College of Arts and Sciences

“Northwest’s science department has amazing faculty members who instill the values of success and leadership. They’re highly trained and qualified in their specific subjects and constantly strive to make sure students are progressing and comprehending the material. They not only prepare us for success, they prepare us for life.”

Chris Rosenthal, senior ecology major

The College of Arts and Sciences, the largest college at Northwest Missouri State University, is integral in providing students and the region with cultural enrichment opportunities and science skills that make a far-reaching difference.

Northwest alumni and friends gave $1.6 million to the College's initiative during The Campaign for Northwest, exceeding the $1 million goal established at the onset of the campaign.

One project made possible from an anonymous donation to The Campaign for Northwest is the creation of a studio theatre. The Black Box Studio Theatre will be located immediately to the south of the Performing Arts Center. The new theatre will accommodate a variety of performance needs and will serve as a studio classroom.

“The Black Box Studio Theatre will have a direct and lasting impact on students, faculty and theatre patrons for years to come,” said Dr. Charles McAdams, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “Without the support from this donor during The Campaign for Northwest, the College would not have been able to have such a facility.”

Laboratory classes, field experiences and online course components in the College of Arts and Sciences complement the traditional classroom setting, enabling students to put into immediate practice the concepts and understandings derived from the classroom.

“I have been involved in several activities outside of the classroom that really gave me a chance to make independent decisions and to show my leadership skills,” said Chris Rosenthal, an ecology major from Kansas City. “My activities included population censuses, pollution research and tutoring students. Doing more than what is expected really gives me a sense of pride in myself and my school.”

Northwest faculty are currently engaged in many exciting initiatives in the arts and sciences. New degree programs in biotechnology, nanoscale science and geographic information science are examples of cutting-edge programs that have been created since the inception of The Campaign for Northwest. In fact, Northwest's online master's in geographic information science was the first such program in the country and includes students from 29 states and Japan.

In addition, the campaign has supported the College by providing scholarships, new laboratory equipment for faculty and students and funding for art shows.

“I have always been more supportive of items related to education versus leisure,” said Linda Borgedalen Baer, a 1983 graduate from Scottsdale, Ariz. Baer provided financial support to enable Northwest to acquire a 10,000-year-old mastodon skull recently discovered in Nodaway County and now the centerpiece in Northwest's new Museum of Life Sciences. “I like the idea of supporting science and the arts and exposing students to a broader array of activities.”

Based on the overwhelming response to this component of the campaign, Baer wasn’t the only Bearcat who has a passion for the College of Arts and Sciences.

“I believe the capital campaign was successful because people could see they were supporting a credible cause, and the support requested was reasonable,” Baer said. ❖
Northwest Missouri State University was founded as a teacher’s college, and today it holds true to the tradition – preparing students to be teachers, counselors and administrators for the nation’s school systems. Teacher education started as the roots of Northwest more than 100 years ago and has grown into the premier professional education program in the region.

Northwest alumni and friends gave $1.7 million toward the College of Education and Human Services/Horace Mann Lab School component of The Campaign for Northwest, more than $700,000 above the original goal.

There are a number of programs within the College of Education and Human Services that have been funded in part by The Campaign for Northwest, including renovations to the Horace Mann gymnasium and additional stipends for international travel/international student teaching. Campaign funds also will be used for the future construction of a new Horace Mann building.

“Campaign funding has assisted with the new teacher induction program, which was a great success,” said Dr. Max Ruhl, dean of the College. “An English Language Learning program to assist schools as they educate non-English speaking students also has been established and is quickly becoming the largest such program in the state.”

One project Ruhl is most pleased about is the creation of the Ploghoft Diversity Lecture Series. This program enables the College to bring noted lecturers to campus at least twice each year. Recent lecturers include Wilma Mankiller, the first woman to serve as chief of the Cherokee nation, Robert Williams, a noted physician and black studies author who coined the term Ebonics, and Chauncey Veatch, a national teacher of the year.

“The establishment of the lecture-ship series was important to me and my family because we have lived with many expressions of diversity and know that our nation depends upon diversity for its strength,” said Dr. Milton Ploghoft ’49, who with his wife, Zella, established the Ploghoft Diversity Lecture Series.

During The Campaign for Northwest, the College began its outreach to Native Americans. The centerpiece of this effort has been an annual powwow in Bearcat Arena. A significant endowment has resulted to provide scholarships for Native American students due to the generosity of a Northwest alumnus.

Since the campaign’s inception, one of the most advanced assessment systems in the nation has been developed by the College. The system allows the College to admit and advise students based on a multiple measures approach. This program played a part in Northwest’s selection as the 2006 Christa McAuliffe Award Winner. This national award recognizes excellence in teacher education.

Numerous existing programs have found renewed support through the campaign. The urban internship programs offered through the Curriculum & Instruction Department and the outdoor challenge course at Mozingo Lake created by the Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance Department are among these, as is the new graduate center in Liberty.

“The funds the College receives from generous alumni and friends will position Northwest to further continue to attract and retain star faculty and top students,” Ruhl said, “ultimately helping promising students fulfill their dreams.”

“I’m involved in the Student Missouri State Teachers Association at Northwest, a great organization that connects us with professionals who help develop our plans for teaching and administrators who teach us what they are looking for in an educator. Because of these opportunities and the inspiring teachers I’ve had, I believe Northwest is preparing me for success.”

Stephanie Malter, a senior elementary education major from Malta Bend
“The importance of diversity can’t be understated. From the time students arrive on campus, the atmosphere should be one that puts them in contact with as many people from different places, backgrounds and opinions as possible.”

Jeffrey Foot, Director of International Affairs

As the United States’ population becomes increasingly diverse, so too has Northwest Missouri State University’s. Today, more than 42 states and 40 countries are represented at Northwest – quite a stretch from the University’s original 19-county catchment area.

For the University to remain competitive in attracting a diverse student body, advancing the University’s diversity efforts became a major component of The Campaign for Northwest.

Since its opening in 1998, the Intercultural and International Center has worked to foster an educational environment in which students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds can come together and share, learn, grow and enjoy the experiences and contributions each has to offer.

The $200,000 raised for the IIC during the campaign will enhance scholarship opportunities for multicultural and international students as well as provide assistance in recruitment.

“To have students develop critical thinking skills, you need to have people who come from many different places,” said Jeffrey Foot, director of international affairs. “In a more concrete sense, it gives students the cross-cultural communication skills needed to allow them to work with many different people.”

The Society of International Ambassadors is a noteworthy project that resulted from the capital campaign, and it holds great potential for support of international programs at Northwest.

The Friends of International Students program pairs Northwest international students with “friends” in the community. These volunteers are willing to spend time with the students and assist them with their transition to Northwest and the Maryville community.

“This program gets students out in the community meeting people and seeing what an American home looks like,” Foot said. “For a lot of international students, if they never get the chance to get into a home and enjoy a meal that someone’s cooked, their understanding of American food is what they buy at a fast food restaurant.”

Currently, the IIC has created a comprehensive plan targeting markets that have the desire to come to the United States. The primary recruitment efforts currently include India, China, Malaysia, Nepal, Korea, Japan, Mexico and Turkey. However, with increased support, the University could increase its recruiting presence in Central and South America, Africa and untapped markets in Asia and Europe.

“Bringing excellent students to Northwest raises the bar for others,” he said, “and the international students benefit from the respect, challenge and environment excellent students bring.”

Once the international students become Northwest students, Foot said there are many social opportunities for them to join groups such as the International Students Organization, Indian Students Association, Asian Students Association and Middle Eastern Students Association.

The IIC also supports student organizations focused on minority students from the United States such as the Alliance of Black Collegians and the Hispanic American Leadership Organization.

“Our multicultural student organizations are very active, and I hope they’ve moved people along the awareness continuum from awareness and tolerance to appreciation and respect,” Foot said.

Furthermore, Northwest participates in several international student and professor exchange programs that offer the opportunity to study and teach abroad.