



BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

One Owl at a Time

Westfield State Foundation, Inc.
2019–2020 Impact Report





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Joshua Clark '15	Cheryl Vieira '08
Meaghan Farrell '07, M'12	Emmett Witherspoon '18



Dear Friends,

Few would dispute how much our world has changed in such a short period of time. We are all adapting to new ways of living our lives, conducting business, and supporting the causes we believe in. Often, from times of great upheaval come new ideas and innovative approaches. It is too soon yet to know what might and what might not endure from the pandemic, but we can certainly attest to the unwavering support of our greater Westfield State University family.

Each year, we try to cull stories that highlight all that is good about Westfield State. The incredibly generous donors, the grateful students, the impact in the classroom and the many profound ways we are able to change the lives of our current students. Once again, we hope we have accomplished that here with the stories you see. We look at how a member of the class of 1949 has her legacy live on in a meaningful way. We highlight two annual fund donors, one who is impacting the lives of students nearby, and one who has continued to give more than fifty years after graduating. Our Owls Helping Owls initiative looks at the students who faced a number of obstacles to remotely completing their spring semester. Your commitment helped them navigate their way through the remainder of the semester. We share heartfelt thanks from the many students impacted by our Last Mile fund, your gifts helped these students to complete their educational journey.

These are just a few of the incredible initiatives happening through the Westfield State Foundation. Included in these pages we illustrate how much your support means to Westfield State and our students.

This has been a year of unprecedented challenges and great changes in the world and on our campus. However, we continue to move forward. We have begun the search for Westfield State's 21st president, we continue planning for a renovated Parenzo Hall and have made, and continue to make, necessary adjustments to keep students, faculty, and staff safe. While much has changed, our commitment to students has not. We remain committed to our students and to supporting their educational journey. With your continued support, we have a bright future ahead.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Andy Oleksak '69
Board Chair
Westfield State Foundation, Inc.

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

OWLS *Helping Owls*

When the shutdowns emanating from the COVID-19 outbreak put Westfield State University students in a vulnerable position, staff, faculty and alumni stepped up this spring, quickly raising close to \$20,000 for essentials in lockdown. Owls Helping Owls helped purchase everything from laptops down to toiletries for students isolated by the quarantine.

“When you put your heart and soul into the work that you do, it is extremely impossible to stay at home safe and disconnect yourself from this new reality, knowing that so many students are struggling to meet their basic needs,” says Marjorie Rodriguez ’15, Program Director for TRIO Student Support Services Program.

A former foster youth, who herself experienced homelessness as a nontraditional student at Westfield State, Rodriguez was able to help track down students hit hard by the shutdowns.

“I know exactly where my students are,” she says.

Rodriguez and Jennifer Propp, her professor and mentor in Westfield State’s social work department, connected with students to meet their basic needs and

provide the socio-emotional support so crucial during uncertain times. “Our team had to figure out how to distribute these funds quickly, so we developed an online system for students to apply for assistance with rent, food, technology, or personal care products—and we created a seamless process,” says Propp.

“As someone who has survived homelessness and experienced the recent loss of a friend by suicide, I thought I was strong enough to survive anything,” says Carolina González ’20. But when the pandemic hit, taking away her work-study income and access to campus-based services such as the dining commons and library, she felt lost and helpless. The emergency fund allowed her to finish the semester in safety.

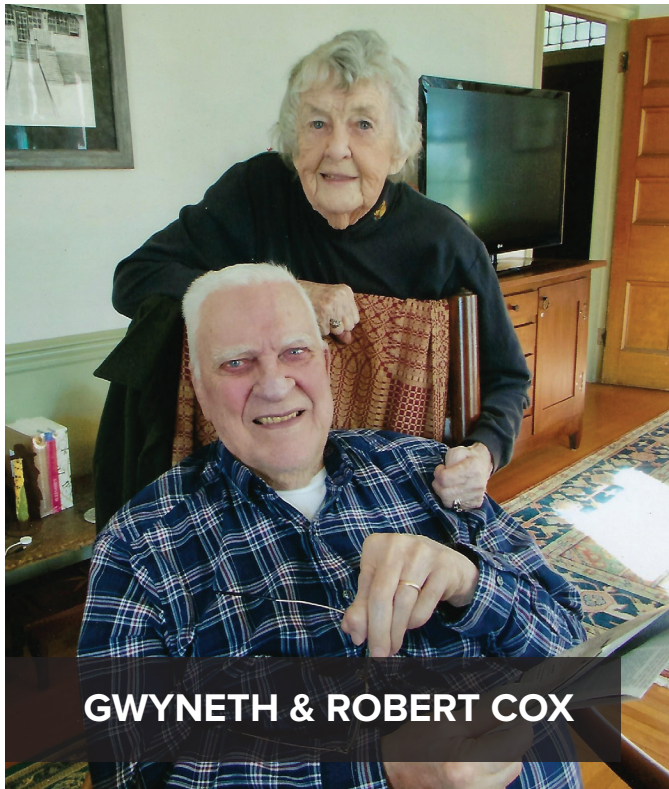
“COVID-19 turned our world upside down,” says Iris Roman-Muñoz ’20. “I can’t imagine how my semester would have ended if I hadn’t received the support I received. They literally saved me and prevented me from worrying about not having food or access to personal care items.”

“I was able to focus on what matters the most, which is to complete my degree,” she adds.

If you’re interested in supporting this initiative, please visit westfield.ma.edu/owlhelp

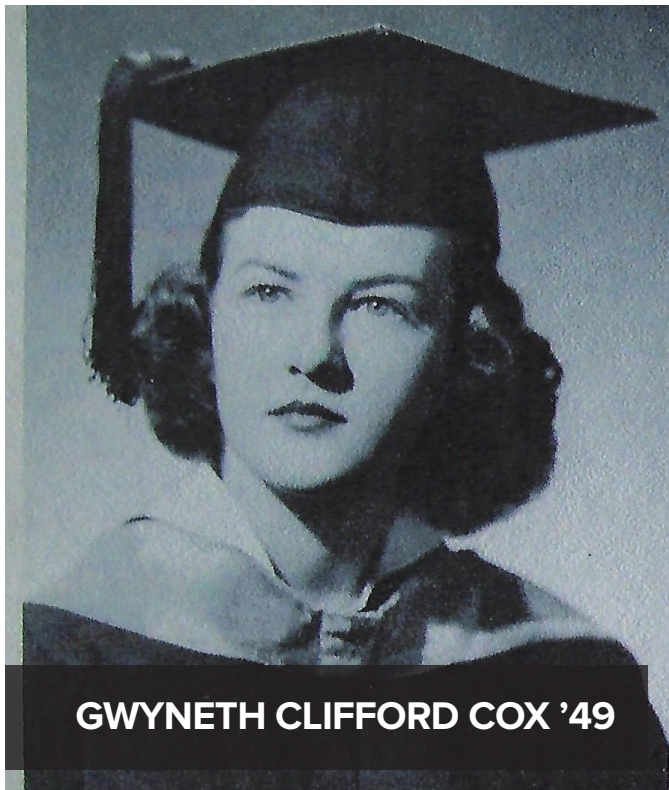
A portrait of a young woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved, ribbed top. Her hands are on her hips, and she has pink and white patterned nail polish. The background shows a city street with a clock tower on the left and a modern building with a slanted roof on the right. The sky is blue with some clouds.

CAROLINA GONZÁLEZ '20



GWYNETH & ROBERT COX

“I’m delighted. I like to give back.”



GWYNETH CLIFFORD COX '49

A LEGACY *Lives on*

Gwyneth Clifford Cox '49 loved teaching young children, and she passed that love on to her own offspring, who have all worked in education. Robert Cox, her husband, recently established a scholarship in her memory and said, “Westfield State University kindled a passion that lasted a lifetime.”

“She loved it. She talked about it all the time,” Robert says of her days at what was then known as State Teachers College.

The Gwyneth Clifford Cox Early Childhood Education Award is given to a Westfield State University junior majoring in early childhood education who, like Gwyneth, has demonstrated a dedication to teaching young children.

“She had a great love of young kids, and she just felt that she wanted to introduce them to education with the right attitude, and Westfield was where she could do it,” he says.

After teaching in Massachusetts, the two moved to Long Island, New York, where Gwyneth took a pause to raise four children. She returned to teaching in the 1970s, instructing kindergartners for 20 years at the Bay Shore School District in Brightwaters, NY.

After his wife died in 2019, Robert Cox wanted to honor his wife’s career as a teacher beloved by her students, and the origins of her life’s path at her alma mater.

“It was a fond experience, remembered her whole life,” said Cox. On the prospect of helping new students start that journey, he says simply, “I’m delighted. I like to give back.”

Scholarships can transform a student’s life, to learn more about endowing a scholarship at Westfield State, please contact Bonnie Clark Hanson at bclark@westfield.ma.edu or 413-572-8631.



A JOURNEY *of Hope*

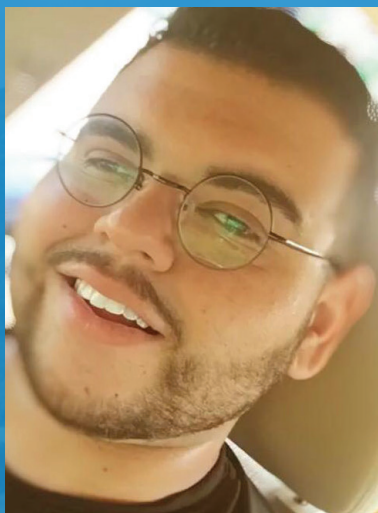
In March 2020, Father Warren Savage, director of the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center, led a group of individuals on an immersion trip to El Paso, TX. The purpose was to foster greater understanding of religious teachings on immigration and race. The trip, endorsed by the Westfield State Foundation, was made possible in part through a \$4,000 grant from the Interfaith Youth Core, a national non-profit organization working to bridge faith and worldview differences on college campuses. “Our proposal was to train student leaders to dialogue and collaborate on issues of immigration and race within the campus community and beyond. We want to have civil and informed conversations on immigration and race across racial boundaries,” said Father Savage.

During the trip, eight students from various faith traditions – two Muslims, two Jews and four Christians – along with trip leaders, met with immigration lawyers, border patrol officials, and individuals who run shelters for those seeking asylum. They visited a temple, a mosque, a clinic, a pre-school, and a library.

One highlight of the immersion trip was a visit to Casa Oscar Romero in El Paso, a shelter that has offered temporary housing to those fleeing Central America. The students prepared and served a meal there then ate along with the immigrants who are awaiting permission to travel to relatives in the United States.

One of the students, Hibo Hussein, a member of the WSU Muslim Student Organization, said “As a person who was born in a refugee camp and whose family went through immigration, what I witnessed was very different than what I expected. I remember when I was talking to a lady named Maria and her daughters, they were telling us about the experience, and when Deacon Kevin translated to them that I was a refugee that fled from Somalia to Kenya, the smile that Maria gave me made me realize that what I gave them was hope and if I can go through it, then they can do it as well.”

For more information about the Interfaith Center and the many programs offered there, please contact Lisa McMahon at lmcmahon@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-8645.



“It fuels my drive to know that there are people like you who invest in the futures of people like me.”

MANUEL MORALES '21



“This award is an investment both in my experience as an undergraduate student and in my future as an English Professor.”

MEAGHAN DAVIS '21



“It is an honor to be a recipient of your generosity and have you along my journey to reach my goals.”

ABBAS MIRE '21

BUILDING A *Brighter Future* ONE OWL AT A TIME



“It feels amazing to know that there are people who are rooting for you and want you to keep working hard at achieving great things.”

KIARA NAZARIO-CARTAGENA '22



“This scholarship will help me in many ways, but most importantly, it will remind me of the love and support from this program that helped in molding me into the person I am today.”

MARIO RICHARDS '21



Thank you again and I hope to one day help a student achieve their goals like you have helped me!”

KAYLIN CARPENTER '22



MORE THAN *Town and Gown*

For Robert Mahar '56, "town and gown" means something more than simply friendly relations between college and community. A Westfield native and member of the Westfield State Foundation's board, Bob wants young people in his home town of Westfield to have the same opportunities that he had.

His work in helping found the Westfield Pride Scholarship—a scholarship offered each year to a graduate of each of the town's three high schools—grew out of his own personal pride in Westfield State, which, in its former incarnation as State Teachers College, sent him on a path that culminated in a 40-year career at Temple University.

Westfield State helped him find the direction he lacked as a high school graduate in 1952, he says.

"I was sort of lost at that point," he remembers. "I had no money to go away and I lived a block from the state college, so I said, why not go there? But once I got there, I discovered myself."

He discovered at Westfield State that he loved teaching, and liked it so much that he and his brothers rallied their widowed

mother to finish her teaching certification there as well. Florence Mahar joined her son as a graduate of the Class of 1956. As class president, he joined student carpools to Boston when a planned restructure of the state university system threatened to shutter Westfield State.

"But once I got there,
I discovered myself."

"Every generation of students makes some type of unique contribution. Our contribution was saving the school from being closed," he says.

Westfield State, whose campus now includes buildings named after several of Mahar's professors, continues to inspire him to give back. Though the school is so much bigger today, "one quality that's been consistent is the bond between the faculty and students," he says. "That is as true today as it was when I was there."

If you are interested in learning more about the Westfield Pride scholarship or purchasing the official Westfield Tartan, please visit: westfieldalumni.org/tartan

A portrait of an older man with white hair and a beard, wearing a light blue and white checkered button-down shirt over a purple turtleneck. He is standing outdoors with a blurred background of green trees and a brick building. A dark rectangular box in the upper right corner contains the text "ROBERT MAHAR '56".

ROBERT MAHAR '56



MARY KITSON '51

“When you have the ability to give back, it’s important to do so.”



JOSHUA CLARK '15

SEPARATED BY YEARS, *but United in Support*

When Mary Kitson '51 attended Westfield State, the campus amounted to two buildings, and the college's president ate in the dining hall with students, who earned their keep with kitchen chores. Tuition was \$150 per year, payable in two installments. “It was all that my family could afford, and that was not easy,” she said.

That investment paid off. After teaching in West Springfield for a few years, she would spend much of her career in Alaska, teaching grade 4-6 in Anchorage and Fairbanks. Even at some 70 years after graduation, she continues to donate to Westfield State.

“Well, I figured I earned my living because of the education I got there,” she says. “Every little bit helps.”

Joshua Clark '15, teaches history in his home town of Chicopee, a longtime dream made real because of his Westfield State University education.

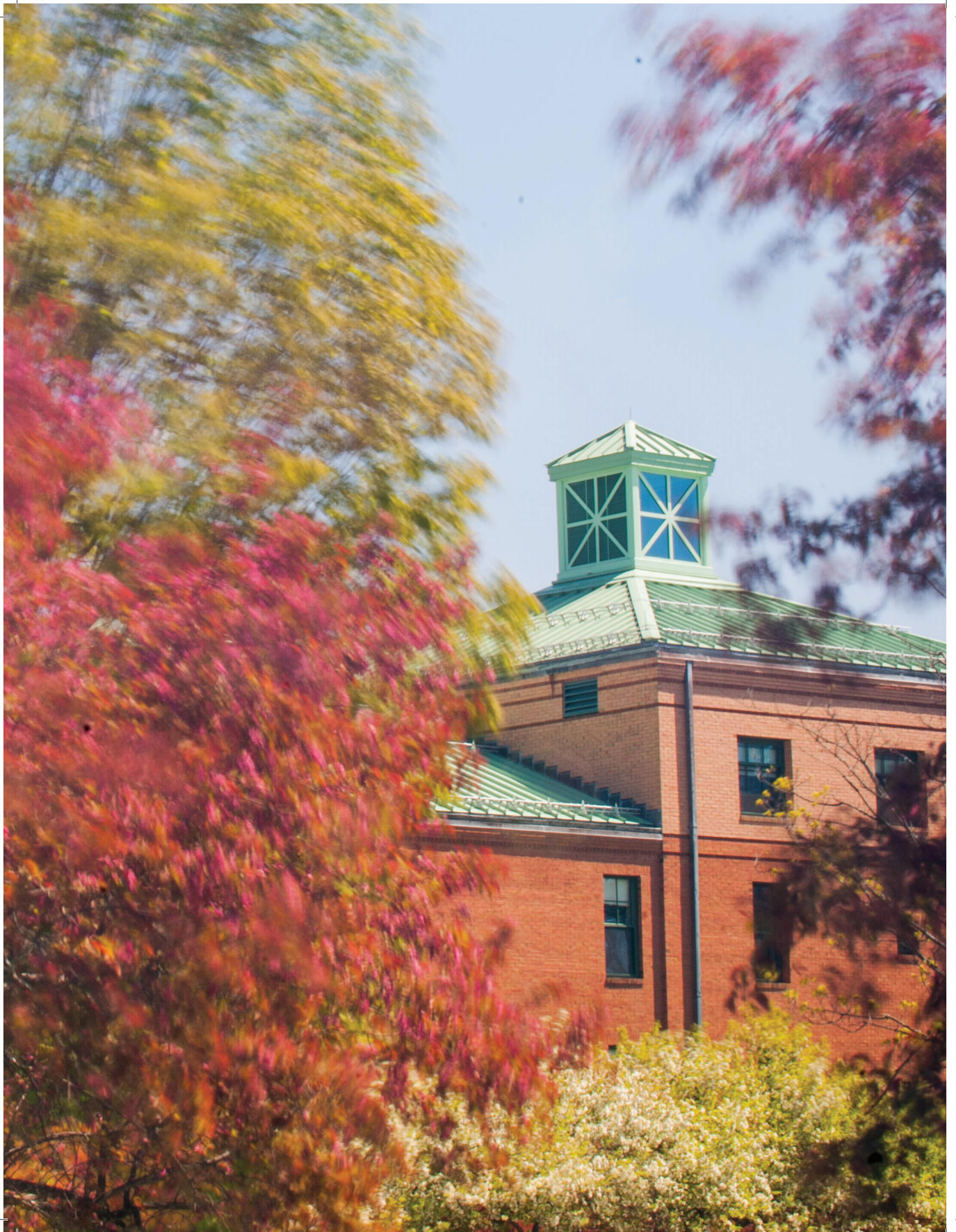
“I’ve always wanted to do something that would benefit the community that I benefited from,” he says.

A member of the Westfield State Alumni Association's executive council, and the Westfield State Foundation's board of corporators, he sees giving back to Westfield State University as a natural extension of his campus days.

“The university creates so many opportunities for so many that, when you have the ability to give back, it's important to do so,” he says. “I’ve always felt the need to give from what resources I can give.”

If you are interested in learning the many ways the Annual Fund supports Westfield State students, please contact Kate Burke at kburke@westfield.ma.edu or 413-572-5404.





THE YEAR IN GIVING

July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020

ALUMNI DONORS
are represented in every class from
1948-2020



1,200+

ALUMNI, PARENTS, STUDENTS,
& FRIENDS FROM **35 STATES**
made a gift to Westfield State

The Westfield State Foundation awarded

\$276,668

IN SCHOLARSHIP AID TO
295 DESERVING STUDENTS



OWLS HELPING OWLS
Covid-19 Student Emergency
Fund brought in **100 DONORS**

\$20K

28%

of donors were
FIRST TIME DONORS
brought in by **#GiveAHoot**

AN IMPACTFUL YEAR BECAUSE OF YOU

42%

INCREASE

IN OWL CLUB MEMBERSHIP

We hit a record of

96

ENDOWED
SCHOLARSHIPS

NEARLY
3/4
of donors were
RETURNING
DONORS



182 DONORS GAVE NEARLY

\$26K

IN MEMORY OR
IN HONOR OF
SOMEONE WHO
*impacted
their lives*



Thank you for donating!

WESTFIELD STATE FOUNDATION, INC.

(A COMPONENT OF WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY)

Statements of Financial Position


June 30, 2020

ASSETS

	2020	2019
Assets:		
Cash and equivalents	\$ 216,693	\$ 70,741
Restricted cash and equivalents	119,755	67,863
Unconditional promises to give, net	300,747	458,017
Investments	10,738,776	10,342,524
Other assets	8,362	24,325
Property and equipment, net	66,054	75,809
Property held for future development	<u>360,877</u>	<u>360,877</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$11,811,264</u>	<u>\$11,400,156</u>

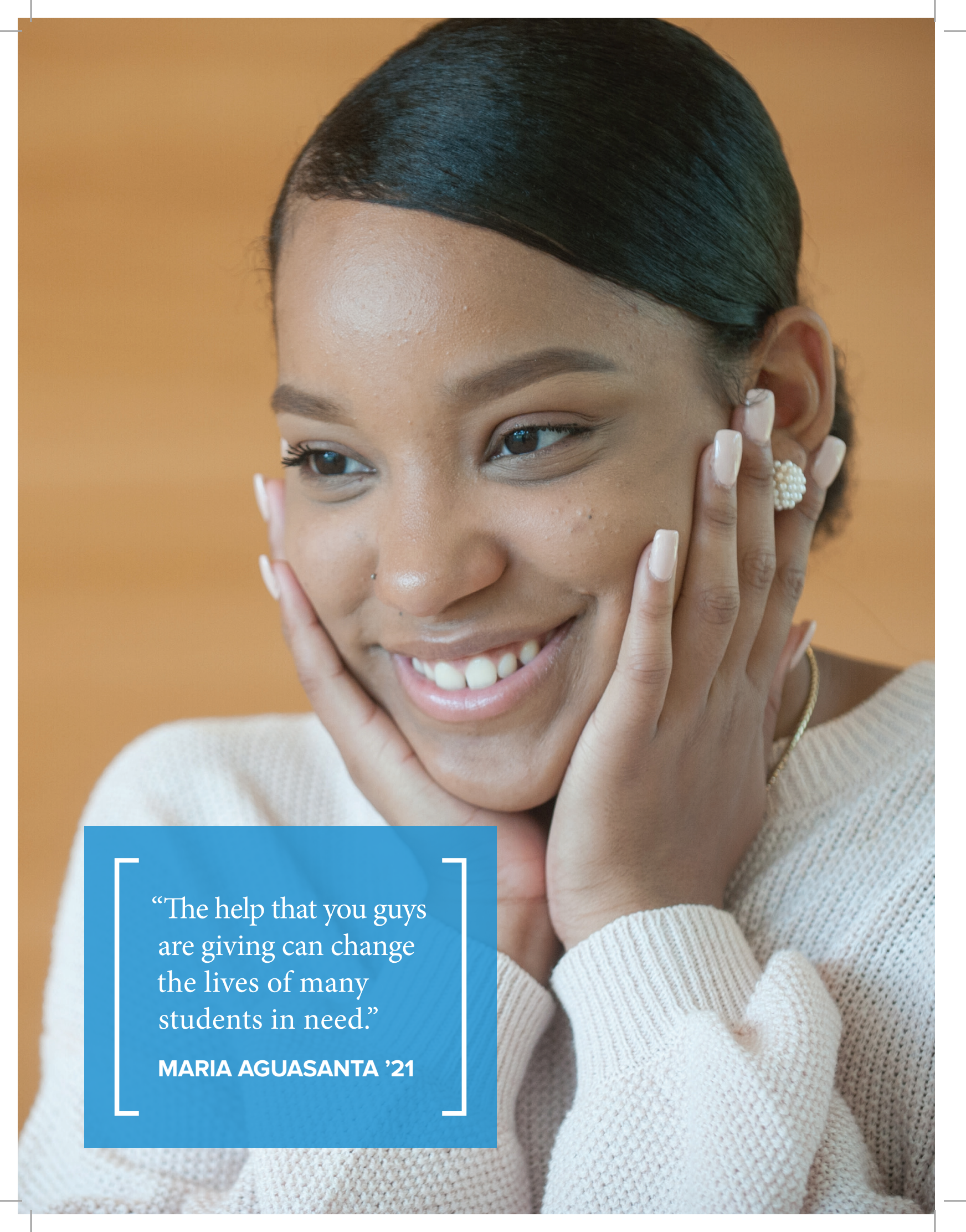
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities:		
Line of credit	\$ —	\$ 7,200
Accounts Payable	3,264	2,130
Deferred revenue	17,420	3,500
Agency funds held	<u>228,529</u>	<u>221,642</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>\$249,529</u>	<u>\$234,472</u>
Net Assets:		
Without donor restrictions	\$ 421,910	\$ 300,500
With donor restrictions	11,140,141	10,865,184
Total Net Assets	<u>11,562,051</u>	<u>11,165,684</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$11,811,264</u>	<u>\$11,400,156</u>

A portrait of a young man with dark hair, a beard, and glasses, smiling. He is wearing a grey zip-up sweater over a dark blue shirt. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a library or study area with bookshelves.

“Through hard work and
determination, anyone
can achieve their goals.”

MATTHEW GIEBEL '21



“The help that you guys
are giving can change
the lives of many
students in need.”

MARIA AGUASANTA '21

You can make a difference!

OPPORTUNITY	GIFT	YOUR IMPACT
Westfield Fund Unrestricted (Area of Greatest Need), Financial Assistance, and Internships	ANY	Opens doors for current students by supporting critical philanthropic priorities of WSU.
Student Scholarships	ANY	An impactful way to make a difference while honoring a family member, friend, or colleague or supporting programs and causes that are meaningful to you.
Sponsor-A-Student	\$1,000	Support a single student with a one-time scholarship award in your name or the name of a loved one. (We will share with you the name of your student and the impact of your gift.)
Sponsor-An-Intern	\$2,500	Support a deserving student's passion for real world practice by underwriting a powerful semester long experience.
Travel Abroad Experience	\$1,000+	Sponsor a student's, once-in-a-lifetime experience, as they immerse themselves in a foreign culture for a semester. Many of our students have only dreamed of this opportunity!
Owl Club Athletics	ANY	Aid the Westfield State Owl Club in support of all teams.
Last Mile	\$1,000+	Many of our seniors struggle with finances or unforeseen obstacles; this fund comes at the critical "last mile" to graduation, assuring a pathway for the student to complete their degree.
Endowed Scholarship	\$15,000+	Generate income in perpetuity by naming a fund for whatever purpose you chose.
Albert And Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center	ANY	Directly benefits the programming of the Interfaith Center as they support our Westfield State students.
Common Goods Food Pantry	ANY	Directly supports our campus food pantry and our students struggling with food insecurity.
FSSN (Fostering Student Success Network) <i>Supporting F.A.C.E.S.</i>	ANY	Committed to supporting current and former foster youth and homeless youth.
Bequest Intention	ANY	Bequeath a portion of your will, insurance, or retirement asset to be used for any of the aforementioned purposes.
Charitable Gift Annuity	\$50,000+	Support any designation while receiving tax guaranteed income for life.

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



WESTFIELD STATE
FOUNDATION

Westfield
STATE UNIVERSITY

The Westfield State Foundation, Inc. is profoundly grateful to our many donors. Please find our Honor Roll of Donors at westfield.ma.edu/honor-roll

If interested in supporting Westfield State students, please contact Bonnie Clark Hanson at 413-572-8631 or bclark@westfield.ma.edu for information.

westfieldalumni.org/foundation