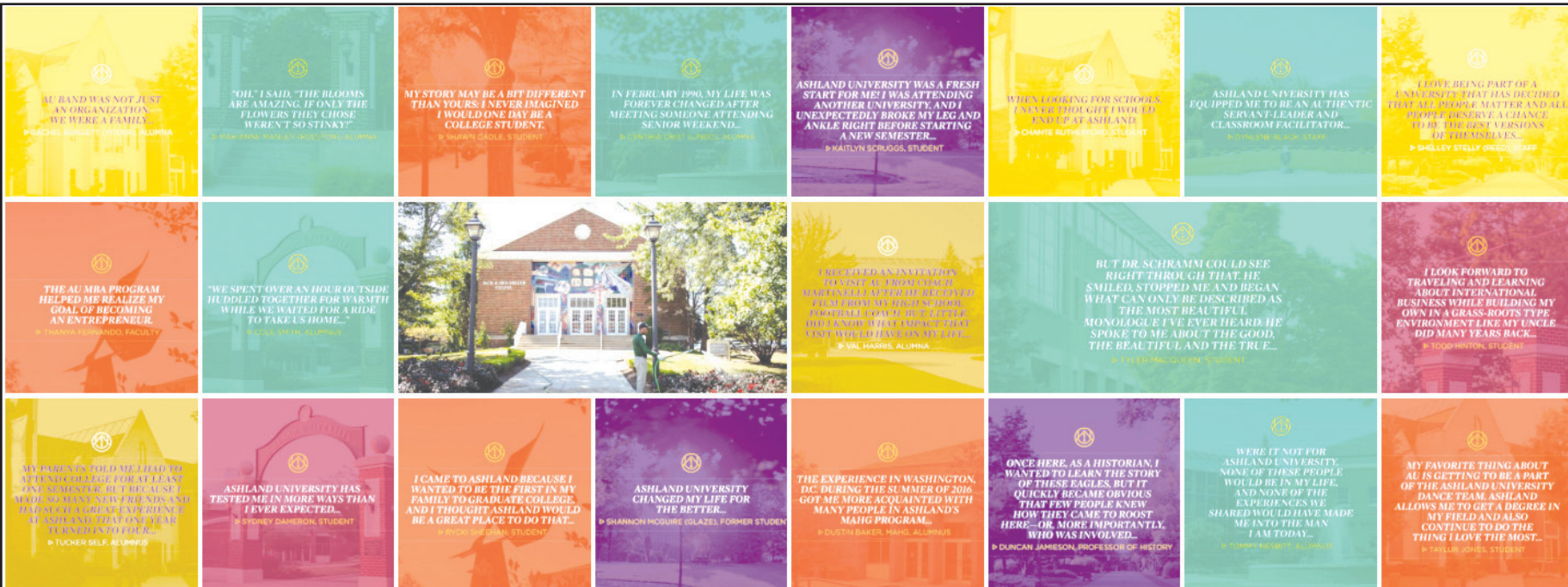


features

The Campaign for Every Individual



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Individual and unique stories can be found on AU's website.

STEVE SHRENKEL Reporter

Every individual at Ashland University has a story to tell. From students, to faculty to alumni, each person may be on a different path in life. All of them, however, share a common connection with each other: AU. Ashland University's Campaign for Every Individual was launched to tell 1,000 individual and unique stories while raising money in the process to help fund endowments, new programs and other scholarship programs. Margaret Pomfret, the vice president for institutional ad-

to expand upon Ashland University's famed; 'Accent on the Individual,' Pomfret said. "It really was a play off of 'Accent on the Individual,'" she said. "When we were interviewing donors, alumni and staff, everyone brought up how important that was. We went from there and said 'what if we expanded upon that and tried to tell everyone's stories?'" Even though the buildings around AU are filled with a rich and complex history, there are many other stories just waiting to be told by the students who walk the campus, she said. "There's so many more stories outside of the names you see on

"Other initiatives are starting to come from this such as donors coming up with ways to help our veterans transition to campus life," Pomfret said. "Another program that started was the life calling classes from this. A donor wanted to see how students could find their group or tribe so to speak." Being able to connect these donors and students is exactly what the campaign is for, she said. "We want to be able to connect our students with our alumni," Pomfret said. "Whether that is getting them internships, mentoring them or just connecting them in a way, these are all gifts to our students. To me, that's a gift every

connection that everyone shares with the university. "It feels so much more like a community here," she said. "You can really connect with your professors and they really seem to care and want to make that connection with you." She thinks that being able to hear everyone's unique story is cool to see because of different perspectives. "I think it's really cool to see different people's points of view," Gilmore said. "Whether it's students, alumni or staff, you get to see the different perspectives of people that have gone here. It's kind of cool to see this because not everybody has the same experiences at the university." Looking towards the future, Pomfret said that they have pretty lofty expectations for the campaign moving forward. "Right now, this is a five year campaign," she said. "Our goal from this is to raise \$50 million." Besides raising money, Pomfret said that a focus on scholarships and creating potential new programs at the university is the goal of the campaign. "While we'll continue to focus on raising money for endowments, our faculty also need funding to start to get new programs off the ground," she said. "We have such talent on this campus and our faculty are so gifted. We want to see new programs created here at the university." Stewardship to donors will also be a big part of the campaign moving forward. Broad wants to see the endowment scholarships continue to grow. "The endowments are what really impact the students," Broad said. "We want to make a huge push to be able to create these new scholarship opportunities. We're trying to engage donors in the past, present and hopefully the future." Allowing donors to see exactly how they have impacted a student's life is an important aspect of the campaign moving forward, Pomfret said. "Stewardship is another big piece of what we do so donors can see exactly where their money is

going," she said. "Everyone who donates will get a folder with stories of individuals showing how they have impacted the university." Pomfret hopes that many more students, faculty or alumni come forward to tell their stories just as Gilmore did. "We want to hear your story," Pomfret said. "I'm privileged to hear from people about how a certain person may have impacted their lives while on campus." Pomfret said this is about the deeper connection that everyone associated with the university. "It's about how did Ashland change your life," Pomfret said. "We all want you to have this same experience. We want you to all go for this experience and if you put in the work, nothing should stop you from having this." While Pomfret hopes that people continue to give, she has just been amazed by the things happening at AU, she said. "You can never really predict if someone is going to decide to give but the things we are doing on this campus are amazing," Pomfret said. "You look at Ashland and our mission and I can't see this slowing down. People have clearly been excited to become involved with the University." Pomfret said she is excited to see where the program goes from here. "It's been really exciting to see all of this support that we've received from donors," she said. "We're going to keep telling our stories and hope that people will continue to see that students are worthy of our investment." Pomfret said that this truly puts the 'Accent on the Individual.' "Accent on the Individual" has been an authentic way of life for faculty, staff and student body," Pomfret said. "When alumni invest their time by offering their expertise with students, mentoring through internships, and providing financial support, they are paying forward opportunities that were afforded to them."



STEVE SHRENKEL

The Campaign for Every Individual looks at the connection that everyone shares with Ashland University.

vancement, said the fundraising campaign involves telling the stories of individuals on campus, from students to alumni and faculty members as well. "The Campaign for Every Individual celebrates the many ways that Ashland University has changed people's lives," Pomfret said. "It's about the entire community that makes up Ashland University and its rich history. We're on this mission to tell everyone's stories because we know that we will continue to build upon what has come before us." Although the campaign is a fundraising campaign, there is so much more to it than just raising money, she said. "The campaign is really about hearing how people are connected to the university in a unique and individual way," Pomfret said. Fred Broad, the vice chair of the board of trustees and chair of the advancement committee, said that everyone is somehow intertwined with AU. "Everyone has a story that revolves around Ashland and endears them to the university," Broad said. The campaign is also different from many other projects on campus because it is a comprehensive program, Pomfret said. "Everything is all in. It's not capital like a building and can provide a lot more flexibility in the end," Pomfret said. The campaign was launched only two years ago in October of 2017. The idea for the program came after a suggestion had been made

these buildings every day just waiting to be told. That's how we got the idea for this," she said. For the past few years, the campaign has been very donor-driven. "When we started, we asked donors what they wanted to see happen," Pomfret said. "They really helped to start to drive the campaign when it first began." Currently, donors can contribute to the campaign by donating to things such as different programs, endowments and even the student emergency fund on campus. There has been a huge increase in donors over the past couple of years, Pomfret said. "Our donor growth each year is amazing," she said. "Last year, we had over 986 new donors. We're seeing such an increase in people giving. Donors want to be connected with our faculty and students." Pomfret thinks that the connection between Ashland and the individual is what has caused such generosity, she said. "People give because Ashland changed their lives," Pomfret said. "Raising money is about saying what is important to you. There's no better feeling in the world than seeing that you've made a difference in someone else's life." This has led to nearly \$20 million being raised by the campaign since its inception, she said. This fundraising has allowed for new opportunities for the university to rise.

alumni can give to our current students." The fundraising from the campaign thus far has allowed for the potential for even more scholarships to arise to specifically impact students, Broad said. "I think there's sometimes a misunderstanding from students with just how donors can impact them," he said. "All of this money raised has the potential to add an additional \$500,000 in scholarship money for students." This all culminated in a celebration during homecoming weekend where alumni were invited to tell their stories. "At our celebration we talked about how much we had accomplished in the first two years and the importance of programs and college affordability," Pomfret said. "We asked alumni to become as involved as possible. It was a celebration about how Ashland impacted their lives." Sophomore early childhood education major Sydney Gilmore, is one of the many stories that has had her story told by the Campaign for Every Individual. Gilmore got the opportunity to work in a kindergarten classroom at Edison Elementary last year due to the education program at AU. "I loved being able to have the opportunity to work with kindergartners," she said. "That experience was what had helped me decide what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. The education program is really great with preparing you." Gilmore said that she feels that



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Sydney Gilmore shares her story through the Every Individual Campaign.