

maroon gold  
**m&g**  
Winter/Spring 2025





# LETTER

from the President



I hope this message finds you and your families in good health and spirits.

As you know, UC is an innovative university. We pay close attention to market trends so that we offer programs that meet both student interests and employer needs. By focusing on our core values of student focus, quality, and integrity, these programs yield strong student and partner satisfaction.

I am grateful to all of our faculty, staff, and students, and the many of you who support our efforts, for helping us achieve record enrollment. This Fall we had over 3,000 registered students, our highest level in over 50 years! In addition, this year we have had over 500 members of the West Virginia emergency medical services and law enforcement communities enrolled in our unique online leadership certificate programs.

In the face of many higher education headwinds, UC is growing by meeting students where they are. I hope you feel as proud as me of *Charleston's University*™!

As you will read in this edition of Maroon and Gold, each day we live our mission to educate each and every student for a life of productive work, enlightened living, and community involvement. We do so across a growing portfolio of programs, our Charleston, Beckley, and online locations, and students of all ages and backgrounds.

Our success is due in large part to the generosity of alumni and friends who believe in the power of a UC education. Whether you help support student scholarships, athletics or other student activities, new academic programs, faculty development, or campus projects, your contributions have a profound impact on the students we have the privilege to serve.

**Your gifts really make a difference in the lives of others.  
Thank you for your continued support!**

Best regards,

Martin S. Roth, Ph.D.  
President



## Winter/Spring 2025

THE MISSION OF UC  
is to educate each student  
for a life of productive work,  
enlightened living and  
community involvement.

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UC Occupational Therapy students  
work with a pediatric patient.

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or visit [www.ucwv.edu](http://www.ucwv.edu).



# CAMPUS CHANGES REFLECT GROWTH

A beautiful new resource for rehabilitation science and athletic training. An update to a beloved structure built in 1962. More options to stay healthy. And exciting changes to our Beckley location.

Our Charleston campus and Beckley location both experienced significant changes this past year. From a major construction project to campus beautification updates to enhancing our existing facilities, we continued to enhance our environment for those who study, work, and visit.

## Outdoor Fitness Court Opens

The Outdoor Fitness Court, located between the Indoor Fitness Center and the Boat House, added a new opportunity for our campus and community to work out and improve their fitness.

Designed in partnership with the National Fitness Campaign, the Court provides comprehensive full-body workouts in about seven minutes. It features various stations for different exercises, clear instructions, and a QR code that links to video tutorials, making it easy for everyone to engage in an effective fitness routine.

The National Fitness Campaign aims to enhance mobility and provide world-class fitness options free of charge, making fitness accessible to all. To learn more about their inspiring mission, visit their website at [www.nationalfitnesscampaign.com](http://www.nationalfitnesscampaign.com).

## Breezeway Beautification

The breezeway has been an iconic part of our Charleston campus since 1966. As with any 58-year-old structure, it was showing its age and needed some work to enhance its role as a major connection between buildings. To provide funding for the facelift, the breezeway was the focus of our annual Give Day.

In addition to financial donations, those who wished to support the initiative could also choose to "Buy a Brick" and purchase an engraved paver to be placed in the walkway under the breezeway.

Pray Construction worked throughout a scorching summer heatwave to update the walkway and the area underneath. The newly refurbished breezeway and donor brick sidewalk were dedicated during our Homecoming celebration in September.

## Changes at UC-Beckley

Our Beckley location also received some updates, reflecting the growth of our programs there.

The Bookstore and Student Solutions were moved across the street to a new space, which opened up more room at the current building and provided gathering areas for our UC-Beckley students, faculty, and staff.

The Radiologic Technology program received new equipment, and the UC Technology Services team installed new camera equipment for student testing. All areas were refreshed with new paint, signage, and graphics to provide an updated and comfortable area for our UC-Beckley faculty, staff, and students.

## Morrison Rehabilitation Center Takes Shape

To meet the increasing demand for rehabilitation services in the city, state, and region, the University of Charleston is making plans to offer graduate degree programs in occupational and physical therapy. To house those programs, a multi-million-dollar renovation project is underway as Gorman Hall becomes the home to the Morrison Rehabilitation Science and Athletic Center.

The Center will include modern occupational and physical therapy labs, quiet study rooms, and lounge and meeting spaces, ensuring students have the tools needed for success. The facility will also house a classroom and faculty and staff offices. Adjacent spaces will include new and renovated visitor locker rooms, laundry facilities, and weight training rooms for student-athletes.

Lead donors for the project include Lisa and Larry Pack, the Maier Foundation, Encova Foundation, Martha Gaines and Russell Wehrle Memorial Foundation, HB Wehrle Foundation, John L. Dickinson Family, Jessica and Pat Graney, Kim and Greg Burton, the Hearst Foundation, Fonda and John Elliot, and Marion and Richard Sinclair. Funding includes a federal Health Resources and Services Administration grant through the Congressionally Directed Spending process.

In addition, UC has established the J. Holmes Morrison Endowed Scholarship fund for undergraduate students pursuing rehabilitation science careers.

"We are dedicated to making a great UC education accessible and affordable," said UC President Marty Roth. "UC students regularly complete their degrees with less debt than those graduating from other West Virginia colleges and universities. The Morrison Scholarship will help us continue this tradition." Contributions may be made to the scholarship fund at any time.

The Master of Occupational Therapy program is currently enrolling students, and the anticipated start date of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program is Fall 2026.

Pickering Associates and Pray Construction are leading the Rehabilitation Science and Athletics Center project, which is expected to be completed by this year.





# INSPIRING INNOVATION

## Downtown Innovation Hub Marks its First Year

The Downtown Innovation Hub (DIH) was recently awarded a “Best Redevelopment” Award from the Charleston Area Alliance during its “We Love Charleston” awards ceremony. The award honors a project that gives new life to an existing structure through redesign and refurbishment. It was a proud moment and a meaningful way to recognize the Hub’s impact since its opening in July 2023.

Since that opening, the Downtown Innovation Hub has served as the site for area gatherings, business meetings, and the launch of Charleston’s only Business Accelerator Program.

The Program, now in its fourth cohort, provides business owners with expert advice, training, and support to scale up and grow their business. Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, this program is free to participants.

To be eligible for the Accelerator Program, a business must have been in operation for more than one year, have at least one employee (other than the founder), and have generated a minimum of \$250K in revenue during the prior year.

## Inspiring Innovation Series Launches

The DIH has also been the site of a unique series titled “Inspiring Innovation.” The monthly series alternated between two different programs – “Fresh Start Breakfasts” and “Two Views Tuesdays.”

The breakfasts offered perspectives from a variety of community leaders on topics ranging from intellectual property, to building a business by investing in the community, managing employee-owned businesses, merchant accounts, and more.

“Two Views” programming featured two perspectives on a specific topic and a networking session following the program. Our dynamic presenters covered issues such as options for K-12 education, energy issues, cryptocurrency, and financing for small and medium businesses.

Huntington Bank generously sponsored the “Inspiring Innovation” series. Several area restaurants, including Ichiban, the Olive Tree, Swiftwater Cafe, Café Appalachia, and Adelphia Sports Bar & Grille, catered the events.



The Downtown Innovation Hub was named a top-three finalist for the Global Innovation Management Institute 2024 Innovation Awards in the category of Best Startup Ecosystem Support Organization. The award recognizes “top incubators, accelerators, or hubs that support and foster innovation within the entrepreneurship ecosystem.”

To qualify, organizations had to showcase their uniqueness and creativity, be practical and viable, and have the potential for scalability. They also had to demonstrate measurable changes,

with clear evidence of the innovation or framework being adopted successfully, and the organization had to demonstrate measurable outcomes, including both financial and non-financial benefits.

The Global Innovation Management Institute (GIMI) is dedicated to democratizing innovation across the world. GIMI provides world-class training and certification programs, working with organizations to implement best practices in innovation management.





# HOMECOMING '24

## CHERISHING OLD MEMORIES & MAKING NEW ONES

"There is something special about returning for UC Homecoming! The campus where we spent our formative years brings back so many memories of our youth. Each year, everyone who attends has a great time reminiscing with old friends and often making new ones. We see each other as we once were, talk to one another until our throats are raspy, and then laugh together so much our facial muscles get tired. All while retracing our steps on that magical piece of land along the Kanawha River. It is our touchstone."  
– David Kurtz, Class of 1980

When we welcome our alumni back to campus, there is an energy present that isn't here any other time. Whether their diplomas say Morris Harvey College or University of Charleston, our alumni bring more than memories when they return to campus. There is the laughter, the joy of seeing old friends, and the discovery of connection and commonality between those who graduated decades ago and those whose diplomas are quite a bit newer. There is the pride in being a Golden Eagle and being part of traditions that go way back or are much newer. And an understanding that, no matter when you graduated, it is always a great time to be a Golden Eagle!

Special guest Holly Forbes from Catlettsburg, KY, and top ten finisher on Season 21 of "The Voice" performed at the Pep Rally, entertaining students, alumni, and guests with several songs. The UC band and dance team also offered performances to keep spirits high.

On Saturday, Golden Eagles football thrilled a huge Homecoming crowd by defeating UNC Pembroke 58-36. The unseasonably high temperatures didn't stop the cheering and the outstanding gameplay - UC had 569 yards of total offense, with nearly a third coming from running back Chavon Wright.

Many games were replayed during a new Homecoming event that was added to the schedule this year. To celebrate our UC student-athletes past and present, we held an athletic reunion in the Boat House on Saturday evening.







## Breezeway and Bricks Dedication

Before the Pep Rally, we held a special dedication of our newly refurbished breezeway and donor brick sidewalk. The ceremony celebrated the impressive update of the connecting walkway, which has been in place since 1966. The updates were funded externally by the University's annual Give Day in February. Donors also purchased named bricks, which have been added to the sidewalk leading to the breezeway.

## Athletic Hall of Fame

The Athletic Hall of Fame Dinner celebration honored four outstanding UC athletes: Kimberly D'Angelo Smee ('14, women's soccer), Rebecca LeBrake ('08, women's volleyball), Coach Tony Demeo (2005 to 2010 football), and Dion Peters ('13, men's soccer).

We also introduced a new digital Hall of Fame with an interactive screen during Homecoming. It is in the Innovation Center hallway to the left of the entrance of the Wehrle Arena.



## Getting into the Spirits

This year's Homecoming also introduced a limited-run "Morris Harvey" bourbon, bottled locally by Bullock Distillery. The single barrel, special label bottle, has been aged seven years in white oak barrels and proofed with Karst water.

The limited-edition bottles were available during our Homecoming dinner and pep rally. Bourbon sales supported our Annual Fund – the bourbon bottles cost \$125, and special UC glasses were available with a donation of \$50. (Must be 21 or older to purchase.)

Bottles can still be purchased through Bullock Distillery. (Because of WV law, bottles cannot be shipped. The bourbon must be purchased and picked up at the distillery.) The glasses are available through the UC Alumni Office.

We thank our generous sponsors who helped make this tasty experience happen: AC&S Incorporated, David & Mary Blashford, Frost Brown Todd LLP, Dave Hendrickson, Steve & Perri Kawash, Mani Ellis & Layne PLLC, Phil Morabito, Eric & Pam Nelson, Rob & Vanessa Pumo, David & Billy Ramsey, Joe & Cathy Rice, and Vandalia Wealth.



Each year, we honor two outstanding members of our alumni community who demonstrate their commitment to their alma mater while also living the University mission. The awards are open to Morris Harvey and the University of Charleston alumni.



## SAM SCOTT Class of 2016, Rising Alumnus of the Year

Sam serves as the associate area director for Young Life Kanawha Valley, a faith-based mentoring organization supporting students from middle school through college, including those at UC.

He also works as a substitute teacher in the Kanawha County School system. He serves as the sports information director at Sissonville High School, where he leads the Strategic Media Club, which UC sponsors. Additionally, Sam is a teaching instructor with Box Out Sports, a platform for creating and sharing professional sports graphics.

Sam graduated summa cum laude in 2016 with a major in Political Science and a minor in Integrated Communications. He later earned a Master of Arts in Ministry and Leadership from Fuller Theological Seminary. During his time at UC, Sam was involved as president of the TOMS Service Club, a Peer Educator, and a member of Psi Chi, the psychology honorary society.

Sam, his wife Katie, and daughter Sophie are active members of Hope Anglican Church, where he occasionally preaches. He also remains connected to UC by contributing annually to the President's Circle.

## JON BLOCK Class of 1979, Alumnus of the Year

A retired Health and Physical Education teacher with 35 years of service, Jon was also head baseball coach at Freehold High School in New Jersey for 30 years, making an indelible mark on his hometown of Point Pleasant Boro, NJ. He is a past president and founding member of the Shore Baseball Coaches Association and served on the New Jersey Baseball Hall of Fame Committee.

While at UC, Jon was an Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity member and acting president during the 1978-79 academic year. He enjoyed intramural sports as a participant and student assistant intramural director from 1975-79 when he resided in Benedum Hall.

In retirement, Jon splits his residency between New Jersey and Florida and enjoys traveling. He remains an enthusiastic supporter of the UC Baseball team and is an active member of the UC Alumni Association. He was instrumental in organizing the Mammoth Park Alumni gathering this past spring, furthering his efforts to connect and engage fellow alums.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO BOTH THESE GOLDEN EAGLES!**



# ATHLETICS *HIGHLIGHTS*



## HIGHEST LEARFIELD RANKING IN SCHOOL HISTORY

UC was ranked 7th in the 2023-2024 Learfield Directors' Cup rankings for NCAA Division II after a record-performing year in Athletics. This was the highest finish in school history.

The National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics awards the Directors' Cup based on points earned in a predetermined number of sports for men and women. The overall champion is the institution with a broad-based program that achieves success in many sports, both men's and women's.

## NINE-TIME MEC COMMISSIONER'S CUP WINNERS

The University of Charleston won the annual Mountain East Conference Commissioner's Cup, the seventh year in a row and the ninth time the Golden Eagles have won since the Mountain East Conference began in 2013-14.

The Commissioner's Cup is the league's annual award recognizing overall athletic excellence among its members.

### UC picked up conference tournament titles in 14 sports in 2023-24:

- + Men's & Women's Soccer
- + Baseball
- + Softball
- + Indoor and Outdoor Track & Field (men's & women's teams)
- + Cross Country (men's & women's teams)
- + Men's Basketball
- + Football (regular season)
- + Men's and Women's Tennis

In an article published in the Charleston Gazette on July 2, UC Vice President and Director of Athletics Dr. Bren Stevens said, "The Commissioner's Cup is a highly sought-after symbol of excellence in college athletics. I am incredibly proud of our staff, coaches, and student-athletes for this remarkable accomplishment throughout the 2023-24 year."

## EXCELLENCE ON AND OFF THE FIELD

On April 3, we recognized 94 student-athletes who have completed at least 60 credit hours and possess a GPA of 3.4 or higher by inducting them into Chi Alpha Sigma (the national athlete honor society). The average GPA for this group (94 SAs) is 3.74. We had 51 athletes who were first-time award recipients and 43 who were second-year award winners.

## NEW COACHES

With excellence comes attention. This year, that attention has meant opportunities for several of our coaches to take on new challenges at other institutions. However, after national searches, several new coaches were named to help lead the Golden Eagles to outstanding seasons:

Robert Poole was named as the Men's Volleyball Head Coach. He was the assistant coach for the Golden Eagles for the past two seasons.

James Long was named as the Head Men's Basketball Coach. Long comes to UC with experience as the head boys basketball coach at Davidson Day School and a three-year stint at West Virginia University Tech as the head men's basketball coach.

Dytanya "Bubby" Johnson returns to UC as Head Women's Basketball Coach. Johnson spent the last two seasons at Presbyterian College. Before that, he served as a full-time assistant to former UC head coach Tianni Kelly.

Sarah Leiby was named Head Women's Soccer Coach. She was most recently an assistant coach at the College of Charleston.

Michael Tesch stepped up to become the new head football coach. Tesch was most recently offensive coordinator for three years under former coach Quinn Sanders.

# GOLDEN EAGLES *SOCCER*

## OFFERS IMPRESSIVE STATS TO KICK AROUND

### OVERALL RECORD

**212-18-13**

**7** NCAA DIVISION II  
**FINAL FOUR** APPEARANCES  
2014 • 2015 • 2016 • 2017  
2019 • 2021 • 2024

**2** NCAA DIVISION II  
**CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
2017 • 2019

**8** NCAA DIVISION II  
**ELITE 8** APPEARANCES  
2014 • 2015 • 2016 • 2017  
2019 • 2021 • 2022 • 2024

**3** HEAD COACHES  
CHRIS GRASSIE@MU  
DAN STRATFORD@WVU  
DANIEL SMEE

**10** NCAA DIVISION II  
**SWEET 16** APPEARANCES  
2014 • 2015 • 2016 • 2017 • 2018  
2019 • 2021 • 2022 • 2023 • 2024

**6** NCAA DIVISION II  
**CHAMPIONSHIP GAME** APPEARANCES  
2014 • 2016 • 2017 • 2019 • 2021 • 2024

**10** MOUNTAIN EAST  
**CONFERENCE**  
TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONSHIPS

In 2024, the Golden Eagles captured the Mountain East Conference and NCAA Division II Men's Regional Championships and returned to the championship game for the 6th time since 2014.

But that's not the only story (although it's a great one). Here's a quick review of the body of work from UC men's soccer from the last 11 seasons, dating back to 2014 (minus the 2020 season when there was no NCAA postseason tournament due to COVID).





Our 2024 athletic season saw records broken, personal bests achieved, several program firsts, and the continuation of Golden Eagle dominance in several sports.

**MEN’S VOLLEYBALL**

The program shattered numerous school records, boasting a remarkable record of 22 wins and seven losses. Notably, in 2023, Charleston Men’s Volleyball embarked on a formidable 14-game winning streak at the season’s outset, not dropping a single set. This impressive performance included historic victories against George Mason, NJIT, Lincoln Memorial, and The Ohio State University, marking the program’s first-ever triumphs against these opponents.

In a groundbreaking achievement, the program soared to national recognition in 2023, ascending as high as 13th in the AVCA DI/DII Coaches poll and securing the top spot in the DII polls for much of the season. In 2024, the Golden Eagles reached another program first with an EIVA Conference Tournament victory over the Princeton Tigers, then advanced to the semifinal round.

**TRACK & FIELD**

Once again, our outdoor track & field teams earned MEC Championships. Nick Bias was named the 2024 MEC Men’s Outdoor Track & Field Coach of the Year.

The All-MEC First Team included 6 Golden Eagle men’s team members and three women’s team members, as well as our men’s 4 x 100 and 4 x 400 teams. Eleven Golden Eagles and the women’s 4 x 400 team were named to the All-MEC second team. Honorable mention went to five UC team members. Individual honors went to Kellen Tropeck, Field Athlete of the Year and Most Valuable Performer; Sam Idiens, Freshman of the Year; Julie LaFare, Track Athlete of the Year; and Warren Thiel, Track Athlete of the Year.

**SOFTBALL**

The team won the NCAA Atlantic Regional, ensuring a chance to play in the Super

Regional and earning Coach Michelle Frew the 1,000th NCAA win of her career. She was named MEC Softball Coach of the Year. The team ended regular season play with an incredible 41-4 record and repeated as MEC Tournament Champions. Charleston advanced to the NCAA Division II Softball World Series, where they entered as the #5 seed. Charleston’s historic season ended with an astounding 51-8 record.

Seven Golden Eagles received all MEC First Team honors. Hannah Rose was named MEC Player of the Year for the third year, and Brianna McCown was named Pitcher of the Year. McCown notched her 30th victory of the season with the completion of tournament play. The NFCA named Isabella Andujar its Player of the Week for the first week of May.

Hannah Rose, a three-time MEC Softball Player of the Year, was voted the 2023-2024 Mountain East Conference Female

Athlete of the Year. Rose was also named the MEC Female Athlete of the Year in 2022-2023. A vote of institutional administrators and the conference office selects the MEC Female Athlete of the Year.

She was voted the 2024 D2CCA Atlantic Region Player of the Year and later added All-America honors from D2CCA (first team) and NFCA (third team).

**BASEBALL**

The Golden Eagles “three-peated” as Mountain East Conference Champions by defeating West Virginia State 17-4 in the championship game. Charleston posted 44 wins in the 2024 season, the winningest season in program history.

Nine Golden Eagles earned All-MEC honors: Casey Fink and JD Armstrong made the first team, Drew Klaserner, Owen MacNeil, Evan Ulrich, and Hector Carreon-Herrera made the second team, and Brayden McCallister, Trace Hartman, and Trey Ritchie were honorable mentions.

**TENNIS**

The women’s and men’s tennis teams earned their Mountain East Conference regular-season titles. At the end of the season, both were ranked #1 with perfect records in the MEC and advanced to the national championships for the second consecutive season, with men coming in as the 10th seed and women as the 14th seed. The men’s program won its first match at nationals, advancing to the Elite Eight for the first time in program history.

With the team victories in early April, Head Coach Alec Foote earned his 100th career win as head coach of women’s and men’s tennis at UC.

Three women’s team players were named to All-MEC teams, and five men’s team players made All-MEC, including Jorge Perez (also named Player of the Year). Coach Alec Foote was named MEC Coach of the Year.

**LACROSSE**

The team had a winning season for the first time in program history, with a 10-7 record (6-2 in MEC play). To cap off their season, the team defeated Davis & Elkins in the semifinals of the MEC Tournament, making it to the championships. Despite playing with a lot of heart and talent, the team fell

to Frostburg State, ending one incredible season!

Nine Golden Eagle Lacrosse players were named to All-MEC teams – Megan Liston, Olivia Esposito, Nicolette Lospitalier, Madison Partridge, Darby Stolz, and Gianni Blundell were all named to the First Team. Allyssa Greaver was named to the Second Team, Hayden Slinkard was named to the Freshman Team, and Ella Russano was named honorable mention.

**GOLF**

Men’s golf had a second-place finish in the Atlantic/East Regional, earning the team a ticket to the DII Nationals in May, where they took home first place in the Atlantic/East Regional Preview tournament. The tournament included all the top teams projected to be in the NCAA tournament. Men’s golf brought home the MEC Spring Championship at the April 6-8 tournament at Oglebay Resort. Pau Sánchez and William Carestam earned MEC First Team honors after their performances in the 2023-2024 season, and Carlos Mortera, Erik Ulväng, and Rory Gorman were named to the MEC Second Team.

Charleston finished second place in women’s golf at the Mountain East Conference Spring Championships. Five Golden Eagles earned All-MEC accolades after completing the Mountain East Conference Spring Tournament. Head Coach Will Johnson was named the Coach of the Year, and Lucia Martin was named the MEC Freshman of the Year. The women’s team was just two strokes off a first-place finish; Lucia Martin was named MEC Freshman of the Year.

**FOOTBALL**

It was a perfect 2024 season for the Golden Eagles – earning an 11-0 record (the first time since 1950) and the MEC Conference Championship. At the end of the season, the team was ranked #6 in the nation in the AFCA poll. The Golden Eagles (11-1, 9-0 MEC) offense was one of the best in the country, putting up 45 points and 461 total yards per game. Junior standout Chavon Wright rushed for over 2,000 yards and broke the NCAA Division II record for most rushing touchdowns in a single season (38). Wright was nominated

for the Harlon Hill Award after being named the MEC Offensive Player of the Year for the second consecutive season. Additionally, UC boasted one of the best defenses in the country while holding their opponents to just 16.7ppg and a +20 turnover margin.

**MEN’S SOCCER**

The team ended the regular season as MEC Conference Champions – for the seventh straight time! They defeated Concord 3-1 to clinch the championship, ending the season with an 18-1-1 record.

Coach Dan Smee was again named MEC Men’s Coach of the Year, and eleven players received All-MEC honors. Joao Silva was named MEC Freshman of the Year, Tristen Rose was named MEC Defensive Player of the Year, and Jack Kay was named MEC Offensive Player of the Year.

Charleston continued its dominance on the pitch, being seeded as the #1 team in Super Region One. The Golden Eagles went on to host and defeated Concord University in the first round, 1-0. The team then defeated the reigning champions Franklin Pierce 1-0 in the Sweet Sixteen to advance to the Elite Eight. The team played in the National Championship game, losing 3-2 to Lynn University.

**WOMEN’S SOCCER**

Under new Coach Sarah Leiby, the women’s team had a fantastic season, ending with an impressive record of 14-4. While the team fell to WV State in the MEC Conference Championship, they still moved on to regional play. Coach Leiby was named MEC Women’s Coach of the Year, and six team members received All-MEC honors.

**CROSS COUNTRY**

Another successful season as both cross country teams secured runner-up finishes at the Mountain East Conference Championships in October. The men’s team finished third in the NCAA Atlantic Regional in Lock Haven, PA. While the women’s team just missed qualifying as a team, Beth Sykes raced to a fourth-place finish, qualifying her to compete in the women’s 6k.



# NEW OPPORTUNITIES *ENRICH* OUR PROGRAM PORTFOLIO

## Senior Leadership Certificate for Law Enforcement

The University of Charleston's School of Leadership is proud to announce the expansion of its educational certificate programs tailored for first responders. Known for its flexible and impactful online education, UC introduced a new Senior Leadership Certificate for Law Enforcement, furthering its commitment to specialized, accessible education for essential service personnel in West Virginia.

The Senior Leadership Certificate for Law Enforcement is funded through a Department of Justice grant secured through the Congressionally Directed Spending process championed by West Virginia Senators Shelley Moore Capito and Joe Manchin III. This new initiative builds on the success of the University's existing EMS Leadership Certificate program, highlighting UC's dedication to supporting first responders.

Courses from the new Senior Leadership Certificate for Law Enforcement will integrate with the School of Leadership's associate and bachelor's programs, making it easy for professionals to continue their education and advance their careers. The University of Charleston provides a seamless educational journey for first responders, acknowledging their unique experiences and challenges by offering substantial credit for prior learning.

Enrollment opened to over 300 WV law enforcement professionals throughout the state. Over 25 weeks, participants will complete five, 5-week courses, earning a Senior Leadership Certificate for Law Enforcement and 15 college credits that can be applied to a leadership degree program. Participants are organized into cohorts that engage online with supportive and experienced industry faculty. The content is tailored for law enforcement, and the delivery is flexible to meet the needs of working adults. All program costs are grant-funded.

## Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice

To address the increased demand for certified nurse anesthetists, the University of Charleston (UC) and Charleston Area Medical Center (CAMC) launched a new Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice (DNAP) program in Fall 2024.

Classes are held at UC's Charleston campus, and clinical rotations will be conducted at CAMC and Vandalia Health's hospitals, including CAMC General, CAMC Memorial, and CAMC Women and Children's. UC's Healthcare Simulation Center, Virtual Reality Lab, and CAMC's Center for Learning and Research are used for hands-on lab and simulation training.

"CAMC has been a pioneer in educating nurses to become Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) for decades," according to CAMC President and CEO Dave Ramsey. "Our approach to training programs has evolved as the education landscape has evolved. We already partner closely with UC on nursing, pharmacy, physician assistant, radiology, and other programs where we have critical staffing needs. We are excited to collaborate on the DNAP program with UC, a university that consistently prepares students to become certified practitioners." The DNAP program is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA) and approved by the Higher Learning Commission.

## Criminal Justice Leadership

The Criminal Justice Leadership Bachelor of Science program offers a unique educational perspective and experience that seeks to empower and enrich current and future leaders in the criminal justice field.

Through a comprehensive curriculum, students will gain a strong understanding of the criminal justice system and its role in society's formal leadership perspective. With a focus on developing critical

thinking skills, effective communication, and problem-solving methodologies, students will be prepared to engage in the challenges and complexities of the criminal justice field. The program also offers opportunities for firsthand learning, networking with other professionals, and engaging in real-world scenarios. The program is fully online to meet the needs of working adults.

Upon completion of the program, graduates will have gained the necessary knowledge and skills to lead effectively and make a positive impact in their communities as ethical criminal justice leaders.

## Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

The MSOT is an accelerated 3 plus 2 program that allows students to apply for the early assurance program and typically complete the degree in 5 years (3 years of pre-requisite courses and 2 years of MSOT coursework). We also offer opportunities for undergraduate transfer students and students who have already completed a bachelor's or associate degree.

The program prepares future occupational therapy professionals with a commitment to moral purpose and personal character who embody and enable purposeful occupational engagement for all people who experience limitations in participation and promote health and well-being across the lifespan and within diverse contexts. Students develop the knowledge, abilities, and character to be life-long learners, use critical thinking and clinical reasoning to create innovative, evidence-based solutions to society's increasingly complex and ever-changing needs, and lead a life rich in productive work and community involvement.

The Occupational Therapy Program has been granted candidacy status for the entry-level Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Program by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). The program is in the process of completing the self-study process and anticipates a pre-accreditation review, an onsite visit in the fall of 2025, and accreditation being granted in the spring of 2026.







**HIPE**  
Healthcare Interprofessional Education

# ACTIVITIES BROADEN STUDENT EXPERIENCES



Studies have shown that cooperation among healthcare professionals can improve patient outcomes. As such, UC has “doubled down” on healthcare interprofessional education, which we call HIPE, to ensure students gain hands-on collaborative skills with other caregivers. Training healthcare students to work together is a significant step in ensuring a cooperative attitude when they enter their careers.



**Last spring, we participated in three distinct events:**

## HIPE Training Event

School of Pharmacy and PA students attended a HIPE (Healthcare Interprofessional Education) training event at the CAMC Center for Learning and Research at the end of March. Medical students from the WV School of Osteopathic Medicine were also present.

Topics included how to care for patients with substance use disorder, trauma-informed care, and a powerful video from Cabin Creek Health system highlighting the work that they are doing to change the lives of those in recovery.

## Nursing Educational Event

In April, senior Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students actively participated in an educational initiative termed the ‘Baby Shower’ event, where they were allowed to engage in simulated vaginal deliveries using advanced simulation lab mannequins. Students were exposed to scenarios encompassing both routine deliveries and challenging complications, including cord prolapse and shoulder dystocia.

The event was provided by Professor Mackenzie Lanham (lead educator). Professor Laura Adams and Professor Savannah Slaughter complemented the learning experience by imparting essential knowledge on topics such as APGAR scores and Leopold’s maneuvers. This immersive educational exercise facilitated the seamless integration of classroom theories into real-world clinical scenarios, fostering a hands-on learning environment for our graduating seniors.

## IV HIPE Lab Day

Junior BSN nursing students held a HIPE with Physician Assistant students. This was an interactive lab utilizing six adult simulation arms and two pediatric simulation arms to master the insertion of Intravenous (IV) access prior to attempting it in the clinical setting. Sixty students participated in this educational IPE event, consisting of half BSN nursing students and half PA students. The nursing students practiced their “patient” education skills, assisting the PA students in mastering IV insertion and infusion calculation rates. The PA students also learned about IV fluid calculations and central line care.

## Assessing Emergency Skills

Last fall, a (simulated) bus accident with multiple victims gave UC health sciences students a chance to work together to triage, treat, and support accident victims and each other in an emergency. (You might notice some familiar faces among the simulated victims.) The students were briefed on the situation, then were sent out to take care of the victims, assessing injuries, prioritizing victims, and treating their wounds. This was followed up by a debriefing to further establish protocols in an emergency situation.







## 2024 Graduations

### *Congratulations, Golden Eagles!*

We held three graduation ceremonies this past year – two in April and one in December – to celebrate the newest Golden Eagle alums.

The spring ceremony celebrated over 300 graduates in two separate graduation events. Undergraduate students were honored in the morning and graduate students in the afternoon. U.S. Senator Joe Manchin III was the commencement speaker for the undergraduate ceremony, and UC's Assistant Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, Dr. John Barnette, addressed the graduate students.

Two long-serving members of the UC faculty were recognized as Emeritus Faculty: Dr. Barnette, former Dean of the School of Leadership and professor, and Dr. Jay Wildt, Natural Sciences program director and associate professor.

The December ceremony honored the hard work of about 200 undergraduate and graduate students. The guest speaker for the event was U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito.

Students represented the university's Charleston, Beckley, and online programs and its five schools: the School of Arts & Sciences, the School of Health Sciences, the School of Business, the School of Leadership, and the School of Pharmacy.

Congratulations to our new Golden Eagle Alumni!



# UC LIFE



## Honors College Receives Gift

The UC Honors College recently received a generous \$35,000 gift from Bipin and Rita Avashia. These funds will support student research, conference attendance, visiting scholars, opportunities, and resources.

A former resident of the Kanawha Valley, Dr. Bipin Avashia has served corporations, universities, and nonprofits in his work as an occupational medicine physician. Ms. Rita Avashia has worked as an accountant and is an alumna of the UC MBA program. The Avashias raised two daughters, Swati and Neema, in the Kanawha Valley. Neema Avashia is the author of "Another Appalachia" and visited with UC Honors students last year.

Dr. Avashia hosted a special class with all levels of our Honors College in April 2024. He spoke about healthy life choices, including supporting and maintaining health, fiscal responsibility, and the profound value of education. He also took questions from Honors College students and shared lunch with them.



## UC is On The Air

The Charleston campus became a film set when the Barnes Agency came to campus to shoot a new UC commercial this summer. Jeff Barnes is a UC alum (Class of 1981) and a 2005 inductee to the UC Athletic Hall of Fame as a baseball player. He played professional ball for the Texas Rangers from 1981-1983 before turning his sights on marketing and advertising. The 30-second commercial was shot at various campus locations and features several UC students and other familiar faces.





## UC PROGRAMS ACHIEVE ACCREDITATION

Three UC programs went through the accreditation process this year – and all three achieved stellar reviews and renewed accreditation:

### Education Program

The UC Education Program has achieved full accreditation from the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP). Following the site visit in March 2024, our program's initial accreditation status was confirmed on June 7, obtaining accreditation for the full seven years.

Thank you to Susan Divita, program director, and her team, including Jason Cheek, Sarah Gallagher, and Sydney Hughes, who were instrumental in the visit's success. We commend the team for their hard work, dedication, and significant contributions to achieve such a positive outcome.

### Radiologic Technology

The Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JCERT) made a site visit in March 2024, and the continuing accreditation status of our program was considered at the May 15 meeting. The UC program was awarded accreditation for eight years – the maximum duration that may be awarded! An interim report will not need to be submitted until the first quarter of 2028.

We congratulate Jason Wilcox, radiologic technology program director, Penny-Jo Treadway (Clinical Coordinator), Drema Taylor (Administrative Assistant), and Mindy Smith, Dean of the School of Health Sciences, who worked hard to ensure the success of the JCERT visit.

### School of Pharmacy

After an April 2024 site visit, the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy received notification that its full program accreditation is continued for the maximum term of eight years, through June 2032.

The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education sets 25 rigorous standards that each pharmacy program must meet. Our pharmacy community worked diligently for nearly two years, completing a self-study process documenting how we meet these standards. At our ACPE site visit, the team of visitors, consisting of representatives from ACPE and other colleges of pharmacy, was very impressed by our students, faculty, staff, preceptors, and all involved with UC and UCSOP. The ACPE site visit team even identified three areas of excellence in which they commended our program and wrote up a “noteworthy practices” report for other pharmacy schools to learn about how our program goes above and beyond set standards in these areas.



### New Scholarship Program Provides Support

“UC Works, our leading-edge collaboration with Workforce West Virginia and area business partners, is a game-changer for West Virginia students to attend and earn a University of Charleston degree,” stated UC President Marty Roth. “This program ensures eligible students can complete their undergraduate education without incurring student loan debt. Plus, it connects students with local employers for part-time work and internships, providing applied learning experiences and building invaluable professional networks that will serve them well beyond graduation. UC Works is a bold step towards accessible, affordable higher education with lasting career impact.”

Through UC Works, students utilize institutional, state, and federal aid programs to cover their UC undergraduate tuition and mandatory fees without the out-of-pocket cost or the need to take out student loans. UC Works students are also matched with a local employer for part-time paid employment during their enrollment at UC.

To apply to the program, students must be West Virginia residents and admitted as first-time, first-year students to the University. They must be in-seat students pursuing a bachelor's degree in specific programs in the School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, or School of Health Sciences. They also must be eligible to receive federal Pell Grant, West Virginia Higher Education Grant, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds.

Part-time employment aims to enhance the student's area of study. “If you're a Healthcare Administration and Management major, we want to match you with a role in the healthcare sector,” explained Executive Vice President of Enrollment Management Beth Wolfe. “Workforce West Virginia is our key partner in matching UC Works students with employment.”

Eligible degree programs include nearly 30 majors from the School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, and School of Health Sciences.





# LABOR OF LOVE

## ALUMNI DISCOUNT

### FOR UC GRADUATE PROGRAMS

For alumni considering a graduate degree, UC can help make the decision easier with our tuition discount for select graduate degrees. The discount is 20% off the published tuition for the selected degree program. It cannot be combined with any other tuition discounts (e.g., military/law enforcement discount, etc.) with the exception of athletic scholarships.

**The following UC graduate degrees are eligible for the discount:**

- **Master of Business Administration (MBA)**
- **Master of Science in Business and Data Analytics**
- **Master of Science in Strategic Leadership**
- **Master of Science in Cybersecurity**
- **Master of Science in Nursing - Family Nurse Practitioner**
- **Master of Science in Occupational Therapy**
- **Doctor of Executive Leadership (DEL)**

Students must have earned a degree from the University of Charleston and be admitted to one of the approved graduate degrees to be eligible for the discount.



The community became a classroom as students, faculty, coaches, and staff participated in our annual Labor of Love initiative on Labor Day, 2024.



UC and KRT buses transported students to nearly 40 community service projects, including beautification projects, packing outreach and food bags, landscaping, trail cleaning, meal preparation, cleaning headstones at Spring Hill Cemetery, a "Get Out the Vote" initiative, and more. The UC softball and women's basketball teams helped with the Charleston Distance Run and Children's Race.

The projects' locations included CAMC Hospitality House, Elk City/West Side neighborhoods, Spring Hill Cemetery, the Morris Creek Watershed, Campbell's Creek Park, Ruth Lawn Elementary School, Ronald McDonald House, YWCA, and Bream SHOP.

UC—Beckley students also participated in projects organized by their program directors. Online students were encouraged to do community service wherever they were.







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The University of Charleston does not discriminate on the basis of sex and anyone with questions regarding Title IX may contact the University's Title IX coordinator or the Office of Civil Rights.

*SAVE THE DATE!*

HOMECOMING

AND FAMILY WEEKEND

SEPTEMBER 19 & 20

2025