, and those who work for the organization reap the numerous advantages that come with participating in a leadership capacity. To demonstrate this, I interviewed Hope Davis, the student manager who followed me in succession, to determine the parts of this internship that they had found particularly rewarding.

The Evergreen Café is a unique opportunity for students such as Hope and myself, in that yes, it provides the opportunity to learn and practice skills that they may not have the ability to practice otherwise, make them appealing to employers post graduation, and establish connections with faculty and other professionals in their field, but it also allows them to truly be the change that they want to see within their universities. In the post-pandemic world, with the transition to distanced learning in the form of restrictions and online classes, many students lost out on opportunities that they may have had otherwise. Student engagement outside of classes, in the form of clubs, study abroad trips, athletics, and others were severely limited, and the resulting sense of community that usually comes from these organizations was stifled.

At the Evergreen, Davis and myself were able work to mitigate that slightly- with the hours being open until 10:30 pm in the Fall semester of 2023, we were able to host events to bring people together- from open mic nights, to trivia, to pumpkin painting, we were able to create a community of sorts. These events also frequently had live music- in addition to giving

the opportunity for student and alumni musicians to perform; it also gave way to the possibility of partnering with other clubs at Millersville. As Hope had mentioned in their interview, the partnership that we created with Marauder Music was incredibly beneficial. On the side of the café, we were provided with live audio equipment and professional grade sound design, and on the side of the students in Marauder Music, they were able to practice the skills that many of them are going on to do professionally. They also received publicity at every event that they were able to facilitate.

In this same vein, student workers at the Evergreen Café were able to facilitate the skills specific to their major that they would find applicable following graduation. As Hope mentioned in their interview, one of our other partnerships was with WIXQ, the campus radio station also run by students. The Evergreen Café's partnership with WIXQ involved running an advertisement for the café on the air, read by student supervisor and communications major Carmen Girton (Davis, 2024). This allowed for her to apply the aspects of advertising and media that she had learned in her classes- another benefit (outside of monetary value and leadership opportunities) provided to the student workers of the Evergreen.

Additionally, the Evergreen Café was able to begin an art initiative for student artists. Mediums from painting, to woodworking, to photography, to crochet were put on display, with plaques underneath detailing the artist's name, major, and social media if they had any. This provided the unique opportunity for students to have their art on display to the public, most of whom were displaying it for the first time. While this directly benefited the students involved, it also helped to facilitate one of the other major aspects of why student-run organizations are so important- the community that they foster.

Benefits to the Community

Student Involvement

As mentioned in the previous section, the opportunity for students to present their music and artwork has been one of the primary benefits to the students, and the resulting community formed has been one of the most exciting developments. However, barring these events, there has also been a significant community formed with the regular customers at the café. When the regulars are also your classmates and peers, it is easier to form relationships with them. These relationships, with both peers and professors, are the cornerstone of developing the campus community.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the threat of dwindling student engagement was a concern for those in university administration (Hendrick et al., 2023). On March 21st, 2024, Hope Davis, myself, and a small number of other hand-picked students met with Dan Greenstein, the Chancellor of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education and discussed this quandary: how could we get students to be engaged again? The overwhelming consensus was that students became more engaged when they were able to see themselves leading change; the students in this meeting were a part of student government, the athletics association, and a variety of clubs- which contributed to the reason why they felt compelled enough to participate in a meeting such as this.

Community Benefits Provided by the Evergreen Café

In particular, on-campus employment plays a pivotal role in enhancing student engagement by providing a platform for students to actively participate in their academic community, while simultaneously gaining valuable skills and experiences and making money, something that is often an impediment for student involvement. According to a study conducted

by Kuh et al. (2008), engaging in part-time employment on campus has been linked to increased levels of student engagement, as it allows students to develop connections with faculty, staff, and peers. Through some on-campus jobs, such as working at the Evergreen Café, but also in administrative offices, tutoring centers, or campus facilities, students contribute to the efficient functioning of the university while also building meaningful connections with members of the campus community (Kroupova et al., 2021). Moreover, as student employees often play a crucial role in organizing and executing campus events and initiatives, they are able to directly enhance the overall student experience. By actively participating in campus employment opportunities, and as such being engaged, students develop valuable skills, leadership qualities, ultimately benefiting the campus community and fostering camaraderie within the campus environment.

Staff Camaraderie

While the camaraderie campus-wide is an ultimate goal for many student-run organizations, another benefit is the community formed within the organization itself. Consider the Evergreen Café. As the issues of day-to-day processes, responsibility, division of duties, and overall functionality came into question, we wanted to establish first what every member of the staff was already doing, and create the baseline activities based on an amalgam, rather than establishing what just one person thought was best. By going through this process, students were able to feel like this organization was really designed by them, and for them, and therefore united the staff under a common goal to succeed.

Partnerships

As touched on previously, student-run organizations introduce the opportunity for partnerships, both outside of and within the university. Within Millersville, many of the student-run organizations and clubs collaborate with one another in order to fulfill a need that the

other may have- like at the Evergreen Café, we did not have the ability to host big events without the support from organizations like Marauder Music. Additionally, these partnerships have given way to innovation that hasn't previously been seen at the university. For example, in our partnership with WIXQ, we came up with the idea of recording an advertisement for the Evergreen Café in exchange for a signature WIXQ sponsored drink (called the "Brain Fog," named after a show on the network) to be our official finals week drink. The drink (a nitro cold brew with oat milk and honey) became a regular favorite, and now has a permanent spot on the menu.

While the partnerships the Evergreen has made across the student body have been particularly rewarding, we wanted to push the idea of community to the surrounding areas, as well. As part of the student manager internship at the Evergreen Café, Hope Davis and I met with Crystal Weaver, CEO and co-founder of the Commons Company. This company began as a stall in the Lancaster Central Market, and later evolved into the Prince Street Café, when Crystal and her business partners purchased a building on Prince Street. Building on the foundation laid by Prince Street Café, the Commons Company was born; a parent company that oversees and manages several eateries and cafés, in addition to providing consulting services to other start up operations (Weaver et al., 2024).

The Commons Company prides itself on its quality, sustainability, and ethical sourcing (Weaver et al., 2024), all qualities that the Evergreen Café wanted to emulate. Because of this, the Commons Company was added to Millersville University's list of approved vendors for dining services. At the end of the Spring 2024 semester, the Evergreen café will begin to offer limited selections of the Passenger Coffee brand- hopefully setting the standard for future partnerships.

Hope Davis and I also presented to Millersville's Council of Trustees and the Business Association, and the questions that followed these presentations were frequently central to the theme of "what are the plans for the Evergreen's future?" While ultimately the vision of the Evergreen Café is to really emphasize its values of sustainability and community, there is still a lot of work to be done in order to build a basis for the desired growth.

Community Benefits Provided by the Marauder Fund

When studying the benefits that the Evergreen Café provides to the community, the primary scope is that of the campus community. With the Marauder Fund, the primary benefit is focussed more on the community outside of Millersville. Most of the money generated by the Marauder Fund goes towards student scholarships (Geli, 2017). While that provides a direct benefit to the students, this philanthropic act also provides a direct benefit to the community, as it enables those who may not have had the monetary funds to attend college initially to have the opportunity to do so. Additionally, all of the students who took part in this organization are now able to graduate with the knowledge and skills that they gained from the hands-on application of their education- something that is highly valuable to employers. This influx of educated, specialized, financially literate college graduates who are ready to enter the workforce are no doubt a benefit to the local economy, and as such contribute to the community in this aspect, as well. Therefore, the Marauder Fund not only fosters financial literacy and responsible investing practices among its members but also contributes to the betterment of their communities as a whole.

To summarize, the benefits that student-run organizations provide to the students are truly invaluable. Not only do these organizations give students the opportunity to further their careers

with the skills, knowledge, and experience gained from these ventures, they also create connections with faculty and community contacts that truly open up doors post-graduation.

Benefits to the University

Although providing benefits to its students is the ultimate goal of a university, the financial benefits that clubs and student-run organizations can provide is another incentive for universities to invest in them- in both financial resources and prioritization. Once again, we will analyze examples from both outside of Millersville University and within it to emphasize this point.

Marketability

Potential Students

On-campus job and internship opportunities play a crucial role in enhancing the appeal of a university to potential applicants by offering them tangible benefits and unique experiences. These opportunities provide students with valuable avenues to gain practical skills, professional development, and hands-on experience within a familiar and supportive environment. The presence of on-campus employment options significantly influences students' perceptions of a university, as it signals a commitment to student success and development (Millard, 2020, 38). Additionally, on-campus jobs and internships often offer flexible scheduling, allowing students to balance their academic and work commitments effectively (Millard, 2020, 38). The opportunity to engage in meaningful work experiences while pursuing their education can attract prospective applicants who seek a well-rounded college experience that integrates academics with real-world applications and career preparation- something that we have established in previous sections of this thesis.

Furthermore, the sense of belonging and connection to the university community, as mentioned previously, can positively influence students' decision-making process when selecting a college or university (Strayhorn, 2019, 5). If a student sees that Millersville University has a place for them to flourish not only academically, but socially, professionally, and perhaps monetarily, it seems natural that they would be incentivised to apply. Overall, the availability of on-campus job and internship opportunities enhances the overall appeal of a university by offering prospective applicants the chance to enrich their academic journey, develop essential skills, and lay the groundwork for future career success within a supportive and dynamic campus environment. This, in turn, represents a benefit to the university, as attracting prospective students is fundamental in the growth of a University.

Donors and Alumni

On-campus job and internship opportunities serve as vital components in making universities appealing to donors and alumni by showcasing tangible ways in which the institution fosters professional development and real-world experience. These opportunities not only provide students with valuable skills and experiences but also strengthen connections between the university and the broader community. Donors and alumni are often keen to support initiatives that directly contribute to students' success and employability, knowing that their contributions are directly impacting the next generation of professionals. Additionally, by supporting these programs, donors and alumni can see the immediate impact of their contributions on the lives and careers of students, fostering a sense of pride and loyalty towards their alma mater. Thus, on-campus job and internship opportunities serve as compelling narratives for fundraising efforts, demonstrating the university's commitment to preparing students for the future and garnering support from its community of supporters.

Financial

In some cases, these student-run organizations can provide financial benefits to the university in addition to the social components and benefits to the students. Through a general scope, firstly, such organizations often host events, fundraisers, and activities that not only enrich the campus experience but also generate revenue through ticket sales, sponsorships, and donations. These events can attract participants from both within and outside the university community, thereby boosting not only financial gains but also the university's visibility and reputation. Additionally, student-run businesses or ventures, if successful, can contribute to the university's income stream through profits or royalties- this is the main focus of this section, with a focus on the Evergreen Café and the Marauder Fund. As mentioned, by providing opportunities for students to develop entrepreneurial skills and gain practical experience, these organizations contribute to the overall value proposition of the university, potentially attracting more students in the long run.

Financial Benefits Provided by the Evergreen Café

When it comes to the Evergreen Café, the financial component was primarily considered when it was first established. The projections for the student café initially estimated the revenue for the first operating school year (2021 to 2022) to be 400,000 dollars, with total costs being 358,400 dollars- meaning that the projected profits from the first operating school year came to be 41,600 dollars, or about ten percent of the revenue generated (Table Four, 39). The projections for the following 2022-2023 school year estimated the revenue to be 459,100 dollars, and the costs being 413,337 dollars, leaving the net profit to be 45,763 dollars, or about ten percent of the revenue once again. These projections were developed by the Finance Department of Millersville University, in an attempt to capture an accurate picture of the student café's finances.

However, the reality of the organization appeared to differ from this, primarily when it comes to costs, growth, and the percentages of each item as relative to revenues.

During the actual 2021-2022 school year, the Evergreen Café operated at a loss of roughly 26,000 dollars- this was partially attributed to the fact that for the first semester of operation, the café was not able to accept meal swipes; the combination of all meal plan items (meal swipes, Marauder Flex, and Marauder Gold) only attributed to 13% of revenue for that year, while the following semester, that percentage jumped to 48%, bringing the total percentage of all meal swipe revenue relative to total revenue to 61% (Table One, 38). The following 2022-2023 school year, the aggregated percentage of all meal plan options jumped to 93% (Table Two, 38) and the following semester (the Fall semester of 2023) the percentage of all meal plan options rose again to 97% (Table Three, 39). As the percentage of meal swipe options relative to revenue increased, so did total profits; the 2022-2023 school year had a profit of 255,171 dollars (Table Two, 38), and the 2023 Fall semester had a profit of 218,782 dollars (Table Three, 39).

The level of growth that the Evergreen Café has experienced roughly over the past two and a half years was unexpected by all- an unheard of 1093.58% from the first year of operation to the second. Additionally, the one most recent semester that we have complete data for is about 86% of the previous year, despite being only half of the time. So what does this mean for Millersville Dining Services (an independent organization) as a whole? There were concerns of the Evergreen Café cannibalizing the other dining locations on Millersville's campus, but after meeting with the Business Association of Millersville on March 21st, 2024, we were assured that was not an issue. The Evergreen Café is a strong organization of its own accord, and the numbers at the other dining locations has remained consistent. This growth and level of profit is a surprising and exciting opportunity for Millersville, if the Evergreen Café is able to obtain this

much success in its opening years, what may the future hold? That remains to be seen, however, the outlook is optimistic.

Financial Benefits Provided by the Marauder Fund

When it comes to the Marauder Fund, the finances generated are either reinvested back into the fund (about 25% of the profits), or they are used for student scholarships (about 75% of the profits)- and while this doesn't necessarily fund the university directly, it does still provide a financial benefit (Geli, 2017). Students that would have been unable to receive a scholarship otherwise now have the funding to do so, and students who may not have been able to attend college because of the financial limitations may choose to enroll at Millersville University because of this option. This allows the University to appeal to a larger range of students, and contribute to the Millersville University Foundation- the nonprofit (and tax exempt) portion of the university that manages investments and gifts.

While the primary benefit in the Marauder Fund lies with educating the students, this is not a closed system- everything is connected to one another. When the students are benefitted, the University is benefitted. Additionally, the club enhances the university's reputation by showcasing the talents and achievements of its members in the financial realm. Overall, the Marauder Fund serves as a nexus of academic learning, practical application, and community engagement, contributing significantly to both the development of students and the university as a whole.

Conclusion

This thesis has exemplified the advantages that student-run organizations bring to universities. The autonomy, experience, and connections that they bring to the students has a ripple effect, subsequently affecting the university and the community as a whole. What Millersville has established thus far in the form of the Evergreen Café and the Marauder fund are a wonderful start, but is it possible that we could be doing more? If Millersville truly wants to represent student-run organizations as student-run, then it is not only advised but necessary to listen to the voices of the students that make up these organizations.

For example, at the Evergreen Café, the day-to-day processes are completely managed by the students. Events, creative direction, and other small decisions are undertaken by the students. However, for big decisions such as furniture, reinvestment of profits, and investment in technology, approval is required from administration, regardless of how profitable the Evergreen Café has been, or how involved or informed administration is on operations.

As a specific example, the point of sale system at the café is able to accept cash, Marauder Gold, Marauder Flex, and meal swipes. On these meal swipes, students are able to receive a variety of options- bagels, breakfast sandwiches, mac and cheese, etc.. However, when swiped for a meal swipe, the point of sale system only records a meal swipe, not what was on the purchase- making it incredibly difficult to track what the café is using, and develop a functional inventory system. This is an issue that had been brought up to dining services administration on multiple occasions from the inception of the organization, but was only taken seriously and brought to the university's technology developers when the Dean of the Department of Business was involved.

The fundamental point is this- student-run organizations are by the students, and for the students, and university investment in them does not necessarily have to be in a monetary form. Simply by treating these organizations like the vital asset they are, prioritizing them, and investing into them like one would any other significant relationship is cyclical, reflecting positively back onto the university, the community, and the students that make both of these things up.

In conclusion, this thesis has explored the multifaceted benefits of university investment in student-run organizations through a comprehensive case study approach. Through examining various dimensions, such as financial gains to the university, student development and engagement, and community enrichment, it becomes evident that such investments yield significant returns for the institution and the students alike. Not only do student-run organizations generate revenue and enhance the university's reputation, but they also provide invaluable experiential learning opportunities for students, fostering entrepreneurship, leadership, and innovation. Moreover, by cultivating a vibrant campus community and forging stronger ties with external stakeholders, these organizations contribute to the overall growth and sustainability of the university. Thus, the findings of this thesis underscore the importance of continued support and investment in student-run organizations as integral components of the higher education landscape, promising long-term benefits for both students and institutions alike.

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Appendices

Interview with Hope Davis: March 15, 2024.

Q: Tell me a little bit about yourself.

A: My name is Hope Davis, my major is business administration with focus in management. I was the student manager of the Evergreen Café in the Fall semester of 2023, and I am expected to graduate in the winter of 2024.

Q: How do you feel like this internship contributed to your education and experience at Millersville?

A: I think that it was a very immersive and hands-on way to learn, and I think as much as we learn technical skills in the classroom, there's really no way to know if we retained it; so we need to put it into practice. This was my period to really test myself I think and challenge myself and put my knowledge to the test. It's also contributed to my education and experience at Millersville because I got recommended for the Cignus Society through that position and I think that'll be really helpful following graduation, because that'll be something that I'll be able to put on my résumé. I think that learning how to manage people with different personalities and learning styles has also prepared me for the real world because that's the world! Everyone is different and you have to be able to adapt to your environment- whatever culture you're in and whoever's around you, that aspect was really helpful as well.

Q: Tell me about the relationships that you formed because of this internship.

A: In terms of being able to make connections with people, I guess making connections with people who can help further my education and people who can help further my career as well have been so helpful. Presenting for the Council of Trustees was a great networking opportunity, presenting for Chancellor Dan Greenstein was also immensely helpful in that area, but also just the communal connections I got to make through my events and initiatives were incredibly beneficial. For example, I got to form a relationship with the Hub¹. They still contact me, and I'm not necessarily interested because it's not something I'd want to be a part of personally, but it's always great that I still have that connection. Additionally, partnerships with WIXQ² and Marauder Music³ can always help me sometime in my future and also just be a connection in general. I guess in the realm of interpersonal relationships, I got to connect with the baristas that have served me up until that year of college in which I started working, so is it just saying something to actually be behind the counter, and be able to create relationships with the baristas that I knew from behind the counter, but didn't really *know*.

Q: What do you want to do following graduation? How do you think that you have been prepared by this internship?

A: That's the craziest question you could've ever asked. Following graduation I am not one hundred percent sure about what I'm doing- I thought about a lot of things. I've thought about moving to Nashville to get into music management or artist management, I've thought about staying local and maybe working at a theater and getting into artist management that way, I've thought about just getting on a cruise and not necessarily doing something that pertains to my

¹ The Hub is a religiously affiliated organization on campus that operates a food bank for students in need.

² The Millersville campus radio show.

³ A student-run club at Millersville that deals with audio- this organization did all of our live audio for our events over the 2023 semesters.

major at all, but something that's fun and something that is different and that could maybe propel me in a different direction so there's a lot of possibilities And I think that my internship at Evergreen prepared me for practically any sort of management position that I might ever get. I think that everything I've learned in my classes- other than maybe like the accounting side and the mathematics side- I definitely have had to apply that knowledge and I think that those classes are built to propel me into what I'm gonna do after college.

Table One- “Ville Perk” Information from the 2021-2022 School Year

Sum of Actuals Reversed			Mon # Mon												Grand Total	% of Revenue
Subtotal	GL Pos	GL Category	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN				
A - Revenue		1 Fall Meal Plans/Flex					8,049							8,049	13%	
		2 Spring Meal Plans/Flex					4,070	8,733	5,794	7,361	3,022			28,980	48%	
		3 Other Food Revenue			5,020	2,475	1,428	3,181	4,016	5,108	1,685	421		23,333	38%	
		6 Interdepartmental Revenue							500					500	1%	
A - Revenue Total					5,020	2,475	13,547	11,914	10,310	12,469	4,707	421		60,862	100%	
B - Personnel		11 Student Wages		-10,000	-4,976	-5,657	-4,880	-11,119	-8,360	-10,558	-5,517			-61,067	-100%	
		12 Benefits		-383								-23		-405	-1%	
B - Personnel Total				-10,383	-4,976	-5,657	-4,880	-11,119	-8,360	-10,558	-5,517	-23		-61,472	-101%	
C - Operating/Capital		13 Food Supplies		-1,800	-1,202	-2,820	-659	-2,111	-1,195	-281	-76	-370		-10,513	-17%	
		14 Other Supplies	-475	-2,004	-242	-577	-61	1,486				-197		-2,070	-3%	
		15 Services		-4,980	-950	-310	-161	-177	-250	-251	-281	-117		-7,478	-12%	
		16 Other Expenses			-2,011									-2,011	-3%	
		17 Computer Related Expenses			-49	-49	-49	-49	-49	-49	-49	-49		-392	-1%	
		18 Utilities			-280	-167	-265	-721				-682	-493	-2,608	-4%	
C - Operating/Capital Total			-475	-8,784	-4,735	-3,346	-1,710	-2,398	-729	-582	-1,087	-1,226		-25,072	-41%	
Grand Total			-475	-19,167	-4,691	-6,528	6,957	-1,603	1,220	1,329	-1,897	-828		-25,682	-42%	

This table details the financial information from the student-run café when it was first called the “Ville Perk.” The information was obtained from the Millersville Department of Finance.

Table Two- Evergreen Café Information from the 2022-2023 School Year

Sum of Actuals Reversed														Grand Total	% of Revenue	
Subtotal	GL Pos	GL Category	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY			JUN
Revenue		1 Fall Meal Plans/Flex		8,621	51,589	44,558	44,633	23,344							172,746	41%
		2 Spring Meal Plans/Flex							26,422	61,055	43,452	78,878	7,773		217,581	52%
		3 Other Food Revenue		615	5,486	3,747	3,933	1,579	1,246	3,270	2,721	3,475	1,293		27,366	7%
		6 Interdepartmental Revenue					55			107	750		77		990	0%
Revenue Total				9,236	57,076	48,305	48,621	24,923	27,668	64,433	46,923	82,354	9,144		418,682	100%
Personnel		11 Student Wages	-54	-1,756	-13,003	-9,636	-10,665	-7,198	-4,559	-10,418	-8,197	-10,040	-5,954		-81,479	-19%
		12 Benefits	-4	-115		-178	-116	-214	-55			-289	-127	605	-491	0%
Personnel Total			-58	-1,871	-13,003	-9,814	-10,780	-7,412	-4,614	-10,418	-8,197	-10,329	-6,081	605	-81,970	-20%
Operating/Capital		13 Food Supplies		-8,400	-6,158	-8,054	-4,882	-3,645	-799	-17,250	-4,747	-6,923	-5,928	-265	-67,053	-16%
		14 Other Supplies		-424	-787	-30			-419	-1,481	-660	-167	-2,926	-	-6,895	-2%
		15 Services	-70	-152	-195	-271	-750	-256	-130	-41	-390	-197		-550	-3,002	-1%
		17 Computer Related Expenses					-190							190		0%
		18 Utilities	-252		-342	-371	-725	-412	-501	-444	-444	-405	-311	-382	-4,591	-1%
		22 Capital					-14,421				28,842		-14,421			0%
Operating/Capital Total			-322	-8,977	-7,483	-8,726	-20,969	-4,313	-1,850	-19,217	22,602	-7,693	-23,586	-1,007	-81,541	-19%
Grand Total			-381	-1,612	36,590	29,765	16,873	13,198	21,204	34,798	61,328	64,332	-20,523	-402	255,171	61%

This table details the financial information from the Evergreen Café from the 2022-2023 school year, from the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester to the end of the Spring 2023 semester. This information was obtained from the Millersville University Department of Finance.

Table Three- Evergreen Café Information from the 2024 Fall Semester

Sum of Actuals Reversed										
		1	2	3	4	5				
Subtotal	GL Pos	GL Category	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Grand Total	% of Revenue
Revenue		1 Fall Meal Plans/Flex		22,327	89,149	131,006	84,806	18,164	345,452	97%
		3 Other Food Revenue		1,331	2,944	2,616	2,291	584	9,766	3%
		6 Interdepartmental Revenue			293	170		0	463	0%
Revenue Total				23,658	92,387	133,791	87,097	18,748	355,681	100%
Personnel		11 Student Wages		-4,538	-13,130	-13,252	-14,934	-8,783	-54,637	-15%
		12 Benefits		-347					-347	0%
Personnel Total				-4,885	-13,130	-13,252	-14,934	-8,783	-54,984	-15%
Operating/Capital		13 Food Supplies		-5,387	-21,453	-16,757	-19,358	-15,432	-78,387	-22%
		14 Other Supplies		-440	-116	-90	-227	-536	-1409	0%
		15 Services	-71	-71	-169	-213	-283	-167	-903	0%
		18 Utilities			-511	-383	-321		-1215	0%
Operating/Capital Total			-71	-5,898	-22,248	-17,443	-20,189	-16,135	-81,913	-23%
Grand Total			-71	12,874	57,008	103,096	51,974	-6,170	218,782	62%

This table details the financial information of the Evergreen Café in the fall semester of the 2023 school year. This information was obtained from the Millersville University Department of Finance.

Table Four- Original Student Café Projections

		FY21-22	% of Revenue	FY22-23	% of Revenue
<u>Revenues</u>					
	Flex Dollars	300,000		334,100	
	Other revenue	100,000		125,000	
Total Revenues		400,000	100%	459,100	100.00%
<u>Expenses</u>					
	Cost of Goods Sold / Food	128,000	32%	146,912	32%
	Café Labor	118,000	30%	136,500	30%
	Cafe Operating Expenses	112,400	28%	129,925	28%
Total Expenses		358,400	90%	413,337	90%
Projected Net Income		41,600	10%	45,763	10%

This table details the original projections by the Millersville Finance Department for the student-run Café. Their original projections included estimated costs and revenues, as well as percentages of each line item relative to the revenues of each school year.

Nicolas Lopez Interview About the Marauder Fund- Conducted April 8th, 2024.

Q- Tell me a bit about yourself:

A- My name is Nicolas Alejandro Lopez Erazo. I was born in Ecuador and moved to the United States back in 2018, and I did my senior year at Lampeter Strasburg. After high school, I applied and was accepted to Millersville University where in the beginning, I was pursuing a business administration major with a concentration in finance. While I was in school and learning new skills, I decided to change paths, and instead double majored in finance and accounting. During college, I completed a few different internships, the last of which hired me as a 401k plan coordinator.

Q- Tell me a little bit about the marauder fund.

A- The marauder fund is a student-run organization that is part of the university where the students take control of money donated to Millersville, with the objective of increasing the money invested into different sectors to generate funds later used to create scholarship opportunities for students. Currently the marauder fund is divided into the financial and real estate sector, the healthcare sector, the industrial sector, the technology sector, and the consumer sector. Each sector has a vice president, kind of a leader, and each sector also has a junior and senior analyst. Any gains generated were reinvested into the fund or used as funding for scholarships. We preferred to invest in big stocks, and we were discouraged from investing in

risky stocks. As a whole, the marauder fund is distributed equally, that is, each sector receives the same monetary value.

Q- Tell me about the student CEO, Student CFO, and vice presidents of the sectors. What were their roles?

A- The student CEO is responsible for running the meetings (giving an economic overview of the market, points of interest), and presenting the pitches approved (votes on whether or not it is approved) by the Marauder fund to the financial board of Millersville. This person is pretty much responsible for the Marauder Fund for the semester that they are in this position. The student CFO takes more of an administrative type of role (taking the minutes for the meetings, capturing who was present, who is voting, etc.), and also gives an overview perspective of the Marauder Fund portfolio. The vice presidents are in charge of a specific sector, they are responsible for looking at the sector's portfolio and organizing what changes should be made to it. This is dependent on the junior and senior analysts for research. The vice president assigns specific duties to each of these analysts, and then members of the sector vote on which stocks we will pitch to the whole of the fund, and then we as a group vote on which stocks are presented to the Financial Committee.

Q- Tell me a bit about the opportunities that this organization afforded to you.

A- This organization gave me the opportunity to learn about stock analysis, and essential tools in the current financial world (primarily y-charts, an essential analysis tool, which I currently use at my job). I was a senior analyst in the Marauder Fund in the real estate and finance sector, which was a step below the vice president of that sector. I was in charge of a specific holding in our

sector, Visa, which I reported on every week. Additionally, every semester, each sector has to complete a buy/sell pitch, which I aided in by collecting information about the stock and helping to create the pitch. I also have to speak in front of people and present frequently at my current job, which is something that I didn't really do very often before I joined the Marauder Fund. Also, I practiced my people skills, which everyone must develop at some point in their professional career. Also, this experience made me far more attractive to employers, so it was a great thing to have on my resume. It was often a primary talking point when I would go to interviews.

Q- Do you wish that you had done anything differently? What opportunities, if any, do you wish you had been afforded as part of the Marauder Fund?

A- If I was to do anything differently, I wish I would have been able to learn more about stock analysis and the bloomberg terminal. What we were taught was a good foundation, but now in my career, I realize that it would have been helpful to know how to analyze stocks using different approaches and technologies. I also think it would have been helpful to hear from a variety of professionals- the speakers that we had were good, but they all fundamentally had the same thing to say- this is how I got started in my career, and these are the things that helped me to succeed. I would have found it helpful to hear from more professionals that could potentially talk us through their daily work, specifically a step-by-step in stock analysis with examples. It is one thing to hear about the theory behind these things, but it is another to actually walk through real examples, considering that is what the primary function of the Marauder Fund is.