

2021 IMPACT REPORT



EXCELLENCE INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY
Training the Next Generation of Leaders and Model Citizens

Thank You to the 2020-2021 President's Club Members for Making These Initiatives Possible.

Your Investment in Shepherd University

Makes a Difference!



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Members as of June 30, 2021



Letter from the President

Dear Valued Members of the President's Club,

If anything can be said about the 2020-2021 academic year, it undeniably will be noted that we lived through one of the 21st century's most challenging historical events. Remembering where we were in spring of 2020 when the campus went online due to a worldwide pandemic, the fact we participated in an in-person, socially distanced Commencement ceremony in May of 2021 was a tremendous achievement. I could not be more proud of the hard-working and dedicated Shepherd University community.

I am profoundly grateful for you, as donors to the President's Club. The projects outlined in this report show the impact each of you had on crucial activities affecting our campus, and most importantly, the virtual platform. As our academic leaders worked to develop a strategic plan for instructional delivery, which melded in-person and online modalities, please know that your donations helped pave the way.

Shepherd University, especially in these challenging times, remains the gateway to success in the Eastern Panhandle. While we spent time pivoting to a virtual landscape, we did not lose focus on the overarching goal to strengthen Shepherd for the future. For example, expanding our distance learning options allows Shepherd to attract and retain not only traditional undergraduate students, but also adult learners, working adults, and graduate students. Your donations made that work possible.

It is my privilege to work with a team of professionals that takes great pride in the effort to educate the next generation of leaders, innovators, and model citizens. I cannot think of a more noble goal than to help all students who desire a college education to achieve their dream. Indeed, working through this year and its adversities made us appreciate each other even more—as we embraced a common goal of sustainability.

Donors like you, the members of the President's Club, are the essence of what makes Shepherd truly special. Thank you for your continued vital support.

I look forward to a time during the 2021-2022 academic year when we can gather together and share these success stories. In the meantime, please enjoy this report. I welcome your comments and questions, and appreciate your investment in Shepherd!

With sincere appreciation,

Mary J.C. Hendrix, Ph.D. President

2020-2021

Pivoting during the pandemic

In the middle of a global pandemic when successful instruction hinged on being able to pivot from in-person classes to a virtual or hybrid model, Shepherd University faculty and administrators turned to its Center for Teaching and Learning for help.

Thanks to funding from the President's Club, the Center was able to subscribe to Quality Matters (QM), an international, nonprofit organization focused on improving the design of online and hybrid courses.

"This online training proved to be invaluable during this challenging year," said Laura Renninger, former dean of



the Scarborough Library and Center for Teaching and Learning. "Through its eight research-based standards, QM provides a framework for instructors to develop and build effective online courses."

Renninger added that QM is not an evaluation of teaching, but a tool to guide how faculty can design their online classes. These standards help instructors improve student interaction and engagement in the online environment. Courses built using these standards can receive QM certification, which is recognized nationwide and ensures a quality product.

"QM is a leader in quality assurance for online education and has received national recognition for its scalable, researched, peer-based approach and continuous improvement in online education and student learning," said Renninger.

The funding not only provided Shepherd faculty at large with a plethora of helpful resources, it also allowed for the teaching certifications needed as the University moves to offer several fully online programs.

Work helps West Campus blossom

The closing of campus last spring due to COVID-19 allowed the acceleration of a special outdoor Shepherd University project.

Guided by local landscape designer Elisabeth Staro, the grounds department and a group of fellow volunteers took advantage of the lull in foot traffic to focus on several West Campus beautification initiatives.

With funding in part from the President's Club, every outdoor area between the Wellness Center, Butcher Center, and Frank Center received much-needed attention. Tree limbs were trimmed and failing trees were removed. New flower beds were created at the south entrance to the Frank Center, and plantings around

the memorial flag pole and two memorial gardens were enhanced. The basins at the entrances to the Butcher Center arena were cleaned up and freshly planted.

A major part of the effort came in building a small retaining wall on the side of the Frank Center to improve an existing drainage basin. Adding river rock, new soil, and native plants made the area attractive and will stop ongoing flooding issues.

"The plants throughout the project were budget friendly, low maintenance, need little water, and are relatively deer proof," Staro said. "This has had a tremendous impact on this part of campus, and I am happy to be able to help."





Far Left: Garden outside of the Frank Center.

Left: Memorial garden for Faye Marie Hageny at the Butcher Center.



Pictured top left, clockwise: Peter Loge, professor at the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs and Director of the Project on Ethics in Political Communication, David Welch, director of The Bonnie and Bill Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communications, and Paul Kendrick, author.

Shepherd University-based podcast promotes civil political discussions

In today's climate, one could be hard pressed to put the words "lively" and "civil" together in anything describing political discussion. Yet in the hands of David Welch, director of The Bonnie and Bill Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communications, and his team, the podcast "Upstream, Downstream" becomes that, and more.

The Institute, which opened its doors in July 2019, was just getting into its first year of programming when COVID-19 shifted the way the group could gather. "We were tossing around ideas about ways to communicate the goals of the Institute and reach a larger audience," Welch said. "This podcast does just that. It takes the Institute's Listen/Learn/Engage Initiative and devotes 30 minutes each week to critical political, policy, and cultural topics that often divide our nation."

The name of the program, "Upstream, Downstream," is an effort to connect the image of a river's two directions. "Political issues and events also possess at least two approaches, often pulling in opposite directions," Welch said.

Funded in part by the President's Club for its inaugural year, the podcast can be heard at 11 a.m. on Saturdays on Shepherd University's NPR-related station, WSHC-FM (89.7) or on-demand through Spotify, Google Podcasts, Breaker, and Anchor.

Welch was joined by Sarah Burke, communications and

events manager and the show's producer, and Shepherd senior Bianca Ison '21, the show's assistant producer, in the productions of the first year's programs. The process to create each show starts about four weeks in advance. Together, they will schedule guests, draft interview questions, and write scripts. Welch was the initial program host and Ison took on podcast hosting duties as well.

Each show features interviews with experts, thought leaders, and influencers on current, often controversial, topics related to politics, culture, and other news items. In the inaugural year, podcast subjects included homelessness, food insecurity, healthcare, and the 2020 presidential election.

Of the more than 20 episodes, some of the most downloaded episodes are "Confessions of a Free Speech Lawyer," featuring Rodney Smolla, the dean and professor of law at the Delaware Law School of Widener University, and "Making History," with West Virginia Delegate Caleb Hannah (R-44), one of the youngest black legislators in the country.

With planning underway this summer for the second season, "Upstream, Downstream" will keep to the Institute's core mandate: To follow a tone of civility and constructive discourse, demonstrating that divergent opinions and principles can be discussed in a thoughtful, reasoned manner.

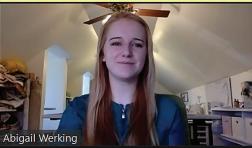
2020-2021











Community members and Shepherd students come together for "Conversation with Strangers." Pictured above l to r: top row, Kevin McClanathan (Hagerstown, MD), and Steve Chase, director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center; bottom row, Maryanna Milleson (Springfield, WV), Brandon Dolly (Inwood, WV), and Abigail Werking (Ellicott City, MD).

Office of Strategic Research Initiatives adapts to pandemic

Knowledge, skills, and intellectual inquiry are essential to prepare all students for an increased role in society. Shepherd University's commitment to providing students with the opportunities to apply abstract theories and skills learned in the classroom to real-world situations shifted, like much else in 2020-2021, to include a virtual platform.

This work falls under the Office of Strategic Research Initiatives, funded in part by the President's Club, and the leadership of Dr. Jason Best, assistant provost for distance education and strategic research initiatives. Dr. Best strives to develop new strategic research initiatives at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and serves as a liaison between the University, Shepherd students and faculty, and external research partners, even in the face of a global pandemic.

One of the first efforts to make this shift was "Dinner with Strangers." Started in 2018, these dinners gave students the opportunity to get to know community members and enjoy a meal in a host's home. The pandemic moved this out of homes and onto the computer screen. Dr. Best worked with the Office of Academic Community Outreach to adapt the program

to an online format, renaming it "Conversation with Strangers." Shepherd students met virtually with local leaders to learn about the skills these emerging professionals need as they enter their career fields.

In November, Dr. Best facilitated the virtual participation of four Shepherd students (see photos right) in the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges 2020 Northeast Regional Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity Conference. Hosted by Eastern Connecticut State University, the conference featured the work of approximately 80 students from nine public liberal arts institutions across the northeast and mid-Atlantic.

In April, the third annual Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors also moved online. Shepherd undergraduate students, in fields ranging from the humanities to STEM, showcased their research and creative projects on the Shepherd website at www. shepherd.edu/undergraduate-research-exhibition.

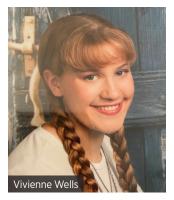
Shepherd also is committed to expanding its curriculam to attract and retain not only traditional undergraduate

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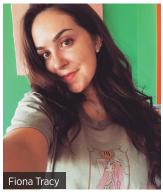
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students, but also groups such as adult learners, working adults, and graduate students. This fall, with the addition of three fully online programs, this commitment shines. Dr. Best worked with a number of Shepherd colleagues to launch the online MBA, MA in curriculum and instruction, and RN-to-BSN programs. "We are excited to be able to provide expanded access to those who might not otherwise be able to pursue a university education," Dr. Best said. "These three high-impact programs in business, education, and nursing are amenable to online delivery, and will serve working professionals in areas of significant national need."

The Office of Strategic Research Initiatives is also working with faculty and administrators across the state as well as the West Virginia Division of Science and Research on a five-year, \$20 million grant proposal to the National Science Foundation. The grant's focus is on research infrastructure improvements for scientific research, educational outreach, and workforce development in emerging scientific fields.









Campus AED program grows

It may seem like an ordinary wall cabinet, yet automated external defibrillators (AED) are anything but inconsequential. These portable, life-saving devices are designed to treat people experiencing sudden cardiac arrest—when seconds count.

Through the support of President's Club funding, the University added three additional AED units during 2020-2021, which brings the campus total active units, strategically placed across campus, to 12.

The need for these units was demonstrated last fall when a patron swimming laps in the Wellness Center pool suffered a heart attack. "Our lifeguard staff acted quickly, and the patron's life was saved, with the help of the Shepherdstown Fire Department," said Nick Mummert, operations manager for Shepherd University's Student Center. "One of the main reasons our lifeguards were able to save the patron's life was due to early AED access."

American Red Cross studies have shown that for every minute that CPR and AED are delayed, a victim's chances of survival are reduced by 10 percent. "Our local

fire department does a great job responding to campus emergencies, but without AEDs on campus, the odds of death from a sudden cardiac event would greatly increase," Mummert added.

The 12 units are still fewer than the number recommended by the American Red Cross for a campus of this size, and University leaders continue to research other funding avenues.



Above: An automated external defibrillator (AED) located in the Student Center Ram's Den.

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Shepherd bolstering enrollment systems and retention using President's Club donations

Reports show that many colleges and universities across the nation are experiencing declining enrollment. Seeing that same trend hit our campus, Shepherd University's enrollment management team reached out to the President's Club to request funding to put measures in place to reverse this trend.

One critical item was to re-engage with an enrollment management customer relationship management (CRM) system after a previous contract had been canceled. "This system will enhance communications between Shepherd and prospective students," said Dr. Kelly Hart, Shepherd's vice president for enrollment management. "Communication from our admissions office will be personalized and our efforts will be more efficient and effective as a result."

The CRM will not only give the admissions team access to important data, but also improve reporting for the admissions office and other departments across campus. "This will help us be more competitive in the marketplace," Hart said.

The President's Club also has an ongoing role in a key program which strives to retain each student that the admissions team enrolls. Steps were put in place in 2017, with the help of the President's Club, to create the Shepherd Success Academy within the Student Success Center, an initiative imagined and implemented by the Division of Student Affairs. The staff of this specialized program works with students one-to-one to help them

create a plan for success. The Center leadership was excited to expand staff with the addition of a full-time and a part-time athletic success coach, partially funded by 2020-2021 President's Club donations, to its ranks this year.

"This has been a passion of our office for quite a while," said Julia Franks, director of the Student Success Center. "While it may be assumed that student-athletes have the support they need, that is not always the case. Even though athletes are surrounded by their team, family members, coaches, and professors, there may not be a specific person dedicated solely to help them navigate the higher education landscape. To have an athletic success coach is not a new concept and many schools have similar positions; now Shepherd has the opportunity to provide the best support to our student-athletes."

The Student Success Center staff knows that when students have the opportunity to work with someone who has experienced what they have experienced—who has walked a path in life they, too, hope to walk—that support means even more.

"Over the years, student-athletes have come to us demonstrating difficulty in balancing academic, athletic, and personal responsibilities," Franks said. "Their world is one that requires intentional and focused attention—someone who can teach them how to thrive within their environment." The new athletic success coaches will help

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student-athletes gain self-efficacy and self-awareness.

The program's current one-to-one model allows the Center's coaches to tailor weekly meetings to each student's needs, including discussing personal and academic challenges, identifying solutions for support and resources, and developing persistence toward the next academic year. The goal is that after the first semester, students can better advocate for themselves, build key professional relationships, and apply these strategies to earn strong grades and persist in good standing within the University and to be academically eligible to play in future semesters.

"We continuously seek to find ways to help our students succeed," said Holly Morgan Frye, vice president for

student affairs. "Because of our great collaborative relationship with Shepherd athletics, the interest and support was in place to help make this happen. Additionally, the Student Success Center has demonstrated positive results in a short amount of time; I have no doubt we will see positive results with this student-athlete initiative as well."

Chauncey Winbush, vice president for athletics, said that the academic success of Shepherd's student-athletes is at the forefront of the athletics department's goals. "Most student-athletes will not continue on to professional athletic careers, so it is imperative that we support their academic success," he said. "The onboarding of the academic success coach will allow us to provide a well-rounded experience for our student-athletes as we support their progression towards graduation."

Tabler Farm continues to expand offerings

Since the program's inception in 2017, the Shepherd University Agricultural Innovation Center has grown by leaps and bounds.

The Center, situated west of the main campus at historic Tabler Farm, has seen the old milk parlor renovated into an aquaponics lab, solar panels added to provide sustainable power, and the construction of a 30-foot by 90-foot tunnel green house that provides for a controlled environment for agricultural production.

Renewed investments from the 2020-2021 President's Club meant adding programs to increase the farm's instructional opportunities.

"It was good to have students back on campus this spring," said Dr. Peter Vila, associate professor of environmental and physical sciences and director, Veterans to Agriculture program. "With their help, we

started growing in the aquaponics system, including installing windows in the tanks to more easily monitor the fish."

Student research sought to determine how long seedlings should spend in the nursery area before being transplanted to the deep water beds. Students also spent the spring transplanting seedlings in the high tunnel and started an experiment, growing two types of mushrooms in raised beds with heating cables to extend the growing season.

Tabler Farm is being transformed into a 150-acre sustainable agricultural laboratory and outdoor classroom. The goals are to provide graduates with paths to success in both sustainable agriculture production and the entrepreneurship and marketing skills to establish successful businesses.





Shepherd's international student population growing

The Office of International Affairs started the 2020 academic year with 70 students on the roster, representing more than 30 countries, which is nearly double the enrollment rate from three years ago.

"In spite of COVID-19, our numbers are on the rise," said Dr. Lois Jarman, director of the Office of International Affairs. "When you have a product that is wanted, like the hallmark of a Shepherd education, people will come."

One challenging aspect of recruiting international students is the lack of financial aid or scholarships to use as a sales tool. "International students pay out-of-state tuition and full room and board," said Jarman. "Many of their home countries offer free college, but these students understand the value of an American education. They choose to come to Shepherd at great expense to their families."

Since most financial aid options are limited to U.S. citizens, it wasn't until the Ram Ambassador Scholarship Fund was created that a funding path became available for international students. With the President's Club making one of the initial donations, the Ram Ambassador Scholarship Fund gives Jarman and her team a necessary recruitment tool to attract and keep Shepherd's

international students.

Shepherd boasts a high retention rate among international students; from fall 2020 to spring 2021, it was 93 percent. "We are hopeful, if U.S. consulate offices resume visa interviews soon, that we will have at least 100 international students on campus in the fall," she said.

"We recognize the challenges our international students have in making the transition to the United States," Jarman said. "It can be emotionally and culturally challenging. Students may be dealing with language barriers and worrying about finances. Hopefully, a robust Ram Ambassador Scholarship Fund gives us a new means to be of help."

The office continues to work through the embassies in Washington, D.C., along with a strong word-of-mouth effort with graduates, to grow Shepherd's international population. "We recognize the challenges and are here to help them down this path," said Jarman. "Getting them to Shepherd is just part of it. We want to make sure they graduate and have options for employment after they earn that degree. We take care of these kids."





President's Club: Funding for strategic priorities



Since 2015, each President's Club donor has been instrumental in providing the resources necessary to advance the strategic priorities of Shepherd University. This philanthropic support allows Dr. Mary J.C. Hendrix to respond quickly to emerging opportunities and to develop new areas of excellence.

Members of the President's Club, through annual unrestricted gifts of \$1,000 or more, ensure the future of Shepherd University. Over the years, projects have ranged from funding stipends for faculty leaders who direct vital new initiatives to answering a student government-led initiative to install water bottle filling stations around campus; from ensuring a boost in student retention by creating the Summer Start program which helps first-year students acclimate to college life to sending the Shepherd debate and forensics team on its path to the 2019 national Division I championship.

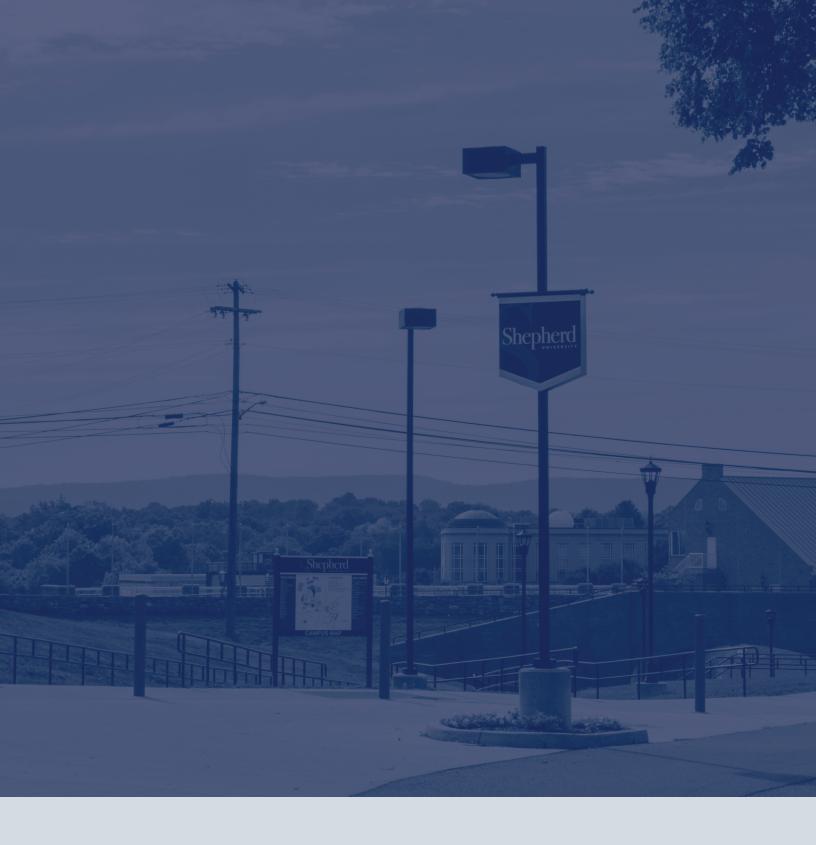
President's Club donors, who include alumni, friends, faculty, and staff, are recognized for adding strength to Shepherd's mission and elevating the University's profile

by funding outstanding programs and academics. As active members, President's Club donors receive:

- An insider's look at University initiatives and progress reports on the strategic plans;
- Invitations to exclusive special events, concerts, and receptions;
- Periodic mailings with updates on emerging programs;
- Opportunities to meet program recipients and hear their successes; and
- Recognition in the President's Report and Honor Roll of Donors.

President's Club giving demonstrates a remarkable level of commitment to Shepherd University and stands as a powerful endorsement of our educational mission. If you want to add your name to the list of President's Club donors, please contact Christine Meyer, director of annual giving, at 304-876-5526 or cmeyer@shepherd.edu.

2020-2021





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