The Gift of Creighton
Students are at the center of the most ambitious campaign in the University’s 143-year history
We held a Town Hall at the beginning of the fall semester, in person in Omaha and virtually for our campus in Phoenix and those living and learning at points far afield. I related my gratitude for the Creighton community — students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, friends, and partners. I shared how, in the darkness of what was a very difficult year, the light that is Creighton continued to burn brightly.

It is no secret how proud I am of how Creighton navigated the pandemic. It is difficult to imagine another time in my life where such determination and resolve have been so enduring and innovative. I would not presume to say we are in the clear because the pandemic remains quite real, but the energy I have witnessed gives me discernible hope, even as we remain vigilant and committed to health and safety.

The following pages of Creighton magazine reveal many of the reasons for my hope, pride, and enthusiasm for Creighton’s next chapter.

I first want to call your attention to Forward Blue — the largest, most comprehensive fundraising campaign in the University’s history. This campaign supports our students first, prioritizing scholarships and the most pressing needs of each of our schools and colleges.

The University has a long legacy of giving that changes lives, starting with the Creighton family. Forward Blue continues that legacy in an uncertain time. There are many changes looming in higher education, but, with your help, Creighton is prepared to face the challenges ahead. We stand ready to step forward, boldly, carried by the momentum of innovation that, in so many ways, over the course of so many decades, defines this University. Read on to learn how you can be part of this historic moment.

Also in this issue, we highlight the opening of our new health sciences campus in Phoenix. Just over three years ago, we announced plans for the campus, an expansion that solidified Creighton as the largest Catholic health professions educator in the country. This semester, our aspiration became a reality, and we welcomed the inaugural classes and incredible faculty and staff. In Omaha, with construction soon beginning on the CL Werner Center for Health Sciences, and in Phoenix, Creighton is addressing a real need for equal access to health care and improved patient care.

We also broke ground on our first residence hall exclusively for first-year students since the 1960s, and the first new residence hall of any kind since 2006 — a modern, inclusive facility with dedicated interfaith spaces and amenities that support student development, wellness, and academics.

Following a national search, we are so pleased that Marcus Blossom is our new McCormick Endowed Athletic Director. As I said in making the announcement, we found a collaborative, passionate leader who is called by faith, grounded in mission and family, familiar with Jesuit higher learning, and committed to excellence.

And as we approach the holy and heartwarming holiday season, please know that you and yours are in my prayers, and that I am grateful to God that you are a member of the Creighton community.

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD
President
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First-generation college students, who often have the odds stacked against them, find a support system to help them succeed at Creighton. The University was recently recognized as a First-gen Forward institution.

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Recognizing the idea of journey, a life-size sculpture of St. Ignatius of Loyola on the new Phoenix campus is in action — even as he contemplates the world. The symbolism is powerful.

34 A TRANSFORMATIONAL MOMENT
With the official opening of the new Health Sciences Campus - Phoenix, Creighton is now the largest Catholic health professions educator in the nation and the only one with two campuses.
**C**reighton University and its clinical partner CHI Health were selected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to participate in a study about the effects of COVID-19 following acute illness. The study, “Clinical Characteristics of Post-Acute COVID-19,” involves examining the effects of COVID-19 in those who exhibited significant symptoms of the disease, says Maureen Tierney, MD, chair of the Department of Clinical Research at Creighton Medical Center - Bergan Mercy, the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas and Mount Sinai Medical School and Health System in New York City. Partner institutions will provide medical data to the CDC, which will analyze the information and draw conclusions.

“I think the fact that we’re one of three sites being chosen for this is a real honor and a real opportunity,” Tierney says. “We were chosen because of the combined academic and clinical partnerships, and, most importantly, because of the large number of patients treated for COVID-19 who came from diverse ethnic and geographic backgrounds.”

CHI Health has a vast footprint in Nebraska and southwest Iowa with 14 hospitals in metro and rural settings. In 2020, CHI Health/Creighton providers led the care of COVID-19 patients across the state.

“I think there was an interest in looking at individuals who had acquired the virus in communities where meatpacking at individuals who had acquired the virus is ongoing,” Tierney says. “And also because those communities were diverse in terms of location, ethnicity and occupation.”

Other CHI Health physicians and Creighton faculty involved in the study include: Renuga Vivekanandan, MD; David Quimby, MD; Nikhil Jagan, MBBS; Salam Salaman, MD; Rima El-Herte, MD; Ryan Walters, PhD; and Venkataraman Sahasranaman, MD.

The investigators will work with a small team of medical students and internal medical residents. The clinical research coordination team will be led by Kayleen Joyce, research director for CHI Health, Sandy Byers, MSN’14, program director of the Creighton School of Medicine’s Clinical Research Office, and her team will also provide support.

In addition, Creighton also played a crucial role in detecting COVID-19 variants for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Beginning in April, the University served as one of three sites in the state identifying variants of the virus. Positive samples from CHI Health COVID-19 testing sites were examined at Creighton’s labs through a state-of-the-art sequencing that can identify known and unknown variants of the COVID-19 virus.

Approximately 960 samples were tested between early April and late May. The efforts “led to the detection of variants of concern that aided DHHS in their efforts to monitor the presence of these variants in the state and perform contact tracing,” says Michael Belshan, PhD, a virologist and professor of medical microbiology and immunology at Creighton’s School of Medicine. This contract has recently been renewed for the next year.

**Law School Opens New Juvenile Justice Clinic**

Joy Suder’s sons sometimes ask her, “Did you win in court today, Mom?”

But that’s a hard question to answer for someone working on juvenile cases, says Suder, JD’08, a former Douglas County assistant public defender and current assistant professor of law at Creighton.

“This kind of work is all about rede- fining your ideas of success and victory,” Suder says. “I will sometimes say, ‘Today we won because this child wasn’t removed from their home. Today we won because my client made it through a hearing without yelling at their mom. Today we won because my client opened up to me in a way they haven’t before.’”

Suder is the director of the School of Law’s newly established Juvenile Justice Clinic, which trains law students through a hands-on and holistic experi- ence serving the client and their family from all angles.

The grant-funded clinic will serve as a small firm, with student-attorneys providing free legal services for youth in the Separate Juvenile Court of Douglas County. The clinic is funded for five years by a nearly $1 million gift from anony- mous donors.

The clinic will be staffed each semester by third-year law students certified as student-attorneys under the Nebraska Supreme Court student practice rule. Each student will enroll in a semester-long class, receive intensive training to advocate for their clients and serve as lead attorneys on a variety of cases.

“With the clinic, we hope to set a foundation where graduates have a baseline skill set to know where to start, how to go forward, what questions to ask,” Suder says. “The clinic’s mission is to create better outcomes for everyone involved, most especially the children we’re serving.”

School of Law student Sidna Brown, among the clinic’s first cohort, says she’s eager to gain hands-on experience in the legal field she’s considering.

“Through the clinic, I’ll be getting the experience to build relationships with my clients, to gain their trust and meet their needs,” Brown says. “We’re learning the law in the courtroom, but we’re getting to apply the law in real-world scenarios in the courtroom. To get that experience before I graduate is amazing.”

With the help of student-attorneys like Brown, the clinic aims to...
help reverse a number of concerning trends in the juvenile court system. A 2019 study by Voices for Children in Nebraska, for instance, demonstrated issues in delinquency and status offenses, excessive detentions, education needs and racial inequity for youth involved in juvenile court in Nebraska.

The study found that prosecution of felony offenses for youths has increased by 42% since 2005. While African Americans represented 12% of the population in Douglas County, they accounted for 51% of people in the juvenile court system.

Creighton's School of Law is well- known for house a Juvenile Justice Clinic, says Dean Joshua Fershee. The school's Milton R. Abrahams Legal Clinic serves clients in need through cases in domestic violence, immigration, and civil and housing matters.

"Our experiences serving the community and our strong relationships with the judiciary, local attorneys and area nonprofit organizations will allow the new clinic to have an almost immediate impact," Fershee says. "This is truly an opportunity to live our mission -- educating attorneys in the Jesuit tradition."

When Nicole Piemonte, PhD, accepted this year’s Kingfisher Award, she related how surprised she was when she first learned that her background in medical humanities would be extremely valuable at Creighton.

A leader in medical humanities, Piemonte has created and implemented new curricula for Creighton’s two campuses, including the new Master of Arts in Medical Humanities.

As assistant dean of student affairs for the medical school in Phoenix, assistant professor of medical humanities and the Peckie Nash Carpenter Endowed Chair in Medicine, Piemonte has been instrumental in making humanities a core element of Creighton medical student formation.

"I am so, so grateful, honored, humbled and shocked to be receiving this award," she said, recalling when a new colleague asked to meet with her at a national conference after hearing that she held a PhD in medical humanities.

"I’ve been hired as an academic support person for third- and fourth-year medical students in Phoenix, and I thought perhaps my academic work in the medical humanities would just be a minor part of my everyday work," Piemonte said.

She learned that day that the medical humanities are “critical to medical education at Creighton” and that the medical school’s dean, Robert “Bo” Dunsay, MD ’81, is a “huge supporter of the medical humanities and wanted more of it in the curriculum.”

This year’s Kingfisher Award is presented annually to the Office of the President in partnership with Creighton’s Kingfisher Institute to recognize faculty and staff who demonstrate the creative application of humanities principles and practices and integrate the humanities and other disciplines or professions.

Piemonte is the author of several books, Afflicted: How Vulnerability Can Heal Medical Education and Practice and her memoir, Death and Dying.

This year’s Kingfisher Award also was given for the first time in an Honorable Mention category. Mary Seevers, PhD, professor and associate dean, and Debbie Wells, PhD, associate professor and interim chair of the Department of Accounting and Business Intelligence, both of the Heider College of Business, also received the award.

The Kingfisher Award is presented annually to the Office of the President in partnership with Creighton’s Kingfisher Institute to recognize faculty and staff who demonstrate the creative application of humanities principles and practices and integrate the humanities and other disciplines or professions.

Piemonte recently published 50 years in education, as a teacher, coach and administrator. Before coming to Creighton, he was a successful high school girls basketball coach in Iowa.

Bruce has been participating in the lives of student athletes, in methods he created, “Kingfisher Concentrations,” part of the Heider Mindset Curriculum, connecting off-campus separate areas of study.

Through the leadership of Severs, these concentrations enrich the academic experience for both business and arts and sciences students, giving them greater exposure and space to explore other fields.

Rasmussen came to Creighton in 1980 to coach the women’s basketball team. He would guide the Bluejays to school records for wins in five of his 12 seasons. He then stepped into athletic administration and was named athletic director on Aug. 1, 1994.

He has served as chairman of the highly esteemed NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Selection Committee in 2018 in his final year of a five-year term on the committee, and he assisted in keeping the College World Series in Omaha and its move to TD Ameritrade Park through his work with College World Series of Omaha Inc. and the CWS Oversight Committee.

In 2019, Rasmussen became the first four-time recipient of the Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year Award. That same year, he was presented with the Gary Cunningham Lifetime Achievement Award from the Division I-AAA Athletic Directors’ Association.

Creighton’s reputation as one of the nation’s top academic institutions is reflected in the success that Bluejay student-athletes have had across the board in the classroom during Rasmussen’s service as athletic director. Bluejay student-athletes have achieved GPAs of 3.30 or above in 27 straight trimester sessions entering the fall of 2021.

"None of what we have achieved could have been accomplished without the collective efforts of everyone who loves the University and our athletics program," Bruce Rasmussen said.
Accomplished business and community leader Walter Scott Jr. died on Sept. 25 at the age of 90. A true friend and colleague, Scott served on Creighton’s Board of Trustees from 1980 to 2008 and was named an emeritus trustee. “An important reason Creighton stands as one of the finest faith-based universities in the nation today is due to what I consider the ‘Scott-Morrison era,’” said Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, Ph.D. “Walter Scott, as chair, and the Rev. Michael G. Morrison, SJ, as Creighton’s president, prepared us for phenomenal growth, particularly in the area of academic reputation. During this era, we achieved 16 consecutive years as the top university in the Midwest, according to U.S. News & World Report. Today, we rank in the top third in the prestigious National Universities category.” Scott and his philanthropic partner and wife, Suzanne, who preceded him in death, invested in numerous areas at Creighton, including the construction of the Hixson-Lied Science Building, the Creighton University Sports Complex, and facilities. “Walter and Suzanne Scott loved and believed in their community, enough that they gave everything back to it. And Creighton University will forever be blessed by that singular commitment. May God bless them both,” Fr. Hendrickson said.

New Residence Hall for Freshmen

The University broke ground in mid-September on the first residence hall built exclusively for first-year students since the 1960s, and the first new residence hall of any kind since 2006. The $37 million hall will be built on 23rd Street, south of Burt Street, just north of McGlinn Hall, and will accommodate 400 students. The new residential facility will offer a significant number of suite-style rooms, which permit more independent living and discussions led by teams of ministry leaders about how to more faithfully incorporate Laudato Si’ into eight areas of the U.S. Catholic Church: advocacy, colleges and universities, compassion in health care and health care teams, environmental justice, preaching for creation care, parochial school education and youth and young adults.

Mission Week 2021 Focuses on Expanding Our Circle of Compassion

Creighton hosted its second Mission Week – a celebration of the University’s Jesuit, Catholic mission – in September. This year’s theme was “Expanding Our Circle of Compassion.” Events included the traditional Mass of the Holy Spirit on Creighton’s Omaha campus and, for the first time, on the recently opened Phoenix campus. It also included the dedication of the St. Ignatius name of the Phoenix campus.

Creighton’s Mission Week keynote address was presented by the Rev. Kevin FitzGerald, SJ, Ph.D., who presented in both Omaha and Phoenix. His talk, “Walking with the Excluded: The Significance of the Creighton Approach into Integrating the Humanities with Science and Health Care,” focused on the second of four Universal Apostolic Preferences animating the work of the Jesuits worldwide – Walking with the Excluded.

Fr. FitzGerald is an associate professor of medicine, chair of the Department of Medical Humanities and interim dean of the Graduate School. He also is the John A. Creighton University Professor and a nationally recognized molecular biologist and bioethicist.
The rising sun, an oft-used metaphor for renewal and hope, carries vivid meaning for a group of women who gathered at 5:30 a.m. twice a week, for six weeks, during the summer.

Stronger Together Rowing is a three-year-old program led by two Creighton rowing coaches and members of the current women’s rowing team. They invite women survivors of cancer and women currently being treated for cancer, to gather for support, friendship and a dose of exercise courtesy of the ancient sport of rowing.

As the rising sun paints pink and golden hues across the landscape, they gather at the edge of Carter Lake near Omaha’s Eppley Airfield while their younger members, or Creighton rowing student-athletes, carry the heavy boats from the boathouse to the water. Joy Dobrac, BA’02, and Bree Rochford, BW’99, both formerly competitive rowers for Creighton and now associate rowing coaches at the University, monitor the proceedings.

They’re not looking to develop competitive rowers, of course. They are simply building a support team in the face of a health challenge that statistics show will impact 17% of women. “We work with women who are survivors of all sorts of cancers, and also women who are in treatment for cancer,” Rochford says. “Most people don’t have any rowing experience, so there is an introduction to the equipment and to technique before we do any rowing at all.”

Some people ask if it’s a support group. I think of it as an active recovery group. We’re not standing in a circle and talking about our experiences, although that of course can certainly happen. But it’s not the main focus. The focus is on coming together, teaching one another and learning from one another.

Dobrac, while a coach, is also a survivor. Diagnosed with breast cancer about two years ago, she joined the Stronger Together Rowing program and found a group of women deeply committed to encouraging one another on the path to recovery.

“This was a nice group of ladies already there to help support me on my journey, and so that first summer I participated as both a participant and a coach,” she says. “It’s a great group of women – cool, just a cool experience. Cancer’s a terrible thing, but this is an opportunity to participate in something special.”

Stronger Together Rowing is modeled after a Chicago-based national program called Recovery on Water. Dobrac says. Unlike that program, however, it is not limited to women who are survivors of breast cancer but is open to women survivors of any cancer.

“We wanted to be a little more inclusive,” Dobrac says. “But we pretty much copied what they do – imitation, I suppose, being the highest form of flattery.”

Stronger Together Rowing is sponsored by Nebraska Cancer Specialist’s, one of Nebraska’s leading oncology practices, a sponsorship that has enabled the purchase of training equipment as well as helping to cover operational costs.

“They are very supportive of wellness programs for survivors and individuals who are battling cancer,” Rochford says. Although little data exists from randomized trials detailing the relationship between cancer survival and physical exercise, observational studies suggest a clear advantage, according to Peter Silberstein, MD, professor of medicine in Creighton’s Department of Physical Therapy and chief of hematology/oncology at CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center – Bergan Mercy.

“In multiple observational studies in breast cancer survivors there is a 50% reduction in the overall death rate and a 28% reduction in death from breast cancer in the most active versus the least active survivors,” he says.

“The very best part, other than the fact that none of us fell out of the boat, was the amazing people, every single one of them, who were so kind, so caring, so encouraging and so funny. We laughed a lot, sometimes so hard it was difficult to row,” Rochford says.

Stronger Together Rowing is sponsored by Nebraska Cancer Specialist’s, one of Nebraska’s leading oncology practices, a sponsorship that has enabled the purchase of training equipment as well as helping to cover operational costs. “As a physical therapist, I know how important exercise is in dealing with cancer to maintain strength, flexibility and mobility,” she says. “However, I didn’t know exactly what to expect that first morning of rowing as we gathered in the dark.

“What I found was a wonderful group of women. There were the cancer survivors, the coaches, many of the young women currently on the rowing team, and even some alumni of the team. All were there to share the experience, and quickly became my friends.”

Rowing, an Olympic sport since 1900, has its techniques, of course, and Gale says learning those was part of the fun.

“It’s hard to describe the feeling of slowly – very slowly in my case – learning to row, learning the language of rowing, using muscles not frequently tapped, moving in unfamiliar ways, finding joy in occasionally actually rowing correctly and synchronously,” she says.

“The very best part, other than the fact that none of us fell out of the boat, was the amazing people, every single one of them, who were so kind, so caring, so encouraging and so funny. We laughed a lot, sometimes so hard it was difficult to row.

“And all this as the sun came up.”

Interested in learning more? Contact Bree Rochford at brrochford@creighton.edu.
Meet the Freshman Class

Creighton welcomed its second-largest freshman class in University history this fall, with an impressive group of 1,130 first-year students. Here are some facts about the class.

**ACADEMICALLY**
- 36% ranked in the top 10% of their high school class
- More than 45 were either a valedictorian or salutatorian
- Nearly 40% had a high school GPA of 4.0 or higher
- A quarter of the class had an ACT score of 30 or better

**BIOGRAPHICALLY AND DEMOGRAPHICALLY**
- 57% are female, 43% male
- 28% enrich the class with racial and ethnic distinction
- 26% are Creighton legacies, having had parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents or siblings attend Creighton
- 12% are first-generation students, or the first in their families to attend college
- 80% participated in volunteer service in high school

**GEOGRAPHICALLY**
- More than 40% come from more than 400 miles away
- 35 states are represented with 10 or more students
- States with the greatest representation:
  - Nebraska: 260
  - Minnesota: 159
  - Colorado: 105
  - Kansas: 71
- 61 students are from Hawaii
- 16 students are from international locations

“Class of 2025, let us have a great journey together. Dive into your hearts and minds. Reach out widely, and curiously, and compassionately. And as you journey, be blessed.”

REV. DANIEL S. HENDRICKSON, SJ, PHD
During Times of Tragedy
Exploring Loss and Grief
From 9/11 to COVID,
BY BLAKE URSCHE

The death of a loved one is a devastating blow under any circumstances. But in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks, all too many Americans learned what it was like to lose someone in the most public and tragic of ways. It’s a reality that millions more are facing today, as the death toll from the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed more than 700,000 Americans so far, continues to rise.

These events have become permanently embedded in the national discourse. They are regularly covered in the media, and they crop up in daily conversation. So, for those who have experienced a loss because of these tragedies, the process of working through grief, while always unique, can be a little more complicated.

“When you start thinking about two of the biggest national disasters we’ve ever had, one of them was 9/11 and the other is COVID-19,” says Ronn Johnson, PhD, professor in the School of Medicine’s Department of Psychiatry and associate dean for Diversity and Inclusion. “They’re both public tragedies, but the issues underlying them psychologically are a lot different.”

The immediate aftermath of 9/11, Johnson says, was characterized by a widespread feeling of national solidarity. The narrative, expressed in news reports from across the country, was one of a nation, united in grief, coming together to support one another as neighbors and friends.

“We could all see 9/11 happening before our eyes. We could all see the planes flying into those buildings, and in a very real, very public way, you could see the anguish people were experiencing,” Johnson says. “That was the last time I can recall seeing the nation as a whole rally around a particular incident and feel a sense of Americanism.”

That’s quite a different story from the narrative that has emerged from the pandemic, which has been awash in political invective almost from the beginning. And the tone of the national discourse could, indeed, impact the personal process of grief for someone who lost a loved one in either tragedy.

But more important than media coverage, Johnson says, working through grief hinges on having a personal network of support: “You get your support from the people who are closest to you, from your friends and your family members,” he says.

Mourning in community is a tradition found in almost all human cultures, says Jill Brown, PhD, professor in the Department of Psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences. The process always involves a commonly accepted series of rituals.

Mourning rituals, even simple ones, help a person re-encode a devastating experience in the brain, Brown says. The outward expression of mourning adds new layers of experience to the initial shock and heartache, making it easier for the grieving person to move forward.

Studies have shown that mourning rituals, even nonreligious ones, can have a positive impact on people working through grief, Brown says.

In the West, mourning has traditionally meant wearing black or dark clothing, with friends and neighbors coming together to bring meals to the grieving family. But for decades, even these basic traditions have been on the decline as the idea of formal public mourning fades away.

“Even our funeral rituals are so divorced from real human connection,” Brown says. “We take the bodies to a professional. We don’t know what happens to them. They make them look like they’re still alive, and we don’t get to touch our dead.”

Within this context, Brown says, the idea of public mourning in the wake of mass tragedies such as COVID and 9/11 could offer some measure of comfort to affected families. Memorial events, such as candlelight vigils, prayer services and benefit fundraisers, can stand in for the formalized mourning rituals of the past, she says.

And in the face of contentious political narrative or unwelcome news coverage that serves as a difficult reminder of the initial loss, that sense of ritual can serve an even more essential function.

“Maybe that’s when ritual becomes even more important,” Brown says. “It’s a public acknowledgment of what’s happening. These public rituals and remembrances might be more important at a time when things are so polarized.

I really do think that there’s something about how these rituals help us retell the story of loss. That’s what growing is. You’re reworking the story from something so terrible and painful to something more manageable.”

“We could all see 9/11 happening before our eyes. We could all see the planes flying into those buildings, and in a very real, very public way, you could see the anguish people were experiencing. That was the last time I can recall seeing the nation as a whole rally around a particular incident and feel a sense of Americanism.”

RONN JOHNSON, PH.D.
Creighton University was built on a foundation of generosity. Every gift given since, no matter the size, has paid tribute to this bedrock belief — that the legacy we leave lies not in ourselves but in the moments we’ve lived for others. That in the end, it’s our acts of kindness and compassion that endure.

Members of the Creighton family achieved great success in their lifetimes. But today they’re remembered not for what they gained but what they gave. To the University, to the city, to the state.

The Creightons are remembered, wrote historian Alfred Sorenson, for a university that will “ever remain a deserved, noble monument” to its founders. Their generosity lives on in the spirit of our alumni and in the faith and service of the many donors who make sure Creighton continues to thrive.

As a private university, Creighton has always relied on the generosity of its alumni and friends to maintain this level of education. Donors make the Creighton experience possible — by funding scholarships, supporting their school or college and making gifts to the essential programs, services and facilities that thousands of students depend on every day.

Large and transformative gifts like those of the Creighton family have marked much of our history. But each year, thousands of donors show their love for Creighton through smaller gifts, and it all adds up to a huge collective impact for our students. A commemorative at the University’s 100th anniversary said it best: “Creighton University has gone far beyond the expectations of a pioneer’s dream. It was a bright and fascinating vision, transformed today into a shining monument by the faith and efforts of those who believe in our mission.”

We call on the Creighton community — join us in the Forward Blue campaign. Together, we will share the gift of Creighton for generations to come.
embraced its base and grew significantly —
and dedicated base of alumni and friends.
Creighton’s ties to its surrounding community

Campus facilities were dilapidated. Creighton
Kiewit Fitness and Skutt Student centers.
Science Building, the Criss Complex, and the
Swanson residence halls, Becker dining hall,
today were constructed during campaigns. To

CAMPAIGNS HAVE SHAPED CREIGHTON?
campaigns along the way.
brate Creighton’s mission, while raising funds
effort over an extended period of time to cele-

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN?
It's the largest, most comprehensive fundrais-

WHAT IS FORWARD BLUE?
Creighton's campaign.
What to know

WHY DOES IT COST MORE TO RUN CREIGHTON THAN WHAT TUITION IS COVERING?
Tuition alone doesn't fully cover what it costs
to educate our students. It covers about two-

WHAT IS CREIGHTON’S MOST PRESSING AREA OF NEED?
Without question, scholarships. Scholarships
are our most effective means

“Scholarship donors have made
our Creighton experience possible.
They've made our
families proud.

“Scholarship

“Every year, Creighton budgets nearly twice as much as for student instructional expenses as public institutions nationwide.

“Any college

“Even before I arrived at Creighton, I admire the University's strong sense of mission and community. That feeling that dedication to service and justice and advocacy has only been multiplied and magnified over the eight years since — declared hundreds of times over.

“Every year, Creighton budgets nearly twice as much as for student instructional expenses as public institutions nationwide. Creighton also budgets 65% more for student services than the national average. And it shows. Our faculty and staff have the time and space to focus on teaching and serving our students first. We give our students a markedly more personalized education, through smaller class sizes — an 11:1 student-to-faculty ratio — and the programs and services that help them flourish.

“Creighton has a myriad of degree programs, outstanding faculty, wonderful academic advisors, and tremendous services and opportunities,” says Wayne Young '50, '81 P0, associate provost for student retention and student development. “Students and parents know that Creighton is the type of school you never leave because Creighton will help you succeed.”

After a deeply challenging year, Creighton’s retention rates were among its highest ever for returning sophomores. Creighton also set University records for retention of juniors and seniors. Student graduation rates, meanwhile, are significantly higher than the national averages for public and private universities. And of our graduates, 97% are employed, serving their communities or enrolled in a graduate or professional school within six months of graduation.

Every gift to Creighton is actually multi-

The Creighton opportunity: Scholarship recipients express their gratitude — for the education they’re receiving and the donors who make it possible.
IF IT’S A PRECARIOUS TIME FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, WHY DID CREIGHTON BUILD A NEW CAMPUS IN PHOENIX? WHY IS CREIGHTON GROWING?

Creighton is making bold moves like building the Phoenix campus largely in response to the changes in higher education. Bringing our singular health sciences education to Arizona not only expands our pipeline of talented health care professionals to an area direly in need of them, it makes a Creighton education a much more prominent option for students in another part of the country. The Phoenix campus is an investment in our future.

Creighton’s history is marked by many such acts of courage in the face of uncertainty. We adapt to the times. We find opportunities for the University to move forward without sacrificing our Jesuit, Catholic identity. We will continue to extend our reach. But no matter what, the foundation remains the same.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?
Gifts of all sizes make a difference every day, and our students benefit from every act of generosity. Every gift — whether $10, $100 or more — adds up to something extraordinary.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?
No two Creighton experiences are exactly alike. We know that alumni and friends have their own personal reasons for believing Creighton is an amazing place, their own feeling or memory that connects them to campus. Maybe a favorite professor comes to mind. Or a class that changed your perspective. Perhaps it’s as simple as the joy of a happenstance encounter along the mall or a quiet morning in St. John’s. One unifying thread of all Creighton experiences? Someone was there for me. In past surveys, graduating seniors and alumni said the strongest aspects of their Creighton experience were smaller class sizes, access to faculty/staff and the overall sense of community.

To everyone who’s ever felt supported by this community, we ask that you be there for our students now. If you love Creighton, if you care about the thousands of students who call it home — join us.

Make a gift. Support Forward Blue. Together, we’ll make sure that Creighton remains Creighton — today, tomorrow, always.

Forward Blue is the largest and most comprehensive fundraising campaign in our history — a student-focused and mission-driven vision for Creighton’s future, prioritizing scholarships, campus improvements and investments in our academics and programs. To keep Creighton thriving — to continue giving our students a life-changing Jesuit education — we need your support.

To learn more about Forward Blue and how you can make a gift to support Creighton, see the attached publication. Or make a gift to Forward Blue at creighton.edu/supportforwardblue.
Creighton Names New AD

Marcus Blossom was introduced as Creighton’s new McCormick Endowed Athletic Director at an on-campus news conference on Aug. 31, and officially began his duties as the senior administrator for Creighton athletics at the end of September.

The former athletic director at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, said the welcome he received from the Creighton and Omaha communities was “nothing short of remarkable.” His two young daughters, Maya (8) and Mora (5), agreed.

“I heard one of them say last night, ‘This is the best day ever!’ Blossom said as he opened his introductory news conference. “When your daughters say, ‘This is the best day ever,’ you did something pretty cool as a dad.”

“I’m extremely confident that we are going to win BIG EAST championships,” Blossom said. “That’s one of my expectations.

“And I think if you’re winning BIG EAST championships, you’re one of the best programs in the country, one of the best teams in the country, and you can make deep runs in the NCAA Tournament and compete for national championships.”

Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, said the University has found in Blossom a collaborative and passionate leader, an individual called by faith, grounded in mission and family, familiar with Jesuit higher learning and committed to excellence.

“I am truly delighted to have Marcus directing the future of our program,” Fr. Hendrickson said. “Personally, I was struck by Marcus’ incredible level of thoughtfulness, preparation, and graciousness. He is clearly and certainly a very capable administrator with a masterful grasp of both the near- and long-term challenges facing college athletics.

Blossom succeeded Bruce Rasmussen as Creighton’s athletic director. Rasmussen retired in August after 41 years at Creighton and 27 years as AD. Blossom and Fr. Hendrickson both praised Rasmussen for his incredible legacy in Omaha.

“Bruce’s leadership of this department, what he’s done for Creighton, his impact on college athletics have been tremendous,” Blossom said.

“There was one of the reasons that made me attracted to this opportunity.”

“I would like to thank Bruce for the blessing of his leadership, his legacy, and his service to Creighton,” Fr. Hendrickson said. “He has been the architect of an incredible athletics program here.” (You can read more about Rasmussen’s legacy on Page 7)

Blossom’s selection as athletic director came after an expeditious yet thorough national search. Creighton trustees and alumni Mark Walter, ’68’82’87, co-founder of Guggenheim Partners and chairman of the Los Angeles Dodgers, was a member of the search advisory committee and described the process as “smart, consultative and comprehensive.”

Fr. Hendrickson said he reached out broadly in the process and thanked the advisory team for their intensive engagement, which, he admitted, included “some late-night calls from their president.”

Blossom said he was attracted to Creighton’s tradition of academic excellence and its firm commitment to its Jesuit mission and values. In Creighton, he saw a university not only committed to developing student-athletes, but to “developing leaders through service to others and through a focus on the common good.”

During his two years at Holy Cross, Blossom oversaw an athletics program, with 27 Division I sports, that ranked first in the nation in overall graduation success rate, at 99.

He also made eight head coaching hires, oversee a football program that won consecutive Patriot League championships and led the development of the athletic department’s first strategic plan.

Before joining Holy Cross, Blossom spent five years at Boston College, another Jesuit school, where he served as senior associate athletics director for business and administration. There, he was a member of the executive team and assisted with all aspects of strategic planning and vision execution for the department of athletics.

His former boss at Boston College, current UCLA athletics director Martin Jarmond, told the Omaha World-Herald that Blossom is a “natural born leader” and “always sees the bigger picture.”

Blossom also served in administrative roles at Providence College, a BIG EAST institution, Brown University and Central Michigan, and worked as an assistant director of championships for the NCAA.

“I would like to thank the entire Creighton family for this amazing opportunity,” he said. “I can assure you that we’re going to do great things. We’re going to do spectacular things. We’re going to win championships. And we’re going to do it together. And I can’t wait to get to work. Go Jays!”

The 42-year-old holds a bachelor’s degree in finance from Northeastern University, a master’s degree in sports management from West Virginia University and an MBA from the University of Rhode Island.

A collegiate athlete himself, Blossom played basketball at Northeastern in Boston, where he was a three-time CBI District 1 Academic All-American and three-time all-conference selection. A Chicago-area native and the youngest of eight children, Blossom was not highly recruited out of Rich South High School.

At least not to play basketball. He did receive a full-ride presidential scholarship from the University of Illinois for academics.

Instead, he decided to follow his dream and headed to Boston.

Through determination and a strong work ethic -- traits that have carried over into his administrative career -- Blossom not only earned a starting spot on the team, he led the Huskies in scoring his junior year and ranks 12th all-time among Northeastern’s leading scorers.

During the press conference, he reached out to Creighton’s current student athletes and expressed his commitment to providing them with an excellent collegiate experience and an environment that is inclusive, equitable and “consistently lives by our great Jesuit principles on a daily basis.”

“I can’t wait to support you. I can’t wait to meet you. I can’t wait to do whatever I can to help your journeys,” he said. “You’re the reason I got into college athletics. I was one of you. Being a positive influence on your journey is extremely, extremely important to me.”

To the coaching and administrative staff, he added, “I’ll be there. I’ll listen. I’ll challenge you. And I expect you to do the same for me.”

He also praised the Omaha community and the Creighton fan base for their support for Creighton athletics, saying that attendance at men’s basketball games, which pre-pandemic consistently ranked among the top 10 in the nation averaging more than 17,000 fans per game, is “a distinguishing factor for us.”

Finally, he addressed Creighton’s “great alumni” and former student-athletes, both in Omaha and points nationally and around the world.

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“I can assure you that we’re going to do great things. We’re going to do spectacular things. We’re going to win championships. And we’re going to do it together. And I can’t wait to get to work. Go Jays!”
Creighton is committed to doing more for our first-generation students, through programs, scholarships and the campus resources our learners need to thrive.
Almost immediately, she was in touch with Student Support Services. They’ve been there for Manasan every time she’s needed help. As a student from a college or university — Manasan’s story is among the ideal. She’s a student from underrepresented backgrounds who found a support system that helps her thrive academically and become part of a community. That support system includes scholarships and a network of student services and organizations. It includes a community of faculty, staff and alumni committed to meeting the everyday needs of each and every student throughout their Creighton journey. (This support system now extends to the Southwest. This semester, the newly opened Creighton Health Sciences Campus — Phoenix welcomed its first group of four-year medical students, 1 in 5 of which are first-generation.)

“At Creighton, it goes beyond school and academics,” she says. “I’ve been afforded an opportunity not only to go to a great college. I’ve joined a community. I’ve found a home.”

WHEN IT COMES TO first-generation Creighton students — a student whose parents or guardians did not obtain a four-year degree from a college or university — Manasan’s story is among the ideal. She’s a student from underrepresented backgrounds who found a support system that helps her thrive academically and become part of a community. That support system includes scholarships and a network of student services and organizations. It includes a community of faculty, staff and alumni committed to meeting the everyday needs of each and every student throughout their Creighton journey. (This support system now extends to the Southwest. This semester, the newly opened Creighton Health Sciences Campus — Phoenix welcomed its first group of four-year medical students, 1 in 5 of which are first-generation.)

“Creighton University is devoted to the success of first-generation students,” says Mardell Wilson, EdD, Creighton provost. “And our innovative programming has provided a welcoming and supportive environment.”

Because of its many programs designed to ensure the success of first-generation students, Creighton was recently awarded the designation of First-gen Forward by the Center for First-generation Forward Council. “With this council,” he says, “we’re really exploring, ‘What does the social experience for first-generation students look like? What does the academic experience look like? What are the issues our students face?’”

“In this academic year, you’re going to begin to see a lot more initiatives and energy focused on direct services, programs and activities dedicated to supporting first-generation students.”

One initiative is already underway — the Creighton First Community. The program connects incoming first-generation students with current first-generation students, offering a peer-to-peer support system. “Through this program, students will know who they can connect with on campus, someone who knows what they’re going through,” says Justin Stoeckle, BSBA ’14, assistant director for transitions in Student Life and co-chair of the First-Generation Forward Council.

Stoeckle says that all aspects of the effort to support first-generation students at Creighton — the council, the programs, the coordination of resources — will be designed to provide a more holistic, organic approach. Not to tell the students what they need but to ask them what they need. And then help provide it. “Above all, there’s this yearning for a sense of community,” Stoeckle says. “For first-generation students, we want to cultivate a space where we can celebrate the fact that what these students are doing is wonderful. That Creighton is lucky to have them and that we’re a better community for it.”
First-Gen
First-generation students discuss their Creighton experience

JACOB IDRA
Heider College of Business
Class of 2022
Born in the South Sudan and raised in North Omaha, Jacob says it’s his life’s mission to serve the next generation of children in each of his communities. “Academically, Creighton has been everything I would want and more. I’ve been challenged in the classroom. I’ve had great professors who’ve been able to engage with. It’s been great to have many options to utilize as a first-generation student. If I’m really going through a tough time, I’ll know where to find someone I can trust and rely on.”

More about Jacob: In 2019, he founded the Omaha-based nonprofit KSG Leaders, which aims to unify the South Sudanese and Greater African communities through programs dedicated to education, health and cultural awareness. He’s also an advocate for educational opportunities, writing editorials and testifying before the Nebraska Legislature on the topic.

Alison Sundrup
Heider College of Business
Class of 2022
Alison was adopted from China by a single mother. It means everything to her mom that she’s getting a great education. “Everyone is very supportive at Creighton, but they also don’t treat you like you’re someone at a disadvantage because you’re first-generation. As a first-generation student, I always strive to be better because I know so many other people haven’t had the chance to go to college. I pray that in the future I can give back to students wishing to better their lives.”

More about Alison: At Creighton, she’s taken part in service projects through the McGrath Center for Service and Justice tutoring children after school. She recently secured an internship in the advisory department of a major accounting firm. “While we’re getting a great education at Creighton, we’re also learning how to better the world,” she says. “I really love the emphasis on community service at Creighton because it reminds us all that we were called by God to help others and spread love.”

KRISTINA DAVIS
College of Arts and Sciences
Class of 2022
The first semester of her freshman year, Kristina struggled. Her family had no experience with college and managing that transition 400 miles from her hometown had been difficult. Then, during Christmas break, the unthinkable happened — Kristina lost her sister in a car accident. “It was so hard to come back to Creighton after that. I remember that next semester, sitting down with Krystal Rice (SSS director), and she cried with me and supported me. And I realized how much love she has for me and her other students. It would have been easy for me to slip through the cracks and not finish college. But she helped me pull through.”

Once I admitted to myself that I needed help, I knew where to find it. People like Krystal and my professors, they’ve helped me so in many ways. They’re genuinely cared for me as a person. You feel cared for at Creighton, and I don’t know if I would have found that anywhere else.”

More about Kristina: For her final semester at Creighton, Kristina is conducting research in the Psychology Department and doing an internship at a therapist’s office. After graduation, the small-town Nebraska native plans to travel the world, doing research and taking part in volunteer organizations.

TAYLOR FRY
College of Nursing
Class of 2023
When Taylor was a sophomore in high school, her little sister spent seven months in Children’s Hospital in Omaha being treated for acute myeloid leukemia. (Her sister is now in remission.) Before that moment, Taylor hadn’t really considered pursuing a career in health care. But the way the nurses cared for her sister and family made her want to care for others herself someday.

Five years later, she’s not only a Creighton nursing student, she’s a nursing intern at Children’s Hospital. On her second day of training, she worked on the same floor where her sister was treated and found many of the same nurses who cared for her. “It’s surreal to now be on the other side of things and get to help take care of families who are in the same position that my family was.”

More about Taylor: At Creighton, Taylor says she’s learning to be the kind of nurse that made her want to be a nurse in the first place. “It can be tough being a first-generation student,” she says. “But Creighton has done a great job of supporting me through everything — from the counselors to the financial aid office to organizations like Student Support Services. People are here to help you, and they’re just really clear about what you need to get done so you can do what you want to do with your life.”

“I’ve still got two years left in the College of Nursing, and I’m already getting to do what feels like my life’s purpose.”

More about Kristina: For her final semester at Creighton, Kristina is conducting research in the Psychology Department and doing an internship at a therapist’s office. After graduation, the small-town Nebraska native plans to travel the world, doing research and taking part in volunteer organizations.

“First, I’m learning and experiencing at Creighton — it’s all going to go back into supporting my communities,” he says.

More about Alison: In 2019, he founded the Omaha-based nonprofit KSG Leaders, which aims to unify the South Sudanese and Greater African communities through programs dedicated to education, health and cultural awareness. He’s also an advocate for educational opportunities, writing editorials and testifying before the Nebraska Legislature on the topic.

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Faith in the Journey

A sculpture of St. Ignatius greets students, visitors at new Phoenix campus, a reminder of the Jesuits’ global vision of service and that life is a journey

by Eugene Curtin
THERE HE STANDS, holding the world aloft, 
a striking symbol not just of the historical 
resilience of the largest order of priests and 
brothers in the Roman Catholic Church but of 
its founding commitment to serving wherever 
need arises.

He is Iñigo López de Oñaz y Loyola, known 
by history as Ignatius of Loyola, the Catholic 
saint who in 1540 founded the Society of 
Jesus, an order whose commitment to Catholicism, 
to education, to serving the poor throughout 
the world, and to reconciling the oppressed has 
echoed through the centuries.

This particular statue of the great saint 
enlivens the new Creighton University Health 
Sciences Campus — Phoenix, opened in August, 
the campus is expected to become a global 
provider of physicians, nurses, occupational 
therapists and pharmacists — and eventually 
physical therapists and physicians assistant - 
throughout the southwestern United States 
and beyond. With the opening of the Phoenix 
campus, Creighton is now the largest 
Catholic health professions educator in the nation — 
a lofty distinction inspired by the life of St. 
Ignatius, who humbly ministered to the poor 
and sick during his spiritual journey.

Before the advent of multimillion-dollar 
medical facilities and a globe-spanning network 
of educational institutions, however, there was 
just Ignatius and his six sandaled, sometimes 
shoelose followers, when, in 1540, Pope Paul III 
issued a papal bull establishing what the world 
would come to know as “the Jesuits.” When 
Ignatius died on July 31, 1556, his order had 
grown to more than a thousand.

Among those first members was Jerome 
Nadal, a son of a Spanish lawyer, who over 
came early suspicions about the doctrinal 
orthodoxy of the new order to become its most 
prominent early theologian, indeed the man 
charged by Ignatius with traveling through- 
out Europe to ensure that the new Jesuits lived 
like their founder — St. Ignatius contemplating 
the world. He was also the author of that part 
of the Society’s constitutions that says Jesuits, 
whenever they may go, are to work hard to adapt 
to the cultural realities of that place. I think 
that’s also quite extraordinary.”

If the Phoenix Ignatius is in motion, then 
he also is in contemplation, gazing at the uplifted 
globe with a mix of reverence and curiosity. 
This, too, is part of the essence of the Society 
of Jesus and is born of the personal experience 
of St. Ignatius himself. Known sometimes as a 
warrior saint, St. Ignatius was born into the 
Spanish nobility and pursued a military career 
where, inspired by the popular chivalric novels 
of his day, he earned a reputation for courage 
and daring. After sustaining grave injuries 
from a cannonball during the Battle of Pampelona 
in 1521, and while recovering at the family 
household estate, he underwent a deep spiritual conver-

tion. Looking for something to read, and 
light food being unavailable, he turned to the 
Bible and to the Spiritual Exercises of St. 
Ignatius, a work he used and expanded on for 
his lifetime. This was the birth of Ignatius’ 
contemplative spirituality, a practice that 
forms the heart of Jesuit theology and remains a 
central part of Jesuit identity to this day.

Recognizing the idea of journey, the six-foot 
statue of Ignatius is in forward motion — in 
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Recognizing the idea of journey, the six-foot 
statue of Ignatius is in forward motion — in 
action — even as he contemplates the world. 
These two qualities, Fr. Hendrickson says, illus-
trate the Ignatian ideal of the “contemplative 
in action” — priests and brothers who embrace 
traditional monasticism in favor of a prayerful, 
contemplative but active role in the world.

“Nadal is the one who said our house is 
not the monastery, our house is the highway.” 
Fr. Hendrickson says. “I think it’s a beautiful 
image, the Jesuits on the move around the 
world. He was also the author of that part 
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A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the $100 million, 95,000-square-foot Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building in midtown Phoenix this September signaled a new era for health care education in the American Southwest and for Creighton University.

With the official opening of the new Creighton University Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix, Creighton is now the largest Catholic health professions educator in the nation and the only one with two campuses.

“This is a transformational moment not only for Creighton University, but for all who have poured serious thought, effort, time, and resources into bringing this inspired vision to a bold reality,” said Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD.
“So I’m very grateful to have Creighton here and to have so many students who really care about serving their community and who are drawn to Creighton because of the values represented by this type of education.”

KATE GALLEGO

Mayor, Phoenix

He cited the Creighton University Arizona Health Education Alliance, and the partners that provide Creighton students with essential hands-on patient care experiences: Dignity Health St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center, Valleywise Health and District Medical Group.

Additionally, he said, Creighton enjoys a strong relationship with Commonwealth Health, the nation’s largest Catholic health care system, which serves “as a model for professionalism and excellence, and to be sure, care and compassion.”

Among those attending the Sept. 9 ribbon-cutting ceremony were Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego and the bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix, the Most Rev. Thomas Olmsted, along with generous benefactors, health care partners, Creighton trustees, University leadership and other dignitaries.

“It’s hard to believe that two years ago, we were standing here with shovels in our hands for the groundbreaking ceremony,” said Bandy Richardson, MD, regional dean for the School of Medicine in Phoenix. “The day has finally arrived — a moment both long-awaited and joyfully celebrated.”

Also present by video were Gov. Ducey and Rev. Olmsted.

“The day has finally arrived,” Ducey said. “And that challenge lately has been finding a primary care physician in the city of Phoenix. “So I’m very grateful to have Creighton here and to have so many students who really care about serving their community and who are drawn to Creighton because of the values represented by this type of education.”

Gallego and Gov. Ducey said the city and state have invested in health care infrastructure and in health care professionals and are excited about the opening of Creighton’s Phoenix health sciences campus.

“The new campus, right here, will be critical in that effort of developing our future health care workforce,” said Ducey. “It’s a commitment to our community.”

During the ceremony, Ducey cut a ceremonial first piece of sod with a five-gallon bucket of dirt.

“Not only is Creighton providing aspiring medical professionals with world-class training, but they are also doing it through a Jesuit education,” he said. “I can say from firsthand experience that it’s the best education that a school can offer. Health care may be science-based but it’s a faith that guides many patients, families and people in need through their toughest challenges.”

A CRITICAL NEED FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN THE SOUTHWEST

The growth of Creighton health sciences programs in Phoenix corresponds with a critical need for health professionals in the city, as well as the state of Arizona and wider Southwest.

Arizona currently ranks 44th out of 50 states in total active primary care physicians and surgeons. With the latest census data showing Phoenix as the fastest-growing city in the United States, and the population of Maricopa County expected to double by 2040, the need is acute for more health professionals now and in the future.

Mayor Gallego said she is well aware of the challenges.

“Every once in a while, I’ll have someone call me and say, ‘I have a great challenge, and I need your help as mayor,’” Gallego said. “And that challenge lately has been finding a primary care physician in the city of Phoenix. “So I’m very grateful to have Creighton here and to have so many students who really care about serving their community and who are drawn to Creighton because of the values represented by this type of education.”

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Meet Our Students

Creighton University is committed to bringing well-educated, compassionate health care professionals to the American Southwest, where numbers are severely lacking. The need is especially acute in Arizona and especially in Phoenix, the fastest-growing city in the nation. Read about a few of Creighton’s health sciences students at the Phoenix campus here and on page 38.

Shana Ofori

First Year | Medicine

Shana Ofori knew she wanted to work in health care; she just wasn’t sure what field. “I thought about being a physician assistant or a dentist,” she says. “But eventually I discovered that being a physician was where my passions were, and it was where I felt I could make the most difference.”

Ofori grew up in Phoenix and lives there now with her family, but both of her parents were born in Ghana. She attended Arizona State University and, as an undergraduate, was vice president of the ASU Black Medical Students Association. She also was named Miss Africa Arizona 2020.

She was attracted to Creighton’s medical program, and its Jesuit values, and is eager to pursue her goal to make an impact on health care disparities. As an undergraduate, she did an honors thesis on pre-term births and low birth weight among Black infants, as well as maternal morbidity. But she is leaving her options open: “I’m flirting with OB/GYN, but other specialties are also pulling at my heart.”

— BY CINDY MURPHY MCMAHON, BA’74

“We are reaching far and wide to bring aspiring health care workers to the state. Already, students enrolled at this campus represent 23 states and four countries.”

REV. DANIEL S. HENDRICKSON, SJ, PHD

PHOTOS BY AARON WARD

SHANA OFORI
ADRIANNE PUGH
First Year | Pharmacy

A drianne Pugh’s passion for science started in elementary school and continued into high school, where her chemistry teacher suggested a career in pharmacy. “Since that discussion, I have been preparing myself for pharmacy school,” Pugh says. Having developed health issues in middle school that required prescription medication, Pugh decided she would like to help others understand their prescriptions. Her goal is to ensure others feel comfortable taking their medications to prevent or lessen future health problems. “I want to learn more about the medications and use my knowledge to create a positive experience with future patients,” she says.

Pugh earned an associate’s degree at Mesa Community College in Mesa, Arizona, before earning a bachelor’s degree with a concentration in biomedical sciences at Arizona State University.
— BY LIZZIE ERFTMIER, BA’18

KAILA ALLEN
January Cohort | Nursing

T he more Kaila Allen learned about Creighton’s 12-month accelerated nursing program in Phoenix, the more the Arizona native was drawn to its excellent faculty and strong sense of mission. Having graduated from Biola University in La Mirada, California, with a degree in psychology in 2017, Allen had put her dream of nursing school on hold. But she definitely felt a calling, hugging her from a mission trip to the Philippines as an undergraduate that included working with local health care professionals to set up small clinics in rural villages. “I remember sitting across from an elderly woman as I took her blood pressure. Although we could not speak the same language, she smiled at me and I smiled back,” Allen says. “I realized in that moment that nursing allows you to transcend many common barriers — such as language and culture — and to meet people right where they are and provide them with care.”

She says since enrolling in Creighton’s accelerated nursing program in January, her experiences have exceeded her expectations, and she is excited to take advantage of all that the new building has to offer, especially the state-of-the-art simulation equipment and opportunities to collaborate with other health professional students.
— BY RICK DAVIS, BA’88

JORDAN ORTIZ
First Year | Occupational Therapy

J ordan Ortiz, a first-year student in Creighton’s Doctor of Occupational Therapy Phoenix pathway, had grown up wanting to be a teacher — until high school, when a younger cousin awaiting a heart transplant had a stroke, and a new calling tugged at her own heart. “Watching my 4-year-old cousin struggle so much broke me,” Ortiz says, “but seeing all the improvement she was able to make with the help of occupational therapy shaped my future.”

“Seeing the progress my cousin made, going from not being able to move the right side of her body to now being able to drive, showed me the importance of having occupational therapy services.”

As a single mom with a son, Ortiz has juggled the demands of school, work and parenting. She earned an associate’s degree from Brown Mackie College to become an occupational therapy assistant and has worked in home health care. She then earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Phoenix’s Grand Canyon University. Creighton’s occupational therapy program is the next step in her journey.

“Deciding to go back to school was a huge decision I was making for both of us,” Ortiz says. “Lucky for me, the Phoenix campus came about, and I am able to get a top education while still being at home.”
— BY LIZZIE ERFTMIER, BA’18

Galgelo also acknowledged Creighton’s value-based education and service to the community as important to her city. “As we lead in cutting-edge areas, we also want to lead in caring for those facing great challenges, and I want to applaud the partnership between Creighton and St. Vincent de Paul, supported by the Piper Foundation,” she said. “We are judged as a community by how we care for everyone, and it’s a real credit to our city.”

Earther this year, the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust announced it would invest $10 million in a collaboration between Creighton and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Phoenix to improve access and quality of care to those most in need. The partnership is designed to reduce growing health disparities that disproportionately affect low-income populations and people of color. A MODERN, TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED FACILITY

A look inside the new Piper Health Sciences Building shows a modern, technologically advanced facility designed not only to provide the latest in health care education and training, but to foster Creighton’s pioneering efforts in interprofessional education.

This new Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building is breathtaking and beautiful and contains some of the latest technology to educate and train health care providers on the cutting edge of their professions.” Fr. Hendrickson said. “We have created a facility that will serve students, faculty, the health professions, and the Phoenix community exceptionally well in the decades to come,” added Catherine Todero, PhD, RSN’72, vice provost of Creighton’s health sciences campuses.

“We examined our educational, clinical and support processes to design the most innovative, effective and collaborative approaches we could envision.” The building offers state-of-the-art active learning spaces; simulation rooms; a task training room; a standardized patient suite; and labs dedicated to gait and motion analysis, human performance, home care, rehabilitation research and more.

It also offers special areas for renewal and building relationships, including a socialization lounge; a community ballroom; and a chapel where students of all faiths can reflect on the connectedness of their academic and spiritual lives.

“Most importantly,” Todero said, “it accommodates our interprofessional approach to health sciences education, with an overall emphasis on collaboration and consultation among disciplines, to achieve holistic, patient-centered care. This is approach that distinguishes a Creighton health sciences education.”

MAKING THE DREAM A REALITY

In the past two years, community partners have made a series of transformative gifts to Creighton’s Phoenix campus. More than $340 million in gifts jumpstarted one of the most exciting moments in the University’s history. These donors helped a dream take shape. Gifts of all sizes continue to make a difference for Creighton’s Phoenix campus. Learn more at alumni.creighton.edu/phoenixcampus.

The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust contributed $25 million toward the building’s construction and endowed programs that will help the Phoenix campus collaborate with nonprofits in Maricopa County, such as St. Vincent de Paul, to train health professionals and improve care for uninsured, underrepresented communities in the area.

Dignity Health made a major gift to establish an endowed fund that will support up to 100 full-tuition scholarships over the next decade for students from diverse, underrepresented backgrounds.

The Norton Family Living Trust gave $5 million to Creighton toward the Phoenix campus facility and an endowed scholarship program.

The Maricopa County Industrial Development Authority gave $2.5 million to support development of the Phoenix campus.

The Del E. Webb Foundation gave $1.5 million toward a learning commons in the Piper Health Sciences Building.

The Shoen Family gave $1 million to dedicate the building’s St. Ignatius Chapel in honor of Army Maj. Caryn Shoen.

The Peter Kiewit Foundation contributed $1 million toward the new campus.

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A Familiar Fall Feeling

Students make their way across the main campus mall this fall between classes, passing Creighton Hall (formerly the Administration Building) and St. John’s Church. After a compressed fall semester last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic that included no fall break, Creighton returned to a normal academic calendar this fall.
Developing Confident Leaders

In a new partnership between Creighton University and Union Pacific Railroad, the second cohort of Union Pacific Scholars arrived this fall. Roland Owona-Agyeman, a sophomore in the Helder College of Business, was one of eight students in the inaugural cohort last year.

“We all screamed — we were so excited. It was crazy.” That’s the reaction that Roland Owona-Agyeman and his family had when he learned he would enroll at Creighton University.

On that February afternoon in 2020, Owona-Agyeman had played soccer with his local Polk City, Iowa, club. When he returned home, his mother and father were waiting for him with a package from Creighton.

“My parents have always loved Creighton. When my dad handed me my mail, I just knew it was about the scholarship.” Owona-Agyeman, one of eight students in the inaugural class of the Union Pacific Diversity Scholarship Program, says in high school he considered soccer scholarships at other universities, but the UP award solidified his decision to come to Creighton.

“The UP scholarship is one of the most important reasons I’m here,” Owona-Agyeman says. “I needed financial aid to attend college, so with UP, it all came together.” This scholarship gave me so much confidence.

For the Owona-Agyeman family, education is a top priority. He says that his parents have always been a source of inspiration for him.

“Watching my parents and knowing their journeys inspires me. They opened my eyes to the importance of education and showed me that school is about more than grades. It’s about access, opportunities and success.”

In 1993, Dr. Ahmed Agyeman and Rhodeline Owona-Agyeman emigrated from Ghana to Iowa. Both graduated from Iowa universities and are active members in their community.

Community involvement became important to Roland, too. In high school, he was active with Youth Congress and Orbits, a project management program that strengthens skills in leadership, problem-solving and communication.

“I learned how to use my voice, and I realized that I can make an impact.” Owona-Agyeman says. “I can’t change the entire world, but I learned that I can really help in my community. And that while I’m helping others, I’m also growing as a person.”

While COVID-19 impacted his first year of college at Creighton, in his second semester he started playing intramural soccer, joined a fraternity and started a role as a campus tour guide.

And in May, Owona-Agyeman began an internship with UP.

With roughly 30,000 employees across the nation, Union Pacific, a Fortune 500 company headquartered in the heart of downtown Omaha, engages students who can articulate and promote workplace leadership in diversity and inclusion for a more just world.

“At Union Pacific, we believe diverse perspectives drive stronger idea generation and spark creativity that, ultimately, fosters innovative solutions in today’s rapidly changing world. This scholarship program is a step forward strengthening our future workforce and creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive community,” says Lance Fritz, Union Pacific chairman, president and CEO.

“By Nichole Jelinek, MA’15

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Impact

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62 Richard R. Stoughton, MD, Plant City, Florida, and his wife, Loretta, published their book Steps Along the Way: A Memoir of 13 Years of Medical Missionary Work in Zimbabwe (Homeland)

63 Michael G. Brase, BSBA, Downers Grove, Illinois, has earned a Master’s of Liberal Studies from Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois.

64 Rodney Morris, BA, Omaha, has published a novel, The Second Killing of Christ. It is about a small group of retired U.S. special forces tasked by the president of the U.S. with foiling a plot by ISIS to close Christ’s Moriah also has been inducted into the Diplomatic Society of St. Gabriel in recognition of his work for the U.S. government in the Middle East and South Asia.

65 Thomas J. O’Connor, BA, Omaha, received the 2021 Cancer Achievement Award from the Omaha Press Club. O’Connor retired in 2020 after working at the University of Nebraska Medical Center for 32 years. He is senior associate director for UNMC Strategic Communications.

66 The Rev. William J. Flagstead, MA, Scottsdale, Arizona, is the author of two new books: Irish Tales from Fr. Fitz and Together: Prayers and Inspiration for Stressful Times in the Age of COVID. David G. Sabott, DDS, Erie, Colorado, was installed as the president of the American Board of Orthodontics (ABO) in May 2021. Sabott is an associate with Trinity Orthodontics in Arvada, Colorado. First certified by the ABO in 1998, he serves as an examiner for the ABO Clinical Examination. Sabott is a member of the College of Diplomates of the American Board of Orthodontists.

67 Dr. Amy M. Haddad, BS, Omaha, recently published The Geography of Kitchens, a chapbook of her poetry. Haddad is professor emerita in Creighton’s School of Pharmacy and Health Professions and served as director for the Center for Health Policy and Ethics at Creighton from 2004 to 2018, where during her tenure she led the development of a fully online graduate program in health care ethics.

68 Daniel E. Monnat, JD, Wichita, Kansas, of Monnat & Spurrer, was named in the 2021 edition of Who’s Who Legal: Business Crime Defense. Monnat also was recognized by Best Lawyers in America 2022 in the areas of international criminal defense; general practice; and white collar crime and government investigations.

69 Dr. Christopher J. Loyke, BS, University of Nebraska Medical Center in May 2021. This is his third degree in education (one from Creighton and two from Marquette). Grogan also was elected to the Greenshield School Board in April 2021. Dr. Gregory C. Skaggs, BA, Tomb, Florida, joined the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2019 as the director of athlete performance in this newly created role. Skaggs provides

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FALL 2021
administrative oversight to the causes that influence health and safety of the players. In the 15 years prior to this position, he served as the director of athletic medicine at the University of Oregon, providing primary care to all university athletes.

Julie E. Bear, BSA'97, JD, Plattsmouth, Nebraska, recently became a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, one of the premier legal associations in North America. Bear is a partner in the firm of Reinsch, Slattery, Bear, Minahan & Prickett in Plattsmouth.

Lina A. Foster, BA, Silver Spring, Maryland, joined the American Association of University Professors and the American Association of University Women as its director of Interdiscipline. Foster previously worked in internal communications at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

Dr. Jamie Van Leeuwen, BA, Boulder, Colorado, recently completed her residency training at the University of Colorado School of Medicine – Wichita Family Medicine Residency Program. She now practices in Aurora, Colorado.

Dr. Kelsey Thies Lee, BS, Sibley, Iowa, has completed her residency training at the University of Iowa College of Medicine – Iowa City General Internal Medicine Residency Program. Lee now practices in Ankeny, Iowa.

Dr. Brandy A. Randall, Silver Spring, Maryland, joined the law firm Dentons Davis Brown as a U.S. Diplomat in the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, where he serves as an associate in the general estate department.

Dr. Koenig|Dunne in Omaha.

President and Interim Provost Hugh M. Thorson, BA, St. Paul, Minnesota, is a historian and the current president of the Nebraska State Historical Society. He oversaw the planning and construction of the new Nebraska State Capitol building.

Michael T. Brewer, JD, Omaha, recently helped two women win their case against a municipal court judge in the case of myBeamer.

Emily Do, PhD, San Diego, is a patent attorney at FRESH, an advanced IP firm, and will head the firm’s San Diego office.

Sheila J. Tecco, BS, JD, Mansfield, Ohio, is an assistant professor of law at Aurora University.

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WEDDINGS

Nicole F. Schroeder, BSN, and Michael M. Lofsdal, BSN, Omaha, June 24, 2021. Living in Omaha.

Marc L. Pietrzykowski, BS, and Mary L. Pietrzykowski, Omaha, Sept. 10, 2021. Living in Lincoln.


DEATHS

Patricia P. Reinig Tunnell, SCJN, was cremated and burial arrangements are being handled by the family.

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- School of Law
- School of Medicine
- School of Pharmacy and Health Professions

Learn more at creighton.edu/forwardblue

IN REMEMBRANCE

We remember Creighton University faculty and Jesuits who have recently passed.

Laura L. Bruce, PhD, was born in 1969, and passed away in 2021.

IN MEMORIAM

It doesn’t matter at what point you are in your career, you can always learn by hearing from others and where they are. Why not think about continuous improvement and evolving where you are as an individual, a way that can help you.

-Mindy Simon, MCRS

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School of Business
A New Chapter for Health Sciences

This fall marked the realization of a dream for health care partners in Phoenix and a historic moment for Creighton University years in the making. The new Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building on the Creighton University Health Sciences Campus - Phoenix represents a new chapter in the history of health sciences at Creighton and addresses a critical need for health professionals in the Southwest.

Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN’72, shares her excitement on the opening of Creighton’s campus in Phoenix.

In 2019 you were named vice provost of Health Sciences Campuses, in addition to continuing as dean of the College of Nursing. How have you been adjusting to your new role as vice provost?

It has been keeping me very busy. Initially because of COVID. So much of the planning for the new Phoenix campus was via Zoom. Now that the COVID-19 environment has improved some, I’m spending extended time in Phoenix. It’s important to me to have a presence on the Phoenix campus and I’m grateful to have a strong team in Omaha while I’m in Phoenix and vice versa.

Creighton has had a presence in Phoenix for more than a decade, but the past year has been especially exciting with the opening of the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building. How does it feel to see the Phoenix campus come to life? Has there been a particular moment that stands out to you?

It has been so very exciting. To see the hard work, great ideas and planning over the years manifested gives one such a sense of pride.

The moment that stood out to me was seeing the community come together for the dedication ceremony. Seeing the governor, the mayor, the bishop, many of Creighton’s generous donors and supporters who have invested in our ideas — all these people in one place — emphasized for me how important this campus is to the city of Phoenix and the state of Arizona. The welcome into the community has been moving and I’m thankful for the support of so many.

The other moment that stood out to me was when nursing student Kaia Allen gave her address at the dedication. I was bursting with pride for her. What was so special about her talk was that she could compare the Phoenix nursing space that she was in before with that of the new building, and she shared firsthand how the new campus has helped drive the interprofessional nature that we strive for. She also talked about experiencing the Jesuit values while going through Creighton’s nursing program, and I thought she articulated well how Creighton can transfer its mission, values and culture to a branch campus.

What are your priorities for the Phoenix campus in the year(s) ahead?

The first priority is to complete programmatic initiatives that we have in progress. These include physical therapy, planned for fall of 2022, and the physician assistant program in the fall of 2023. Additionally, we’re working on developing a dental presence in Phoenix with our partner Valleywise Health for dental residencies and perhaps dental rotations. Another priority will be fine-tuning our operational processes and procedures. We had an idea of how things would work but now that we’re in the building we need to tweak some things and develop an in-depth, clarified operational plan. This will be key for the future going forward.

Another priority will be expanding the diversity among our cohorts, while also promoting diverse leaders within our current student population. We want students and leaders of all backgrounds. Phoenix is a diverse community, and I want to see that same diversity reflected in the students we recruit.

For fun, what are three of your favorite things about Creighton?

My favorite things about Creighton center on the people. First, my colleagues — I have a cohort of leaders I work with who I not only respect as colleagues, but also value as friends. It makes the work especially enjoyable.

Second, the students and alumni — when I talk with our students and alumni who are doing amazing things, it makes me proud to be part of the Creighton community. I feel lucky to be affiliated with Creighton.

And third, the community — we are an institution that celebrates its people, achievements and accomplishments. It always seems that there is a special event going on. It’s a good thing. Not every institution does this well. I think Creighton does this really well and I’m happy to be part of an institution that celebrates its people.

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Scholarships are foundational to our mission, crucial to our success and life-changing for our excellent students. The **Forward Blue** campaign is your opportunity to help a new generation of Bluejays join you as Jesuit-educated leaders serving our communities.

Learn more or make a gift at [creighton.edu/forwardblue](creighton.edu/forwardblue)

“When you make a gift to Creighton, you might not know whose life you’re changing, but you are changing someone’s life.”

— JADA GLOVER, BSBA’21

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