

SPRING 2021

Invention

THE MAGAZINE OF THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY

IMPACT
WE MAKE
TOGETHER

Thomas Edison
State University
FOUNDATION

DONOR
IMPACT
REPORT

2020

TOGETHER *in Giving*

Monica Castaño

BSN '12, MSN '17, Current DNP Student
Alumni Ambassador

Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,

I want to express my sincere gratitude to each of you who gave generously this past year to the Thomas Edison State University Foundation to support our remarkable students during this uniquely challenging time.

The most gratifying part of serving as chair of the Thomas Edison State University Foundation Board of Directors is witnessing our students' dedication and commitment to staying the course, regardless of the obstacles in their paths. This year has put their dedication to the test.

Because of the extraordinary hardships caused by the pandemic, many TESU students faced the real possibility that they would have to set aside their educational goals. Many struggled with the loss of income, employment or education benefits. Others faced the challenge of becoming full-time caregivers and proxy educators while working remotely. Still, others selflessly placed themselves at risk as frontline healthcare workers, first responders and military service members.

Your generosity has helped significantly in mitigating that strain and is more meaningful than ever in enabling our students to stay the course and earn their degrees. Since its inception in 2020, nearly \$100,000 has been raised through the Student Relief Fund to assist students facing urgent and unexpected financial struggles. I am equally pleased to report that with your support more than \$450,000 in scholarship funding was distributed to students in 2020 – an increase of \$69,000 from the previous year.

In the pages that follow, you will read about the unflagging resilience of our students, the generosity of our supporters and how we became an even stronger TESU community during a year like no other. I want to express my sincere gratitude to each of you for supporting our remarkable students during this time of unparalleled challenges and your continued dedication in the year ahead.

On behalf of the Foundation and our Board of Directors, thank you for your amazing partnership.

Sincerely,



Aubrey Haines
Chair, Foundation Board of Directors



Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,

For nearly 50 years, Thomas Edison State University has been a leader in providing adults unique pathways to degree completion and this year our mission held particular importance. While our students were already accustomed to a remote learning environment, the pandemic nonetheless caused widespread disruption in their lives and livelihoods.

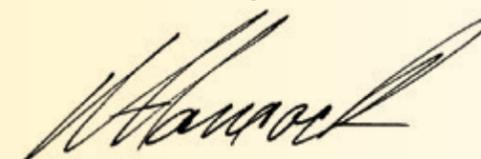
Each year, thousands of TESU adult learners complete a degree. For some, it is a goal they were not able to pursue following high school; for others it's the completion of something started, but never finished; for still others, it's graduate-level study that will lead to career advancement. As University president, to be a part of their triumph is immensely gratifying. Each of our graduates carries a compelling story of resilience and determination, and I am constantly inspired by what they have accomplished while working, serving in the military, volunteering, parenting and caregiving – all while completing their rigorous academic programs.

In a year that defied category, the impact of our donors in supporting our students, academic programs and institutional infrastructure was particularly significant. As 2021 unfolds, you have continued to help TESU conquer challenges and deliver on our promise of transformation for a multitude of students and alumni.

In this edition of *Invention*, you will learn more about the impact of our donors and the bravery and persistence of our students. We hear from grateful 2020 recipients of the Student Relief Fund and about the development of our innovative Academic Community Impact Program. You will also hear from students in our educational partnerships and about the University's special events that helped us raise additional funding for students and the programs that support them. We will meet an Alumni Ambassador, celebrate our healthcare heroes and learn more about members of the Foundation Board of Directors and the influential work that they do.

On behalf of the the University and the Thomas Edison State University Foundation, thank you for your commitment to our mission. Whether you chose to support scholarships, programs or the Annual Fund, attend an event or volunteer your time and talent, you helped enrich our students' experience while enabling us to set a new standard for higher education.

Be well, and to a brighter future,



Merodie A. Hancock, PhD
President





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TOGETHER in Scholarship

Student Profile: Kathryn Hauser, BA in Liberal Studies

Most mornings, Kathryn Hauser puts on her military uniform and reports to a position that she can never discuss outside of the workplace.

“Over the past five years, I’ve been serving in the U.S. Navy as a cryptologic linguist, and, in that time, I have been working toward finishing my bachelor’s degree with the goal of completing it before I conclude my service in September 2021,” said Hauser, a

assisting with the cost of TECEP® exams. Having already earned two associate degrees, she’s confident that she’ll be able to complete her bachelor’s degree at TESU in about 18 months.

“I joined the Navy because serving in the military was on the list of things I wanted to accomplish. When I separate from the U.S. Navy later this year, my fiancé and I are planning on investing in real estate and launching a financial independence blog,” said Hauser. She and her fiancé, also a TESU graduate, plan to pursue their interests’ full time.

Hauser said her blog will encompass their journey to financial independence, tips on how to save money, the benefits of minimalist living and launching profitable side gigs. Hauser is also considering a position in the intelligence community where she can apply her military skills and education.

To learn more about the programs offered in the Heavin School of Arts, Sciences, and Technology, visit tesu.edu/heavin.

“WITH A GOAL OF GRADUATING IN JUNE, I AM GRATEFUL THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND AWARDED FROM THE EDITH AND OSCAR SMILACK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND HAS HELPED ME STAY ON PACE.”

Kathryn Hauser
BA degree in Liberal Studies

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Liberal Studies student at TESU who is now eagerly preparing for her civilian career.

Hauser said she chose TESU because of the flexible degree pathways and acceptance of the credits she had already earned elsewhere. She also appreciates the term schedules as they make it easier to complete courses while working full time in her role of identifying and translating foreign communications using the Navy’s defense systems. The scholarship funds awarded from the Edith and Oscar Smilack Memorial Scholarship Fund have helped her stay on pace by



TOGETHER in the Community

TESU Implements an Innovative Academic Community Impact Program that Empowers Nonprofits

UNLEASHING THE POWER OF SERVICE-LEARNING THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING

At a time when engagement in community life is waning and governmental funding is shrinking, nonprofit organizations face unprecedented challenges in supporting the communities they serve.

Thomas Edison State University's recently launched Academic Community Impact Program (ACI) intends to bridge that capacity gap while building students' resumes and transcripts. Students participating in the ACI Program support the mission of partner organizations by collaborating with them in hands-on projects that fulfill their Bachelor of Arts degree Capstone requirements. We recently spoke with ACI's Program Manager,

Daniel Fidalgo Tomé, EdD, about the new program, its purpose, and impact on students and the nonprofits with which they are collaborating.

Invention: Tell us about the ACI Program and why it is so important.

Tomé: The ACI Program affords our students the opportunity to complete a real-world, hands-on project that directly meets the strategic and capacity-

building needs of community-based nonprofit organizations. This unique partnership will build collaborations with participating organizations and provide solutions to some of the challenges they face. On the instructional side, a University mentor will provide the academic expertise to guide students successfully through their projects. Following successful completion, students will have finished a professional project they can share with future employers and use as a tool for their own career growth. Launching this program would not have been possible without funding support from The Provident Bank Foundation, the Booth Ferris Foundation and the Ireland Funds as well as the Thomas Edison State University Foundation and TESU leadership team who helped us bring this innovative program to fruition.

Invention: What are some of the potential ACI projects and what needs will they fulfill for these organizations by completing them?

Tomé: Nonprofit leaders continually tell us that they can neither spare the time to train and supervise community



Dr. Daniel Tomé with LeaderKid Academy Co-Founder Rishi Dixit, BSOL '15

service volunteers nor can they afford professional consultants to address their organizational needs. TESU students are often mature adults who can deliver results on the important projects that are critical to the nonprofit's ability to serve and support their communities. The projects in which students engage are varied and focus on building organizational capacity while implementing effective use of technology and data, creating a well-structured website or an improved social media presence. It also affords students the opportunity to develop and implement a successful strategic plan, assist with fundraising and grant-writing strategies, address program sustainability and

staff recruitment and retention issues, enhance customer and client services, and measure and evaluate service impact as well as participate in public policy research.

Invention: How do students become involved in the ACI Program and how is the program structured?

Tomé: The ACI Program is currently open to undergraduate students enrolled in the Heavin School of Arts, Sciences, and Technology. Students enroll in the first of a two-course sequence: Academic Community Impact - Theory, Methods, and Practice (SOS-204) where they fulfill a civic engagement and social science elective requirement in

the general education program. In fulfilling the requirement, students will complete a final project proposal that aligns with their professional interests and priorities. In the final stage, students enroll in the Liberal Arts Capstone - Community Engagement (LIBCE-495) course. During Capstone completion, students will execute their project proposals with their community partner.

Invention: How have students responded to participating in this academic and service-learning initiative?

Tomé: Student enrollment and participation in the ACI Program has been steadily increasing





“The ACI program provides the unique opportunity for me to work hands-on with a nonprofit organization in order to fulfill its needs. Giving back to the community is a priority for me since I've been involved in community volunteer projects in the past. I firmly believe that this program will benefit me beyond completing a research paper and will provide me with practical job skills as well as personal growth.”

Katherine "Katie" Bezz, BA
Degree in International Studies student



“When Thomas Edison State University approached The Provident Bank Foundation with the framework for the ACI Program, we knew that we were embarking on something truly special. A year into the program, it's evident that students are empowered to lead, and that positive change is being created through effective public service partnerships between the University's students and local non-profits.”

Samantha Plotino
Executive director of The Provident Bank Foundation



since the courses were introduced in September 2020. One of the successes I'm most proud of is the ACI Scholars Program that offers qualifying students additional donor support to successfully complete the courses and their ACI projects. The attraction centers on the fact that the program allows students to experience the power of active citizenship, prepares them to create positive change in human service organizations and develops effective public service partnerships in our community.

Prior to becoming the University's ACI Program manager in January 2020, Tomé served as the director of Service-Learning at Stockton University in New Jersey. He oversaw diversity, community service and leadership development student programs at City College of New York. He has also served as chair of the American Association of State Colleges and University's American Democracy Project as well as the American College Personnel Association

“THE ACI PROGRAM AFFORDS OUR STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLETE A REAL-WORLD, HANDS-ON PROJECT THAT DIRECTLY MEETS THE STRATEGIC AND CAPACITY-BUILDING NEEDS OF COMMUNITY-BASED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.”

Daniel Tomé, EdD

Committee of Community Service and Service-Learning. For more information on the ACI Program, visit: www.tesu.edu/aci, call 609-984-1120, ext. 2315, or email Dr. Tomé: dtome@tesu.edu.

TOGETHER

experiencing our world

Abigail Reyes, BSBA student

SEEING STUDENT RELIEF FIRST-HAND

Dreaming big is what Abigail Reyes does. Whether traveling or studying, Reyes finds a way to enjoy every opportunity that presents itself.

As a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) student who is employed in the aviation industry, opportunities for travel abounded. But when the pandemic struck, planes were grounded, and her ambitions became less clear. Gone were the customary travel opportunities associated with her position and her employers' resources became more limited.

Receiving support from the TESU Student Relief Fund kept Reyes moving on her educational path.

Reyes said that she chose the BSBA degree program because it is helping her expand her skillset and venture out of her intellectual comfort zone. Since she flies internationally on a weekly basis, she felt it was prudent to understand globalization and international management in today's world economy. Thomas Edison State University helped to bring those two worlds together.

“I am so blessed to have a career that best showcases my talents and strong suits. It allows me to meet a variety of people from different

“THE SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT HAS HELPED ME TO PURSUE A DEGREE THAT IS AN IDEAL COMPLEMENT TO MY WORK AND TRAVEL.”

Abigail Reyes
BSBA student

cultures and backgrounds,” Reyes said. “What I learn from that, you cannot get from a classroom lesson or lecture. The scholarship support has helped me to pursue a degree that is an ideal complement to my work and travel.”

Currently, she volunteers with several organizations including small local charities helping terminally ill children and



Abigail Reyes on a trip in Antarctica.

victims of domestic violence. She is also a part of the United Service Organizations (USO) and is a member of the Women in Aviation International (WAI) organization. Traveling is her passion, having been to all 50 states, 78 countries and seven continents. When at home, Reyes practices Bikram yoga and enjoys swimming, spinning and painting with mixed media.

To learn more about the programs in the School of Business and Management, visit tesu.edu/business.

TOGETHER

in a Time of Need



The TESU Student Relief Fund

OFFERING A HELPING HAND IN TIMES OF NEED IS THE HALLMARK OF TESU'S DONOR BASE

Through the generosity of many contributors, the Thomas Edison State University Foundation established the TESU Student Relief Fund in 2020 to help enrolled students experiencing financial hardships as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fund has already assisted more than 60 students who would have otherwise been forced to put their education on hold.

TESU students embody the positive effects of that support – expanding their skillsets and persistently working toward their degrees while balancing full-time jobs, caring for their families and handling multiple responsibilities. Many enrolled students are on the frontlines of the pandemic serving as first responders, healthcare workers, military service members and public servants. Others have experienced unemployment, furloughs or the overall loss of household income.

The Education Advisory Board, an organization providing research, technology and consulting services to more than 575 higher

“I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE PARTNERSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND OUR CONTRIBUTORS; TOGETHER, WE WILL HELP OUR STUDENTS ACHIEVE THEIR EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND FIND A NEW WAY FORWARD.”

Merodie Hancock, PhD

education institutions across the U.S. and Europe, reported that 70 percent of adult learners who participated in their recent survey stated that the pandemic had negatively impacted their current or future employment outlook. We're confident that the 2,211 TESU graduates who earned their degrees in 2020 now have an advantage in a challenging job

market and possess an invaluable asset in the prevailing economic conditions.

“Creating more robust resources for student support, providing scholarship assistance and helping students facing financial hardships are key priorities for 2021,” said University President Dr. Merodie A. Hancock. “I am grateful for the partnership that exists between the University and our contributors; together, we will help our students achieve their educational goals and find a new way forward.”

Thank you to those who generously supported the Student Relief Fund in 2020. To continue your support, please visit give.tesu.edu/StudentRelief.

Alumni Profile: Joseph Ciaffone, AA '20, BA in Liberal Studies and JetBlue Scholar

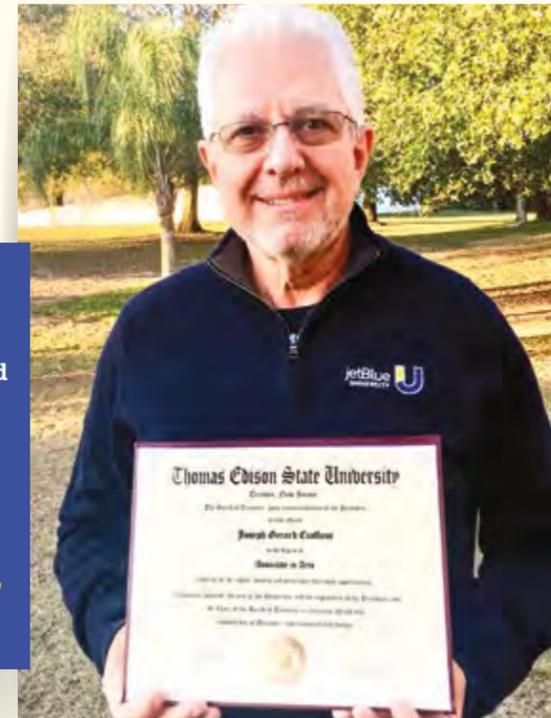
THE STUDENT RELIEF FUND HELPS A JETBLUE SCHOLAR'S EDUCATION TAKE OFF AGAIN

Joseph Ciaffone fulfilled a lifelong goal of earning a college degree while serving as a JetBlue crewmember, but that dream was almost grounded by the pandemic. Fortunately,



I requested support from the University's Student Relief Fund and was so relieved when I was granted assistance that has allowed me to complete my associate degree."

Joseph Ciaffone, AA '20, BA degree in liberal studies and JetBlue Scholar



Joseph Ciaffone proudly displays his associate's degree.

the TESU Student Relief Fund came through just as his financial resources and salary were the most adversely impacted and his wife was furloughed.

As an instructor of cabin safety with TESU's educational partner, JetBlue Airways, Ciaffone inspires, motivates and trains his colleagues to fulfill their lifelong passion in the aviation industry. He noted that being an instructor in the field provides unlimited opportunities to make a difference in people's lives. While sharing his industry knowledge and experiences, he enjoys watching his students prosper in their newfound careers. Sparking joy and inspiration in others is a passion that he and his wife, Linda, a photographer for Walt Disney World, share. His position has even allowed him to volunteer with the youth in his community who are interested the aviation field.

“Like so many other students, I was faced with many challenging decisions, and our financial priorities needed to be adjusted quickly. I requested support from the University's Student Relief Fund and was so relieved when I was granted assistance that has allowed me to complete my associate degree.”

Ciaffone is grateful for the support of the University so that he could continue with his studies. He said that completing his TESU degree was certainly one of his best moments.

To learn more about the programs in the Heavin School of Arts, Sciences, and Technology, visit: tesu.edu/heavin.



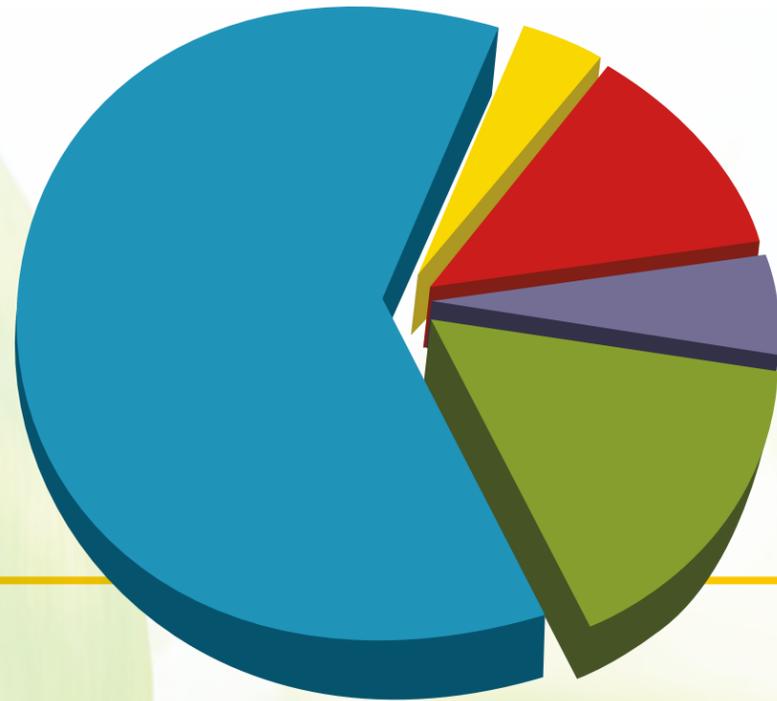
\$100,000 raised in 2020

68 students supported

The Need Continues

TOGETHER

Foundation Financials



WHO GAVE BACK

- Friends - 15.98%
- Employees - 5.56%
- Alumni - 12.07%
- Foundation Board - 4.15%
- Corporations/Foundations - 62.24%

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED



MATCHING GIFTS



| | YE 2020 | YE 2019 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Support & Revenue | | |
| Contributions & Grants | \$791,638 | \$752,075 |
| Special Events | \$151,954* | \$264,551 |
| Donated Services & Auction Materials | \$268,411 | \$260,744 |
| Donated Securities | \$10,917 | \$21,369 |
| Net Investment Return | \$1,063,171 | \$1,663,182 |
| Total Support & Revenues | \$2,286,091 | \$2,961,921 |
| Expenses | | |
| Program Expenses** | \$1,000,811 | \$1,245,866 |
| Management & General | \$23,827 | \$25,608 |
| Fundraising | \$70,051 | \$95,791 |
| Total Expenses | \$1,094,689 | \$1,367,265 |
| Change in Net Assets | \$1,191,402 | \$1,594,656 |
| Net Assets, Beginning of Year | \$11,021,625 | \$9,426,969 |
| Net Assets, End of Year | \$12,213,027 | \$11,021,625 |

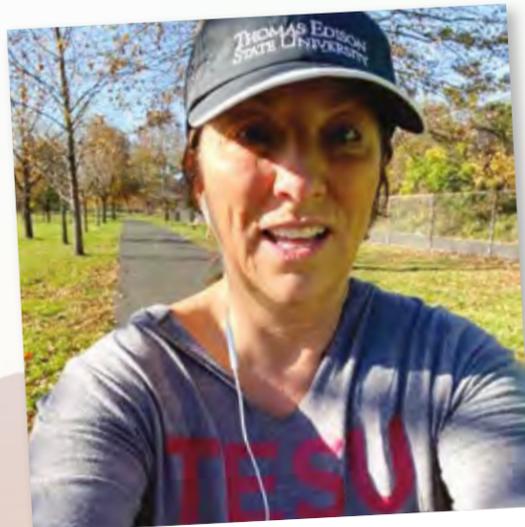
NET ASSETS (as of December 31)



*Due to the financial difficulties many TESU student experienced in 2020, a portion of special event revenues were directed to the Student Relief Fund and scholarship support. This support is reflected under the Contributions & Grants line. Special events are an integral part of Thomas Edison State University Foundation's fundraising portfolio. For more information about the 2020 Golf Classic and Grande Ball see pages 14-17.

**Program expenses include TESU Foundation grants awarded to the University, scholarships, events and other donated services.

TOGETHER as a Team



Tracy Bellerby Tosti
November 7 at 12:22 PM
My son's baseball obligation kept me from walking with my TESU family but where there is a will there is a way! In Warminster representing

TESU Colleagues Rally to Financially Support University Mission

TESU EMPLOYEES BAND TOGETHER TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE STUDENT RELIEF FUND

Each one of TESU's 303 employees proudly embraces the mission of the University and its collective 'student-first' ethos. That mission, to provide distinctive undergraduate and graduate education for self-directed adults through flexible, high-quality collegiate learning and assessment opportunities, is at the heart of what we do.

Staff across multiple administrative areas collaborate every day to help students

fulfill their educational goals and respond to their rapidly evolving workplaces. As TESU employees focus daily on this mission, they are also generous in their efforts to 'pay it forward.' This year, employees supported scholarships, the Annual Fund, the TESU Foundation Golf Outing, a Virtual Grande Ball and a Virtual 5K created in support of the TESU Student Relief Fund. More than \$51,000 was donated by staff to this fund in 2020.

Way to go Team TESU!



Emma Timmons is in **Spring Lake, NJ.**
November 7 at 2:03 PM
Completed the TESU virtual 5k! Such a beautiful day we ended up walking 6 miles, can't complain with this view and weather! 🌞🌊



Anna Krum
November 14 at 2:08 PM
TESU Virtual 5K completed! What a beautiful morning for a 3.7 mile walk in the country. Have a wonderful weekend!



Vikki Bovoso Monaghan
November 14 at 2:08 PM
Knocked off a few 5Ks this morning...



Jaclyn Joworisk
November 10 at 5:03 PM
Leanne Geller Kochy and I met at Mercer County Park to knock out some work and our 5k on a beautiful day! 🌞🐾



Merodie Hancock
November 7 at 6:08 PM
Seems like it was the day to knock out the 5k.



Danielle Williams
November 7 at 10:42 AM
Me and this pretty girl finished our TESU virtual 5K 🐾❤️



Juliette Punchello
November 9 at 5:26 PM
A beautiful afternoon to write this 5K in the books! The sun set quickly tonight! 🌅📖🐾



“The Student Relief Fund resonates with me, and I'm very glad the response has been so good. I know how lucky I am to have my job and to work from home. Our students are doing their best to manage so many things at once, oftentimes with much less flexibility. I admire them, and I'm so glad to know my friends and colleagues have stepped up in meaningful ways to support this effort.”

Cynthia "Cindy" Mooney
Instructional designer, Center for Learning and Technology at TESU

SAVE THE DATE! TESU VIRTUAL 5K



May 28 - July 5, 2021

TOGETHER on the Links

TESU Foundation Golf Classic Raises Nearly \$70,000 in Support of Student Relief Fund

While COVID-19 forced most of us apart for the majority of 2020, golf was one of the rare activities that safely brought people together. New Jersey courses reopened in early May of 2020, and the Thomas Edison State University Foundation was one of the first organizations in New Jersey to hold its previously postponed annual outing.

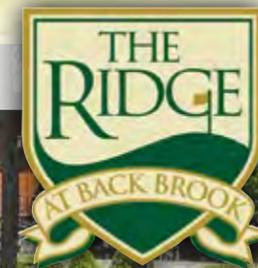
The 26th TESU Foundation Golf Classic was modified this

year to comply with health and social distancing guidelines and, on June 29, more than 90 golfers and guests enjoyed a day of golfing at The Ridge at Back Brook in Ringoes, N.J., along with a renewed sense of normalcy.

Nearly \$70,000 was raised through sponsors and golfers who supported the event. Proceeds were directed to the Student Relief Fund established to support and benefit TESU's

working adult students including nurses, first responders, active-duty military and reservists, busy parents and family caregivers – those most likely to have their higher education endeavors derailed by the pandemic.

To view the photo gallery from the event, visit: tesufoundation.org/events/golf.



Thank You!
Golf Classic Sponsors

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KPMG

The Minunni Family
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Packet Media
Plumbers and Pipefitters Local #9
PNC
Rider University Athletics
Zekavat Investment Group, Inc.

TOGETHER in Spirit

29TH ANNUAL

Grande Ball



TESU Gala Donors Are Together in Spirit During the Pandemic

FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL GRANDE BALL HONORS HEALTHCARE HEROES AND RAISES NEARLY \$120,000

For nearly 30 years, Thomas Edison State University Foundation's Annual Grande Ball has been a special evening of celebration and purpose. This year's virtual event transformed 'distance' into communal triumphs and gave event planners a new platform on which to celebrate healthcare heroes, honor special guests, showcase the University's successes and commemorate 2020's Year of the Nurse and Midwife.

The program was livestreamed on Oct. 29, 2020, with the help of a virtual event production company and the in-house expertise of TESU's Center for Learning and Technology. The theme honored our healthcare heroes featuring stories of TESU nursing students and alumni on the frontlines of the pandemic. Dr. Deborah Mican, vice president of Patient Care Services/ chief nursing officer at Capital Health, was presented The Spirit of Edison Community Leader Award.

"The spirit of the Gala is to ensure students keep moving on their academic journeys. This year we could not be prouder of the hundreds of nurses Thomas Edison has launched into the world to make our healthcare system stronger," University President Dr. Merodie A. Hancock said.

With 300 preregistrants and an estimated 170 viewers, TESU students and alumni were able to join and engage in the event. A contest to name the new Nursing Infant Simulator was won by Bachelor of Science in Business Administration student Laura Wiecezszak whose winning submission was Skylar, which in Dutch means "scholar." Sponsorships, advertisements, donations and silent auction sales generated nearly \$120,000 in support of new academic programs, scholarships and the University's innovative and flexible educational methods.



The partnership between TESU and Capital Health is extremely important for our community. I was honored to accept this award on behalf of all of the employees at Capital Health after the crisis we've been through, and are still going through, with the pandemic."

Deborah Mican
PhD, MHA, BSN, RN, CNOR
Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer, Capital Health

THANK YOU 2020 GRANDE BALL SPONSORS

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Capital Health

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DIAMOND SPONSORS
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Triple Sun Spirits

HONORING HEALTHCARE HEROES AND CELEBRATING 2020: THE YEAR OF THE NURSE



TOGETHER

in Giving Back

Together in Giving Back and Paying it Forward

Have you ever experienced that feeling of gratitude when a complete stranger goes out of their way to do something nice for you?

Maybe they offered quarters for a parking meter, helped you navigate a turnstile or payment kiosk or paid for your coffee. Or, perhaps you experienced that

The TESU community was recently inspired by a donor's generous act of kindness toward a population of students the University serves. In October

"IT MAKES ME DEEPLY HAPPY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THESE STUDENTS AS THEY WORK TO IMPROVE THEIR FUTURE PROSPECTS, IT IS MY HOPE THEY WILL ALSO 'PAY IT FORWARD' IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER."

Anonymous Donor

same euphoria when you were the person performing a random act of kindness for someone else.

2020, the donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, established the "Pay It Forward Fund for Incarcerated Students at TESU."

As a lifelong educator, the donor's wish was to support students who deserve a second chance and who have an opportunity, through the power of education, to earn that chance.

"It makes me deeply happy to provide support to these students as they work to improve their future prospects," said the donor. "It is my hope they will also 'pay it forward' in one form or another."

The Fund will support application fees, graduation fees and up to two TECEP® credit-by-exam courses to students who qualify.

"Having the opportunity to provide professional support to this particular group of students who are working toward a second chance is so encouraging," said

Give back... pay it forward!

Kerry Stuhlmuller, Student Special Services representative in TESU's Office of Accessibility Services.

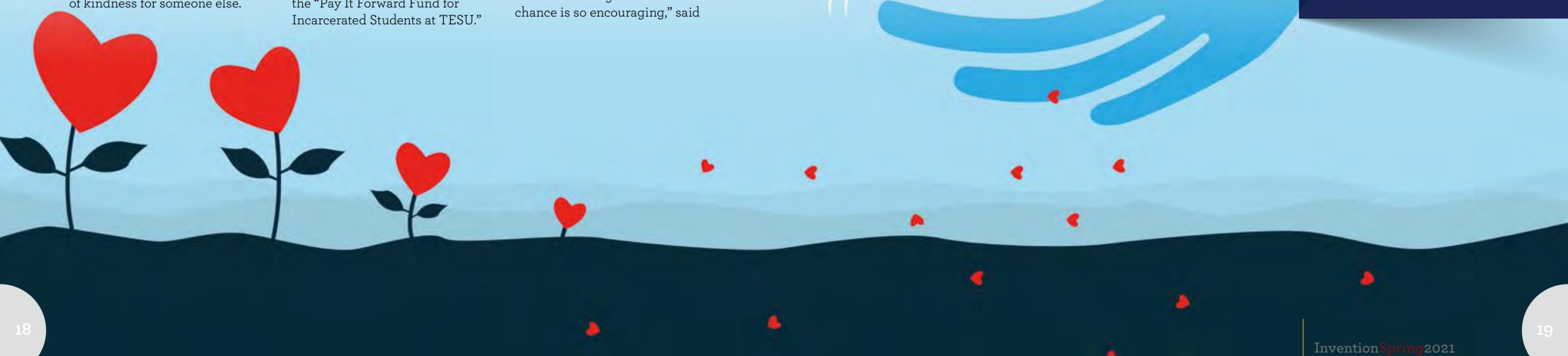
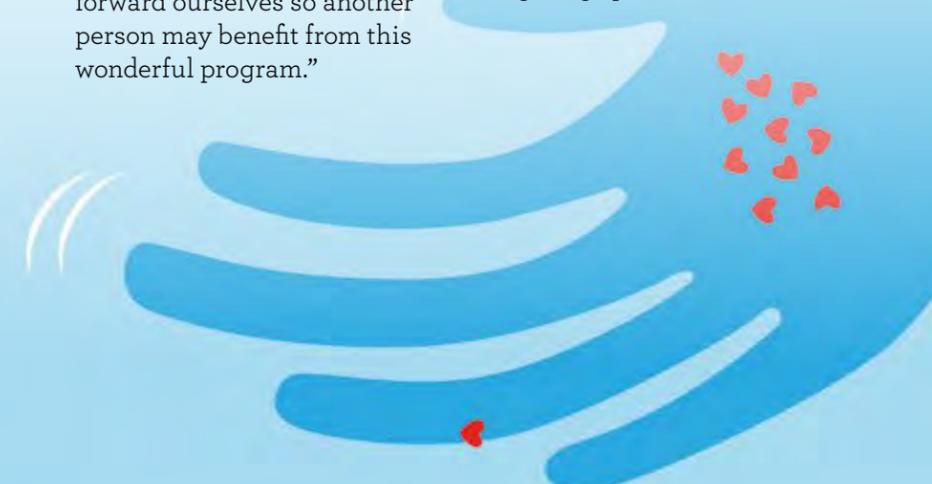
The Fund has already made a tremendous impact on the life of one incarcerated TESU student and his family. "Our son is working very hard to overcome his mistakes and make a positive impact in whatever way he can," said his family members in a thank you note to the donor. "We hope to emulate you and pay it forward ourselves so another person may benefit from this wonderful program."

Whether you refer to these acts of generosity as 'giving back' or 'paying it forward,' they are demonstrations of selflessness that encompass giving of yourself for the benefit of others. Whether you give of your time, talents or treasure, these acts have the ability to inspire kindness in others who then in turn, extend a hand to someone else. We are grateful to facilitate this act of generosity and kindness and thank this donor for her giving spirit.



Having the opportunity to provide professional support to this particular group of students who are working toward a second chance is so encouraging"

Kerry Stuhlmuller
Student Special Services Representative
TESU Office of Accessibility Services



TOGETHER

with Our Students



TESU Welcomes New Chief Student Success Officer

SUPPORT BEYOND THE STANDARD, MEET DR. JASMEIAL "JAZZ" JACKSON

As many traditional universities still grapple with the reality of empty dorms and dining halls, TESU continues to provide a predominantly distance-learning experience to its students. It embraced this academic model decades before the pandemic took hold and continues to fine tune the enterprise to fit students' evolving needs.

Central to its 'students-first' mission and building on TESU's student-facing support efforts initiated by President Merodie A. Hancock, PhD, in 2019, the University has hired its first chief Student Success, Equity and Inclusion officer, Dr. Jasmeial "Jazz" Jackson.

"Access plus success equals empowerment, and TESU is in the business of empowering our students," said Hancock. "Creating the position and having someone of Dr. Jackson's caliber assume the role is an important milestone in our commitment to students and in expanding our institution's overarching equity and diversity initiatives."

Reporting to the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs and under her leadership, Jackson is responsible for developing, leading and overseeing the University's comprehensive efforts to enhance student support.

"The role is exciting to me because it is a new one for the University and completely focused on student success and inclusiveness," said Jackson, who has supported adult learners throughout his academic career.

As an undergraduate student, he had envisioned a different path.

"I began my career as project manager for a construction company where I had the opportunity to see ideas come to fruition. While I loved seeing ideas transform from simple blueprints to actual purposeful structure, I wanted to impact people in a different way. I leveraged all my learning from construction management and pivoted. When I think about my journey, I went from building buildings to 'building people.' My true calling allows me to build supportive student experiences where I continuously consider their entire experience while identifying barriers and obstacles students face during the journey," Jackson added.

Jackson's role is also emblematic of a new category of university leadership centered on an increasingly 'student-first' ethos. He attributes the intensified effort around student support and equity to shifts in the higher education landscape.

"WE ARE VERY EXCITED TO HAVE DR. JACKSON JOIN THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS TEAM TO CONTINUE TO EXPAND OUR EFFORTS IN THE AREAS OF ADVISEMENT, STUDENT SUPPORT AND STUDENT SUCCESS."

Cynthia Baum, PhD
provost and vice president for Academic Affairs

"Recently, institutions that were focused on enrolling students realized that they had to develop more robust and comprehensive ways of supporting and retaining them," he noted. "What's more, accrediting bodies are holding higher education institutions more accountable for retention and graduation rates. Underrepresented and nontraditional students face even more unique challenges that require enhanced levels of support."

Jackson said that he is genuinely drawn to TESU's mission and

its focus on adult learners. As an adult learner himself, he understands that working adults have competing priorities that continually impact their ability to succeed in higher education.

"We are very excited to have Dr. Jackson join the Academic Affairs team to continue to expand our efforts in the areas of student advisement, support, success and diversity," said Dr. Cynthia Baum, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs. "He has served in similar roles throughout his career and will provide a fresh vision and voice for our students at the highest levels of leadership at the University."

On the theme of "Giving Back" Jackson feels donor support benefits students in incalculable ways — not only in helping them to cover costs but also to reduce common burdens that hinder their success.

"When I think about 'Giving Back and Paying It Forward,'

one of the things I see in my work is that financial challenges remain one of the top five reasons students don't complete their educational journey," he noted. "Generous donors help to support innovation and the development of new programs and technology advancements for institutions, in addition to helping students over the finish line who need financial assistance with tuition or course materials. I would not be where I am today without the support of others, so I strongly believe that your legacy will always be the impact you make on other people."



With more than 15 years of experience in education and project management, Jackson has overseen curriculum development, student advising, student engagement, student retention and program accreditation efforts. His work includes extensive research to increase retention for underrepresented and nontraditional students. Prior to his role at TESU, Jackson served as the associate dean of First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, Retention, and Special Programs at Southern New Hampshire University. He currently serves as an active member of the University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA) New England Regional Committee and as the secretary/executive assistant for the New England State Leadership Team of Phi Beta Sigma, Inc. He earned a Doctorate of Education in Higher Education Administration from Northeastern University, a Master of Business Administration from William Carey University and a Bachelor of Science in Construction Engineering from the University of Southern Mississippi. He is also a certified professional coach.

TOGETHER in Leadership

The Thomas Edison State University Foundation Board of Directors is comprised of extraordinary leaders who believe in the power of education and are committed to TESU's mission.

The following members of the board contribute to the success of the University through their professional expertise and insights, advocacy and philanthropy in support of institutional priorities:

Aubrey W. Haines

Chair of the Board
Chief Executive Officer
Mercer Oak Realty, LLC

Nancy S. Gloor

Vice Chair of the Board
Managing Director, Technology
Goldman Sachs (Ret.)

Carlos Arroyo

Central New Jersey Region Bank
President
Wells Fargo

Ahmed A. Azmy, PhD, AIA, APA

President
Azmy Architects, LLC

Alex Binder

Vice President, Advanced Care
Institute
VNA Health Group

Steven Binder

Chief Financial Officer
MannKind Corporation

Daniel R. Brenna Jr.

Founder and Principal
Ajax Management

Lovepreet Buttar, CPA, MBA, CGMA, PSA

Managing Director and Principal
The Mercadien Group

Ronald Gimbel

Vice President and Head of
Finance, Global Manufacturing
Bristol Myers Squibb

Merodie A. Hancock, PhD

President
Thomas Edison State University

Michael Illum '05

Chief Customer Officer
Second Nature Brands

Dolores R. Kelley, Esq.

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The Princeton Packet, Inc.

Steven R. King '93 '15

Executive Chairman
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Kim Kleasen, EdD

Senior Director, Organization
Change and Communications
Johnson and Johnson (Ret.)

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Managing Partner
Lear & Pannepacker, LLP

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TD Bank

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Vice President of Patient Care
Services/Chief Nursing Officer
Capital Health

Janice Mills

VP Relationship Manager,
Commercial Banking Group
Investors Bank

Sean Murray

Market Executive
Fulton Bank of NJ

Lucia Stegaru

Vice President and Business
Banking Relationship Manager
PNC

Jeffrey Stokes '15

Senior Director, Development
PSEG

Michael Toscani, PharmD

Research Professor and
Fellowship Director
Rutgers University

Joseph P. Treddinick

Market President
Republic Bank



Aubrey W. Haines

Chair of the Board

Chief Executive Officer, Mercer Oak Realty, LLC

Aubrey Haines began his tenure as chair of the Thomas Edison State University Foundation Board in December 2019. Originally appointed to the Board in 2015, Haines served on various board committees and as vice chair for two years before taking the helm.

Haines and his wife, Suzie, have generously hosted a number of Foundation Board events at their historic Mount Laurel, N.J., home built by Haines' ancestors in 1769. In September, they welcomed a small group for an outdoor gathering to celebrate Foundation Board member and 2020 Grande Ball Spirit of Edison Award honoree, Dr. Deborah Mican, vice president of Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer at Capital Health. While the traditional Grande Ball couldn't be held in person due to COVID-19, the Haines' gracious celebration provided a safe venue to recognize Mican along with the staff at Capital Health for their extraordinary sacrifice and service throughout the pandemic.

Haines has more than 34 years of experience in the Princeton commercial real estate market. His extensive experience includes acquiring and marketing office and industrial space, directing land development, consulting and investment property sales and purchases.



Nancy S. Gloor

Vice Chair of the Board

Managing Director, Technology, Goldman Sachs (Ret.)

Nancy S. Gloor was elected vice chair of the Thomas Edison State University Foundation Board of Directors in December 2019. Appointed to the Board in 2017, Gloor served on numerous board committees including chair of both the Board Development Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee, before becoming vice chair.

Throughout her more than 25-year career at Goldman, Sachs and Co., Gloor held several senior management roles and was an architect of the firm's application and data infrastructures. She also created and led several initiatives focused on the advancement of women and other underrepresented groups to senior technology positions. This focus inspired Gloor and her husband, Dr. Guy Gloor, to endow the Glass Hammer STEM Scholarship that will provide annual scholarships to deserving TESU students or applicants.

"Our goal in establishing this scholarship is to address diversity issues in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)," Gloor said. "We seek to help students who may be facing similar struggles and challenges to those we have encountered." In awarding the scholarship, preference will be given to students pursuing a STEM degree who derive from historically underrepresented groups in those industries.

The Thomas Edison State University Foundation Board of Directors was pleased to welcome four impressive new Board members in 2020. The Foundation is grateful for their willingness to serve and eager for their participation and contributions:



Lovepreet Buttar, CPA, MBA, CGMA, PSA

Managing Director and Principal, The Mercadien Group

As a managing director with Mercadien's Nonprofit and Human Services Group, Lovepreet Buttar has

more than 10 years of experience performing and overseeing audit engagements for various nonprofit clients, including associations, schools, private foundations and health and human services organizations. She is passionate about helping these organizations support their constituents and achieve their mission. Buttar also has family ties to TESU as her sister is a graduate of the University's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.



Kim Kleasen, EdD

Senior Director Organization Change and Communications, Johnson & Johnson (Ret.)

Dr. Kim Kleasen has spent her career in healthcare, beginning with working as a clinical music therapist in a county psychiatric hospital. Over time, she transitioned her skills into the business world, working for 25 years at Johnson & Johnson. Her expertise is in organization development and leadership development.



Lillian Lowery, EdD

VP and COO, Student and Teacher

Assessment, ETS

Dr. Lillian Lowery is a former Maryland State Superintendent of Schools and Delaware Secretary of Education and was

appointed vice president of

Student and Teacher Assessments at Educational Testing Service (ETS) in September 2018. Lowery leads a division comprising Student Assessment, ETS Professional Educator programs and business development in state K-12 student assessment programs.



Lucia Stegaru

Vice President and Business Banking Relationship Manager, PNC

Lucia Stegaru began her career in banking as a teller and held various banking positions mostly helping individuals

and businesses with their banking needs. She came to the United States from Romania at the age of 28 and credits her success to her ability to embrace change and adapt, despite the overwhelming challenges of a new culture, language and a new way of life. Having spent more than 25 years immersed in the Princeton community, she is a dedicated advocate for Women in Business and avid supporter of various not-for-profit organizations.

TOGETHER

Giving Time

MEET ALUMNI AMBASSADOR **ALUMNI AMBASSADOR**

❖ **Monica Castaño, BSN '12, MSN '17, current Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Student**

Born in Girardot, Colombia, Monica Castaño came to the United States at the age of 12, adapting quickly to an environment that was wholly unfamiliar to her.

She and her family settled in Cranford, N.J., and, after high school, she attended Union County College, becoming an LPN in 1993. While working at Essex Valley Visiting Nurse Association in East Orange, N.J., Castaño continued to pursue her RN license and earned her associate of science degree at Regents University.

“Nursing has always been my true calling, specifically in making a difference in underserved communities due to my own experiences as an immigrant born to deaf parents,” she said.

Now, as vice president at Holy Redeemer Home Care & Hospice of Elizabeth, N.J., Castaño leads a team that provides vital healthcare and support services to a culturally diverse population, many of whom are also economically disadvantaged. During the pandemic, she and her team witnessed firsthand the challenges of COVID-19. It helped solidify Castaño’s passion for caring for others and for encouraging her team to be successful.

Earning her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree in 2012 and, later, her Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree in 2017 from W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing and Health Professions, she found the momentum she

needed to enroll in the school’s Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program. Castaño noted that her TESU experience ignited her professional development and extols the value of continuing education to her staff. As an Alumni Ambassador, she has referred more than a dozen Holy Redeemer employees to the institution and has volunteered her time to speak to prospective students about her experience.

“As a leader in my profession, I encourage all nurses to embark on furthering their education and experiencing all that Thomas Edison State University has to offer,” Castaño said.

Along with volunteering for TESU, Castaño is also a volunteer board member of the Home Care and Hospice Association of New Jersey.

To learn more about the programs offered in the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing and Health Professions, visit tesu.edu/nursing.



“As a leader in my profession, I encourage all nurses to embark on furthering their education and experiencing all that Thomas Edison State University has to offer.”

Monica Castaño
BSN '12, MSN '17
current DNP student



Monica Castaño

PSEG Foundation Awards \$200,000 Grant to Support Key TESU Academic Priorities

Research has found that a strong predictor of adult learner success is the quality of student-to-student interaction. PSEG Foundation funding will enable TESU to create inclusive “learning communities” that allow students to connect in an online environment while they build constructive peer networks. The \$200,000 in grant support will help TESU foster

this inclusive environment while expanding academic and student support initiatives that nurture student success.

The funding will also enable TESU to expand its online cybersecurity simulation training while building its cloud computing capacity. The grant support is also expected to aid in the expansion of the Military



and Veteran Portal in order to reach thousands of nonmilitary students and alumni and allow them to access career resources and workforce development features.

TESU Receives Novartis US Foundation \$15,000 Grant

The Thomas Edison State University Foundation has received a \$15,000 grant from the Novartis US Foundation in support of its Building the Future Healthcare and Science Workforce through STEM Education Scholarships.

The support will help students who are enrolled in STEM degree programs in the University’s Heavin School of Arts, Sciences, and Technology, and/or who are enrolled in one of the nursing degree programs in TESU’s W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing and Health Professions.

The \$15,000 grant from the Novartis US Foundation will enable the University to provide scholarships for up to 15 students who are enrolled in STEM or nursing degree programs and who demonstrate financial need and hardships, particularly for those individuals from disadvantaged or minority backgrounds. The grant will also allow TESU to maximize

the ability of the scholarship recipients to continue their STEM or nursing studies and to graduate in a timely manner by offering support to those who display the greatest financial needs and the highest quality academic performance, and to provide scholarship recipients with needed advisement, support services and community referrals during their academic journeys, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis.

“We are truly grateful to the Novartis US Foundation for its support of our vital mission to provide education to these healthcare heroes,” said Dr. Filomela “Phyllis” Marshall, dean, W. Cary Edwards School of



Dr. Filomela “Phyllis” Marshall, dean, W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing and Health Professions

Nursing and Health Professions. “The grant will enable our nursing students to continue their education while serving the community during this difficult time.”

For more information on the programs at the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing and Health Professions, visit tesu.edu/nursing.

TOGETHER — Giving Time

2020 TESU Alumni Volunteers



featured in stories and promotional campaigns



student referrals

Thomas Edison State University alumni provide a powerful and compelling voice in support of the educational experience at TESU. By referring friends and family, participating in social media platforms and sharing unique stories, alumni volunteers devoted more than 1100 hours of their time to help advance the mission and vision of the University in 2020.

Be a TESU Genius!

Alumni and friends of TESU are invited to join the new Genius program. Simply complete five steps to be eligible for the prize! See complete details at tesu.edu/genius.

Keep Us Posted!

To connect with the Office of Alumni Engagement and fellow TESU alumni, join the conversation on social media:

- Alumni Facebook Group: tesu.edu/FacebookGroup
- Student and Alumni LinkedIn Group: tesu.edu/LinkedInGroup
- Alumnifire: tesu.edu/Alumnifire



University Store

[TESUshop.com](https://tesushop.com) is Thomas Edison State University’s online store for TESU students, alumni, employees, mentors and TESU families. Declare your TESU pride with apparel and products bearing Thomas Edison State University’s logo.



Anthony Wright, BS '19

You've Crossed the Finish Line.

Giving Back Helps Future Alumni Do the Same!

Introducing TESU Philanthropy Cords.

TESU alumni have a long history of giving back and helping fellow alumni achieve their own dreams of continuing their education. The TESU Philanthropy Cord recognizes the generosity and spirit of giving in graduates as they join together to support future generations.

Graduates will receive a green Philanthropy Cord to wear during Commencement with their cap and gown by making a gift of \$21 or more to the TESU Foundation. By proudly displaying your Philanthropy Cord, you will demonstrate your commitment to building a stronger TESU and that you believe in the power of paying it forward for future Thomas Edison State University alumni.

All Philanthropy Cord donations will support the TESU Scholarship Fund to help current students cross the finish line.

tesu.edu/alumni/support/cord

philanthropy (noun)

Definition of philanthropy

1. goodwill to fellow members of the human race especially active effort to promote human welfare.
2. a : an act or gift done or made for humanitarian purposes.
b : an organization distributing or supporting funds set aside for humanitarian purposes.

