



YOUR PASSION **OUR PURPOSE**

2024-25 **FOUNDATION REPORT**



VINCENNES UNIVERSITY
FOUNDATION



VU FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gregg Sturm, **CHAIR**
Conya Wampler '84, **TREASURER**
Pat Carter '69, **SECRETARY**

Kirk Bouchie '78
Mike A. Burch '82
Brent Courter '91
Kristi Deetz '89
Harold Dumes
Mollie Ewing
David Frette
Dr. Chuck Johnson, Jr.
Kirk Koenig '87
Ross Martin '04
Will McCormick
Rob McLin '84
Joyce Memering '68
David Miller '59
Lonnie Moore
Brenda Reetz '99
Helen Seirp '95
Brent Stuckey
Cassie Vanderpool '01
Dr. William R. Vaughn '77
Linda Waldroup
Charles "Shorty" Whittington
Jayne Bierhaus Young '76
Jerry Zeigler '93

LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Seventy years ago, in 1955, our Foundation was created with a simple but bold vision: to serve as a bridge between opportunity and achievement. Since then, each decade has brought new challenges, fresh ideas, and doors that opened wider because of your steadfast belief in what is possible.

Together, we have responded to times of change – expanding access to education when resources were scarce, offering hope when obstacles seemed insurmountable, and creating opportunity for students who dared to dream beyond their reach. From our earliest scholarships to today's diverse programs, the Foundation has grown because of you – your passion for learning, for service, for creating brighter futures.

That passion has shaped our purpose. Your passion, our purpose is more than a theme; it is the story of this Foundation. It is the energy that fuels student success, the spark that ignites innovation, and the steady light that keeps our mission focused, even as the world shifts around us.

Thank you for making these seven decades possible. Your support is not just part of our history; it is the foundation of our future.

With gratitude and hope,

Kristi
VU Class of 1989



Kristi Deetz
Executive Director

LET'S CONNECT!

✉ **Vincennes University Foundation, Inc.**
Louis O. Dayson Center
1002 N. First Street, Vincennes, IN 47591

✉ vufoundation@vinu.edu

☎ 812.888.4510

🌐 www.vinu.edu/foundation

📘 www.facebook.com/VUAlumniAssociationandFoundation/

🌐 www.linkedin.com/company/vincennes-university-alumni-association

FOUNDATION AND ALUMNI TEAM



Aaron Selby
Director of Alumni
Engagement



Leslie Kidwell
Director of
Development



Steve Beaman
Associate Director of
Communications and
Donor Relations



Austin Welp
Assistant Director of
Special Projects and
VUJ Foundation



Sara Young
Account Analyst

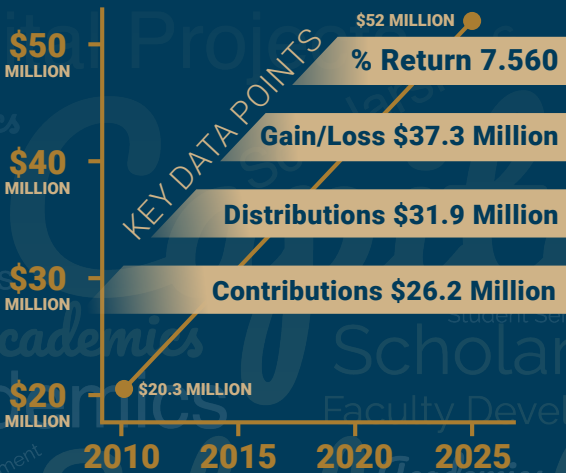


Dartanyan Abney
Coordinator of Media
and Events

FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT

JUST OVER \$52 MILLION

Cumulative Totals 2010-2025



Over the last 15 years, our Foundation Endowment has experienced remarkable growth – more than doubling in size. In 2010, the portfolio began with a market value of \$20.3 million. Since then, through a combination of strong market performance and the generous contributions of supporters like you, the portfolio has continued to strengthen. Market activity during this time added \$37.3 million, while contributions totaled \$26.2 million.

Today, we are proud to share that as of June 2025, after accounting for all contributions, distributions, and investments, the total value of our endowment stands at \$52 million.

This growth is a testament not only to wise stewardship but also to the trust and generosity of donors who believe in our mission.

• OVER •

700

STUDENTS
RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIPS
TOTALING OVER

\$1.2 MILLION

MAKING AN IMPACT ON LIVES



VINCENNES UNIVERSITY
FOUNDATION

\$2.78 MILLION IN GIFTS & PLEDGES

1,134 DONORS MADE 3,425 GIFTS

LEVELS OF GIVING

59% OF GIVING
BY INDIVIDUALS

24% BY CORPORATIONS

17% BY FOUNDATIONS

\$10,000 AND UP 3.2%

\$5,000-9,999 1.5%

\$1,000-4,999 6.5%

\$500-999 5.2%

\$499 AND UNDER 83.4%

THE 4 COLUMNS OF GIVING

The Foundation is committed to supporting Vincennes University in achieving its strategic objectives. By fostering collaboration and engagement, we aim to create a lasting legacy that benefits current and future generations of students. Together, we can empower Vincennes University to reach new heights and make a meaningful impact in our communities and beyond.

COLUMN 1 SCHOLARSHIPS

At Vincennes University, we promise to deliver a quality education at an affordable price, yet students still face financial gaps and your support makes all the difference. By investing in scholarships—flexible or designated—you can ease the cost of tuition, housing, and supplies while opening doors for students today and tomorrow. Your gift empowers them to pursue their dreams and build brighter futures.



At the Foundation's September Donor and Student Scholarship Breakfast, the room was filled with heartfelt gratitude. Students shared personal messages of thanks, expressing just how much donor support has impacted their lives.



Thank you very much for this generous scholarship. The gravity of this donation is not lost on me; it will go far to help me reach my goals in college to achieve my teaching degree so I can impact the young minds in the world. VU is where my mother attended school and is close to home for me, for those reasons, plus the small class sizes and the amazing teaching program, I have chosen to pursue my education there.

JADAYA F.

My whole life I have wanted to be a nurse, and to put it simply the timing was never quite right, but now going back to school as a 35-year-old non-traditional student this scholarship helps in more ways than anyone can imagine. It gives me hope that one day in the future I will be able to change lives and make a difference and that's all I have ever wanted.

CHELSEA O.

This scholarship makes a real difference in my college experience because aviation is not only demanding academically but also financially. By easing that burden, I can put more of my focus and energy into becoming the best pilot I can be. As the first in my family to attend university, receiving this support is especially meaningful as it represents more than just financial help, it represents opportunity, hope, and the chance to achieve something that once felt out of reach.

JANEL M.

COLUMN 2 STUDENT SUCCESS

Students at Vincennes University are proving what's possible with the right support. Many come to us with different levels of preparation, but with caring faculty, staff, and a welcoming campus community, they're finding success—our on-time graduation rate is nearly twice the state and national average. We're committed to building on that momentum with programs that meet students' unique needs, remove barriers, and open pathways to brighter futures.

I wasn't sure I would be able to graduate this December. I've struggled to find the funds to continue my education, and this scholarship was exactly what I needed to stay on track. My goal is to become a psychiatric nurse practitioner so I can help others. It's hard to put into words what it means to have someone believe in me. Aside from the unwavering support of my husband, I haven't had many people in my corner. That's why this scholarship means more than I can express. A thank you doesn't seem enough but truly thank you!

LINDSEY M.

This is actually the first scholarship that I have ever been awarded. I'm majoring in mechanical engineering and my goals after graduation are simply to provide a better life for my three young daughters. I am a single father and have my children primarily. By showing them that I can accomplish things at this age and persevere I hope that it will help them in their futures.

MATTHEW H.

COLUMN 3

UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE

VU is all about preparing students for real careers in fast-changing fields. As technology and equipment evolve, we're making sure students have the hands-on training they need for tomorrow's jobs. Our dedicated faculty lead the way, providing the education and support that set VU apart. On our Vincennes campus, we're reimagining facilities like welding and health sciences to match the excellence of our programs—so students always have the best faculty, facilities, and tools to succeed.

When you give, everyone gains.

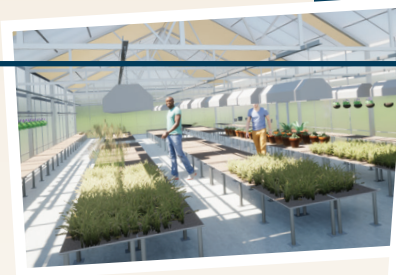
The Whittington Endowed Faculty Fund is all about meeting one of the biggest challenges colleges face today – recruiting and keeping exceptional talent in highly competitive fields. By supporting faculty positions in the College of Technology and the College of Business and Public Service, the fund has already provided stipends to five key positions. This support helps VU attract and retain outstanding professors who inspire students, strengthen programs, and prepare future leaders in areas that matter most to our communities.

One step closer to the dream of a new greenhouse.

The dream of a new Greenhouse, a true “living lab” for students to explore horticulture, agriculture, and hands-on science, moved one big step closer thanks to a generous \$50,000 gift from the Knox County Farm Bureau. It is the first installment of a \$100,000 pledge.

“Our local Farm Bureau board was fortunate enough to have the funds to make such a donation. Farm Bureau strives to support our local community activities and growth for the next generation that will lead this community,” shared Gene Flaningam, Knox County President IN Farm Bureau.

The Greenhouse will give students an opportunity to learn



The Ro and Shorty Whittington Endowed Professorship has provided invaluable support for our students and faculty, driving innovation in curriculum development, experiential learning, and industry engagement. These initiatives are not only shaping the future of our Agribusiness students but also contributing to the broader goal of building more sustainable, resilient communities. We are deeply grateful for the generosity of Ro and Shorty Whittington, whose vision and commitment to education continue to make a lasting impact on our program and beyond.

JENNIFER STEFFY, AGRIBUSINESS/HORTICULTURE

This support has given me the opportunity to focus on developing innovative programs, designing real-world lab projects, and investing more time in my students' success. With fewer outside commitments, I have been able to create hands-on learning experiences that prepare students for real-world challenges, enriching their educational journey and enhancing the quality of education we provide.

JERAMY SMITH, DIESEL TECH (CUMMINS)



in ways that textbooks can't capture – nurturing plants, testing soil, and seeing firsthand the connections between science, sustainability, and community. It's a place where curiosity and opportunity will grow side by side.

This gift builds on the University's \$250,000 pledge and other fundraising efforts, bringing the campaign to 75% of its goal. With momentum growing, the vision of the Greenhouse is nearly a reality – made possible by partners like Knox County Farm Bureau who believe in investing in tomorrow's leaders.

Vincennes University is on the brink of completing the largest project in our campus history—the new Center for Health Sciences and Learning Innovation. This is more than a building—it's where students will learn, grow, and launch their futures.

YOU CAN BE PART OF THIS MILESTONE THROUGH THE VU BRICK CAMPAIGN.

Your gift to what is closest to your heart—scholarships, academics, athletics, or health sciences—earns you a commemorative engraved paver, permanently placed outside the Center. It's a lasting way to honor a loved one, celebrate your Trailblazer pride, or leave your own legacy.

Join us today. Place your paver, make your mark, and be part of a story that will inspire generations.



COLUMN 4 STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND ENRICHMENT

College is where students discover themselves, explore new ideas, and connect with people from around the world, an experience especially meaningful for VU students. With your support, we can expand programs like study abroad, exchanges, spring break experiences, competitions, conferences, and field opportunities. These opportunities enrich academics, introduce students to diverse perspectives, and help them develop the skills and confidence to succeed in life and their careers.

Transforming Classrooms into Adventures

Vincennes University students recently turned Iceland, the Land of Fire and Ice, into their ultimate classroom. Nine students, guided by three VU professors, hiked waterfalls, kayaked among glaciers, swam in thermal rivers, and explored volcanic landscapes—all while studying geology, wildlife, and Icelandic culture firsthand. As Andrew Corless, Biology Department Chair, explained, "These trips represent a unique and transformative opportunity for students. They are designed to deepen their understanding of the world and promote significant personal growth."

"Iceland was very exciting, it was one of the best experiences at VU, and it was a wonderful opportunity," said Eden Elpers, Earth Science Club President. "VU was able to give me the amazing opportunity of going to Iceland for a small price while also learning."

These students not only gained knowledge, but created memories that will last a lifetime. "The trip was an incredible chance to see a landscape I've never gotten to experience...This was a great opportunity to interact with unique people, particularly those involved in research," shared one student. Made possible through fundraising and generous donor support, this expedition exemplifies how VU transforms education into adventure, sparking curiosity, broadening horizons, and inspiring the next generation of scientists and explorers.

Through the generosity of our donors, Vincennes University continues to build on a proud legacy of forging global connections; blazing new trails, strengthening partnerships with schools, colleges, and communities in Japan, China, Mongolia, and beyond. These relationships bring the world to our campus, enrich the lives of our students, and ensure that every Trailblazer benefits from a truly global education.

DR. CHUCK JOHNSON, PRESIDENT VINCENNES UNIVERSITY



During the recent Chu Scholars Jubilee Reunion, the alumni recreated their graduation photo with President Johnson.



SURPASSING OUR GOALS,

on behalf on the Vincennes University
Foundation and Board of Directors,

we wish to share a heartfelt

THANK YOU

to everyone who gave their
energy, talent, and resources to
support our 5th Annual
#BlazersGIVE Day!

Your dedication helped make
this day a success, and we truly
appreciate your efforts.

We encourage you to
Save-The-Date and
join us as we change
student lives in 2026!



SAVE-THE-DATE
APRIL 2ND
VU'S DAY OF GIVING





Lothian Skelton reviews blueprints with Andrew Young, VU Director of Architectural Services during a recent visit to campus.

LOTHIAN AND RED SKELTON GALLERY OF FINE ART

This November, the dream of Lothian Skelton will become a reality with the opening of the **Lothian and Red Skelton Gallery of Fine Art at Vincennes University**.

The project was made possible by Lothian's **\$4 million gift to the Vincennes University Foundation**, a testament to her passion for honoring her late husband, legendary comedian and Vincennes native Red Skelton. Lothian recently visited campus to see the progress firsthand.

"For Red, the Red Skelton Performing Arts Center was a dream come true, but for me, the Lothian and Red Skelton Gallery of Fine Art makes my dream come true," she said.

The new **7,200-square-foot gallery** expands the Red Skelton Museum of American Comedy, creating a permanent home for Red's artwork and ensuring that his humor, artistry, and legacy continue to inspire generations.

Lothian's generosity is a reminder that every gift – big or small – has the power to preserve legacies, create joy, and bring dreams to life.



Vincennes University
Alumni Community Series

25-26 SEASON

All shows begin at 7:30pm EDT

Cellovoci
Friday, November 14, 2025

Michael Cavanaugh
A Merry Rockin' Christmas
Saturday, December 13, 2025

Bond! James Bond
Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra
Ft. Dan Domench, Chloe Lowery, and the VU Music Dept
Friday, February 13, 2026

The Barricade Boys
"Broadway Party" Starring London's Leading Men From
Les Miserables
Saturday, February 28, 2026

Resurrection - A Journey Tribute
Friday, March 20, 2026

Believe - The Cher Show
Friday, April 24, 2026

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!
812-888-4354
vinu.edu/communityseries

EVENTS

VU HOMECOMING
NOVEMBER 1, 2025
Vincennes Campus

GIVING TUESDAY & LAST DAY OF BRICK OFFER
DECEMBER 2, 2025
All Sites

SURVEYING ALUMNI EVENT
JANUARY 28, 2026
Top Golf • Fishers, Indiana

CELEBRATION OF GIVING DINNER
APRIL 16, 2026
Vincennes Campus

BLAZERS GIVE DAY
APRIL 2, 2026
vinu.edu/blazersgive

TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON:




VU SOCIETY PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION

SPIRIT OF MAC GOLF CLASSIC

VU SURVEYING ALUMNI GOLF EVENT

ALUMNI REUNIONS

FOLLOW US! for information and updates about upcoming events.

-  www.vinu.edu/foundation
-  www.facebook.com/VUAlumniAssociationandFoundation/
-  www.Linkedin.com/company/vincennes-university-alumni-association

YOUR PASSION. OUR PURPOSE.

WAYS TO GIVE

Providing high-quality teaching and excellence in education is at the core of Vincennes University, allowing students to blaze their own trail to success. When your passion meets our purpose, transformative change happens. Options for your impact on this change include annual support, endowed scholarship support, leaving a legacy, making honorary and memorial gifts, as well as corporate and foundation gifts.

TORCHBEARER

Vincennes University Foundation is thrilled to launch a new level of giving, exclusive for those who give \$1,000.00 to the Blazers Give Fund - The Torchbearer!

A Torchbearer is a donor who has a passion for Vincennes University and seeks to inspire others through their generosity. A Torchbearer, by definition, is someone who carries the light, leading the way and illuminating the path for others to follow. Through your gift to the Blazers Give Fund, you embody this spirit, serving as catalysts for positive change and innovation at VU.

RECURRING GIFTS

Make a difference today, and throughout the year, by making your gift recurring!

- Easier on your budget
- Easy to set up
- No need for reminders, just set it and forget it
- Consistent, steadfast support for VU

Just go to vinu.edu/give and choose the Recurring Donation option – it's that easy!



SCAN HERE

THE VU SOCIETY AND VU SOCIETY BUSINESS DIVISION

The VU Society and VU Society Business Division are honorary giving societies recognizing donors giving unrestricted funds to the VU Foundation in supporting the educational mission of VU. Giving to the VU Society fund allows your generous unrestricted gifts ensures quality teaching, programming, scholarship, and all aspects of the university are fully supported.

Visit vinu.edu/foundation for details.

BUILD YOUR LEGACY

Ignite your planned giving journey by allowing us to help you create a legacy at Vincennes University. By sharing your intended planned gift with us, you are invited to be a member of the William Henry Harrison Society, VU's honorary legacy society. By including a gift to the VU Foundation within your overall estate plans, you are preserving the legacy of VU and advancing the University's mission while earning tax benefits in return.

Contact Leslie Kidwell, Director of Development, at lkidwell@vinu.edu or 812-888-6941 to discuss further.

Gifts to the Vincennes University Foundation are deductible when included among your itemized deductions on your federal income tax return. In addition, Indiana adjusted gross income tax law provides that you may take a credit against your state tax.



VINCENNES UNIVERSITY
FOUNDATION

