



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
CORPUS CHRISTI

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



TEXAS A&M-CORPUS CHRISTI FOUNDATION

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Julian Lopez '23 | *Foundation Coordinator*





TABLE OF CONTENTS

04

PRESIDENT'S LETTER
Kelly M. Miller, Ph.D.

05

UNIVERSITY FINANCIALS

06

FOUNDATION PRESIDENT'S
LETTER
Nancy Eshleman

07

TAM-CC FOUNDATION
FINANCIALS

10

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT
Allen Simonyan '24

12

NEW ENDOWMENTS

13

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP
COUNCIL NEW INDUCTEES

14

DONOR SPOTLIGHT
Robert Garcia and Bill Richmond

16

TAMU-CC BY THE NUMBERS

17

INNER CIRCLE OF
EXCELLENCE

18

CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT
*Valero Energy donations brighten the
future of children at Garcia Center*

20

GENERATIONS OF GIVING
HRI Legacy of Support

24

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT
*Career and Professional Development
Center*

26

ISLANDER ALUMNI

28

ISLANDERS ATHLETICS
SPOTLIGHT
Lucie Charbonnier '24

Dear Islanders,



“...we celebrate the progress, the people, and the powerful stories of inspiration and achievement that define what it means to be an Islander.”

As we reflect upon the last year at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, our sense of community and shared vision for the future shines brighter than ever.

Within the pages of this annual report, we celebrate the progress, the people, and the powerful stories of inspiration and achievement that define what it means to be an Islander. You will learn about student-athlete Lucie Charbonnier '24, who hails from a small village in France. Despite facing significant health issues, her strength of character saw her overcome adversity and not only play her personal best on the golf course but also break school records. Finance major Allen Simonyan '24 embodies the resilience we aim to foster at TAMU-CC. His story is one of academic merit paired with a willingness to experience all that his time at the Island University has to offer. The new \$1.5 million endowment for the Harte Research Institute, The Larry D. McKinney Endowed Chair for Coastal Conservation and Restoration, generously funded by the Pam and Will Harte family and the Harte Charitable Foundation, continues our mission to combine top-tier research with a commitment to preserving our beautiful environment. It upholds the dream of conservationist and philanthropist, Ed Harte, by developing future scientists and safeguarding a sustainable Gulf of Mexico.

I am also delighted to share with you the work of the university's

Career and Professional Development Center, which has partnered with both local and international companies to ensure that the talented students we develop here on our Island are well prepared for their careers after graduation.

Amid another year of academic excellence, athletic determination, and innovation, one of the most significant milestones has undoubtedly been the initiation of one of our most ambitious projects: the construction of a new 85,000-square-foot Arts and Media building. This state-of-the-art facility marks a new era of creative and cultural enrichment on our Island and vibrancy for our community. The generosity of longtime supporters Robert Garcia and Bill Richmond, who contributed \$100,000 toward our fundraising goal, has been instrumental in bringing this concept to life. In this report, you'll read more about their dedication to uplifting this campus and community through the arts.

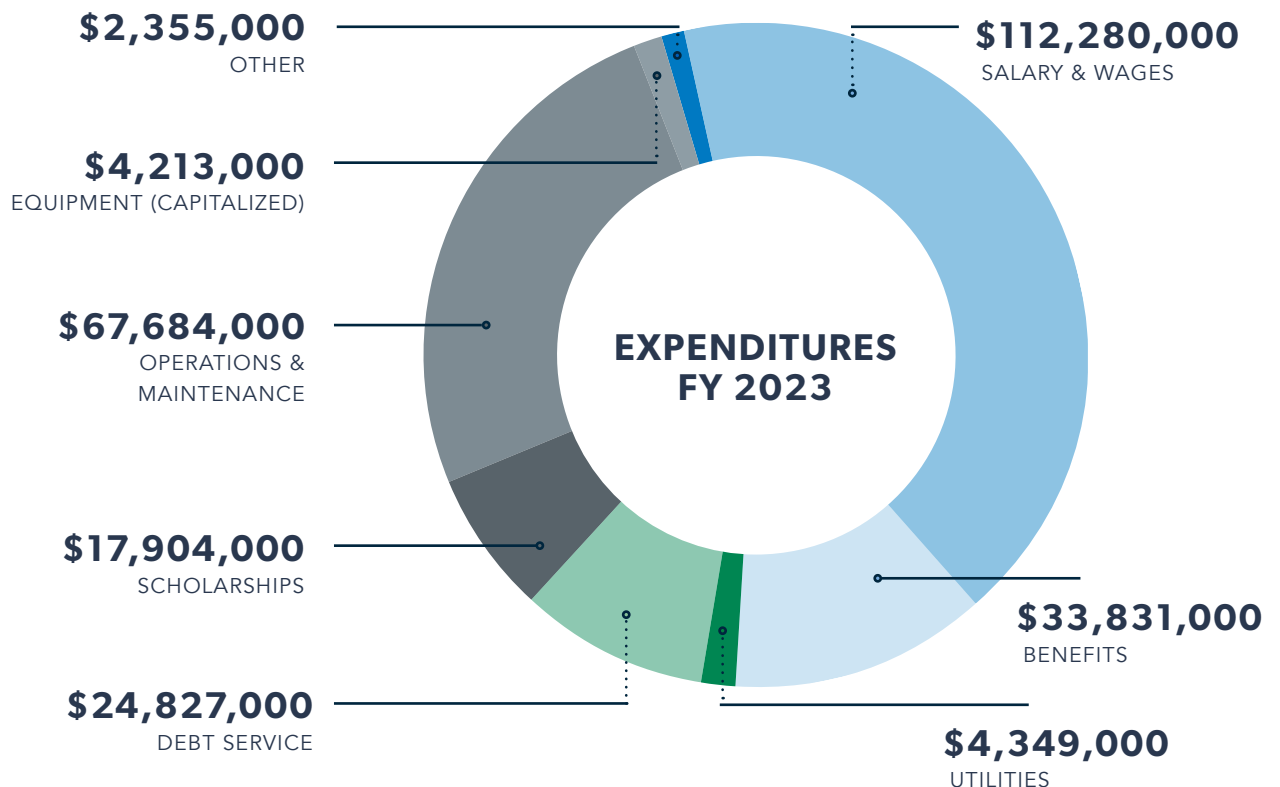
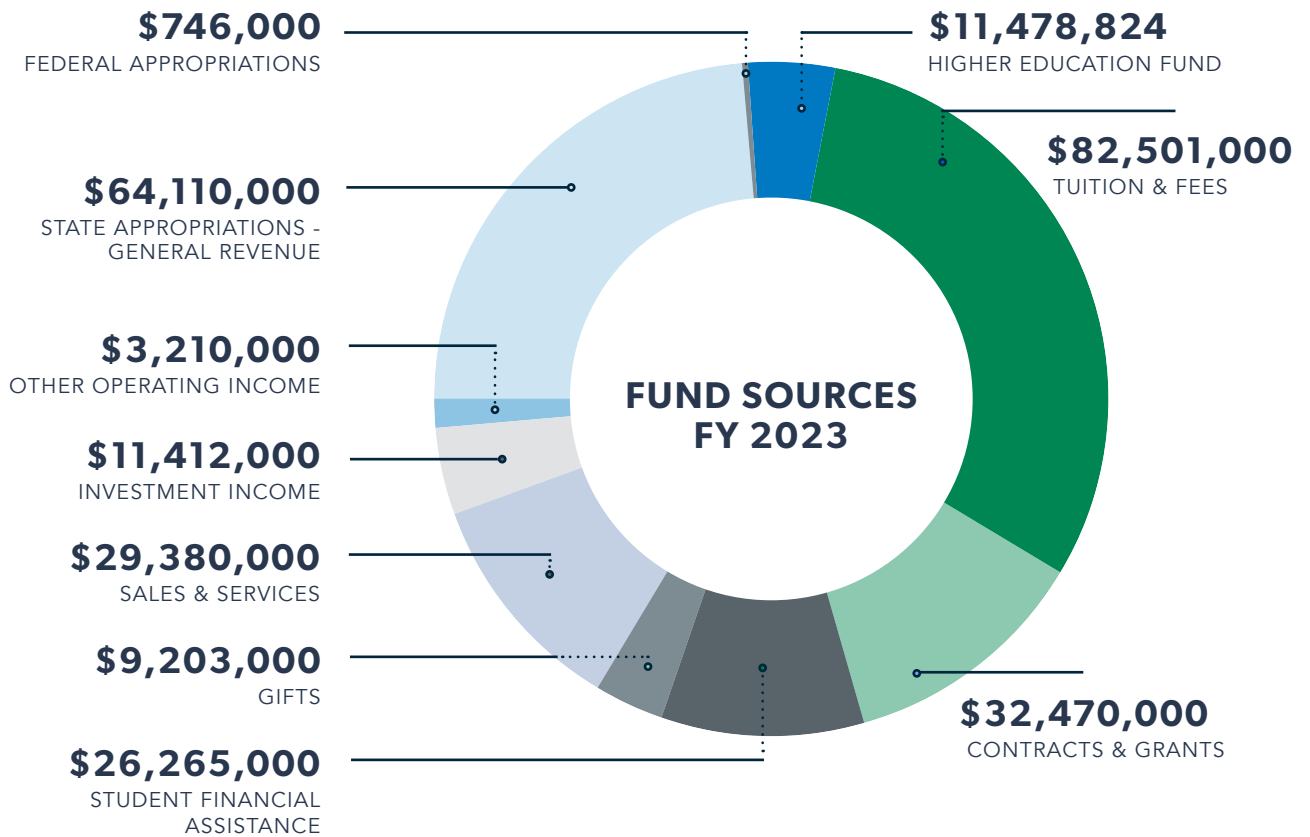
Your unwavering support for the Island University nurtures the potential of every Islander who learns and grows here. We extend our deepest gratitude for your role in shaping the future of our Island University.

Sincerely,

Kelly M. Miller, Ph.D.

President & CEO

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi



Dear Islanders, Supporters, and Friends,



“Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi strives to make a lasting impact on our community, and I am proud to partner with you in that success.”

As the current president of the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi Foundation, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to lead the foundation and help engage the community to increase local area engagement. As you can witness from our increased scholarships and endowments, we are exceeding that goal of making Corpus Christi a university town that has active, multifaceted engagement that extends throughout the region. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi strives to make a lasting impact on our community, and I am proud to partner with you in that success.

In 2023, I am pleased to report that the TAM-CC Foundation managed more than \$48 million in its endowment. The foundation distributed over \$2 million to support our Island University by funding chairs and professorships, scientific research, and updating technologies in the classrooms. We were able to grant \$826,000 to over 400 deserving scholarship recipients.

I am so proud to work with our president and CEO of TAMU-CC, Dr. Kelly Miller, whose vision has been instrumental in supporting student success by removing financial obstacles and creating an environment that prepares our Islanders for life after graduation. Through your generosity, our students can succeed in the classroom and beyond with scholarships, career development, and hands-on research experience. And as our Islanders succeed, so does our community.

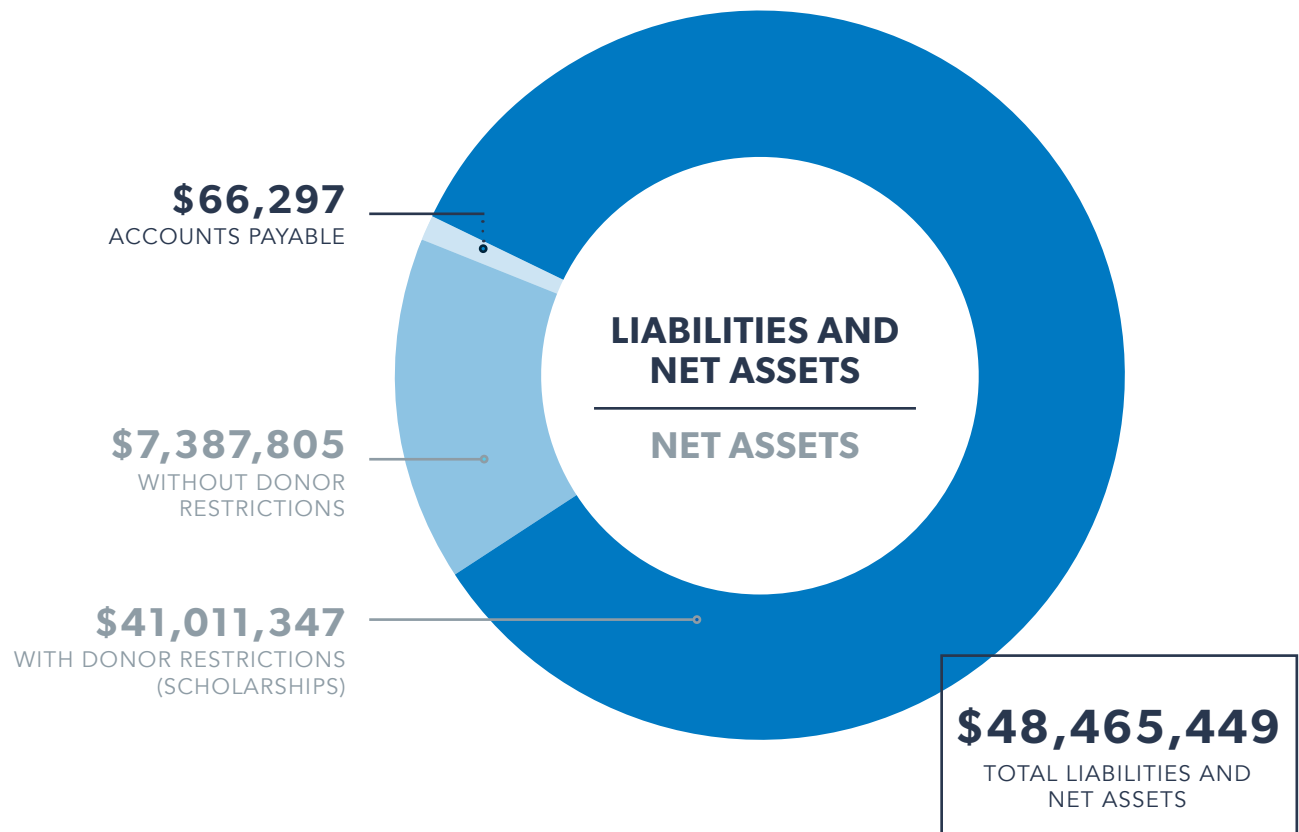
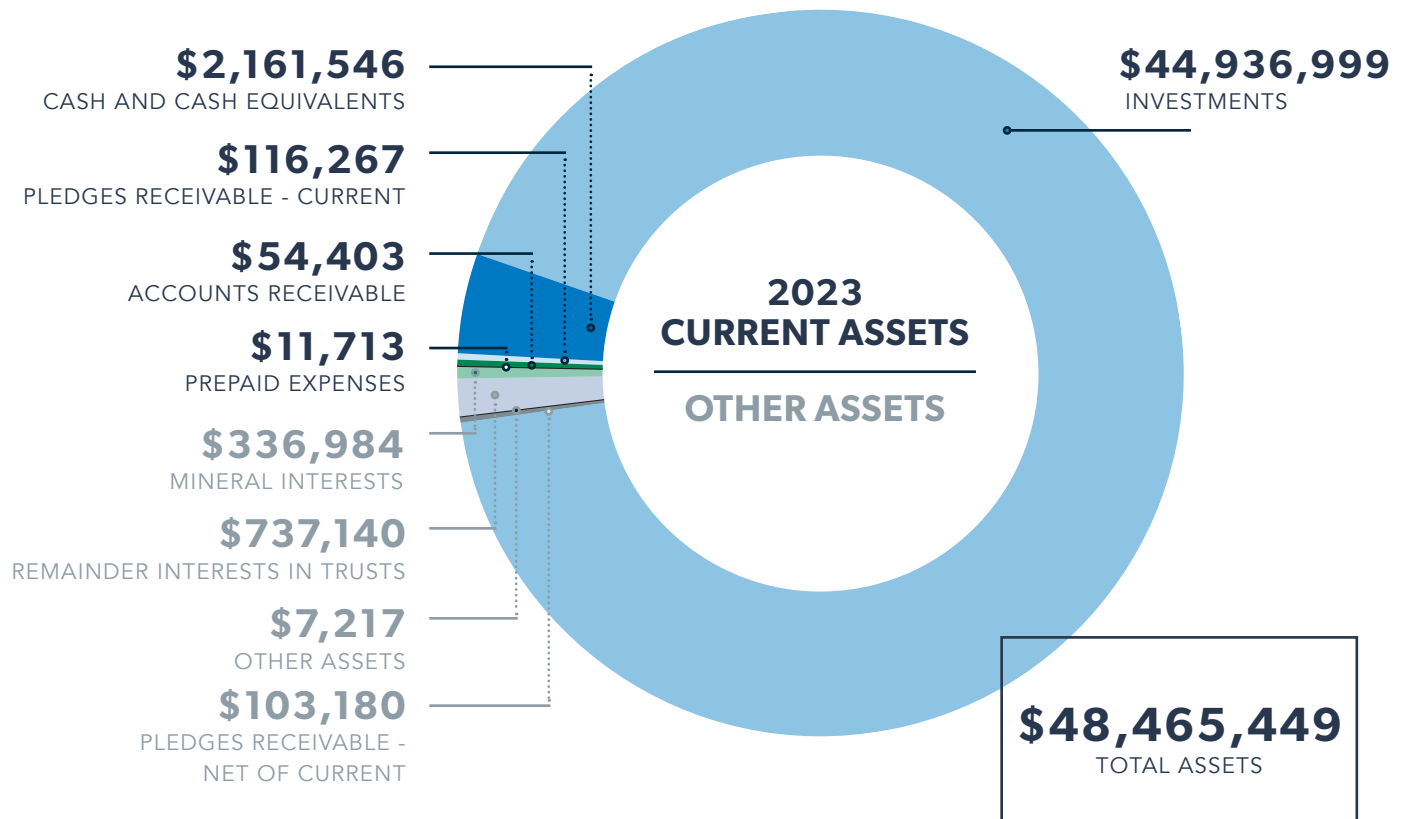
On behalf of the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi Foundation, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your continued and growing support to our vibrant campus and amazing students.

Sincerely,

Nancy Eshleman

President

Texas A&M-Corpus Christi Foundation

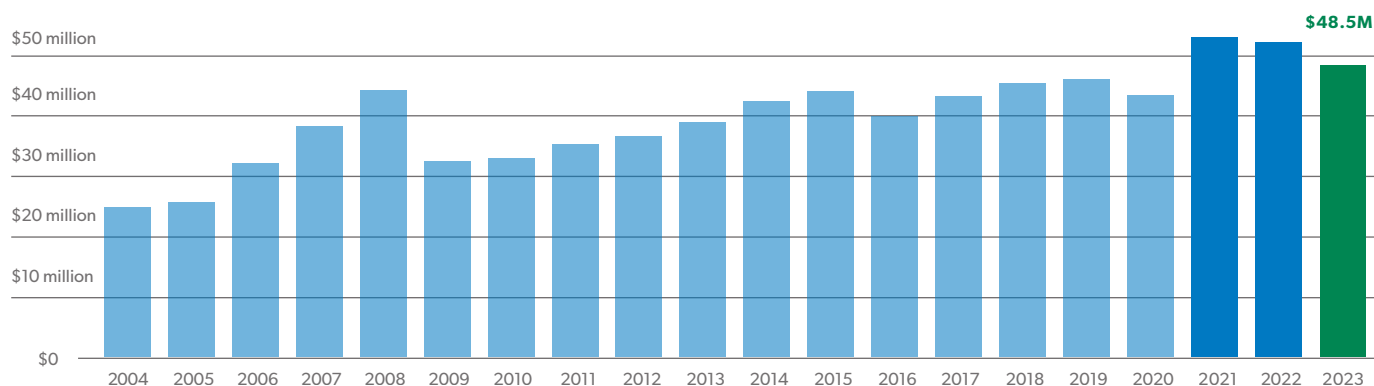


STATEMENT OF FOUNDATION FINANCIAL POSITION

For the years ending March 31, 2022, and March 31, 2023

ASSETS	2022	2023
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$1,738,824	\$2,161,546
Accounts Receivable	\$42,953	\$54,403
Pledges Receivable - Current	\$72,013	\$116,267
Investments	\$49,015,902	\$44,936,999
Prepaid Expenses	\$4,211	\$11,713
OTHER ASSETS		
Mineral Interests	\$101,083	\$336,984
Remainder Interests	\$808,869	\$737,140
Other Assets	\$1,906	\$7,217
Total Other Assets	\$911,858	\$1,081,341
PLEDGES RECEIVABLE - NET OF CURRENT POSITION	\$82,507	\$103,180
TOTAL ASSETS	\$51,868,268	\$48,465,449
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$4,680	\$66,297
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$7,670,778	\$7,387,805
With Donor Restrictions - Scholarships	\$44,192,810	\$41,011,347
Total Net Assets	\$51,868,268	\$48,465,449
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$51,868,268	\$48,465,449

FOUNDATION FYE TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS





Meet Allen Simonyan '24

EMERGING ENTREPRENEUR

FOR AS LONG AS HE COULD REMEMBER, Allen Simonyan '24 said he's had a business and entrepreneurial mindset. The Island University finance major describes his decision to pursue a business degree as driven not only by the knowledge it imparts but also by the opportunity to acquire essential life skills like budgeting, investing, and financial management.

"Choosing to major in finance is a deliberate choice that aligns with my aspiration to effect meaningful change," Simonyan said. "It goes beyond finance and business. It offers me the opportunity to make a positive impact on individuals' lives. Through my academic pursuits, I aim to not only contribute to the success of businesses but also to empower people by sharing financial wisdom that fosters a secure and prosperous future."

"My time as an Islander has taught me to adapt to different environments, develop resilience, and build a strong sense of determination."

Simonyan has consistently earned a spot on the Dean's List for maintaining a 4.0 GPA and has been awarded numerous scholarships, including the TAMU-CC Regents' Access Scholarship, the Greater Texas Foundation Removing Educational

Barriers Scholarship, and the Howard and Julia Townsend Endowed Scholarship. Simonyan said the scholarships empower him to pursue his passions, interests, and goals.

"One of my interests is traveling and exploring new places," Simonyan said. "I think it's important to venture to the diverse corners of the world and immerse myself in different cultures to gain a better understanding of other people's traditions and way of life."

Simonyan also served as president of the university's Student Finance Association (SFA), where he collaborated with fellow business-minded Islanders to exchange knowledge about investing, engage in educational workshops, and prepare for careers in finance.

"Through my involvement with SFA, we met with chief financial officers and executives of large companies," Simonyan said. "We went on company visits, hosted industry-leading guest speakers, and with oversight from our professors, managed an investment portfolio of \$25,000."

Scholarship funds made it possible for Simonyan to study abroad at Texas A&M University at Qatar, located in Education City, Al Rayyan, Qatar, in winter 2023. The trip provided Simonyan with an immersive experience, which included visits to businesses in agriculture, food production, and oil and gas industries. The study abroad experience, which he describes as "remarkable and thrilling," was highlighted by an overnight stay in the desert, museum visits, camel rides, dune bashing, and savoring local and cultural cuisines. The trip also allowed Simonyan to

indulge his love of motorsports and passion for food.

"In my free time, I enjoy sharing recipes and cooking tips on my YouTube channel," Simonyan said. "In addition to my aspiration to become a hedge fund manager, I would love to open up a worldwide line of restaurants."

Simonyan, who hails from Houston, is Palestinian-American and multilingual, speaking English, Arabic, and Armenian, with ongoing efforts to learn Spanish. He describes his family as a motivating force throughout his college experience.

"My mom, sister, and stepdad are incredibly supportive of me. No matter what I aspire to do, they stand firmly behind me," Simonyan said. "My number one purpose and goal is to ensure they are happy and stable. I aspire to one day buy my mom a house and I prioritize every effort to make this goal a reality."

Thanks to a summer internship at PNC Bank in Dallas in 2023, Simonyan has already secured a full-time corporate banking position with the company after his spring 2024 graduation. He prepared for the internship by working closely with the university's Career and Professional Development Center to structure his resume and work on his interviewing skills.

"At the Island University, I've learned much more than textbooks could ever teach," Simonyan said. "My time as an Islander has taught me to adapt to different environments, develop resilience, and build a strong sense of determination. I am incredibly grateful for this enriching journey of learning and personal growth." •



NEW ENDOWMENTS

2023

Brian Miller & Colleen Johnson Endowed Scholarship in
Honor of Academic Decathlon

Uvalde Heart Endowed Scholarship

The Corpus Christi Medical Center Endowed Scholarship for
Undergraduate Students in Nursing and Health Sciences

Seneca Holland and Richard Smith Endowed Scholarship in
GIS and Geomatics

Coastal Bend Advanced Practice Nurses Organization
Endowed Scholarship Fund

Rally Credit Union Endowed Scholarship in
honor of Gerry Morrow

The Rolean A. Cook Endowed Scholarship in Piano

Habib and Loabat Kouzekanani Memorial Endowed
Scholarship in Educational Leadership

Blaskey Endowed Scholarship

Morris L. Lichtenstein, Jr. Endowed Distinguished
Professorship in Public Health

Leslie Aigner Endowment for the Arts

Suzanne Rell Ferguson Endowed Scholarship in
Early Childhood Education

The Larry D. McKinney Endowed Chair in Coastal
Conservation & Restoration at the Harte Research Institute

Lucido Family Clinical Teachers Endowed Scholarship

Dr. Glenn Blalock Endowed Scholarship in English

The Corpus Christi Medical Center Endowed Scholarship for
Graduate Students in Nursing and Health Sciences

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP COUNCIL

Scholarship endowments that have reached a book value of \$50,000 or more are inducted into the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Endowed Scholarship Council and recognized at various levels. Below are new inductees for 2023.

PLATINUM WAVE

\$500,000 or more

Dr. Donald E. Joyner and Dr. Betty C. Joyner Endowed Scholarship

SILVER WAVE

\$150,000-\$249,999

Erin Caroline Donalson Memorial Endowed Scholarship

Marine Technology Society, Houston Section Endowed Scholarship

GREEN WAVE

\$100,000-\$149,999

Carl and MaryJane Crull Endowed Scholarship in Civil Engineering

Paul and Linda Orser Scholarship Endowment

ArcelorMittal Texas HBI Endowed Scholarship for Residents of San Patricio County

Uvalde Heart Endowed Scholarship

BLUE WAVE

\$50,000-\$99,999

The Thomas & Susan Shirley Graduate Travel Endowed Scholarship

Joseph P. Mueller Endowed Scholarship in Engineering

Dr. Don P. Trahan, Jr. Endowed Scholarship

The Maite Yuleana Rodriguez Memorial-Quasi Endowed Scholarship in Marine Biology

James A. Rennier Endowed Music Scholarship for Percussion

The Corpus Christi Medical Center Endowed Scholarship for Undergraduate Students in Nursing and Health Sciences



\$1,092,675

AMOUNT AWARDED IN
ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS



260

NUMBER OF ENDOWED
SCHOLARSHIPS

Setting the Stage

GARCIA AND RICHMOND PROVIDE \$100K GIFT FOR NEW ARTS AND MEDIA BUILDING

FOR LONGTIME COASTAL BEND

arts supporters Robert Garcia and Bill Richmond, giving to the Island University's new Arts and Media building was an easy decision.

"I believe it's a necessity to have art around us," Garcia said. "Watching talented performers on an equally beautiful stage is inspiring."

"This new building reflects the university's commitment to music, theatre, and dance..."

The couple has attended numerous university plays and concerts and witnessed firsthand the limitations

of the current spaces in the Center for the Arts, which was built in 1978. They are equally familiar with the challenges of hosting an intimate student recital on a world-class stage such as that in the Performing Arts Center (PAC), which also has limited areas for rehearsal and teaching.

Garcia said while the university's music and theatre programs have managed to accomplish a great deal under challenging conditions, the time is right to build a facility that truly meets the needs of Islander creatives and the audiences who support them.

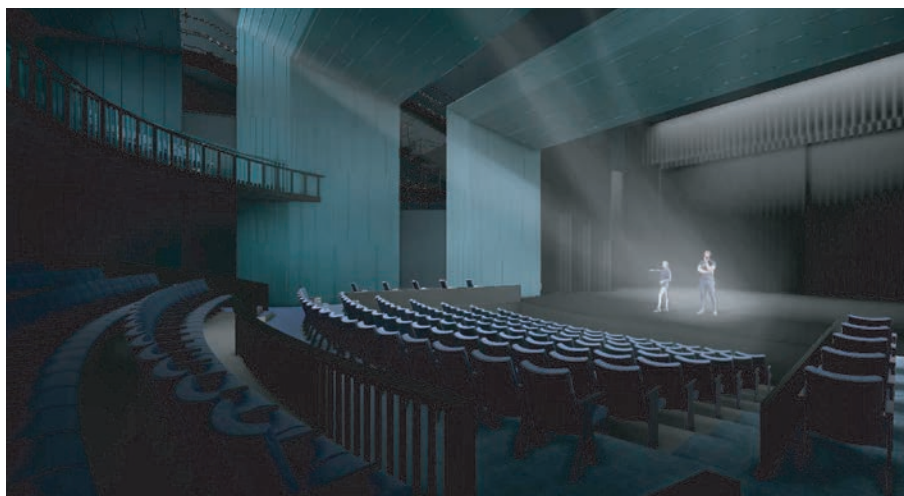
"The arts programs at TAMU-CC deserve a high-caliber facility," Richmond said. "A better facility will inspire students to dream big and perform at the highest level."

With approval from The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents, that dream begins its march to full realization with the construction of a new 85,000-square-foot Arts

and Media Building on the grounds of the space formerly occupied by Classroom East. Among the principal features of the new two-story Arts and Media Building are a 325-seat proscenium theatre, a 202-seat recital hall, and a 166-seat black box theater. Other highlights include a new piano lab, a percussion suite, and a dance studio complete with mirrors, barres, and a sprung floor.

The new building will also have modern sound-proofed rehearsal spaces — something the Center for the Arts does not have — which will ensure that students can rehearse without major distractions.

"This new building reflects the university's commitment to music, theatre, and dance; it is also critically important for program accreditation as we strive for the highest standards of quality, excellence, and recognition," said Dr. Diana Sipes, Professor and Director of the School of Arts, Media, & Communication. "The building will not only be functional but also modern and beautiful. It will be a place where students will learn, faculty will do their best work, and audiences will enjoy the fruits of everyone's labor."



To offer philanthropic support for the new Arts and Media Building or for donor naming opportunities, contact:

Jaime Nodarse Barrera, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, at 361.825.3320 or Jaime.Nodarse@tamucc.edu.

Left: The design of the proscenium stage is inspired by the dramatic underwater experience of the Gulf of Mexico, with gradient layers of blue on the walls and floors.

Robert Garcia and Bill Richmond, seen here flanked by Island University students at the 2024 President's Ball, were inducted into the Bronze Inner Circle of Excellence.



To help the Island University reach its fundraising goal for the new building, Richmond and Garcia have donated \$100,000 to the project. In recognition of this gift, TAMU-CC plans to name the proscenium theatre stage “The Garcia-Richmond Stage.”

“The new proscenium theatre is going to propel arts on campus and in the Coastal Bend forward,” Richmond said. “I also see the new building as being a great draw for our middle

and high school students who are deciding where to go to college.”

Phase 1 of the project is estimated to cost \$81 million, with \$45 million provided by the Texas Legislature. To supplement the remaining costs, the university will provide institutional funds and will solicit additional donor support.

The new building is expected to be completed in 2026. As students,

faculty, and staff begin their transition to the new space, the Center for the Arts will be repurposed to suit the needs of students in programs such as studio art, graphic design, communication, and media. •

TAMU-CC

*by the numbers**



MORE THAN \$130 M

IN SCHOLARSHIPS & AID AWARDED



\$1.02 B

IN TOTAL ECONOMIC BENEFIT
TO THE STATE OF TEXAS
GENERATED ANNUALLY BY
THE UNIVERSITY

\$644 M

IN TOTAL ECONOMIC BENEFIT
TO THE COASTAL BEND
GENERATED ANNUALLY BY
THE UNIVERSITY

\$590 M

IN TOTAL ECONOMIC
BENEFIT TO THE CORPUS
CHRISTI COMMUNITY
GENERATED ANNUALLY BY
THE UNIVERSITY



49

STATES REPRESENTED
BY OUR STUDENT
POPULATION

#1

TAMUS REGIONAL
UNIVERSITY IN RESEARCH
EXPENDITURES

150+

STUDENT
ORGANIZATIONS

*Using data from FY23 (Sept. 1, 2022 - Aug. 31, 2023)

INNER CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE

The Honor Wall of Recognition, located in the University Center's Legacy Hall, showcases the university's most generous donors and reflects cumulative giving. It affords visual recognition of these most inspired donors with gold plaques in their likeness. Below are new inductees for 2023.

LEGACY SOCIETY

Gifts of \$10,000,000 or more

The Dobson Family

PLATINUM INNER CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE SOCIETY

Gifts of \$1,000,000 - \$9,999,999

Harte Charitable Foundation

Greater Texas Foundation

GOLD INNER CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE SOCIETY

Gifts of \$500,000 - \$999,999

Dr. Donald E. and Dr. Betty C. Joyner

Puente de Maravillas Foundation

Port of Corpus Christi

Tres Grace Family Foundation

SILVER INNER CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE SOCIETY

Gifts of \$250,000 - \$499,999

Frazier Family Foundation

BRONZE INNER CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE SOCIETY

Gifts of \$100,000 - \$249,999

San Antonio Area Foundation

Carl E. and MaryJane Crull

Bette Williams and Lewie Barber

Drew M. Bingham Foundation

Robert Garcia and Bill Richmond

Dr. Kamiar Kouzekanani



\$13 M+

RAISED BY DONORS
IN FY23



5,462

TOTAL NUMBER
OF GIFTS

Powering Minds, Inspiring Hearts

VALERO ENERGY DONATIONS BRIGHTEN THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN AT GARCIA CENTER

IF YOU WALK THROUGH THE DOORS of the Antonio E. Garcia Arts and Education Center at a certain time of day, you'll hear the sounds of laughter — a sort of joy that comes out when learning and fun join forces. It's that dynamic combination that has helped the center, which is overseen by the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, make a significant impact in the community. The center is located on the city's westside, on Agnes Street, near the Crosstown Expressway.

“This donation can be counted by more than just dollars. It can be counted by the impact we’re making through education, life skills, and community building.”

ESMERALDA TERAN '11, '16, '21
Garcia Center Director

“Many of our students come from lower-income blended families or families where a grandparent is the primary caregiver,” said Esmeralda Teran '11, '16, '21, Garcia Center Director. “The center’s many programs not only offer valuable educational experiences but also foster collaboration, relationship building, and a supportive learning environment conducive to academic success.”



Above: Representatives from the Garcia Center and Valero pose for a photo during the 2023 Benefit for Children check presentation.

The work the staff and volunteers are doing at the center would not be possible without the generosity of donors, and the Valero Energy Foundation has been one of the Garcia Center’s biggest supporters for years. Their latest contribution made in fall 2023 was a check for \$100,000. The money was raised during the Valero Texas Open golf tournament and associated events; in total, Valero raised a record-breaking \$23 million for charities nationwide last year.

“We have worked with the Garcia Center for several years and see the continued good work they are doing at providing educational programs to engage children of all ages,” said Darcy Schroeder, Public Affairs Manager for Valero Corpus Christi Refineries. “We appreciate that the team at the center is continuously looking for new ways to expand their services.”

Thanks to Valero’s gift, the center is funding such projects as a math/STEM boot camp, cooking camp, ceramic

art camp, and art workshops, along with various programs for elementary, middle, and high school students with themes like volunteerism and money management. One such camp is the Very Important Kids (VIK) summer camp.

“What a true blessing the VIK camp was to our children,” said Adrienne Luter, a mother of two. “My daughter was initially nervous to attend, but she ended up enjoying the projects that they were guided through each day. Her favorites were the art projects.”

For Rhonda Baker’s grandchildren, the center provided a space to learn while their father, a single parent, worked to provide for his family.

“The kids were constantly learning in a safe and healthy environment,” Baker said. “My youngest grandchild has a speech disability and has been in speech therapy for about three years. His speech improved more in six weeks at the Garcia Center than in those three years.”

From left: Gina Perez '25, Melissa Hernandez '18, and Esmeralda Teran '11, '16, '21, supervise the after-school program at the Garcia Center.



Island University students who work part time at the center are also impacted by Valero's donation. One such student is Gina Perez '25, a history major who aspires to be a teacher once she graduates. As a co-education coordinator at the Garcia Center, Perez oversees many of the programs at the center and manages tutors who help kids during "Homework Hour." She also teaches a literacy lesson once a week.

"The center has helped me prepare for my future career by allowing me to gain experience in lesson planning and working with children," Perez said. "I have learned crucial skills in classroom management, work with various grade levels, and have the freedom to be creative while teaching; all of which will be invaluable in my own classroom one day."

Teran adds that Valero's investment

in the Garcia Center empowers the center's workers to reach even more families and make a lasting difference in their lives.

"This donation can be counted by more than just dollars," Teran said. "It can be counted by the impact we're making through education, life skills, and community building." •

From left: Antonio Cantu '24 and Kate Shlepr, under the direction of Dr. Dale Gawlik, HRI Chair for Conservation and Biodiversity, quantify the habitat of the Upper Laguna Madre in correspondence to waterbird foraging use.





HARTE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Generations of Giving

**ED HARTE'S GIFT INSPIRES A LEGACY OF SUPPORT
FOR THE GULF OF MEXICO**

A GIFT HAS THE REMARKABLE ABILITY TO IGNITE PROFOUND transformation within an individual's life, transcending mere material value to touch the very core of their being. When Will Harte gifted his father Ed Harte the book, "Sea Change: A Message to the Oceans," Dr. Sylvia Earle's autobiography, it became the catalyst for a remarkable journey. This gift would not just spark inspiration for the creation of the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies (HRI) at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, but it also laid the foundation for a lasting legacy.

Continued on the next page.

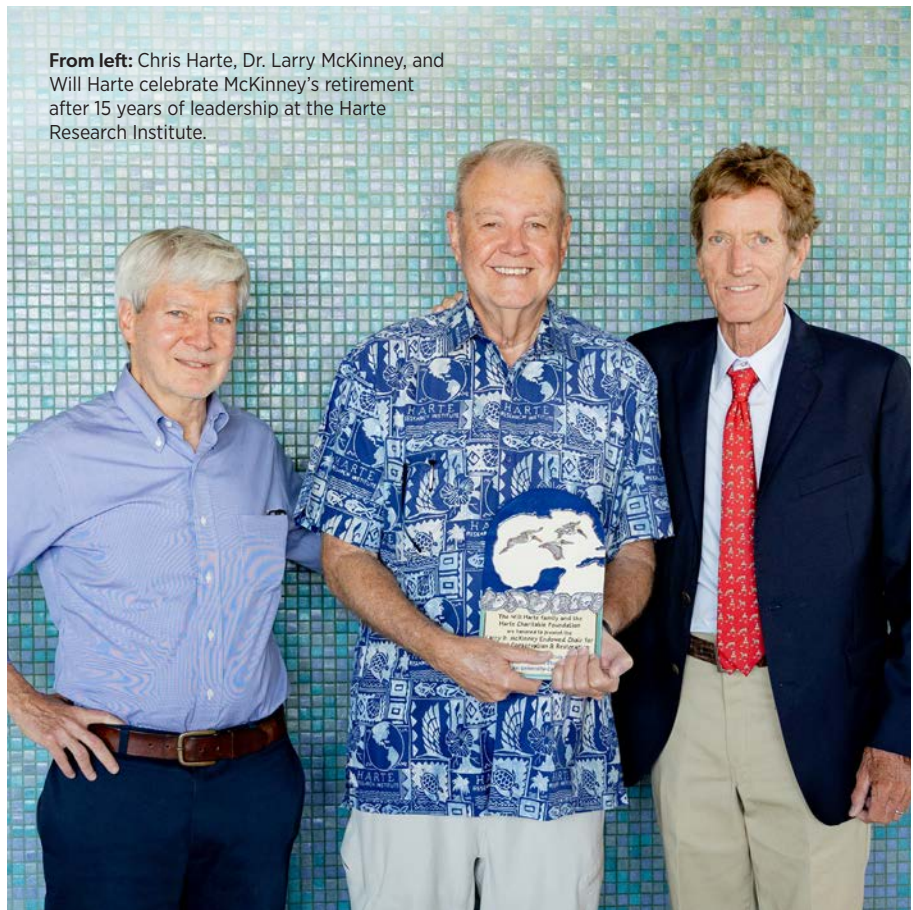
Five years later, in 2000, Ed Harte, conservationist and philanthropist, donated \$46 million to establish HRI. Harte's transformative donation marked a pivotal moment in marine science and environmental research as the institute grew to become a beacon of interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation, dedicated to advancing understanding and stewardship of the Gulf of Mexico's diverse ecosystems. Harte's vision and philanthropy have enabled scientists, policymakers, and communities to work hand in hand, addressing critical issues such as conservation, sustainability, and resilience in one of the world's most vital marine regions.

While Ed Harte's legacy continues to inspire generations of researchers and conservationists to safeguard the Gulf's natural resources for future generations, it also inspired his children to continue in that spirit of giving to the Gulf.

In 2023, the Pam and Will Harte family and the Harte Charitable Foundation jointly funded a new endowment at HRI in honor of former HRI Senior Executive Director, Dr. Larry McKinney. The \$1.5 million endowment, aptly named The Larry D. McKinney Endowed Chair for Coastal Conservation and Restoration, commemorates McKinney's 15 years of leadership at HRI, his tireless efforts to advance the institute, and his ongoing commitment to a healthy and sustainable Gulf of Mexico.

This endowment funds the activities of Dr. Jennifer Pollack, who leads the Coastal Conservation and Restoration group at HRI. This group examines how estuarine habitats like oyster reefs are affected by changing conditions, along with how to efficiently restore habitats to replace lost ecological functions. Endowments such as this are the pinnacle of giving and scientific performance in both national and international arenas as they can shape the future of an institution in perpetuity.

"My father wanted the institute to 'make a difference' and it certainly



From left: Chris Harte, Dr. Larry McKinney, and Will Harte celebrate McKinney's retirement after 15 years of leadership at the Harte Research Institute.

has: great people, great research, great solutions, and a bright future," Will Harte said.

In addition to endowments, the Harte Charitable Foundation annually funds the Wes Tunnell Fellowship and other strategic institutional programs. The fellowship supports Mexican and American graduate students who are committed to a research discipline supported by HRI and focused on the Gulf of Mexico.

"We are delighted to support the next generation of scientists and to have contributed to the Dr. Larry D. McKinney Endowed Chair for Coastal Conservation and Restoration," said Don Perkins, Executive Director of the Harte Charitable Foundation. "We look forward to seeing HRI continue to expand its research capabilities along the Texas Coast and around the Gulf of Mexico."

Antonio Cantú '24 received the Wes Tunnell Fellowship in 2023. Cantú, a native of Monterrey, Mexico, is a Ph.D.

student in Coastal and Marine Science at TAMU-CC, working alongside HRI's Endowed Chair for Conservation and Biodiversity, Dr. Dale Gawlik, as he studies foraging habitat dynamics for waterbird conservation.

"The support I've received through this fellowship has been very important to me, helping me focus on my graduate program and achieve my goals," Cantú said.

The Harte family's generosity continues to seed the work at HRI and foster the dreams and hard work of the Gulf of Mexico's next generation of leaders. Though HRI's efforts thus far have already resulted in truly transformational gains in the Gulf, the work is just beginning. With the continued support of those like the Harte family and the combined support of a steadfast conservation community, HRI will continue providing science-driven and economic-based solutions for the benefit of all, now and forever. •



"Immersing myself in the engineering discipline has solidified my love for it, and each experience has further fueled my determination. The support granted by my scholarship acts as a powerful motivator, reinforcing my commitment to realizing my aspirations within the engineering domain. Your generosity resonates deeply, pushing me to excel and fulfill my potential as I work toward becoming the engineer I aspire to be."

VERNONIKA CASTANEDA '26

Civil Engineering

An Island of Interns

CHARTING SUCCESS WITH THE CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

AS CAREER AND RECRUITMENT

initiatives have evolved at the Island University, the Career and Professional Development Center has established itself as an indispensable cornerstone of student success and regional prosperity, embodying the university's commitment to excellence and community engagement.

A particular area of success is the center's internship program, which benefits from an institutional commitment to nurturing student talent while developing highly employable, highly sought-after new professionals through a holistic approach to entering the workforce.

"TAMU-CC interns rank among the best the country has to offer," said Dr. Leslie Mills, Career Center Executive Director. "Supervisor satisfaction in the context of intern performance is extremely high, coming in at 93%, based on national surveys."

In carrying out the Island University's commitment to serving the local community, the Career Center has carved out a reputation as a hub for intern talent in the Coastal Bend, with 833 local internships reported in 2023. Over the years, numerous interns have reported receiving full-time job offers

following their successful internship and the subsequent hiring process.

The Career Center works alongside the university's academic colleges to determine meaningful internship experiences for students. Examples include an atmospheric sciences research program to support a NASA project, collaborations with notable local medical providers such as CHRISTUS Spohn and Driscoll Children's Hospital, and onsite experiences with the Nueces County Juvenile Justice Center and the Corpus Christi Police Department — to name just a few.

For electrical engineering major, Yohance Machado '24, who interned with defense and space manufacturing company Northrop Grumman as an operations engineer intern in summer 2023, the commitment to fostering partnerships with industry to create internship opportunities sets the Island University apart from other institutions.

"In searching for jobs and other professional opportunities, exposure is often key to success, and the Career Center at TAMU-CC facilitates this exposure," he said. "My internship contributed to my professional growth because not only have I gained insight into my intended career path, but I've also developed confidence in communicating with interdisciplinary groups."

Ensuring students are prepared for a career-launching internship requires close collaboration between Career Center staff and university faculty to incorporate

key professional competencies and industry knowledge into the university curriculum. The university also leverages its extensive faculty networks to source opportunities for students.

One example is a partnership with the TAMU-CC College of Business that includes activities and assessments related to professional development in first-year Introduction to Business classes. This means that all Islander business students are required to submit resumes, build professional profiles, and participate in mock interviews. The Career Center team also arranges for guest speakers, particularly Islander alumni, to deliver guest lectures to students. In 2023, 76 employers visited the



2,074

STUDENTS AT CAREER/
INTERNSHIP FAIRS

1,663

CAREER COUNSELING
APPOINTMENTS

1,478

TOTAL INTERNSHIPS
REPORTED

**Data from 2023*



From left: Yohance Machado '24 consults with Dr. Leslie Mills, Career Center Executive Director.



"I consider myself very fortunate to be part of a university that prepares its students so thoroughly for professional life."

VALERIA BARBOSA '23, '25
Current MBA student

Island University for either classroom presentations, panel discussions, or information sessions.

"Attending the career-focused events hosted by the College of Business helped me gain the knowledge and experience that I needed to successfully pursue an internship which later turned into a full-time job," said Valeria Barbosa '23, '25. "I consider myself very fortunate to be part of a university that prepares its students so thoroughly for professional life."

Barbosa earned her Bachelor of Business Administration from TAMU-CC and is a current MBA student. She interned with the Port of Corpus Christi for nearly two years before earning a full-time position as an organizational development assistant.

The university's Career Center continues to serve as a vital resource, linking students with professional opportunities and bolstering regional growth through its internship program, career events, and collaborative efforts. As the

center focuses on the road ahead, its dedication to empowering students and bridging academic learning with practical experience remains unwavering, shaping the leaders of tomorrow in the Coastal Bend and beyond. •



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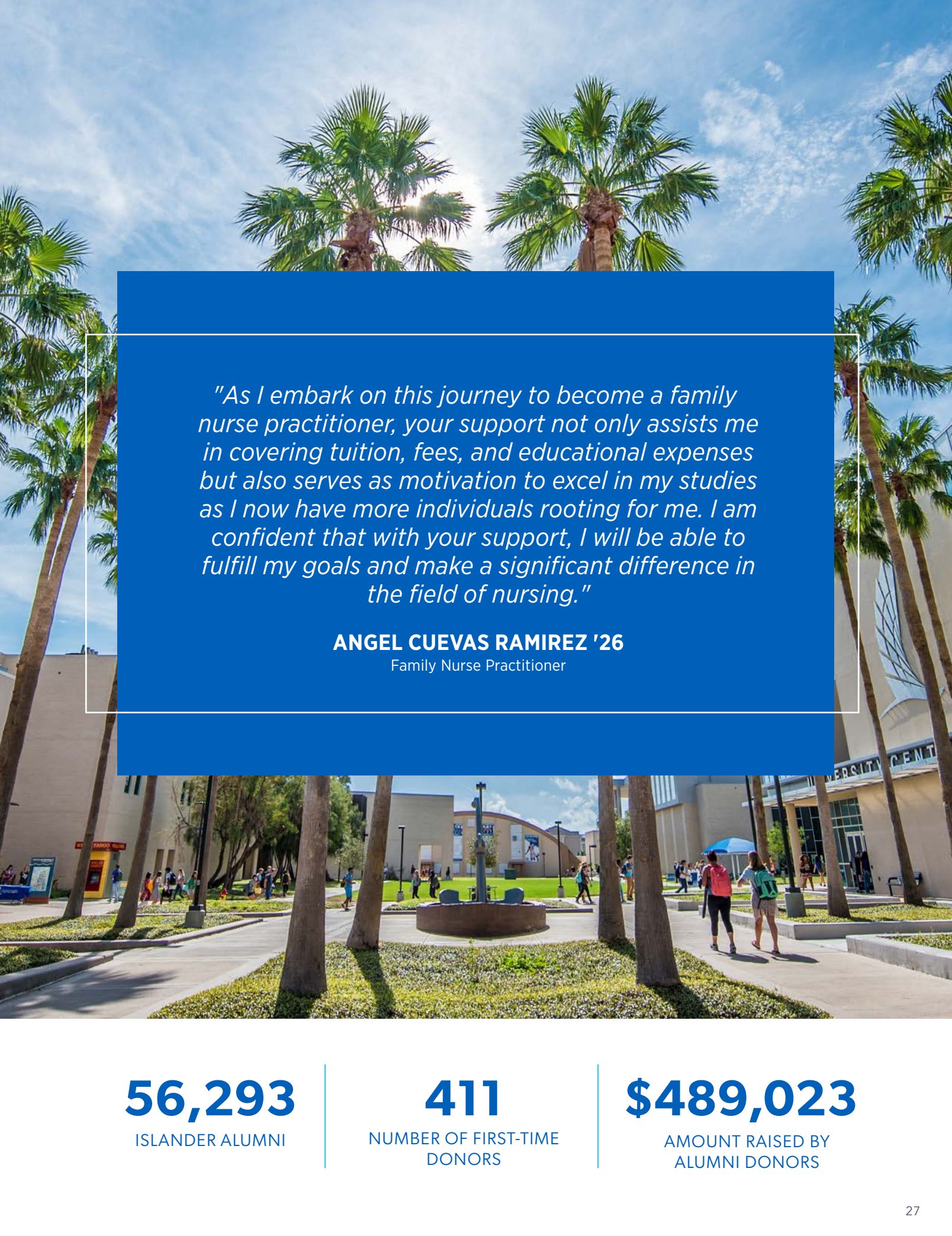
Jagdev Cheema '68

Outstanding Alumnus

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"As I embark on this journey to become a family nurse practitioner, your support not only assists me in covering tuition, fees, and educational expenses but also serves as motivation to excel in my studies as I now have more individuals rooting for me. I am confident that with your support, I will be able to fulfill my goals and make a significant difference in the field of nursing."

ANGEL CUEVAS RAMIREZ '26

Family Nurse Practitioner

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ISLANDER ALUMNI

411

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ALUMNI DONORS

Meet *Lucie Charbonnier '24*

ISLANDERS WOMEN'S GOLF STUDENT-ATHLETE

LUCIE CHARBONNIER '24 DOESN'T remember a time when she wasn't on the golf course. Her parents, who are avid golfers, first introduced her to the game at age three, with plastic clubs. She began formal lessons when she was four.

"I am where I am today thanks to my family, my coaches, and my teammates who supported me in my recovery."

Charbonnier's hometown, Peron, is a small village in eastern France located on the border with Switzerland. For most people, it is an idyllic place that offers skiing in the Alps in winter and swimming in Lake Geneva in summer. But for Charbonnier, whose drive and passion are for the sport of golf, the snow prohibits year-round golfing. So, at age 15, she left home to attend the Mouratoglou Academy in the south of France where she could play golf year-round, improve her game, and prepare for her dream — a life of golf in the United States.

While at Mouratoglou Academy, Charbonnier was recruited by Joni Stephens, Islanders Women's Head Golf Coach from 2018 to 2022, to play for the Islanders starting in fall 2020. Pat Stephens, Islanders Women's Head Coach during the 2022-2023 season, who is married to Joni Stephens, was the assistant coach at the time.

"Joni and Pat are like my parents in the United States," Charbonnier said.

"Joni was my first coach at TAMU-CC, and I can talk to Pat about anything, just like my dad."

During her freshman and sophomore years at TAMU-CC, Charbonnier helped her team to first-place wins, and she also achieved numerous personal accolades. In fall 2022, while continuing to break school records and play her personal best, Charbonnier fell ill.

"I had a persistent cough and back pain that I thought was normal for a golfer," Charbonnier said. "However, one night, the pain in my back radiated to my abdomen in excruciating cramps, and on the advice of my mother in France, my teammate took me to the emergency room."

That ER visit revealed that Charbonnier's left kidney had enlarged to three times its normal size and was surrounded by fluid. She was admitted to the hospital for emergency surgery.

"Coach Joni stayed with me the first night in the hospital and my teammates alternated the other nights so I wouldn't be alone until my parents arrived," she said.

As soon as she was able to travel, Charbonnier's parents arranged for her to see a kidney specialist in Switzerland who performed an additional surgery that restored her kidney to about 20% of its full function.

"For the first two weeks after surgery, it was very painful for me to walk or even stand for more than 15 minutes at a time," Charbonnier said. "My dad had to physically lift me and get me moving again so I wouldn't lose too

much muscle mass. Throughout this time, I was determined to recover and rejoin my teammates on the golf course as soon as possible."

Initially, Charbonnier admits it was difficult to see her team playing without her. After playing so well during her first two years at TAMU-CC, her new reality was a body that could no longer perform as it once did. During her break from play, she said she fell into depression.

"The only thing that I love to do, the only thing that makes me happy, is being out on the golf course," Charbonnier said. "I was willing to do whatever I had to do to get back to playing golf as I did before, so I consulted with a nutritionist, worked with a chiropractor and physical therapist, and began to see a counselor at the University Counseling Center."

Charbonnier's pause from Division I play also meant she had more time to focus on her academics. Although a business major, she said she found a journaling assignment for one of her English classes to be surprisingly cathartic.

"Through that journaling assignment, I was able to better process my thoughts and emotions about my illness and recovery," Charbonnier said. "I would have never thought that English class would turn out to be my favorite class last year. I have even kept up with journaling on an as-needed basis, processing my tough days through writing."

Her mother also helped keep things in perspective.

"She reminded me that just five months before, I was unable to walk,"

Lucie Charbonnier '24 is a recipient of the Knox and Bette Williams Athletic Scholarship and the Eleanor E. Rabin and the Eshleman Family Endowed Scholarship for Women's Golf.



Charbonnier said. "This revelation had a freeing effect on me. I adopted a new mindset and my way of playing changed because I was just so happy to be back on the course."

Charbonnier resolved to stay positive and focus on doing her best. Throughout her recovery, the maneuvers that required a deep rotation of her body caused her immense pain, so she devised a strategy to minimize those shots. She remained consistent in the other technical aspects of the game that weren't hindered by her surgery. By the end of the 2022-2023 season, she was the WGCA All-American Scholar for the third year in a row, she made the SLC All-Academic First Team, the

All-Conference First Team, and was named the PGA Works Collegiate Champion and SLC Student-Athlete of the Year. In February 2024, she won the all-around individual trophy at the Islanders Classic, while the team also took home the first-place trophy in the same tournament.

After her spring 2024 graduation, Charbonnier plans to start a master's degree in sports management and work as a graduate assistant coaching golf. She also hopes to continue competing in golf tournaments around the United States.

"I am so thankful for the opportunity to play golf for TAMU-CC," Charbonnier said. "I am where I

am today thanks to my family, my coaches, and my teammates who supported me in my recovery. I'm also thankful for the scholarship donors who believed in me and helped me play the game that I love. The only way I can possibly repay everyone is by making a full recovery and playing even better than I did before." •

POINTS OF PRIDE



The mission of Islanders Athletics is to bring distinction to the university by winning conference championships and competing successfully on the national stage, contribute to a vibrant campus culture, and develop successful student-athlete graduates who will excel as leaders in their communities.





955

TOTAL NUMBER OF
GIFTS TO ISLANDERS
ATHLETICS



437

TOTAL NUMBER
OF ISLANDERS
ATHLETICS DONORS
IN 2023



\$692,915

AMOUNT GIFTED TO
ISLANDERS ATHLETICS IN 2023



ONLY DIVISION I

ATHLETICS PROGRAM
WITHIN 150 MILES



4.0 GPA

FOR 50 STUDENT-ATHLETES
IN FALL 2023



2,778 HOURS

OF COMMUNITY SERVICE
DONATED IN FY23

The background of the entire page is a photograph of several palm trees against a clear blue sky with some light, wispy clouds. The palm trees are green and have long, slender trunks. One tree in the lower left has a cluster of orange coconuts hanging from it. The sky is a vibrant blue, and the overall scene is bright and sunny.

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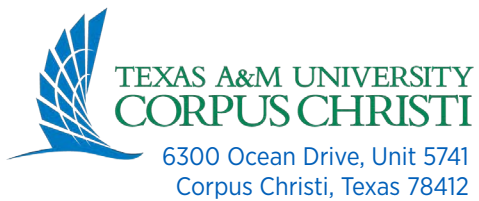
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