

2023 IMPACT REPORT



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TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS AND MODEL CITIZENS

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How to join the President's Club

Since its inception in 2015, President's Club leadership donors have been instrumental in providing the resources necessary to advance strategic priorities of Shepherd University. This philanthropic support allows Shepherd President Mary J.C. Hendrix, Ph.D., to respond quickly to emerging opportunities and 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. Leadership giving demonstrates a remarkable level of commitment to Shepherd, and stands as a powerful endorsement of our educational mission.

If you would like 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.



Letter from the President



Dear Valued Members of the President's Club,

I am profoundly grateful for each donor to the President's Club. Please know that you are investing in Shepherd's ability to provide a transformational educational experience for our treasured students. These gifts play a vital role on the Shepherd campus, funding exciting, innovative projects outlined in this Report. Three of these projects are highlighted below, but many others are described in the Report and await your review.

As the gateway to the Eastern Panhandle, Shepherd University strives to fill this noteworthy role by expanding its programs and infrastructure to meet the needs of our students, faculty, staff, and community. Illustrative of our commitment is the vital grant preparation work funded by the President's Club that resulted in \$1.4 million in federal funding. This will allow Shepherd to create a small business incubator at the Agricultural Innovation Center at Tabler Farm—providing a unique educational venue for our students and community members.

Another project, "CERT First," developed by two Shepherd School of Education professors, will give the Eastern Panhandle and all of West Virginia a pathway to fill the critical shortage of classroom teachers.

As Shepherd endeavors to educate the next generation of leaders, innovators, and model citizens, it is critical to keep our students safe and secure. The need for the East Campus covered bus stop came to my attention from a meeting with Student Government Association leaders. I am very appreciative of the President's Club for funding this necessity.

The remarkable professionals whom I have the privilege to work with are collectively on a mission—they are determined to help all students who desire a college education achieve their dream. Your leadership giving makes this work possible. Thank you, on behalf of our students, faculty, and staff, for your continued support.

With sincere appreciation,

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

Tabler Farm's course for the future

Shepherd University's Agricultural Innovation Center at Tabler Farm, a 158-acre site located just a mile from campus, focuses on small-scale sustainable agriculture production and agricultural business management. Past grants from the President's Club have renovated an old dairy barn to a high tunnel for vegetable production and added an indoor aquaponics research lab.

During 2022-23, the President's Club helped to change the farm's course for the future. Through stipends to support grant writing, staff members were successful in an application for \$1.4 million in federal funding. The grant, supported by Sen. Shelley Moore Capito and Sen. Joe Manchin, who serve on the Appropriations Committee, was part of the omnibus bill signed by President Joe Biden on December 23, 2022.

"We are profoundly grateful to Senators Capito and Manchin for their support of this critical project at Shepherd University," said Shepherd President Mary J.C. Hendrix. "This support will strengthen Shepherd's ability to offer students a world-class education and help promote area economic development in our region and state."

With federal funds, Shepherd will create a small-business incubator at Tabler Farm. The goal will be to train novice farmers in innovative small-scale agriculture. The successful request was submitted by Dr. Jeffrey Groff, chair of the Department of Environmental and Physical Sciences, Dr. Peter Vila, program director, Sustainable Agriculture at Tabler Farm, and Dr. Brooke Comer, visiting assistant professor of environmental and physical sciences.

The stipends also supported two other grant submissions:

\$52,172 grant titled "Enhancing Production in an Aquaponics System with Spectrum Controlled LED Lights" through the West Virginia Specialty Crop Block Grant. This grant will allow for a functioning aquaponics laboratory once the lights are installed.

\$12,000 Veterans and Heroes to Agriculture grant titled "Production of edible mushrooms and specialty fungi." The grant addresses the required training necessary for the cultivation of different types of mushrooms and demonstrates the equipment necessary for a small-scale mushroom and specialty fungi enterprise.



The President's Club also funded ground-level enhancements at Tabler Farm, purchasing a mower and storage shed. "The mower helps with the health and safety of the students, faculty, and visitors who come to the farm by controlling the tick and insect populations," noted Matt Ware, Tabler Farm operations manager. "The shed provides a space to keep the equipment out of the weather. It is greatly appreciated." ■

Student presents at international conference

Lee DiFante, a senior pursuing a degree in English education, accomplished something academically impressive at a prestigious event—especially for an undergraduate. DiFante presented a paper at the Sigma Tau Delta 2023 Convention in Denver, Colorado, this spring. President's Club funds, combined with funding from Shepherd University's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the international English honor society, covered Lee's travel costs.

Rolling the dice on *SHE*Popoly

Shepherd University's business fraternity, Delta Sigma Pi, is developing a Shepherdstown-based version of the popular Monopoly board game.

SHEPopoly will give Shepherd alumni a chance to revisit some key Shepherdstown locales, including McMurrin Hall, White Hall, Ikenberry Hall, the Ram's Den, the Frank Center, and the Sweet Shop, other German Street businesses. Customized Community Chest and Chance cards will bring back Shepherd University memories.

"The President's Club provided the seed money so Delta Sigma Pi could make a down payment to the company manufacturing the game," explained Dr. Ben Martz, dean of the College of Business. Student members are honing their business skills as they solicit local companies to advertise their businesses on the board and collaborate with University Communications to finalize the design.

The game should be available for summer 2023 distribution. Delta Sigma Pi will be using these games to help pay for chapter operations and ongoing leadership education. ■

Branding Shepherd in the Panhandle and around the world

Shepherd's brand and marketing got a refresh in 2022-2023 thanks to the President's Club. From new images on building walls to a platform that reaches prospective students worldwide, the focus was on increasing the University's outreach.

University Communications, Marketing, and Athletics departments worked together to launch a refreshed Athletics logo, which was unveiled during Homecoming 2022. "This came at an exciting time for Shepherd Athletics," said Dana L. Costa, executive director, University Communications. "Several players from the 2022 football team were receiving national attention, and exposure helped to expand the reputation of Shepherd and attract new students to campus."

The refresh also took a more tangible approach, with the placement of marketing "tiles" on the walls of Ikenberry and Gardiner halls, where the Admissions and Financial Aid offices are located. When potential students visit campus, they see dozens of images of students just like them on all the walls, even in the stairways. "These tiles were part of the overall enrollment plan," said Heidi Schlag, director of marketing and digital strategy. "We want to beautify the buildings that prospective students see."

The President's Club funded radio and print advertisements in December, promoting Shepherd programs locally, and underwrote efforts to connect with prospective international students across the globe.

Shepherd has been able to increase the University's virtual international recruitment presence, attending virtual fairs for the Asian, Middle Eastern, and African markets, reaching over 1,000 students, parents, and high school counselors.

"The virtual recruitment fairs are more affordable and help us increase brand awareness of Shepherd University and empower us to meet and connect with prospective students," explained Emily Liu, director of International Affairs.

The Office of International Affairs (OIA) also signed a one-year digital marketing agreement with a firm that creates search engine optimized landing pages for universities and colleges in more than 33 languages. "This will help students from all over the world find our programs on Google and other search engines," Liu noted. In the first two months of 2023, Shepherd has received over 100 inquiries from students from countries, including Africa, South Asia, and the United Arab Emirates.

This spring, OIA will participate in a Global Virtual Connection event hosted by the U.S. Department of Commerce, featuring U.S. Sustainability Programs. This event will allow Shepherd to connect virtually with potential international student recruitment partners in over 20 countries to promote Shepherd degree programs that focus on sustainability. ■



Photo credit: Nevaeh Jackson

Frank Arts Center lobby dedication

The Frank Arts Center ticket lobby, along with the theater’s bathroom and gallery space, was updated with new flooring, paint, and artwork, thanks to private donors and funding from the President’s Club.

Dedicated to Dr. R. Scott Beard, provost and vice president for academic affairs, who passed away unexpectedly on March 28, 2021, the unveiling ceremony was held before the 2023 Musical Showcase for Scholarships.

“I know he would be touched to know his legacy lives on in the Frank Center,” said Alan Gibson, Beard’s life partner of 30 years. “Scott’s legacy also lives on through the lives of every student he mentored and taught.”

Beard, who was also a professor of music at Shepherd, is remembered for his energy, cheer, and dedication to Shepherd students.

“For 26 years he inspired, encouraged, and uplifted students and faculty toward the single goal of making the university he loved a shining example to the world,” President Hendrix said in her remarks at the dedication. “We remember and honor him here where he entertained and dazzled us year after year at the piano.”

The Showcase, a School of Music fundraiser created under Beard’s direction in 2017, has raised nearly \$250,000 to help music students attend Shepherd. ■

CERT First to help West Virginia teacher gap

West Virginia is facing a critical shortage of public-school teachers, and two professors in Shepherd University’s School of Education are creating a path to fill that gap.

With recent changes to state policy, individuals with undergraduate degrees who meet academic excellence and content knowledge requirements in various teaching disciplines can teach in public schools while pursuing their teaching certification. Using stipend funds provided by the President’s Club, Dr. LeAnn Johnson, Shepherd’s coordinator of the Master of Arts in Teaching Program, and Jason Allen, assistant professor of education, are developing the CERT First coursework to take advantage of the policy changes and help students pursue the new Master of Education in instruction at Shepherd.

CERT First has two elements that make it unique among alternative certification options. “The coursework will be offered in an asynchronous, self-paced manner,” explained Allen. “This flexibility caters to those with personal circumstances, and it allows individuals to register for a course without having to wait

until the beginning of the next semester.” According to the West Virginia Department of Education, this flexibility is a need not met by any of the coursework options currently available, he added.

Second, as the name implies, CERT First allows individuals to gain certification first, before completing a master’s degree. “As a certified teacher, they can begin teaching and will be able to apply to their respective counties for funding to take additional courses through Shepherd’s Master of Arts in Teaching degree,” Johnson explained.

Since unsubsidized student loans are the only financial aid for teacher training at the graduate level, Shepherd’s CERT First teachers will be able to qualify for limited public-school funds for teacher training.

The two courses under development by Johnson and Allen, “Introductory Pedagogy” and “Advanced Pedagogy,” will be ready for state review during the summer of 2023 and become available to Shepherd students after state approval. ■

¡Aprendemos Cantando!

Welcome
Modules
Glossary
Grade Book



Module Menu

01 Enter Module 1
Shakira
"Waka Waka (Esto es África)"
Present tense of regular verbs plus "ser"

02 Enter Module 2
Olga Tañón
"¿Cómo olvidar?"
Yes/No and open-ended questions

03 Enter Module 3
Jarabe de Palo
"Agua"
Present tense of *ir, tener, venir, estar*

Piloting an innovative Spanish culture program at Shepherd

An innovative Spanish program, developed by Shepherd University Associate Professor Dr. Rachel Krantz in collaboration with an educational publishing house, has come to life, thanks to a generous grant from the President's Club.

The Department of English and Modern Languages piloted ¡Aprendemos cantando!, or Culture Dive Spanish, an online, multimedia resource for first-year Spanish students that aligns with the textbook used at the University. Feedback and usage data will be gathered from Shepherd students to further refine the educational software and create a new revenue source.

"This resource contains a selection of Spanish language songs that follows the text's grammar sequence and offers not only more practice with the target structures but a fun, active way of improving vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural knowledge as well," said Krantz, who developed the program during her recent sabbatical.

"Listening to a song or watching a movie shows students how what they learn in class is used in real life," she added. The Spanish 101 and Spanish 102 volumes each contain modules featuring a specific singer teamed with grammar, vocabulary, and listening exercises. A second

activity lets students choose between music, creative writing, or cinema. All three involve listening and reading tasks and result in a written product, so students' skills grow no matter which option they select.

Designed for self-paced use at home, the goal is to give students in-depth exposure to current Spanish-language culture in an engaging, interactive format. "The hope is that knowledge about other cultures will lead not only to further interest and exploration of these cultures but increased tolerance of diversity in general," Krantz noted.

The modules feature a wide range of singers, including Shakira, Luis Fonsi, Enrique Iglesias, Nelly Furtado, and Manu Chao. Students get to know the singers not only by listening to their music but by also reading their biographies and by listening to interviews. "They get a feeling for who the singer is as a person, what drives them as an artist, and what role music plays in their life," she added.

The range of films featured deals with myriad subjects, including serious issues such as war, revolution, old age, colonialism, and political oppression. "But even the heaviest film shows the importance of love, family bonds, and imagination," Krantz said. "So, these films constitute another important window into the Spanish-speaking culture." ■



Student Success Center undergoing a growth spurt

The Student Success Center opened in the fall of 2020 with a mission to help students connect, plan, act, and succeed. “The Center is a champion of campus collaboration, supporting every student’s needs and promoting a positive and connected experience,” explained Julia A. Franks, Shepherd’s director of student success and orientation programs. “Through success coaching, students engage in a one-to-one model to create individualized success plans.”

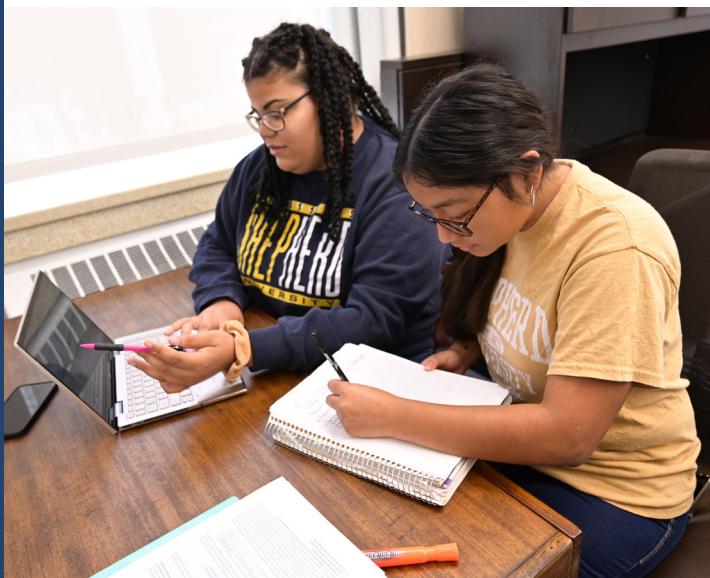
Just two years after opening its doors, the Center was experiencing a growing number of walk-ins, referrals, and Shepherd Success Academy students who needed to use the space. To help Franks and her staff meet this increased demand, the President’s Club stepped in to fund renovations to their existing space in the Student Center.

The area now features new meeting rooms, providing additional comfort and privacy for meetings between success coaches and students. “The renovations did not take away a signature component of the Student Success Center: the open study space available to all Shepherd students,” she noted. The study space, with its bright and welcoming atmosphere, now houses four desks, two whiteboards, a comfortable chair, and a bookshelf with free supplies for students.

Students can use these spaces as a quiet areas to attend online classes or virtual meetings. Additionally, campus peer success leaders can use both office spaces for their peer-to-peer meetings. Graduate assistants, interns, and practicum students can use these private spaces for project planning and day-to-day meetings.

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the Student Success Center assisted over 100 student walk-ins and referrals, with the number increasing weekly. “Thanks to the President’s Club, the Student Success Center has been truly enriched,” Franks said. “We have six meeting spaces and a study space to handle our overall workflow and our success coaches can engage with more students.”

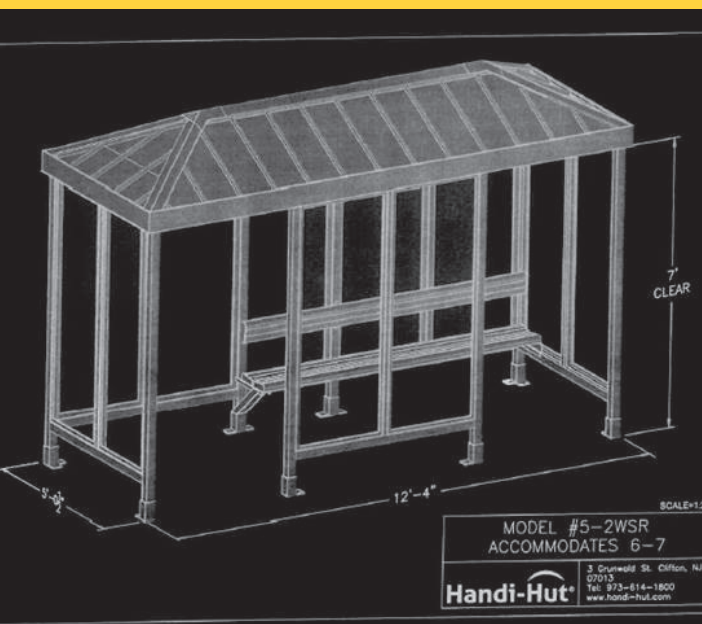
The Center’s programs include Shepherd Success Academy for first-year students as well as support for students on academic probation, student-athletes, international students, and veterans. ■



Yellowstone trip

Shepherd University students studying geology and ecology with Dr. Jeffrey Groff, professor of physics and chair of the Department of Environmental and Physical Sciences, were able to experience Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks thanks, in part, to the President's Club.

"The President's Club support we received reduced the out-of-pocket costs by about \$200 per student," Groff noted. "I strive to offer this course and trip at a cost as low as possible. I thank the President's Club for making this experience accessible to more students." ■



Bus shelter on East Campus

Shepherd University, in partnership with the Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority (EPTA), has provided weekday shuttle bus services between West Campus and East Campus since 2014. Fondly known as "Ram Force One" and the "Ram Express," these shuttles help commuters and residents make it to classes on time. "They provide safe and reliable transit which is especially crucial to our students with mobility challenges," explained Rachael Meads, Shepherd's director of student activities and leadership. "They also help ease parking congestion, providing access between the commuter parking areas on West Campus to the East Campus classrooms."

If you ask students to name a downside of this convenience, they will universally agree on the lack of protection from the rain, wind, and snow while they wait for the shuttle. Thanks to generous support from the President's Club, a new bus shelter will be installed on East Campus in front of Stutzman-Slonaker Hall during the summer of 2023, giving students a place to get out of the inclement weather.

The Student Government Association Executive Board worked with President Mary J.C. Hendrix and Zach Pollard from the Facilities Department to select an attractive, high-quality, ADA-accessible shelter with solar-powered lighting.

"As a student who relies on the EPTA shuttle bus daily, I am grateful that a shelter is being added to protect us from wind and rain," said Oli Pierce, a psychology major. "It is especially comforting to know that my backpack and laptop will be protected from the weather."

During the 2023-24 academic year, watch for a student-led campaign to raise funds for a matching shelter at H Lot on West Campus. ■

Shepherd's place in a fast-paced world

The Shepherd University College of Business, with funding from the President's Club, took initial steps to implement a long-term strategy to create cyberinfrastructure. The President's Club funded a proposal that was submitted to National Science Foundation's (NSF) Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure on March 1, 2023. The potential award would help upgrade Shepherd's research-critical cyberinfrastructure.

"We recognize that cybersecurity skills have become, and will remain, some of the most critical components of virtually all professional activities," said Dr. Ben Martz, dean of the College of Business (COB). "The COB is developing a multidisciplinary program that will frame traditionally non-technical fields in their technology contexts, examining them through the lenses of cybersecurity, risk management, and compliance law."

If funded by the NSF, the new program will combine the existing management information systems (MIS) curriculum with courses in applied cybersecurity—a rigorous, hands-on training—resulting in an MIS concentration in the Master of Business Administration and, eventually, in an interdisciplinary Master of Science in applied business.

"Ultimately, these activities could mature into an independent Center for Cybersecurity Studies focusing on public-private partnerships, and academic and commercial applications," explained Dr. Jarda Flidr, a research professor of business information systems who prepared the proposal.

The proposed project will deploy a new cyberinfrastructure, dedicated to data-driven research and cybersecurity practicums, and connect to the research and education (R&E) network called "Internet2"—a national consortium of more than 500 academic and research institutions. "This will make new services available to campus, and shape the evolution of the campus network core," Jarda explained. These improvements also will allow Shepherd to join the R&E community on collaborative

and network connectivity levels. The proposal includes monies for a cyberinfrastructure engineer to administer and maintain the new system. ■

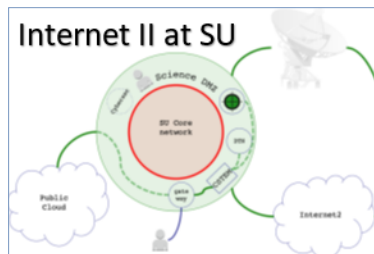


Figure 1: Science DMZ concept. An enclave dedicated to high-performance research applications isolated from the campus network enterprise core thus separating their diverging missions: performance and openness vs. constraints and security.

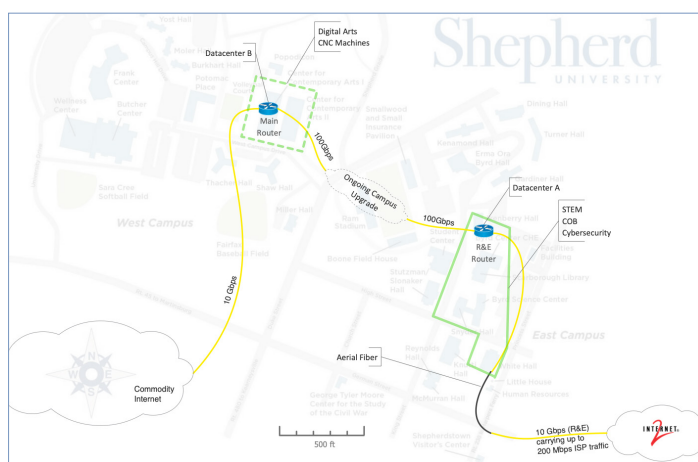


Figure 2: A top-level sketch of the resulting cyberinfrastructure upgrade. The Main Router was donated to Shepherd by Cisco Systems, Inc., and will be integrated into the ongoing campus network upgrade. The R&E Router and the related equipment is the result of the award, and will instrument Ikenberry Hall, Snyder Hall, Byrd Science (shown above) in Center, and White Hall. As a side effect, Shepherd University's bandwidth will increase from the current 1 Gbps to an aggregate of 20 Gbps.



Known for its strong commitment to musical excellence and its exciting shows, Shepherd's Ram Band, directed by Dr. Scott Hippensteel, is in great demand throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. The band provides musical entertainment at Shepherd home football games, tours regional high school football games, and participates in the annual Intercollegiate Marching Band Festival in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Funding from the President's Club, combined with donations to the Ram Band, purchased new sound and keyboard carts. These new carts transport and house the electronic equipment needed for Ram Band performances. ■

National Millennial and Gen Z Community trip and learning experience

Shepherd University, one of 44 colleges and universities involved in the National Millennial and Gen Z Community, had the opportunity to participate in a national conference in Washington, D.C., thanks to the President’s Club.

The mission of the Community is to create dialogue that broadens awareness and understanding, advances civility, and focuses on solutions. Shepherd University Professor of Communication Dr. Matt Kushin, along with Shepherd students Ethan Baker, Michea Dawson, and Emily Boyd, were among approximately 25 students from across the United States, India, and Colombia to attend the conference.

Students met with executives and leaders from AARP, WeberShandwick, the National Museum of American History, Nestlé, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of State, and the White House. In addition, they participated in a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) workshop with Dr. Jean Grow, Dr. Kevin Thomas, and Dr. Edward Timke, all from GROW, a DEI consultancy.

They took part in team-building exercises at the Spy Museum and in a leadership training session at the DC IMPROV. “They had

rich cultural experiences, interacting with rising young professionals from across the country and the students were able to network with fellow students and professionals,” Kushin noted.

Baker, a senior studying communication with a concentration in digital filmmaking, found the conference “an inspirational experience” and plans to pursue a career at Nestlé after touring the company’s headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. “While we had not previously met any of the other members, we quickly grew close and bonded through our frequent meals and meetings together,” he said. “I can definitely see myself working at Nestlé as a content development specialist.”

Dawson, a senior studying communication with a concentration in digital filmmaking, was apprehensive about making the trip but soon overcame her unease as she got to know the “warm and compassionate individuals” at the conference. “It was a transformative experience to be able to meet with government agencies like the U.S. Department of Transportation and big corporations like Nestlé,” she said. “This trip helped spark my passion for the communications field again and made me excited for what my life may hold after my graduation this spring.” ■

Shepherd University’s Popodicon, the historic home that serves as President Mary J.C. Hendrix’s business residence, is undergoing a second-floor restroom renovation thanks to generous donations from the President’s Club and the Friends of Popodicon (FOP), a group dedicated to restoring the home and gardens. FOP member Nicholas Landon of LRS, LLC in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, managed construction efforts with the assistance of FOP member and Shepherd alumnus Paul Wilmoth. Design efforts were overseen by FOP member and interior designer John D. Miller and FOP member and Shepherd alumna Pattie Wilmoth, with input on design and finish materials provided by President Hendrix and various FOP members.

The original layout of the second-floor restroom had a footprint of 9 feet-by-54 inches, which encompassed an acrylic shower stall, vanity, toilet, and open linen closet. By taking advantage of an unused closet in the adjacent room, the FOP was able to increase the restroom’s footprint to 10 feet-by-54 inches enabling them to incorporate a 3-by-4 foot tiled walk-in shower. The renovation project will include insulation for soundproofing, drywall, tile flooring, new cabinetry, granite countertops, and additional upgraded

finish materials. “This is a major improvement to the beauty and function of the second-floor bedrooms,” Miller said.

The University opened the beautiful home and grounds for weddings, birthday parties, and other formal events after receiving several requests to rent the venue. While the first floor is the main area for events, the second floor is available to serve as changing rooms and restrooms for bridal parties.

For more information about Popodicon, please visit www.shepherd.edu/popodicon. ■



Thank you for your support!



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