# TESTFIEL STATE

# **BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE** One Owl at a Time

Westfield State Foundation, Inc. 2020–2021 Impact Report









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### MEET THE 21ST PRESIDENT OF WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY, Dr. Linda Thompson

Upon coming to campus, Dr. Linda Thompson, Westfield's new president, looks at the big picture for a university that touches more lives.

"I began to think about how we connect with the state and community colleges in this region, to become a pipeline for those students to come here for degree completion, as well as master's degrees," says the veteran nurse, educator, administrator and advocate.

"One of the things in the back of my mind [coming here] is creating opportunities for people," Thompson says. "As the president, I can do that."

Thompson hopes to craft the kind of initiatives she did at UMass Boston's College of Nursing and Health Sciences and West Chester University of Pennsylvania: expanding programs and partnerships with other institutions, developing resources for scholarships, recruiting faculty and visiting scholars, and increasing campus diversity.

"I'm paying a lot of attention to how we can become one of the best regional universities, what I would call a premier university," she says.

Find out more about Dr. Thompson's vision by visiting the University website at westfield.ma.edu





**BETSY SCHEIBEL H'17** 

Dear Friends,

Who could have anticipated that, despite navigating a pandemic, we would realize our most successful fundraising year to date? We have achieved this milestone due to your unwavering support. It warms our hearts to know that, literally, your generosity will help us transform the lives of thousands of students.

This past year, we were able to assist students struggling with food, housing and transportation insecurities, brought on by the pandemic, by raising over \$50,000 for our Owls Helping Owls initiative to fund their immediate and critical needs. Our Criminal Justice alumni dug deep to establish a dedicated criminal justice scholarship, while Hockey alumni have helped make possible a dedicated locker room for our team. Your generosity in remembrance of Jerry Gravel, a professor, mentor, friend and coach who, for three decades, impacted the lives of students at Westfield State University will ensure that his passion for helping students is continued. An unprecedented planned gift has elevated our scholarship support to provide the first-ever dynamic four-year, \$10,000 a year scholarships to be awarded to high achieving students. Indeed, this gift, the Paul W. Dower Live Strong Scholarship, cements Westfield as a premier state institution in the Commonwealth.

This was also a time of transitions as we said good-bye and thank you to interim president Dr. Roy Saigo and his wife, Dr. Barbara Saigo and welcomed our 21st President, Dr. Linda Thompson who, in the short time she has been here, has set an ambitious agenda for the institution.

There are so many good things happening through the Westfield State Foundation. We hope you enjoy reading and learning more about the few that are being highlighted this year. It is always difficult to determine which stories to share with you as we find ourselves surrounded by generosity, good will and caring in our Westfield State community and beyond.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Betsy Scheebe Q

Betsy Scheibel H'17 Board Chair Westfield State Foundation, Inc.



**ERICA BROMAN** 

Erica Broman

Erica Broman, Ed.D. Vice President, Institutional Advancement Executive Director, Westfield State Foundation, Inc.



### THE INCREDIBLE IMPACT of a Thoughtful Gift

An avid outdoorsman, Paul Dower continued his adventures well into his later years. A favorite trip was canoeing James Bay, in the southern end of Canada's Hudson.

"It's about the last wilderness there is, where you can do just about whatever you want," Dower told the Springfield Republican in 2010 when he was 90 years old.

In a year marked by monumental challenges and changes, 2021 saw the implementation of one of Dower's last wishes, to help Westfield State students finish their undergraduate days and embark on their life's adventure.

With lifetime wealth acquired from a lifetime of investing, he spent his later days anonymously supporting the Last Mile Fund, which helps Westfield State students who just need a little extra financial assistance to get over the finish line of graduation.

When he died just days following his 100th A one-time student but not a graduate of birthday, Dower bequeathed close to \$4 Westfield State, Dower preferred anonymity million to Westfield State: a million to the during his lifetime, eschewing the notoriety Last Mile fund, another million to establish his beloved sister Catherine Dower, who the Paul W. Dower Live Strong Scholarship taught here from 1956 to 1990, received Fund, and the balance for a trust fund to be after she donated \$1 million to the University dispersed over the next five years. during her lifetime.

"He had a good heart," says Maria Perez '18, who only last year learned the name of the person who helped make completing her education possible.



MARIA PEREZ '18, Last Mile Fund Recipient

The Paul W. Dower Live Strong Scholarship Fund is the University's first full scholarship of \$40,000, granting \$10,000 per year for four years, awarded to high-achieving Westfield State students.



### ALUMS Giving Back

For an increasing number of Westfield State alumni, the university isn't simply just a part of their life history; it's a returning point in a cycle of helping others.

"My whole life has been about giving back. That's the way I was brought up," says Thomas H. Convery '78, a member of Westfield State's alumni relations team since 2015, who funds a scholarship for students committed to community service. A longtime volunteer for the Make-A-Wish Foundation and organizations including the Jimmy Fund and Local Heroes, Tom says, "The one thing I try to tell people is, every little bit helps."

Doing small things to make an impact is just the sort of thing that Nicole Erickson '23, the 2021 education major and recipient of the Convery Scholarship for Community Service, is raring to do.

"In ten years, I see myself running a classroom that will give students the freedom to explore, and I want to be able to aid other teachers to do the same," she says.

Receiving the Convery scholarship, the Mary & Herman MacDougall Scholarship, and gifts from the Westfield State Foundation and Class of 2008 "has alleviated a lot of stress for my family," Nicole says.

With Veta Daley '87 '91, paying it forward means passing the opportunity all the way down to the primary school level. A retired Springfield educator, she established a scholarship fund that supports students of color planning to teach in Springfield and guarantees them jobs through the Reach to Teach program.

"The next generation of teachers needs to impact students in urban areas," explains Daley. "Think about how powerful it would be if all of us decided to give back to our communities."

"Everything I'm doing right now is for my students," says Erick Zorrilla '22, the 2021 recipient of the Veta Daley Scholarship.

A transfer student to Westfield State, Zorrilla says the university is a good fit with his belief in racial equity and representation. Seeing teachers like him at the head of the class significantly benefits BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) students; this fuels his ambition to teach.

"This scholarship is going to have a lasting effect on my life. It's allowing me to get the right tools, the skills that I can give back to my students, to make them lifelong learners," he says.

Another case study in cycling back to help Westfield State grow is the late Edwin Abar, who graduated from Westfield State in 1968 with a degree in English and later returned to found the Mass Communication Program, teaching here for 35 years. Upon retiring from the university, Abar established the Edwin J. Abar/Kiwanis Communication Scholarship.

"He had a vision, and he dedicated his life and energy to making that dream a realization," says his widow Sylvia Abar. "When he retired, his desire was to have a scholarship, and he would love where it's been used."

The scholarship has "relieved a lot of the pressure of graduating and getting a job right away to pay off my student loan debt," says Tom Mespelli '22, who has set his focus on public service, with plans to teach English in Ecuador for the Peace Corps.

"I want to effectively share my inspiration, to make the world a better place," he says.



### **PARENTS** Give Back

"As the child of an immigrant working-class family, there wasn't a lot of extra money for philanthropy," says Ana Hebra Flaster, who is currently writing a book about her family's escape from Cuba in the 1960s.

The intervening years have provided many blessings, so after their daughter graduated from Westfield State in 2015, Ana and her husband Andy Flaster decided to support the university with a donor-advised fund.

"What particularly impressed us about Westfield, was, in addition to everything else, how so many of the kids that Natalia got to know were the first students in their family to go to college," says Andy, co-founder, managing partner and chief operating officer for Volition Capital in Boston.

"This really appealed to us, and is one of the major reasons we continue to support the school," he says. "Because education is so important, and that first kid can be the role model and the inspiration for everybody else in their network."

### A Conversation with Ana and Andy Flaster

### Why did your family pick Westfield **State University?**

Andy: So, our daughter Natalia knew she wanted to go into education, and Westfield has a great reputation as a school that delivers high-quality education graduates. She felt really at home when she visited the campus. When she was accepted —and she was accepted at all 13 schools she applied to (can you tell she was our first child?)—she chose Westfield because of the quality of the

wanted to, literally subsidize the tuition for program, the level of support that Westfield every student. But schools like Westfield could deliver to its students, and she felt State don't have that kind of endowment, and this student body was very down to earth. Ultimately, we left it up to her to decide, they're serving people, many of whom are but we can't say enough good things about first-generation college students. And they're her experience there. She did very well. She focused on teachers and [fields such as] really felt like she belonged, and the school criminal justice, people who are going to serve delivered on everything that she had hoped the public. Knowing how hard Ana's parents for. So we were thrilled. as immigrants worked, and how important education was to her family, we just want to Ana: On one of our first visits there, being support that.

typical parents standing in the main area of the campus looking around, not knowing where to go, I think we had four students stop to ask us how they could help us. That made such an impression on me. Just so friendly and kind. I thought, this is a place where Natalia will find not only great preparation for her field but also great friends, and she has indeed stayed very close to her college friends.

Ana: You never know just what your contribution will mean to someone. People finding their full potential, finding a career, What's your philanthropic origin story? those things don't just happen. It takes people contributing in many ways to reach that goal Ana: In college, I had loans and scholarships. When I graduated and right away started of a student having access to good-quality getting requests for donations, I admit I was education. Your contribution is going to shocked. It was foreign to me, these people mean a difference in not just their lives, but asking me for money. But as time went on, the lives of everybody they contact through and I got my feet under me, and Andy and I their careers. What better thing to do with started having the privilege of being able to a little extra cash, if you should be lucky participate in philanthropy, I understood. enough to have the funds? And if everybody I considered the scholarship funders and I does something, that's more opportunities thought: I don't even know anything about for people to make the world better. I don't them, but they were essential to me, and now mean to be corny, but these things don't just I can be helpful like that, too. happen. Institutions don't just happen.

### What made you decide to direct your giving to your daughter's alma mater, Westfield State University?

Andy: The places that need it are places like Westfield. The Ivy Leagues could, if they

### How might you make the pitch for other parents to give to Westfield State?

Andy: If you appreciate what the school has done for your children, and how it's positioned them in their careers, then it's a nice thing to help, to do that for others.

### Is there anything you'd like to add?

Ana: Only that, whatever Westfield is doing to create an environment of kindness and support and learning, keep doing it!

Westfield State Foundation and Alumni Association Scholarships



"The education that I have received from Westfield State will assist me along every step of the way."

CAMERON GANONG '23 CRIMINAL JUSTICE, POLITICAL SCIENCE





"This award will make it much more possible for me to achieve my dreams."

LYRIC LAMAGDELAINE '22 CRIMINAL JUSTICE. POLITICAL SCIENCE

Thomas H. Convery, Westfield State Foundation, Wawruck Academy, and Class of 2020 Scholarships



"These scholarships have allowed me to use my time to focus more on developing skills."

**MANINDER SINGH '22** ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, REGIONAL PLANNING

**President Frederick and** Carol Woodward Scholarship



"Because of donors like you, I am better equipped to continue in my chosen path." ERICA KEELEY '23

NURSING





# BUILDING A Brighter Future ONE OWL AT A TIME

Musical Theatre Guild, Carey Family, and Rick Martin Scholarships

"With this award, I'll be better able to focus on my academic pursuits without having to worry about how I'm going to be able to afford my education."

**HOLDEN NELSON '23** CHEMISTRY, MATHEMATICS

### Westfield State Foundation Scholarship



"Thank you for your investment in Westfield State students like me." **MARILYN MAISON '22** 

HEALTH SCIENCES



### **COACH JERRY GRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP** Honors His Legacy

Jerry Gravel established the men's track and field program when he arrived at Westfield State in 1969. A beloved mentor and "jokester," he served the longest coaching tenure in Westfield State varsity athletics and is the most successful track and field coach in university history. After his retirement in 1997, he was awarded faculty emeritus status as an associate professor of Movement Science. He was inducted into the Westfield State University Athletic Hall of Fame in 2004.

Shortly after Coach Gravel's passing in 2020, a group of track and field alumni made it their mission to create a scholarship in his honor. The group, led by John Whidden '86, Mark Aldam '85, Peter Davenport '80, and other track alumni, quickly got down to business. Their many efforts to connect with track and movement science alumni have raised nearly \$72,000 already to endow a scholarship in Coach Gravel's name. They aren't stopping there.

This dedicated group is no stranger to fundraising as they, working in partnership with Coach Gravel, had raised over \$118,000 for the Dan Doyle Memorial Scholarship. On September 11, 2021, the group also hosted the inaugural Jerry Gravel Golf Classic, with the proceeds supporting the new Jerry Gravel Scholarship, which hopes to provide two deserving sophomore students annually with \$4,000 each.

Track alumnus Bill Devine '74, recalls how important Coach Gravel was to him after his own father passed when he was just 16, describing him as a "surrogate father to all of us." Gravel was more than just a coach to his athletes; he was a mentor, role model, and friend. Now as WSU cross-country coach, Devine explained, "Coach Gravel's enthusiasm for the sport was infectious. I stand on the shoulders of those before me."

If you would like to give to the Jerry Gravel Memorial Scholarship, please visit westfieldalumni.org/makeagift. Select scholarships and then select the Jerry Gravel Memorial Scholarship. For additional information on how you might further Coach Gravel's legacy please contact Bill Hynes at whynes@westfield.ma.edu or 413-572-8647.

### PERSEVERANCE PAYS OFF with Criminal Justice Alumni Scholarship

More than three quarters of Westfield State students require financial aid. Despite many scholarships offered at Westfield State, a growing number of students still need assistance. A new scholarship endowed this year will help address that need. The Criminal Justice Alumni Scholarship will be awarded to at least two criminal justice students each year, helping them fulfill their community-minded goals of public service.

In 2016, the Criminal Justice Alumni Association kicked off a fundraising campaign to establish the Criminal Justice Alumni Scholarship, initially raising \$8,000. Criminal Justice Alumni Hall of Fame members also worked tirelessly to help create the scholarship. For the past four years, alumni and friends have facilitated the well-attended Hogan Golf Classic in Florida. Named after CJ Hall of Famer Bill Hogan '77, the tournament aims to providing an Owl networking opportunity.

Westfield State's criminal justice program is ranked as one of the best in Massachusetts bring resources to Westfield students while and with nearly 700 current students, it is one of the largest majors at the university. The Hogan Classics have been successful, but Efforts are underway to continue to grow the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a brief this fund to address the ever-present need. hiatus. Instead of a tournament, the Hogan Please consider joining this dedicated group Classic Golf Committee decided to redirect of alumni by making a meaningful gift to the their efforts and contributions to help endow scholarship fund. the Criminal Justice Alumni Scholarship.

If you would like to give, you may do so at The hard work and collaboration of numerous westfieldalumni.org/makeagift. Please alumni, including Marian McGovern '89, check the box that says "Other" and list the Kevin Queenin '70, Betsy Scheibel H'17, and Criminal Justice Alumni Scholarship. Steve Marcus '88, has brought this scholarship fund to \$35,000, and now endowed, can be awarded in perpetuity.



**BILL HOGAN '77** 

# **OWLS** 7HOCKEY

# HONOR THE TRADITION









### **ALUMNI AND DONORS** Fund New Hockey Locker Room

For the 2021-2022 hockey season, The Westfield Owls will finally have their own dedicated hockey locker room at their home rink, Amelia Park Arena. The new locker room will feature professionalstyle locker stalls for each player, video equipment for team instruction, and additional team storage.

Because of the generosity of alumni and donors, nearly \$60,000 has already been committed to the hockey locker room project. Curt Everett '79 shares his reason for giving, "I am proud to be a Westfield State Owl alumni hockey player and parent of two graduates from Westfield State. Helping future Owls was an easy decision," said Everett.

This project would not be possible without gracious donors, like Everett and other alumni, including Ralph Studley '00. Studley reflected, "It is hard to summarize how I feel about Westfield Hockey. If I had to put it into one word, it would be pride. Hockey was a massive part of my life as a kid growing up in Scituate, and it was something that I thought was over for me when I transferred high schools."

Fortunately, hockey was not over for Studley He found his community with Westfield State's hockey club team.

In the early and mid-2000s, Westfield hockey alumni united to form the Blueliners Club, which supported the fundraising effort that restored hockey to varsity status in 2008 after an 18-year hiatus. Peter Laviolette '86, Washington Capitals head coach and Owls Ha of Famer, helped spearhead the first Blueline: campaign and helped launch fundraising efforts for the hockey locker room project.

"When we took on the task of restarting the program, it seemed as like we had a mountain to climb. So many have committee



y.	so much to make hockey at Westfield a reality. Having been able to play a small part in that gives me tremendous pride," said Studley.
11	The new customized locker room will provide Westfield State players with an indispensable sense of pride in their community, all thanks to the support of numerous essential donors.
rs	If you would like to support this project, please contact either Dave Caspole, Associate Athletic Director for External Affairs at (413) 572-5433 or dcaspole@westfield.ma.edu or Marnie Dacko, Major Gifts Officer at
ed	(413) 572-8648 or mdacko@westfield.ma.edu.

### **OWLS** *Helping Owls*

Owls Helping Owls was established in March 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The onset of the pandemic led to the loss of student jobs, housing, technology, food access, and more. To address these needs, the campus community reached out to alumni, faculty, staff, and community members. The response was remarkable. To date, over \$75,000 has been raised, supporting the essential needs of nearly 90 students thus far. Owls Helping Owls is administered by a team led by Jennifer Propp, Ph.D., associate professor of social work, and Marjorie Rodríguez '15, G'16, TRiO student support services program coordinator.

"Students were unable to pay bills, were going hungry, were living in unsafe conditions due to lost housing, and feared they would have to drop out of school because they could no longer afford their education. Owls Helping Owls literally changed the life trajectory for many students, allowing them to continue their education," said Dr. Propp.

### An anonymous student reflects on their experience:

"Owls Helping Owls had a huge impact on me. I found myself depressed and stressed about how I could afford necessities and school supplies. If it weren't for these funds, I would not have been able to eat or do my schoolwork. There was a point in time where the floor in my bedroom caved and I lost a ton of my stuff, and my school stuff was destroyed. Owls Helping Owls helped me replace the things I needed to be successful. My GPA has since gone up. I couldn't be more grateful to have had access to this resource, and I hope someday I can donate to help another student the same way it helped me."

### Community of Caring

Before Owls Helping Owls was established, an interdisciplinary network of resources was available on campus. Faculty and staff from nearly a dozen departments played a role, and still play a role, in supporting students with the greatest needs. FACES, the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center, and the Common Goods Food Pantry are just a few of these organizations.

FACES (Fostering a Culture of Empowerment and Success), founded by Rodriguez, Propp and others, is a group that supports former foster and homeless youth by assisting with housing, food insecurity, and essential social-emotional and academic support.

"In response to the food insecurity crisis that students were experiencing on campus, the Interfaith Center in collaboration with an interfaith group of students and chaplains, along with faculty and staff, established the Common Goods Food Pantry located at the Second Congregational Church in 2016. This interfaith initiative has been and continues to be a valuable resource for anyone in need of food and other essential items," said Father Savage, Director and Catholic Chaplain at the Interfaith Center.

"Unfortunately, the long-term impact of the pandemic on our students remains, and we continue to rely on these funds to help those who are still experiencing insecurities. We are so appreciative for the ongoing donations to this fund so we can continue to make a difference," said Dr. Propp.

If you would like to support Owls Helping Owls, please visit **westfieldalumni.org**/ **makeagift** and select Owls Helping Owls | Student Emergency Fund.









ALUMNI, PARENTS, STUDENTS, & FRIENDS FROM 36 STATES made a gift to Westfield State



IN SCHOLARSHIP AID TO **260 DESERVING STUDENTS** 





## **AN IMPACTFUL YEAR BECAUSE OF YOU**



Thank you for donating!

## WESTFIELD STATE FOUNDATION, INC.

(A COMPONENT OF WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY)

### **Statements of Financial Position**

Assets: Cash and equivalents Restricted cash Unconditional promises to give, net Investments Other assets Property and equipment, net Property held for future development

**Total Assets** 

Liabilities: Accounts Payable and accrued expen Deferred revenue Agency funds held

**Total Liabilities** 

**Net Assets:** Without donor restrictions With donor restrictions

**Total Net Assets** 

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** 

**SCHOLARSHIPS** 

June 30, 2021

### **ASSETS**

2021	2020
\$ 299,930	216,693
699,521	119,755
188,922	300,747
16,607,203	10,738,776
2,470	8,362
56,299	66,054
<u>360,877</u>	<u>360,877</u>
<u>\$18,215,222</u>	<u>\$11,811,264</u>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

nses	2,118	3,264
	12,660	17,420
	<u>261,762</u>	<u>228,529</u>
	<u>\$276,540</u>	<u>\$249,213</u>

\$456,146	\$421,910
17,482,536	11,140,141
<u>17,938,682</u>	<u>11,562,051</u>
<u>\$18,215,222</u>	<u>\$11,811,264</u>

OPPORTUNITY	GIFT
<b>Westfield Fund</b> Unrestricted (Area of Greatest Need), Financial Assistance, and Internships	ANY
Student Scholarships	ΑΝΥ
Sponsor-A-Student	\$1,000
Sponsor-An-Intern	\$2,500
Travel Abroad Experience	\$1,000+
Owls Helping Owls/ Student Emergency Fund	ANY
Owl Club Athletics	ANY
Last Mile Fund	\$1,000+
Endowed Scholarship	\$15,000+
Albert And Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center	ANY
Common Goods Food Pantry	ANY
<b>FSSN</b> (Fostering Student Success Network) <i>Supporting F.A.C.E.S.</i>	ANY
Bequest Intention	ANY
Charitable Gift Annuity	\$50,000+

For more information, contact Bonnie Clark Hanson at 413-572-8631, bclark@westfield.ma.edu or visit westfieldalumni.org/foundation.

# **77**

I have a family in you and you have now helped ease my financial burden. Thank you endlessly for your support on all levels, including financial.

**LISHA LOPEZ '23** 

### YOU MAKE the difference!

### YOUR IMPACT

Opens doors for current students by supporting critical philanthropic priorities of Westfield State.

An impactful way to make a difference while honoring a family member, friend, or colleague or supporting programs and causes that are meaningful to you.

Support a single student with a one-time scholarship award in your name or the name of a loved one. (We will share with you the name of your student and the impact of your gift.)

Support a deserving student's passion for real world practice by underwriting a powerful semester long experience.

Sponsor a student's, once-in-a-lifetime experience, as they immerse themselves in a foreign culture for a semester. Many of our students have only dreamed of this opportunity!

A fund to support the essential needs of our students facing unforeseen financial hardships.

Aid the Westfield State Owl Club in support of all teams.

Many of our seniors struggle with finances or unforeseen obstacles; this fund comes at the critical "last mile" to graduation, assuring a pathway for the student to complete their degree.

Generate income in perpetuity by naming a fund for whatever purpose you chose.

Directly benefits the programming of the Interfaith Center as they support our Westfield State students.

Directly supports our campus food pantry and our students struggling with food insecurity.

Committed to supporting current and former foster youth and homeless youth.

Bequeath a portion of your will, insurance, or retirement asset to be used for any of the aforementioned purposes.

Support any designation while receiving tax guaranteed income for life.





The Westfield State Foundation, Inc. is profoundly grateful to our many donors. Please find our Honor Roll of Donors at **westfieldalumni.org/honorroll** If interested in supporting Westfield State students, please contact Bonnie Clark Hanson at 413-572-8631 or bclark@westfield.ma.edu for information.

westfieldalumni.org/foundation