

**2024-25**

# Annual Impact Report



WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY  
**FOUNDATION**  
*— Student Success Is Our Mission —*







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# The Best is Yet to Come



West Chester University and East Whiteland Township held a formal signing ceremony to celebrate their historic partnership in preserving a 52-acre farm that was gifted by an anonymous donor. Pictured (L to R) are West Chester University President Laurie Bernotsky, Executive Director of the West Chester University Foundation Deb Cornelius, East Whiteland Township Manager Steve Brown (signing), and Chairman of the East Whiteland Township Board of Supervisors Scott Lambert.

## *Dear Donors and Friends,*

At the West Chester University Foundation, we stepped into a new fiscal year energized by the strength of our shared accomplishments and the promise of what lies ahead.

Looking back on the 2024–25 fiscal year, we are proud to recognize another period of remarkable progress—including securing the largest philanthropic gift in the University's history, an astounding \$4.7 million! This milestone, just one of the many gifts that helped raise more than \$13 million this year, is a remarkable testament to the power of our institution's mission and momentum, one that positions us to champion even greater opportunities for our students.

Now, amid the 2025–26 academic year, our focus is clear: to continue building a future where every student thrives. With your generous support, we are fostering a University community that empowers academic excellence, equity, and innovation. Together, we are shaping a student experience that reaches beyond the classroom—one enriched by hands-on, real-world learning that prepares Golden Rams to lead in an ever-evolving world.

Your investment makes this possible. It supports vital scholarships, strengthens our commitment to access and affordability, and enhances the spaces and programs that define a West Chester University education. Most importantly, it fuels a culture of experiential learning—ensuring that students engage deeply with their studies while gaining the knowledge, skills, and confidence to succeed beyond graduation.

As we look ahead, we are inspired by the collective impact of this community. There is so much to celebrate, and so much more to achieve. Thank you for continuing to walk alongside us—as donors, friends, and partners in purpose—fueling a bold and bright future for West Chester University.

With gratitude,

*R. Lorraine Bernotsky*

**R. Lorraine Bernotsky, DPhil**  
President, West Chester University

*Deb Cornelius*

**Deb Cornelius '91, CFRE**  
Executive Director, WCU Foundation

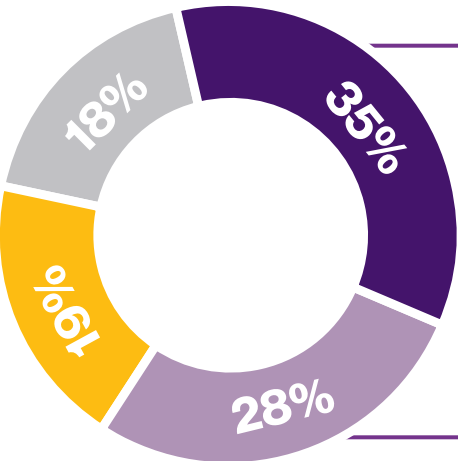


Your Impact

# By The Numbers

Discover the difference you made in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

**\$13,038,324** total cash, gifts-in-kind & future commitments



**\$5,893,388** cash & gifts-in-kind

CORPORATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS	\$2,061,742
ALUMNI	\$1,645,992
FOUNDATIONS	\$1,113,087
FRIENDS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS	\$1,072,567

**\$6,150,000**  
planned gifts

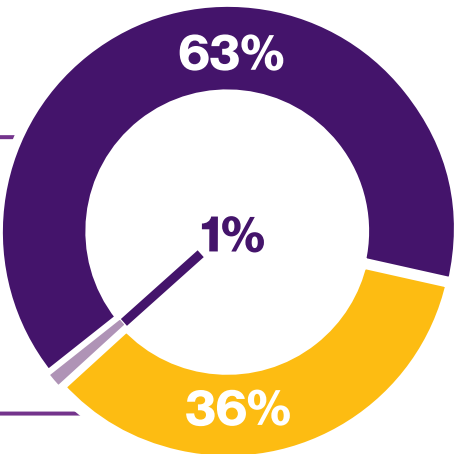
**4,933**  
donors

**\$994,936**  
commitments

**9,164**  
gifts

Allocation of Gifts

CURRENT USE	\$3,721,715
ENDOWMENT	\$2,130,407
CAPITAL PROJECTS	\$ 41,266



## Day of Giving Download

In March, hundreds of alumni, students, families, current and retired faculty and staff, corporations and organizations, and friends of West Chester University participated in the fifth annual Day of Giving—a twenty-four-hour collective effort to support our shared mission of student success.

**\$344,413**  
raised

**2,158**  
gifts

**128**  
funds supported

**1,851**  
individual unique donors

**637**  
first-time donors

Your continued support helps our students make the most of their experience at West Chester University. Visit [WCUFoundation.org/Donate](https://WCUFoundation.org/Donate)



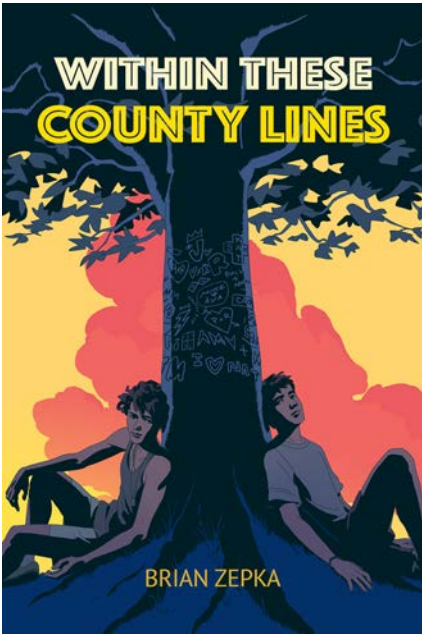
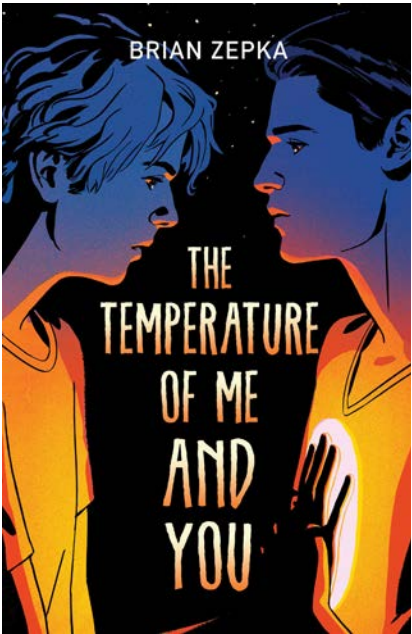


# Where Success Takes Root

*From pre-med student to published author and public health advocate, one alumnus credits his WCU experience as the foundation for a life of purpose.*

This spring, Brian Zepka '13 will graduate with his doctoral degree in Public and Environmental Health, adding “doctor” to his growing list of credentials: environmental scientist, public health advocate, and published young adult author. Each of these accomplishments stems from one transformational experience, according to Zepka: four years as a West Chester University student.

“I think of my time at WCU as the starting point of my professional life,” says Zepka. “It was a foundational experience—a time of discovery and maturation, when I found confidence in myself, and the starting point for both my writing and public health career.”



**Every Gift Counts**

Gifts of \$250 or less from 1,658 donors helped us hit our goals last year.

Zepka entered the University on a pre-medicine track but discovered his passion for the public health side of disease prevention through his coursework, quickly realizing his interests fell less in clinical medicine and more in areas like environmental science and epidemiology. Along the way, he discovered an unexpected talent.

“As a student, my coursework was intense, so I started writing for fun,” says Zepka, whose fiction works focus on LGBTQ themes, coming-of-age stories, and sci-fi, among other topics.

At WCU, Zepka learned by doing, immersing himself in experiential learning opportunities like shadowing healthcare professionals and volunteering at Chester County Hospital as an emergency room technician. His coursework also took him beyond the classroom to places like Natural Lands’ Stroud Preserve, where he and classmates studied grasslands, farmlands, and woodlands.

“Experiences like these validated my desire to pursue a path that was less clinical and more community focused,” recalls Zepka, who went on to work for organizations like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Resources Institute.

“The courses I took, the people I met—it all opened my eyes to new opportunities and perspectives,” he says. “It showed me, firsthand, what kind of impact your work can have on the world.”

**Reconnect with your alma mater. Visit [WCUAlumni.org/Volunteer](https://WCUAlumni.org/Volunteer)**





# A Daughter's Dream, A Family's Mission

*Inspired by their child's educational journey, the Dash family is paying it forward, breaking down barriers for future teachers.*

When Deborah and Rob Dash's daughter, Samantha Dash '22, headed off to West Chester University to pursue a degree in education, she was following in the footsteps of both parents: her father, a West Chester alumnus, and her mother, a lifelong educator.

For the Dashes, seeing Samantha thrive at WCU presented a unique opportunity to ensure even more aspiring educators could follow the same path.

"Seeing our daughter's educational journey and the steps she progressed in following her passion to become a teacher helped solidify what we wanted to do in helping others—a new generation of youth coming through," says Rob.

Inspired by the vision of Dean Desha Williams, the Dashes jumped at the chance to support the PRIZE Program, an initiative designed to address the national teacher pipeline shortage. The program, a partnership between WCU and participating regional school districts, cultivates exceptional educators who, following their graduation from WCU, agree to return to PRIZE school districts to teach.

"I believe all students deserve a chance for an education," says Deborah. "So often the quality of education is tied to the wealth—or lack of wealth—in a community. If we can put more quality educators into low-income districts, the opportunities for impact are boundless."

For the Dashes, the mission of the PRIZE Program directly aligns with philanthropic priorities that have long been close to their hearts.

"All of our charitable endeavors focus on children, because children don't choose where they originate from, but every child should have the opportunity to better themselves, provided they put the effort in," says Rob.

"Choosing West Chester University as a beneficiary allows us, through this program, to achieve our goals: allowing those who may not otherwise be able to achieve their dreams to have that opportunity."

## Teaching is a rewarding profession

The PRIZE (Partnering in Raising Inclusive Zealous Educators) Program is designed to help high school students become teachers by offering sustained mentoring, college credits, and guaranteed admission into WCU with a 3.0 GPA or better.

**Learn more at**  
[www.wcupa.edu/education-socialwork/prize](http://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialwork/prize)

## Cycle of Success

**Alumni, friends, corporations, and foundations gave more than \$6.8 million in gifts and future commitments last year.**



# Preserving Beauty, Cultivating Knowledge

*A historic land partnership protects one of the region's most breathtaking greenways while generating millions for student opportunities.*

It all began with one donor's vision: preserve her beloved 52-acre Chester County farm property, Ridley Springs, while investing in West Chester University's future. Championed by former WCU Foundation Board Chair John Baker '74, that vision became an innovative two-year partnership involving the Foundation; West Chester University; East Whiteland Township; and state, county, and local funding partners.

Following the donation of the farm to the Foundation, the Township purchased the \$4.7 million property for preservation as protected open space, directing proceeds as discretionary funding to the University. This flexible funding stream—available at the University's discretion—will support student success initiatives including scholarships and experiential learning.

"This partnership represents the best of philanthropic vision coming to life," says Deb Cornelius '91, Executive Director of the WCU Foundation. "Our donor wanted to preserve her farm while supporting our students, and through creative collaboration, we've honored both wishes while generating transformational, unrestricted funding."

The outcome is a true win-win-win: a donor's vision honored, the University strengthened with significant funding, and the community enriched with preserved open space. Even better, the land itself will remain a vibrant part of WCU's story. Students—especially those in geographic information systems, health, sustainability, art and design, and the sciences—will use the property as a living laboratory, applying what they learn in class to hands-on projects that benefit both the campus and the wider community.

"This partnership gives West Chester University an extraordinary resource that will expand opportunities for experiential learning and applied research," says Evan Leach, PhD, Dean of the College of Business and Public Management. "Students apply classroom knowledge to real-world projects, developing skills and confidence for professional success."

"Our commitment to sustain this land is part of who we are as good stewards," adds President Laurie Bernotsky. "This beautifully demonstrates how the University contributes to environmental sustainability while integrating students in everything we do."



*WCU Geology students conduct soil analysis.*

## Invested in the Future

**Donors have built an endowment that now exceeds \$74 million in support of their passions at WCU.**

Visit [WCUFoundation.org](https://www.wcu.edu/foundation) to learn how you can help build a better WCU.



# From Service to Scholarship

*Patricia “Pat” M. Inglesby ’76 has lived through some of history’s greatest health challenges, experiences that now fuel her mission to support tomorrow’s healthcare heroes.*

To say that Pat Inglesby’s nursing career has placed her at the frontlines of an evolving healthcare landscape would be an understatement.

After graduating with her bachelor’s degree in Nursing from West Chester University, one of Inglesby’s first positions placed her in an intensive care unit, where she encountered both patients suffering from AIDS—a disease that would change the course of humanity—as well as Legionnaires’ disease following the deadly Philadelphia-based outbreak in the late 1970s. Decades later, in her 60s, found herself yet again in the trenches of another unfamiliar virus, nursing amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and eventually traveling on a medical mission to Warsaw, Poland, to aid Ukrainian refugees at age 70.

“I’m an average person who found themselves in extraordinary circumstances,” Inglesby recalls. “If I hadn’t gone to West Chester University and didn’t have those basic principles on which to build, I don’t know how successful I could have been.”

Inspired by her mother, who received her nursing diploma from Frankford Nursing School in Philadelphia—and would later earn her bachelor’s degree from WCU in 1972—Inglesby’s career transported her to a variety of healthcare settings, from the ICU to ophthalmology to managing a vascular lab, a move that would springboard her into clinical research at Wyeth, which later became Pfizer.



“When you love what you do, you don’t work a day in your life, and that’s me—I loved what I did,” Inglesby recalls fondly. “I don’t think I would have had any of these opportunities had I not had a great education to build from.”

In recognition of this experience, and as a way to honor both of her parents and the value they placed on education, in 2015, Inglesby established the Mr. and Mrs. Edward and Mary Macko Endowment to provide scholarships to a new generation of aspiring nurses.

“It’s a privilege to get an education, but education is a lot of work, and it’s more expensive now than ever,” she says. “Students should have time to study, to replenish. My hope is that these funds will help more students do just that.”

**Greater Opportunity**

**Over \$1.5 million in scholarship funds was raised last year.**

See for yourself how much your gift can accomplish. Get started at [WCUFoundation.org/Direct-Your-Gift](https://WCUFoundation.org/Direct-Your-Gift)





# A Lifelong Melody

*Through an estate gift to the Wells School of Music, Robert “Bob” Rhoades ’64 is ensuring future generations can discover the transformative power of music education.*

Bob Rhoades’ childhood took him across the country—from the city streets of New Orleans to the quiet countryside of Lansdale, Pennsylvania. But one constant remained, regardless of where he called home: his love of music.

At just nine years old, Rhoades learned to play clarinet in New Orleans, widely considered the birthplace of jazz. When his family relocated to Pennsylvania, he continued honing his musical talents in high school under the guidance of his music teacher, a West Chester University alumnus who inspired Rhoades to follow the same path.

“Music teaches you how to perform, but more importantly, it teaches you how to achieve something,” recalls Rhoades, who went on to enjoy a 32-year career as a music educator.

“Music reinforces the notion that we all have to learn to practice,” he adds. “That lesson of practice and dedication, one that grew while I was attending West Chester University, I’ve used every day of my life—it’s certainly paid off.”

Now, through an estate gift benefiting the Wells School of Music, Rhoades is helping create new opportunities for future musicians and music educators to pair their passion for music with their desire to bring positive change to the world, just as he did.

His gift—supporting faculty needs, student scholarships, and immersive student experiences—is more than a tribute to his own musical journey. It’s also a way to honor his late wives, both of whom played instruments.

“We need educated people in all areas,” Rhoades says. “Since I don’t have a family any longer, I thought the best thing to do with my estate was give it to a place I knew something about, a place that would do something worthwhile with it—and I have no doubt that will happen here at WCU.”

**Plan your own legacy today. Get started at [WCUFoundation.org/PlannedGifts](https://WCUFoundation.org/PlannedGifts)**

## Leave your legacy.

Make a profound impact on future students by documenting a planned gift to West Chester University. Planned giving is an effective and meaningful way to give back to the University and can help you achieve your own charitable and financial goals. With flexible giving options, our team is honored to help and your family leave a legacy at WCU.

**We welcome the newest members of the George Morris Philips Society and thank them for their support of West Chester University.**

The George Morris Philips Society has more than 430 members who’ve included the Foundation in their estate plans. A special welcome to this year’s new members who are touching the lives of others while creating a legacy at WCU (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025):

Judy & Howard J. Buss ’72  
Janet R. Cox ’75 & Ken Seegren  
Deborah J. Liney ’81  
Robert V. Rhoades ’64



# Driving Success Forward

*Enterprise Mobility's decades-long partnership continues to launch West Chester University graduates into leadership roles.*

For seven years, Brittany Anuszewski has watched West Chester University students transform from eager interns to motivated managers to ambitious executives at Enterprise Mobility. In her role as Talent Acquisition Manager, she can personally vouch for the company's longstanding partnership with the University—one that continues to benefit both organizations.

"We have such a strong West Chester University alumni presence in our workforce who are excelling in their positions, all the way up the organization," she says. "The skills and knowledge they bring from WCU, paired with the training and development we offer at Enterprise—it's a winning combination."

Over the past three decades, Enterprise has contributed nearly \$100,000 in support of West Chester University students' professional development. From funding free LinkedIn headshots at the Twardowski Career Development Center Job and Internship Fairs to supporting immersive experiences like the College of Business and Public Management Case Competition and Marketing Sales Competition, these investments are preparing tomorrow's business leaders for life after graduation.

The results speak for themselves. Last year alone, Anuszewski hired an estimated 32 WCU students, with 17 recruited directly on campus—a testament to their preparation and drive.

"These students aren't just our future workforce, they're our future leaders," says Anuszewski. "As corporate partners, we can invest in them by developing their skills and guiding them towards rewarding careers."

"They can be the leaders we know they're capable of being—that's why it's crucial for organizations to invest in that ambition at places like West Chester University."

## Join the Momentum

**More than 1,642 friends of the University chose to give for the first time last year.**

**For more information, visit**  
**[WCUFoundation.org/CommunityPartners](https://WCUFoundation.org/CommunityPartners)**





# Coming Home

## MEET TOM MILLS, WCU FOUNDATION BOARD VICE PRESIDENT

**Thomas E. Mills, IV '81:**

President, Kratos C51SR Modular Systems Division

**WCU Degree:** BS, Accounting

### Awards & Recognition:

- Current WCU Foundation Trustee
- WCU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award (2008)
- President's Circle Award (2010)
- Former Advisory Council Member, College of Business & Public Management

*After 40 years in business leadership, one alumnus returns to strengthen the University that launched his success.*

It's been more than 40 years since Thomas E. Mills, IV '81 left West Chester University with his accounting degree in hand, but he remembers one thing with perfect clarity.

"I lacked nothing with regard to my technical ability and my accounting knowledge," Mills recalls proudly. "Because of the work ethic that I saw modeled by everyone around me at WCU, it didn't feel like an adjustment for me."

After graduation, Mills joined one of the "Big Eight" accounting firms, KPMG, where he quickly saw how his WCU education stacked up against his peers—a confidence he carried into various leadership roles throughout his business career.

Years later, Mills returned to his roots, joining then-Dean of the College of Business and Public Management, Dr. Christopher Fiorentino, as a member of the school's Business Advisory Council.

"As a student, I found that WCU provided a unique combination: low cost and high-quality business education, something I still see today," says Mills. "It's why I have such a special place in my heart for this University—one that called me back all these years later."

Today, Mills serves as Vice President of the West Chester University Foundation Board of Trustees, playing a vital role in preserving the defining qualities that continue to set WCU apart. In addition to his board leadership, Mills and his wife, Lorie, are generous philanthropic partners, supporting the construction of a new home for the College of Business and

Public Management in 2016 and initiatives like Fund to Finish, which provides crucial financial assistance for students to complete their degrees.

"When you look at our students, you can see exactly what your contributions are going toward," he says.

"I see the benefit every time I walk on campus, every time I look into the eyes of these students—they're walking with purpose and intent, and they're going to achieve anything they set out to accomplish."



# WCU Foundation Board of Trustees

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US Army (ret.)
- VICE PRESIDENT  
**Thomas E. Mills, IV '81**  
President  
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Systems Division
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WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY  
**FOUNDATION**  
*— Student Success Is Our Mission —*

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## Our Mission

*The West Chester University Foundation engages donors and other partners to drive student success. We secure funding that helps West Chester University students achieve more.*