

2022 IMPACT REPORT



EXCELLENCE INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY
TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS AND MODEL CITIZENS



**Thank you to 2021-2022
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making these initiatives possible.**

**Your investment in Shepherd University
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Members as of June 30, 2022

A photograph of Mary J.C. Hendrix, the President of Shepherd University, speaking at a wooden podium. She is wearing a yellow blazer, a blue and gold patterned scarf, and a dark visor. Her hands are raised in a gesture of emphasis. To her left is a large American flag. The podium features the Shepherd University logo, which includes the year 1871. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a building.

Letter from the President

Dear Valued Members of the President's Club,

Honoring the past and transforming the future: As President's Club members, you played a pivotal role in Shepherd University's 150th anniversary celebration throughout the 2021-22 academic year. While students, faculty, and staff came together for a myriad of noteworthy programs to honor the past, it was you, through your financial support and involvement, who created a path for transforming the future.

The projects outlined in this report detail your transformative impact. The efforts were both big and small, and all were meaningful! The President's Club is integral to Shepherd's strategic priorities, supporting vital initiatives that were not funded in our State appropriations budget.

Shepherd is working to increase our academic programs, initiatives, and partnerships to meet the region's growth predictions. One such endeavor has been an aviation partnership with the Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport Authority to address the need for trained pilots and aviation professionals. This effort was made possible by your donations.

Shepherd University's faculty and staff are educating the next generation of leaders, innovators, and model citizens. I am thankful to be surrounded by professionals who strive each day to help students achieve their dream. This is what "honoring the past and transforming the future" looks like, and we champion that common goal beyond our 150th year.

I welcome your comments and questions, and appreciate your investment in Shepherd. Donors like you, the members of the President's Club, are the essence of what makes Shepherd truly special. Thank you for your continued support.

With sincere gratitude,
Mary J.C. Hendrix, Ph.D.
President

Enhancing Campus Technology

Classroom technology is changing at an exponential rate, and it is critical that Shepherd's campus reflects those advancements to remain competitive.

With seed money provided by the President's Club, Shepherd began making long-term strides to update classroom technology during the 2021-22 academic year.

"We know that having access to enhanced technology leads

to innovative education for the next generation of leaders," said Dr. Ben Martz, who was the team leader on this effort, along with Assistant Provost Dr. Jason Best, and Chief Information Officer Joey Dagg. "This is about transforming the lives of our students and giving them the tools to be successful in their careers," he added.

One of the first steps was to perform a technology audit to find out where each classroom ranked. Although

some classrooms on campus were sufficient, others were unable to fulfill the functions desired by faculty and a few were actually hindering how classes were taught. "Because so many different campus groups were involved and had input into the process, this audit really provided to be a rallying point for Shepherd's faculty," noted Dagg.

The President's Club funding was leveraged to garner additional funding during November's Giving Tuesday, and a list of 17 classrooms, based on the audit's findings, were slated for upgrades. As the classrooms rotated out of summer classroom use, the work began. Over the summer, the Facilities Department painted and updated flooring and blinds. Once the rooms are prepared, the transformation begins, with improvements including large-scale 4K display monitors, mobile computer carts, and expanded audio and video capabilities. We also envision the development of "Zoom Rooms," equipped with enhanced video and audio capabilities to complement group work and dynamic interaction. ■



Top left: Upgraded classroom in Center for Contemporary Arts II

Bottom left: Upgraded classroom in Knutti Hall



Scarborough Library's iconic front porch is much more inviting for students and guests after President's Club funding. The addition of four Shepherd-blue Adirondack chairs encourages engagement and collaborative learning, as small group meetings can move outdoors. Fresh air is the best medicine for reducing stress, and sitting with a good book can help students, faculty, and staff recharge. The furniture's sturdy poly material allows for easy disinfecting and will last for many years. ■





Pictured (l. to r.) are Shepherd's inaugural high school financial plan scholarship winners: Samuel Duffy, Conner Izes, and Brady Masters.

Through Shepherd's Dean's Council, faculty leaders were encouraged to create innovative programs to build on the University's larger goals: provide better educational opportunities for students to ensure the next generation of leaders; strengthen academic programs; and develop new areas of excellence.

Three programs that met those objectives received seed money for the 2021-22 academic year: the Brightspace ambassadors training effort; the inaugural high school financial plan competition; and the National Writing Project application/implementation.

"These diverse efforts capitalize on everything the President's Club is about," noted Dr. Ben Martz, dean of the College of Business, who served as interim provost during the 2021-22 academic year. "We were able to quickly identify opportunities that were integral to the strategic priorities needed by Shepherd, but not funded by the State."

Touching nearly every facet of Shepherd's campus, the Brightspace ambassadors' effort provided vital

University-wide training. At the beginning of the academic year, the Shepherd campus migrated to a new learning management system called Brightspace. This platform offers a wealth of tools, including discussion boards, gradebooks, and assignment tracking along with the flexibility of access anytime, on most any device, providing an expansive learning environment. However, this change meant that both faculty and students faced a significant learning curve making the shift to this new tool.

Shepherd's Director of Educational Technology Dr. Christy Wenger stepped up, creating the Brightspace Ambassador Program. With stipends funded by the President's Club, a mix of teams, comprised of faculty and students, immersed themselves into the training. "It was important to us to make sure that both our faculty and student ambassadors knew as much as possible about Brightspace before leading others on campus," Wenger said.

Starting in October, these enthusiastic training teams were unleashed at both formal and informal training events throughout the academic year. Aside

from providing a pivotal professional development boost for the campus, the Brightspace Ambassador Program will serve as a model to engage faculty, staff, and students in collaborative teams in the future.

The second program supported by the President's Club was modeled after similar programs at other state institutions. Building on existing academic programs in the College of Business, Shepherd's inaugural high school financial plan competition challenged high school students to use real-life skills of financial planning and entrepreneurship to get a jump-start on their future.

"It is imperative that students are prepared for success in a challenging and dynamic future," noted assistant professor of business administration, Dr. James Dovel, who developed this effort. "Properly managing personal finances and being able to determine your own destiny are important elements of success."

Participating high school students wrote essays answering the question "How will you prepare yourself financially for an entrepreneurial career?" and described a business idea that they believed fulfilled an urgent need in society. The finalists presented their plans to a group of business professors

and students. The plans were creative and innovative. For example, one student plans to develop an app to help people find a job based on their personality. The President's Club funded scholarship prizes for these students who will be attending Shepherd and bringing that entrepreneurial spirit with them.

The final Dean's Council funded effort shines the light on statewide recognition. The President's Club funded the fees associated with the launch of the National Writing Project (NWP) and will sponsor future workshops for local teachers.

NWP is a network of teachers, university faculty, researchers, writers, and community educators who work to advance writing and the teaching of writing. There are 170 active sites in the United States and before Shepherd entered the program, there were only two in West Virginia—and none in the Eastern Panhandle. Importantly, we are poised to draw on the support of an existing, well-funded national, professional development network—a network that serves teachers who care about diversity, the teaching of writing and the use of writing in teaching from kindergarten to university and across all subjects. ■



Undergraduate Research

Shepherd students **presented at the 2022 West Virginia Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol** on February 18. The event's purpose is to familiarize State legislators with research and creative activities involving undergraduate students that occur on campuses across West Virginia.

Pictured (l. to r.): Alyssa Nazarok (political science), Olivia Rodgers (psychology), and Sianna King (music)

Social Change

Lasting social changes happen when people collaborate, working toward a common goal. Shepherd student organizations, faculty, and staff teamed up, and with the help of President's Club challenge grants and guidance from the Office for Diversity and Equity, sought to make positive changes in three areas on campus.

“By working in groups and involving student organizations, we build long-lasting relationships,” said Dr. Chiquita Howard-Bostic, associate vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusivity. “The Office for Diversity and Equity strives to create dialogues that lead to fair treatment, access, learning opportunities, and advancement for everyone, in every stage of Shepherd’s education and career development.”

The first area addressed was an existing program: food insecurity. The Tabler Farm Healthy Food Initiative provides fresh, nutritious vegetables grown at Shepherd’s Tabler Farm to the Ram Pantry, the University’s free food pantry for students, faculty, and staff. The generous grant from the President’s Club purchased essential supplies such as irrigation piping and row covers for vegetable production to make the farm more productive. Students with the Shepherd Environmental Organization (SEO) installed, harvested, and delivered the produce.

Dr. Peter Vila, associate professor of environmental and physical sciences and director of the Veterans to Agriculture program, noted that providing local, sustainably produced food to the students and community is part of the farm’s mission. “These funds allowed us to increase production and to expand our connections to the campus community,” Dr. Vila added.

The second focus area comes out of the success of the Ram Pantry. Dr. Jenny Flora, who heads Shepherd’s Wellness Center and oversees the Pantry, said the staff surveyed its users, asking what other services they needed. “Clothing, particularly career clothing, was mentioned,” Flora said. “We saw a need to expand our vision to combat resource scarcity on our campus.”

In early 2022, the Ram Closet opened its doors. The President’s Club funded the garment racks and supplies to create the start-up program. Shepherd Clothing



Anyé Polite and Arthena Roper

Initiative student volunteers led the charge; and the Shepherd chapter of the Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity held clothing drives and donated volunteer hours.

Undertaking the third area of need, “Empowerment through Community Reading” addressed the education gap created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This partnership brought together Shepherd University’s School of Education, Office for Diversity and Equity, Kappa Delta Pi education honor society, WISE Empowerment student leaders, Jefferson County Schools, Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communication’s ListenLearnEngage Initiative, Jefferson Security Bank, and Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.

Since COVID had changed the way Shepherd’s student teachers were able to engage pupils in the classroom during the 2020-2021 academic year, these sessions sought to break down those barriers. It included an event featuring motivational speaker Ronald Jones of DareIILead; honoring Jefferson County Magistrate Arthena Roper, who is a children’s book author; and celebrating local third grader Anyé Polite, who read more

than 100 books in the spring and summer of 2021.

A mini-conference for Jefferson County teachers and Shepherd University education students focused on “Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Reading Readiness.” Invigorated by what they learned at the conference, the

Shepherd students and volunteers took copies of Justice Roper’s book, “Smart Kids Rock” to Jefferson County School’s 601 second graders and read to each students. The President’s Club made sure each student went home with their own copy of the book. ■



Hunter Carlos Willis Aviation Program

With seed money provided by the President’s Club, the Hunter Carlos Willis Aviation Program met its first-tier fundraising goal, giving this new academic opportunity its wings.

Teaming up with Bravo Flight Training and the Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport (MRB), Shepherd University has named the program for a courageous, local teen. “Hunter had a true passion for flying and a dream to become a commercial pilot,” Shepherd President Mary J.C. Hendrix said. “He aspired to attend Shepherd University and be the first student in the aviation program.”

Hunter died in early 2022 at age 19 of a rare bone cancer. “He displayed courage and never complained, which was remarkable considering what he went through,” his father, Tom Willis, said. “As we establish the Hunter Carlos Willis Aviation Program, one of the pillars that I hope upon

which it stands is the character trait of courage that Hunter showed.”

Currently, the Hunter Carlos Willis Aviation Program offers a concentration in the College of Business for students pursuing a degree in business administration. The goal is to expand into an aviation minor and eventually offer a full baccalaureate degree.

“Shepherd feels a deep sense of responsibility to help address the urgent demands of the aviation industry, and this includes transportation needs, supply chain issues, and how this is affecting the global economy,” Hendrix said. “The unique partnership we have created will begin to address the marketplace challenges and support the rapidly growing businesses emerging right here in the Eastern Panhandle, an area we are proud to call home.” ■

Enrollment: *Summer Sessions*

From incoming first-year students getting a solid foundation for their Shepherd career to strengthening dual enrollment for rural students to inviting West Virginia teachers to campus to explore Appalachian culture, President's Club funds reinforced Shepherd's enrollment and marketing reach.

Shepherd's Summer Start program gave 19 first-year students head starts on their college careers. Through accelerated classes on financial literacy, fitness and wellness, writing, and rhetoric, each student got individualized attention and support from peer educators, faculty, and tutors in an encouraging environment. The President's Club covered some of the baseline costs.

"They took full advantage of the opportunity to enroll in challenging, accelerated courses, make friends, and get to know the Shepherd campus and community," said Shannon Holliday, program director. "Throughout the experience, the new Rams also learned how to manage their time and study effectively."

For students not yet on the Shepherd campus, the President's Club provided matching funds for a USDA program grant, "Pathways to Postsecondary Education for Rural Students:

Dual Enrollment Distance Learning." This created distance learning options, connecting rural high school students to Shepherd classes.

Through "Voices from the Misty Mountains, Reclaiming Our Story for a New Appalachia," the President's Club provided matching funds for a West Virginia Humanities Council grant. From July 11-22, teachers from across West Virginia came to Shepherd to attend the Misty Mountains Teacher Institute. Focusing on Appalachian culture, language, literature, history, and storytelling, the K-12 educators completed projects to take back to their classrooms. Celebrated Appalachian writer Gretchen Moran Laskas participated in the Institute. Shepherd's Storyteller-in-Residence Adam Booth presented a community program called "Stories from the Front Porch," leaning into the art of storytelling.

"The literary, historic, and cultural voices explored in the Institute helped teachers and mentors understand the diversity of our region, the importance of knowing this rich story, and the value of passing on that knowledge and understanding to West Virginia children," noted Dr. Sylvia Shurbutt, director of Shepherd's Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities, and lead instructor at the Institute. ■



Dual Enrollment students pose with J.C. the Ram in front of the Shepherd University Martinsburg Center.



How to Join

President's Club: Funding for strategic priorities

For the last seven years, President's Club donors have provided the necessary resources to advance Shepherd University's strategic priorities. This broad 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. Since 2015, projects have ranged from funding stipends for faculty leaders who direct vital new initiatives to answering student-government led initiatives; from sending the Shepherd debate and forensics team on their path to the 2019 National Championship in the Division I Team Speech Sweepstakes to renovating the old milk parlor at the Agricultural Innovation Center at Tabler Farm into a sustainable, solar-powered aquaponics lab.

President's Club donors, who include alumni, friends, faculty, and staff, strengthen Shepherd's mission and elevate the University's profile by funding scores of outstanding

academic programs. 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 about their successes; and
- Recognition in The President's Impact Report and Honor Roll of Donors.

Leadership giving demonstrates a remarkable level of commitment to Shepherd University and stands as a powerful endorsement of our educational mission. If you wish to add your name to the list of President's Club donors, contact Christine Meyer, Director of Annual Giving, at (304) 876-5526 or cmeyer@shepherd.edu. ■



Shepherd

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