Our 800-acre campus – situated within the Everglades watershed – provides a living laboratory for teaching and research that makes Southwest Florida a better place to live.
More than 20 years ago, the state of Florida and regional business and political leaders recognized that creating the tenth state university was a good investment. Since opening in 1997, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) has grown to include five colleges that offer 51 undergraduate, 28 master’s and two doctoral degree programs. With an annual budget in excess of $215 million, we educate more than 14,000 students and employ more than 1,200 faculty and staff.

Our students perform well, with an average GPA of 3.0. Diversity – one of the core values of our University – is increasingly reflected in our student population. Today, more than 23 percent of our students are minorities and many are first-generation students. FGCU now has more than 20,000 alumni, the majority of whom call Southwest Florida home. In turn, our graduates are helping to lead our communities into the future.

Concurrent with the University’s growth, our importance as an economic and workforce driver for Southwest Florida has grown rapidly, generating $422 million in direct and indirect expenditures in 2013 alone and creating 3,723 jobs. We are not only educational and research leaders; we also significantly contribute to the region’s vitality in the arts, athletics, community engagement, and environmental sustainability. FGCU now awards more than 2,000 degrees each year, and our graduates consistently lead the State University System in Florida employment following graduation.

FGCU’s magnificent growth and development will continue into the future as we meet the higher educational needs and aspirations of Southwest Florida – and serve as the region’s catalyst for an even greater quality of life intellectually, culturally, scientifically, socially, economically and civically. Investments made in FGCU through scholarships, professorships, buildings and programs have paid off tremendously. Our public officials, donors, supporters and communities have received a valuable return on their investments in our region’s future, and continuing this trend will be FGCU’s legacy.

We are proud of what we’ve accomplished through support and partnership with the people of Southwest Florida. As we approach our 20th anniversary, FGCU has identified five strategic fundraising initiatives that will positively impact not just our campus, but also our region. These initiatives include:

1. Academic Excellence
2. Scholarships
3. Student Success
4. Intercollegiate Athletics
5. Community & Regional Impact

Although each of these initiatives has its own objectives, priorities and funding goals, all the initiatives intersect to take our students, our campus, and our region to even greater levels of success. Please join us as we embark on a $100-million campaign for these five initiatives, and help Florida Gulf Coast University soar to new heights.

Wilson G. Bradshaw, Ph.D.
Florida Gulf Coast University
The past is prelude to our future

Twenty-five years ago, Florida Gulf Coast University merely was an idea, a vision shared by individuals in Southwest Florida’s private and public sectors. Their vision was to build the State University System’s 10th university in Southwest Florida, one of the state’s and country’s fastest growing regions. By early 1991, after passionate advocacy by our region’s citizens, the former Florida Board of Regents agreed and recommended the development of Florida’s 10th state university in Southwest Florida. Campus groundbreaking was held in late 1995, and just 21 months later, the University officially opened its doors for students.

Our 800-acre campus – situated within the Everglades watershed – includes 400 acres of restored and preserved wetlands and uplands. Our location in one of the most fragile ecosystems in the world has influenced our mission and academic programs. FGCU is one of only a handful of academic institutions in the country to develop a model for undergraduate education where the entire campus serves as a laboratory for study.

Environmental sustainability is a core value of FGCU and is reflected across campus from our community outreach, to research, and even to the way we generate power for our facilities. Three of the five largest academic buildings now draw 85 percent of their power from our 15-acre solar field, and the University annually saves $700,000 in energy costs.

It is easy to measure FGCU’s many positive impacts in both tangible numbers and intangible benefits, and when we captured the national spotlight with our Dunk City basketball success, the region shared that visibility with the University. While not all of our activities make national news, we continue to serve Southwest Florida in ways that significantly impact the lives of area residents. A dedication to service is intrinsically woven into the campus culture, and is exemplified by our service-learning graduation requirement that has resulted in FGCU students donating 1.5 million hours to the community since 1997.

By the time we celebrate our 20th anniversary in 2017, projections show that FGCU will be serving a population of approximately 1.5 million residents in the region. While Southwest Florida has grown, the University has kept pace with that growth thanks to generous support from the community. Today, FGCU continues to impact the five-county area – and beyond. Whether it is monitoring the water quality for the region through our Vester Marine and Environmental Science Research Field Station, or providing victim services through the recently established Southwest Florida Regional Center on Human Trafficking, FGCU continues to touch lives well beyond our campus.

Today, FGCU is home to a thriving community of more than 14,000 students, representing 45 states and 50 countries. The Dunk City phenomenon created national awareness for FGCU, and resulted in an unprecedented surge in freshmen applications – up more than 35 percent in just one year. From all perspectives, the future is promising!

Support from the community has been integral to our growth. The next growth must focus primarily on endowments and programs. As President Bradshaw has said, “We are entering into an exciting phase of enhancement and fine tuning. We’re not spreading our roots as wide; instead, we are now going deeper.”

This campaign is purposefully designed to tend these roots. Whether your gift advances pioneering research, attracts and retains the best and brightest students and faculty to our campus and region, or supports students with scholarships, your investment will pay dividends on campus and throughout Southwest Florida for generations to come.
Academic Excellence – $30 Million

Academic excellence begins with an investment in our faculty that impacts our students and the region. To sustain and grow FGCU’s commitment to academic excellence, President Bradshaw and our academic leadership have carefully targeted opportunities that will focus on a multitude of University-wide signature projects to raise $30 million over the course of this campaign.

Investing in academic excellence over the years has proven to be an excellent return on capital for FGCU and Southwest Florida. In research grants since 1997, our faculty and staff have been responsible for generating more than $175 million in external grant awards. In 2013-14, research awards and grants produced more than $13.5 million. Throughout the campus and the community, FGCU faculty have been responsible for contributing to critical knowledge in their respective fields, providing graduates to fill employers’ job opportunities and assisting local governments in policy decisions.

Research is not the only area in which FGCU has distinguished itself. FGCU is a leader in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education. FGCU’s Whitaker Center for STEM Education is composed of faculty, staff, and students from the College of Arts & Sciences, College of Education, and the U.A. Whitaker College of Engineering who are committed to improving the delivery and content of STEM education across all levels. According to data from the U.S. Department of Education, jobs for biomedical engineers will increase by 62 percent by 2020, while jobs in software development and medical science are expected to increase by 32 percent and 36 percent, respectively. That increase, combined with the number of current workers who will retire in the next few years, will result in 2.4 million STEM job vacancies by 2018, according to a 2011 report from Georgetown University. Thanks to investments in STEM education, FGCU graduates will be filling these critical job vacancies and many will be staying in Southwest Florida.

These are just two examples of the impact investing in academic excellence can have on our campus and across the community. Collectively, FGCU’s leadership team has identified strategic priorities that include:

- **Faculty Endowments:** Named Professorships and Eminent Scholar Chairs help retain and recruit faculty. Endowments also encourage original research, fund collaborative projects across campus, as well as research and study abroad.

- **Improvements to Teaching & Learning:** We remain dedicated to preparing new faculty for success in the classroom. Investment in teaching and learning, such as The Lucas Center for Faculty Development, will support faculty training in a range of areas: instructional design, classroom management, learning theory, assessment, and teaching techniques.

- **Academic Facilities:** This campaign presents an opportunity to update classrooms and laboratories across campus, enabling us to replace aging equipment and instruments used in teaching and research. Gifts to academic excellence also will support the renovation of labs and classroom spaces at FGCU’s Vester Marine and Environmental Science Research Field Station, as well as investing in new degree programs.

Investing in academic excellence represents an opportunity to impact the very heart of this aspect of FGCU’s mission: Outstanding faculty uphold challenging academic standards and balance research, scholarly activities, and service expectations with their central responsibilities of teaching and mentoring. Working together, University faculty and staff transform students’ lives and the Southwest Florida region.
An investment in scholarships helps ensure that dedicated people like Bernice Cochran become the best teachers they can be – and that future generations of students will benefit.
FGCU competes head to head with other colleges and universities in Florida to recruit and retain the very best students. Increasingly, that competition extends to universities from around the country. As a public institution, FGCU is deeply committed to eliminating financial barriers that would prevent otherwise qualified students from attending our University. This remains one of our highest priorities.

At Florida Gulf Coast University, 84 percent of our students request financial aid. In the 2013-14 academic year, the FGCU Foundation awarded 1,066 scholarships totaling approximately $1.9 million to help students continue their education. Currently, we are only able to provide 60.3 percent of full-time undergraduates with financial aid.

Endowed scholarships are critical because they continue to support students in perpetuity. Our goal over the next three years is to raise $40 million to “bridge the gap” and meet the needs of the remaining 24 percent of students who require financial assistance, particularly in these strategic areas:

▶ First Generation College Students. The State of Florida matches dollar-for-dollar any scholarship gift in support of first generation students. FGCU has an active outreach program to area students from migrant families working in the region to the Seminole and Miccosukke Native American tribes. Additional scholarship funding will allow FGCU to expand our recruitment efforts to first generation students throughout Florida.

▶ Merit-Based Scholarships. FGCU is committed to funding merit-based scholarships across all five colleges and in Athletics to attract outstanding undergraduates with top academic and leadership records from regional high schools. Without these competitive scholarships, potential FGCU students are likely to accept offers from other colleges and universities and leave our region. To attract and keep the best and brightest minds in our community, we must compete at a regional and national level.

▶ Need-Based Students. At FGCU we are committed to keeping doors to higher education open to all, no matter what their financial resources. The collegiate experience is an exciting time of individual growth and development, not only academically, but also socially. FGCU is committed to making accessible the university experience to qualified students throughout our region.
A college education changes lives – not just those of the students themselves, but also their families and their communities. At FGCU, we remain deeply committed to each student’s future. From the time a student is enrolled at FGCU to graduation and beyond, FGCU provides a web of services dedicated to an environment supportive for success.

In a 40-hour week, students typically spend 15-18 hours in the classroom. At FGCU, we also are responsible for developing programming and support for students’ time out of the classroom. Providing programs and support services ensures that our students succeed not only in their respective academic fields, but in laying the foundation for life after college. Despite the web of support we have built for our students, there is still room for expansion. For this campaign, we have set a goal of $8 million to enhance student success, which will allow FGCU to start and expand a variety of initiatives that include:

► Helping Students Graduate on Time and with Little, if any, Debt. Following the 2009 economic downturn, our students have struggled with the competing needs of studying and working to support their education. Earning a living and earning credits toward graduation create dual pressures on students, often resulting in many stretching a four-year program to five and even six years. By providing enhanced academic advising programs, we can help our students earn their degrees in four years and graduate with little debt.

► Increasing Internships. By expanding paid co-op and internship opportunities for students to work outside the University, we can better prepare them for post-college employment and success.

► Enhancing Programming. Creating leadership development programs enables students to learn critical skills for their careers and lives.

► Building a Recreation and Wellness Center. The University’s leadership is committed to providing a facility that offers the needed space, equipment, and training to enhance student health and wellness, and that keeps them physically and mentally strong throughout the college experience.

► Expanding Academic Advising. FGCU is piloting a program that identifies students with academic challenges and assists them in improving study habits and learning strategies, with the goal of improving retention, graduation rates and employment possibilities.

► Expanding Residence Hall Programming. The University plans to build on its innovative programs in the freshman residence halls, which include faculty in residence; academic support; and classrooms located in the residence halls, thus allowing for close proximity to academic space and one-on-one support after hours for struggling students.

► Offering A Global Perspective. FGCU plans to underwrite student research, education, and travel with our international partners through expanded study abroad programs.

► Enhancing Career Readiness Services. To enhance career readiness services and placement opportunities following graduation, the University continuously looks to expand on partnerships with local, state and regional employers to expedite placement and employment.
FGCU is an established powerhouse within NCAA Division I and the Atlantic Sun Conference. While the success of our Division I teams is undeniable, the time has come for new significant investment in Athletics, and that investment begins with our student-athletes. We have developed an ambitious plan to raise more than $12 million to invest in our facilities, our programs and athletic scholarships.

Up to $8 million will be designated for capital projects starting with enhancements to our main facility, Alico Arena. Thanks to a collaborative program with our College of Health Professions and Social Work, we envision the creation of a state-of-the-art sports medicine facility. Additional capital improvements for Alico Arena include adding a dedicated weight room for our student-athletes and a new LED scoreboard. Gifts to Athletics also will provide significant support for our aquatics center, the baseball/softball complexes, and our tennis programs.

FGCU is proud that our student-athletes are not just successful on the competitive playing field; indeed, they succeed in the classroom, holding an average 3.3 GPA. To continue to attract the brightest and the best student-athletes, FGCU is committed to raising an additional $2 million in scholarships.

Recruiting and retaining both our coaches and our student-athletes is critical for FGCU to compete not only across Florida, but nationally. We are proud that our teams have rapidly risen to the top of the Atlantic Sun Conference ranks. Behind each team’s success are the coaches; the academic advising and student services support; travel budgets, and recruitment resources for our coaches. An investment of $2 million is needed over three years to ensure that these vital programs remain a bright star of Florida Gulf Coast University.
FGCU’s commitment to Southwest Florida and the communities we serve is demonstrated every day as our faculty, staff and students collaborate with area partners on projects that contribute to the cultural, economic and social well-being of our region. In just the last few years, FGCU has developed new, exciting and relevant partnerships that will impact our community, including:

► Developing the Emergent Technologies Institute/iHub.
FGCU’s planned Emergent Technologies Institute in the nearby Innovation Hub is the result of a public/private partnership. The iHub is slated to become our area’s first research and development park with a focus on renewable energy.

► Supporting Business Growth:
FGCU’s Small Business Development Center offers businesses a wide range of resources to help them start up and expand, enhancing the region’s business climate and its overall economic health.

► Improving Health Care.
FGCU works with area hospitals and health care providers in developing strategies to address the projected shortfall of health care professionals in our region. FGCU is expanding its health care degree programs, which includes launching a doctoral program in nursing practice and a master’s level physician assistant program in the coming years.

► Supporting Regional Centers.
The Women’s Fund of Southwest Florida has partnered with FGCU to create the Southwest Florida Regional Center on Human Trafficking. The Center, housed on our campus, is designed to support the region’s Human Trafficking Task Force by coordinating research and data that will help law enforcement officials prosecute criminals, and also social service agencies assist victims.

Investment in community and regional impact is critical if FGCU is going to continue to serve as an incubator for ideas and invention, a force for social influence, and a renowned cultural and entertainment resource. The $10 million goal for Community & Regional Impact will support the following projects and more on campus and around the region:

► Investment in Continuing Education.
From the Renaissance Academy and Kapnick Center in Naples, to our community classrooms throughout the five-county region, we embrace and encourage access to “lifelong learning.”

► Investment in Southwest Florida K-12 Schools.
FGCU’s partnerships with local school systems offer training in effective teaching and assessment methods, while offering “real world experience” for our student teachers as they bring the university culture to area classrooms.

FGCU is fortunate to be located in Southwest Florida, a region that continues to attract visionaries with the passion to pursue bold dreams. It is this passion that will define our region as we work side by side with community supporters to realize and maximize Southwest Florida’s full potential. We all have an important role to play in making this happen.