

# A FUTURE DEFINED BY VOLUNTEERS

**YOU ARE SHAPING UT'S NEXT ERA OF EXCELLENCE**

FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 IMPACT REPORT



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE

# POWERED BY VOLUNTEERS

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**Tennessee Volunteers have contributed a historic \$581 million in philanthropic support—an unprecedented milestone that is accelerating UT's impact for Tennessee and beyond.**

**More than 70,300 donors** helped advance UT's land-grant mission and strengthen lives and communities across our state.

**More than \$170 million in new commitments was added to UT's endowment**, strengthening long-term flexibility to meet emerging needs and elevate the Volunteer experience.





**70,300+**  
DONORS



**\$581M+**  
RECEIVED



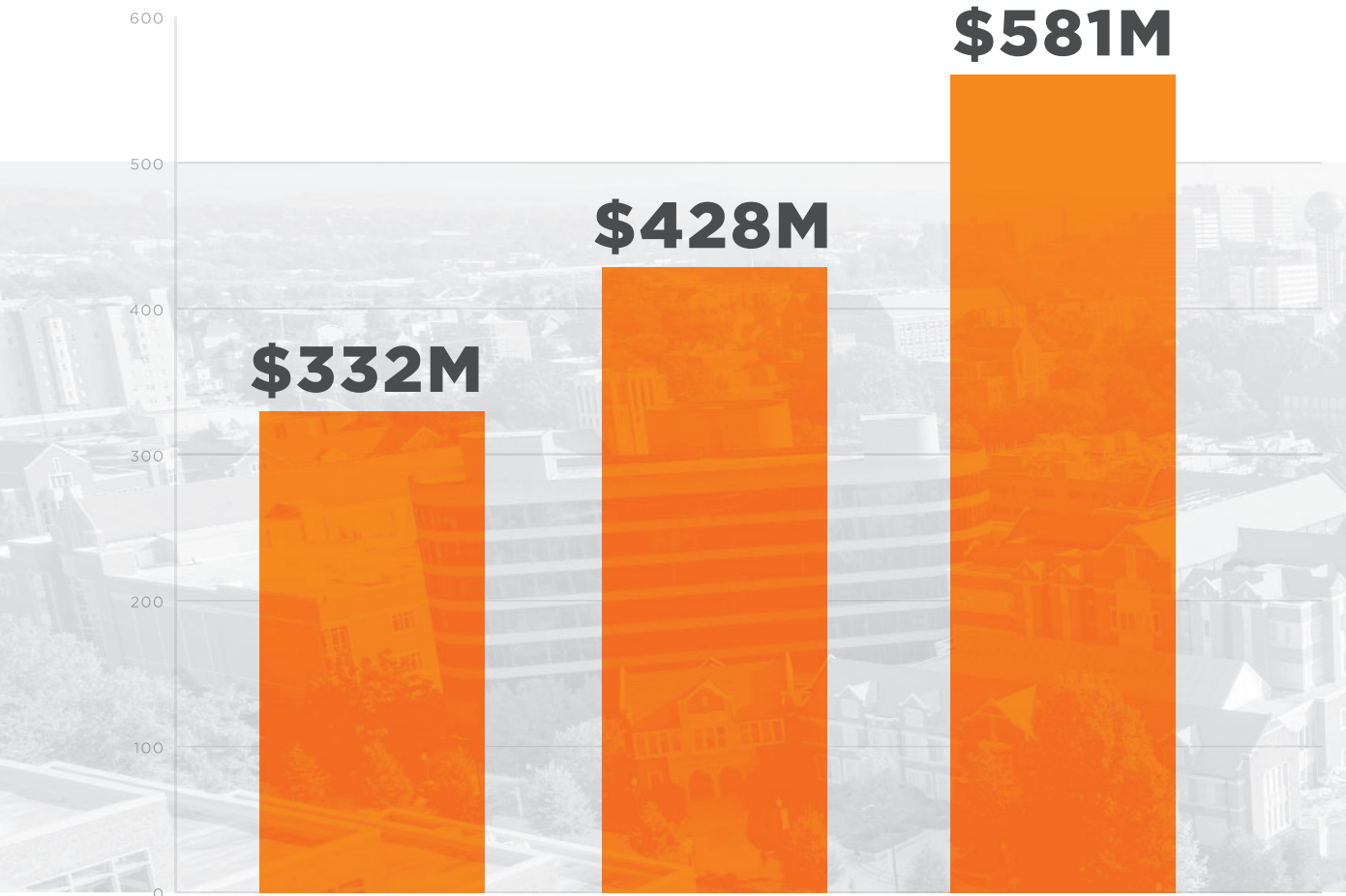
**\$170M+**  
TOWARD  
ENDOWMENT



This is a historic time for the University of Tennessee—  
and the momentum we have built is only the beginning.  
We continue to pursue excellence in everything we  
do because we know a great university means more  
opportunities for our students and everyone we serve.”

—CHANCELLOR DONDE PLOWMAN

# PHILANTHROPY IS FUELING MOMENTUM



## 2023-24 ACADEMIC YEAR

- 10,000+ donor-funded scholarships awarded
- 91.1% first-year student retention rate
- Named the **Natalie L. Haslam College of Music**
- Established the **Denbo Center for Humanities and the Arts**

## 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR

- 12,000+ donor-funded scholarships awarded
- 91.9% first-year student retention rate
- Named the **Winston College of Law**
- Named landmark spaces, including the **John McLeod Food Science Building** and the **Charles and Julie Wharton Chemistry Building**
- Established the **Alan and Wendy Wilson Communication and Leadership Academy**

## 2025-26 ACADEMIC YEAR

- 12,000+ donor-funded scholarships awarded
- 92.4% first-year student retention rate
- Received largest investment in university history from **Dee and Jimmy Haslam**
- Named landmark spaces, including the **UT Medical Nursing Building, Jenny Boyd Theatre, and Randy Boyd Hall**
- Established the **Linda and David Bohan Center for Global Engagement**

Over the past three years:



**112%**  
increase in  
philanthropic support



**#1**  
in SEC for fundraising  
growth



**28.5%**  
compound annual  
growth rate

*The national average for year-over-year growth in giving to higher education is approximately 3-4%*



Recognized as an  
**INTERNATIONAL LEADER  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
FUNDRAISING**  
by Council for Advancement and  
Support of Education



The university is experiencing extraordinary momentum, and we are proud to help elevate its national reputation, attract world-class faculty, and support the next generation of leaders—all while keeping the best and brightest here in Tennessee.”

—DEE AND JIMMY HASLAM

# IGNITING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SERVANT LEADERS

**Your generosity is expanding access, strengthening outcomes, and connecting every Volunteer to be prepared to lead.**

With your generosity, students arrive with opportunity and leave Rocky Top prepared to lead, serve, and build stronger communities. Your support helps meet students' essential needs, opens doors to life-changing experiences, and fuels excellence across campus.

You are helping prepare students for success after graduation through programs like Vol Edge—the university's one-of-a-kind career readiness experience—and Rocky Top Scholars, a cohort-based coaching and mentorship program for scholarship recipients. Your support also helps strengthen our nationally recognized University Honors program and together, these investments prepare Volunteers to lead while building one of the nation's most qualified workforce pipelines.





**TOTAL  
ENROLLMENT  
SURPASSED  
PREVIOUS  
RECORDS**

with more than  
40,000 students

Nearly

**95%**

of incoming students received  
some form of financial aid



Creating a personalized student experience is our anchor, from recruitment to graduation. The record number of students choosing Rocky Top reflects the passion that defines the Volunteer family and the Volunteer experience. With many college options, there's only one UT—where the genuine care of the Vol community supports students throughout their college journey.”

—KARI ALLDREDGE, SENIOR VICE  
PROVOST FOR ENROLLMENT  
MANAGEMENT



Because of support from donors, I have been able to say yes to leadership programs, study abroad experiences, and opportunities that have completely changed my perspective and my future. That support does not just impact one student in one moment. It creates opportunities that shape lives, build confidence, and encourage students to give back in their own way.”

—CALLIE HUDSON, CLASS OF 2028



IGNITING THE NEXT GENERATION

Expanding Global Learning Opportunities

The Linda and David Bohan Center for Global Engagement will create a dedicated space to support study abroad, international partnerships, and cross-cultural learning made possible through the generosity of David ('70) and Linda Bohan. It's a reflection of the College of Communication and Information's commitment to expanding access to global experiential learning opportunities and builds upon the Bohans' lifetime of service and generosity.

A Front Seat to History

Joshua Dobbs ('17) provided seven aerospace engineering students with the opportunity to attend the Artemis II rocket launch—humanity's first flight to circle the moon in more than half a century. The students also visited NASA's Exploration Ground Systems, saw the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, and met with NASA experts.

Meal Plan Support Fuels Students

A gift from Jason ('92, '96) and Suzie ('97) Epstein established a meal plan scholarship endowment through the Center for Basic Needs, ensuring long-term, reliable support for students on campus who face food insecurity. Initiatives by the Center for Basic Needs have a track record of helping retain and graduate students at higher rates.



UT earned a  
**GOLD RANKING  
AS A MILITARY  
FRIENDLY SCHOOL**  
for assisting student veterans and  
military-connected students

IGNITING THE NEXT GENERATION

Resources That Prioritize Student Health

Knoxville native Cohl Morgan (’19) turned his diagnosis into a cause when he founded the Vols Beat Cancer Scholarship Endowment Fund. The scholarship provides financial support to any active UT student who has been diagnosed with cancer, enabling them to focus on their health while balancing studies.

Service That Builds Leaders

During the 25th year of MLK Jr. Days of Service, more than 690 students, faculty, and staff contributed 1,651 hours across 23 partner organizations—an estimated \$50,438 in community impact.

Honoring Academic Mentors

Peyton Manning’s (’97) \$4 million gift recognizes the professors who shaped his UT journey, while strengthening academic excellence for future Volunteers. The gift supports the establishment of the Faye Julian Dean’s Chair Endowment and the John Haas Director’s Chair Endowment, each of which will open doors to bold ideas, innovation, and a best-in-class experience for students in the College of Communication and Information.



GRADUATION RATES ROSE TO RECORD HIGH FOR 5TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

74.5% of students graduate within six years.

The four-year graduation rate climbed 5.2 points, reaching a record high of 66.8%.



Legacy gifts totaling more than

**\$24.5M**

this year are creating scholarships,  
advancing research, and strengthening  
the future of the university.



**HISTORIC \$2 MILLION  
ESTATE GIFT EXPANDS  
ARTS AND CULTURAL  
EDUCATION**

With an estate gift divided equally between the Department of Theatre and the McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture, the late Florence Fair Johnston and Hendon Russell Johnston Jr. established a lasting legacy at UT. The largest gift in the museum’s history, it will fund a new Tennessee River exhibition. This generosity also marks a transformational moment for UT, completing funding for construction of the Jenny Boyd Theatre, which is now holding productions.



## **GRANT WILLIAMS INVESTED \$1.5 MILLION IN THE FUTURE OF TENNESSEE**

Williams' gift supports softball and men's basketball while creating the Grant Williams Scholarship Endowment in the Haslam College of Business, reflecting his commitment to student success in athletics and academics.

**"Rocky Top truly is home sweet home to me. It is a privilege and an honor to be able to give back to the university that did so much for me and helped me become the man I am today."  
—Grant Williams ('19)**



IGNITING THE NEXT GENERATION

# Equipping Students for Challenges of an Evolving World

Investing in the student experience ensures that Vols are equipped to meet the workforce of tomorrow and strengthen communities in Tennessee and beyond. Your generosity is helping equip graduates with the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experiences needed to lead in a rapidly changing world.

New academic departments and innovative degree programs are preparing students to address the growing workforce demands across a wide range of industries. The Department of Applied Engineering and Technology is helping address critical needs in manufacturing, aerospace engineering, energy conservation and storage, and applied computer science. UT also continues to lead in computing and innovation by offering a degree in applied computer science and launching the state's first degree in bioinformatics, empowering students to develop real-world solutions for agriculture and animal science.

## Supporting Tennessee's Special Education Teachers

As school systems across the country grapple with teacher shortages, UT is partnering with Knox County Schools to launch the Teach Knox Fellows program, a new initiative aimed at investing in, preparing, and supporting the professional development of special education teachers at no cost to participants.

## Developing the State's Nuclear Workforce Pipeline

A new partnership between UT, Roane State Community College, and the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology is transforming the nuclear workforce pipeline. In response to the growing demand for skilled workers in this critical industry, UT is creating seamless education pathways with hands-on training opportunities.

# ADVANCING A BOLD VISION FOR TENNESSEE'S TOMORROW

**You help advance a land-grant mission that  
turns research into real-world impact.**

Your generosity is helping advance research that addresses Tennessee's greatest challenges, strengthens our workforce, and improves lives across the state. With partners working alongside our faculty and students, UT is transforming discovery into practical solutions while preparing the talent Tennessee needs. Faculty are advancing nuclear science and engineering while helping shape the policies, workforce, and security frameworks that will define the future of energy. Researchers are also leveraging artificial intelligence to improve outcomes for breast cancer patients, develop personalized treatments for heart rhythm disorders, and help prevent injuries on athletic fields.

Because of you, UT is attracting world-class researchers who are preparing the next generation of innovators. Your investment empowers them to think boldly, pursue groundbreaking discoveries, and deliver solutions that will strengthen our state for generations to come.

UT was named a  
**2025 APLU\***  
**INNOVATION &  
ECONOMIC  
PROSPERITY  
AWARD  
WINNER**

*\*Association of Public and  
Land-grant Universities*

**#14**

in the nation among public  
universities for innovation

*US News & World Report 2025*



UT helps create vibrant, connected places where people want to live, work, and build. Our work strengthens Tennessee’s competitiveness, contributes to the nation’s security and economy, equips Tennesseans with skills that lead to rewarding careers, and improves individual lives around the country and the globe.”

—DEBORAH CRAWFORD, VICE CHANCELLOR  
FOR RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





## TVA Spearheads Nuclear Engineering Growth

Reinforcing East Tennessee’s status as the national epicenter for building a more secure energy future, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) provided \$3 million to the Tickle College of Engineering to endow the department chair for the Department of Nuclear Engineering. The endowment will provide critical resources to advance the mission of the department and strengthen research initiatives aligned with industry needs.



12 students and alumni were awarded a

## **NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP**

*the nation’s oldest fellowship directly  
supporting graduate students in STEM*



## ADVANCING A BOLD VISION

# World-Renowned Faculty Light the Way

Across disciplines, UT faculty and researchers are consistently recognized internationally as the best of the best. From making groundbreaking discoveries to mentoring students and guiding the next generation of leaders, our faculty lead the way in innovation.

- Six of the world's most highly cited researchers are Volunteers—an honor only one in 1,000 scientists and social scientists receive from Clarivate. Their research publications rank among the top 1% by citations in their respective fields over the past decade.
- Five UT faculty members received a Fulbright award, one of the most prestigious and competitive international exchange fellowships in the world.
- Three researchers received National Science Foundation CAREER awards for their work in chemistry, physics, and computer science.
- Four faculty members were selected as 2025 Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), bringing the university's total number of AAAS fellows to date to 103.

ADVANCING A BOLD VISION

Turfgrass on the World Stage

UT’s world-renowned turfgrass experts led a first-of-its-kind research collaboration with Michigan State University and FIFA to set the stage for the FIFA World Cup 26. Heading up the installation, testing, and maintenance of natural turfgrass at stadiums and training facilities across North America, UT led the way in ensuring safe and consistent fields of play for the world’s biggest and most-watched sporting event.

A Hub of Innovation, Technology, and Economic Development

A plan is underway, in collaboration with the University Financing Foundation, Inc., to develop the Maplehurst Innovation District—a hub for computing and artificial intelligence located between campus and downtown Knoxville. Designed as a live-work-play neighborhood, the district will support high-tech startups, the Tennessee AI Initiative, and other innovation-driven ventures. It will join the Oak Ridge Innovation Corridor and the Peninsula Innovation District as a regional hub for public-private collaboration—fostering new technologies, launching new companies, and driving economic development. The district will also be home to a next-generation hybrid quantum and classical computing hub as part of the Knoxville Quantum Accelerator, advancing the region’s position as a leader in quantum technologies and systems.



## Recruiting Acclaimed Faculty

To advance UT's leadership in research, innovation, and discovery, the university has launched a major, multi-year effort to recruit world-renowned faculty across a variety of disciplines. In alignment with UT's land-grant mission to serve the state of Tennessee, the university is attracting faculty with expertise in artificial intelligence, advanced materials and manufacturing, energy and environment, future mobility, and health and wellness. Many new hires have been offered named professorships and other donor-supported faculty funding, which assists the university in attracting top talent and enables recipients to do the research that provides the solutions of tomorrow.



**The opportunity here is to connect Tennessee's strengths with international networks of expertise, accelerating innovation while training the next generation of scientists in a collaborative environment. Ultimately, this is about people and ideas. We are creating environments where interdisciplinary thinking thrives, where we learn from nature, and where we translate knowledge into solutions that matter for Tennessee and for the world."**

**—ORLANDO J. ROJAS, UT-OAK  
RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY  
GOVERNOR'S CHAIR FOR  
CIRCULAR BIOMATERIALS**





UT is in the nation's

**TOP 10**

for humanities fellowships  
and the

**TOP 5**

for citations in leading  
engineering journals

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More than

**2,000**

donors made new planned gift  
commitments totaling \$85.9M

**Thousands of Books from  
Cormac McCarthy's Library  
Gifted to UT**

UT Libraries received thousands of books from the estate of Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Knoxville native Cormac McCarthy. Numbering between 16,000-18,000 volumes, the titles will be available for checkout by students and scholars, offering valuable insights into the author.



ADVANCING A BOLD VISION

Advancing Alzheimer’s Research Through Pat Summitt’s Enduring Legacy

Working in close partnership with the Pat Summitt Clinic—a collaboration between UT Medical Center and the Pat Summitt Foundation—Chunhong Xiao, assistant professor in the College of Nursing, is leading innovative, community-focused dementia research aimed at improving care and outcomes for individuals living with dementia across East Tennessee.

Research Reveals Hidden Biodiversity in Tennessee Rivers

Tennessee researchers made key contributions to genetic research that revealed previously unknown species of freshwater mussels in the Tennessee River Basin. Using genetic analysis, traditional fieldwork, and museum collections, they identified three previously unnoticed species. The revelation has wide implications for conservation protections, research funding, and habitat management decisions.







# THIS MOMENT BELONGS TO VOLUNTEERS

Thank you for believing in the future of the University of Tennessee. Because of you, our university is experiencing extraordinary momentum, creating life-changing impact for students across campus.

Together, we achieved a historic milestone this year, with \$581 million in philanthropic support—more than double the donor support received just three years ago. Your generosity represents a powerful vote of confidence in our mission, our people, and what Volunteers can accomplish together. Every gift expands opportunity for students, advances groundbreaking research, strengthens championship-caliber athletics, and creates lasting impact for the people and communities we serve.

The momentum we are experiencing today has been years in the making. Together, we are preparing the next generation of leaders, accelerating discovery and innovation, and building a stronger future for our state. Your investment empowers Volunteers to think boldly, solve meaningful challenges, and lead with purpose.

No one understands the transformational power of higher education more than those who call Rocky Top “Home Sweet Home.” Because of you, the future of UT has never been brighter.



BRIAN BROYLES,  
SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ADVANCEMENT



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P225 Andy Holt Tower  
Knoxville, TN 37996  
**giving.utk.edu**

gratitude.

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U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
KNOXVILLE, TN  
PERMIT NO. 481

