

# *Endowment* REPORT 2025



UNIVERSITY *of* ARKANSAS - FORT SMITH  
**FOUNDATION**



As the year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting with deep gratitude on the impact of your remarkable support—both across our campus and in the lives of our students. It is humbling and an honor to serve as chancellor of this university—

and I remain profoundly thankful for your continued generosity and partnership.

This year, we've taken bold steps in advancing our mission to foster social mobility and fuel the economic strength of our region. We launched our first four-year engineering degree, the Bachelor of Science in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering, this fall, and we are preparing to seek approval for a new respiratory therapy program to complement our recently added Associate Degree in Nursing. These additions join more than 70 academic programs at UAFS that are designed to serve the people and industries of the River Valley.

We also welcomed a growing class of first-year students who chose UAFS because they believe in the promise of a life-changing education. They bring with them energy,

ambition, and determination—and thanks to more than \$3.1 million in Foundation scholarships, many are able to pursue their dreams despite financial obstacles that may otherwise have blocked their paths.

Endowed gifts continue to enrich these students' experiences by supporting research, creative performance, and global exploration, while empowering hands-on discovery in world-class labs right here in Fort Smith. These investments also help us attract and retain expert faculty, leaders in their fields who are preparing the next generation of changemakers. Together, these efforts make UAFS truly extraordinary.

Your belief in this institution makes all this possible. You are shaping lives, strengthening our university, and creating ripple effects that reach across the River Valley and beyond. For that and so much more, I thank you.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Terisa C. Riley

Chancellor, University of Arkansas – Fort Smith



This year has marked a defining moment for UAFS—and your generosity continues to serve as a powerful catalyst for all that we've accomplished and all that's still to come.

Because of you, the UAFS Foundation has continued to

expand its direct impact across our campus. With more than \$3.755 million allocated from endowments to the university this year, the Foundation has driven discovery and unlocked potential that will transform our region for years to come.

Strategic stewardship and long-term planning have allowed our total asset portfolio to thrive, reaching \$155 million as of June 30, 2025. This strong financial footing ensures we can continue to deliver on our mission—today and for generations to come.

This spring, we publicly launched Intrepid Ambition: The

Campaign for the River Valley, and since that moment, we've felt a surge of tangible excitement from our community. The enthusiasm is real, and it's a testament to the collective belief in our vision for the future.

Together, we've already raised more than \$76 million through the campaign, fueling opportunity, advancing academic excellence, and supporting the economic growth of this region. The momentum is transforming what's possible, and your role in that progress is essential.

Thank you for believing in this mission and for helping us build a future defined by fearless ambition and lasting impact.

Gratefully,

Blake B. Rickman

Vice Chancellor for University Advancement  
Executive Director, UAFS Foundation

# The University of Arkansas - Fort Smith Foundation, Inc.

## Overview of Investment Practice and Performance

The past fiscal year has seen a continuation of the recovery from the 2022 lows that began during the latter half of fiscal 23. Markets ended the fiscal year at a new all-time high, after an intense market sell-off earlier in 2025, driven by the implementation of tariffs against foreign countries by the US.

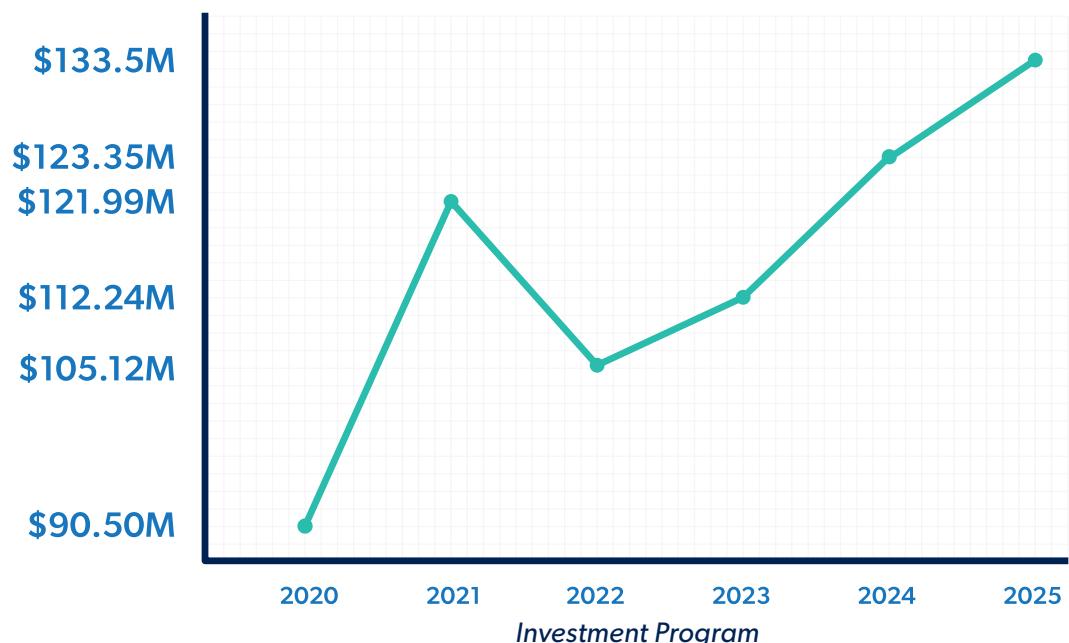
Over the past fiscal year, U.S. large-cap stocks returned 15.16% (S&P 500 Index) while U.S. small-mid cap stocks returned 9.91% (Russell 2500 Index) and international equity markets returned 17.72% (MSCI All-Country World x U.S. Index). The commodity market was up 5.77% for the past 12 months (Bloomberg Commodity Index). The fixed income markets continue to recover from the 2022's Fed rate hikes posting of positive return of 6.08% (Bloomberg US Aggregate) over the past 12 months.

The Foundation's investment portfolio returned 8.26% during fiscal year 2025. The Foundation's performance was led by the capital appreciation segment (equity-oriented) which returned 8.96% while the capital preservation segment (fixed income-oriented) returned 6.48%.

The Foundation's investment program has grown to \$133.55 million, on June 30, 2025. The change in assets over the past fiscal year was driven by \$8.03 million of unrealized/realized gains. Over the past six years, the Foundation's investment program has grown from \$89.40 million to \$133.55 million.

In fiscal year 2025, the Foundation allocated \$3.755 million from endowments in support to the university for scholarships, equipment, library holdings, chair and professorship positions, student activities, and other programs and projects.

The investment portfolio is well diversified across multiple asset classes and is designed to provide for the distribution requirements of the Foundation to support the University. The Foundation has engaged Graystone Consulting for management of the funds.



# Unlocking Opportunity

*Ensuring every student—regardless of background—can access the life-changing power of education*

**\$3.146m**

In Foundation  
scholarships awarded  
to 1,937 students

**9,920**

Gifts given through the  
Intrepid Ambition Campaign...

totalling  
**\$16.17m**

in support for student success



## What Philanthropy Means

"I've wanted to study biology since I was little," said Shelby Zink, a Poteau, Oklahoma native. But without financial support, her childhood dream felt out of reach.

That changed when she received multiple scholarships from the UAFS Foundation. Over the last three years, those gifts have allowed her to earn her degree, discover her calling as an ecologist, and gain real-world experience in the field.

"The scholarships gave me peace of mind to study what I love," she said. "And because that was handled, I was able to discover myself as a person, too."

At UAFS, faculty mentors guided her through graduate school applications and research opportunities. Through the Myles Friedman Honors Program, she studied abroad in Ireland and South Carolina, and her sophomore year, the National Science Foundation offered her a prestigious research internship at the University of Virginia.

With graduation approaching, she knows her path could have looked much different.



*"To me, philanthropy means giving others the chance to learn, grow, and achieve their dreams through the power of education. The scholarships I have received have helped me in my college career by minimizing financial stress and helping me build my resume.*

*– Tristan Knauls, sophomore graphic design major*

"Everything was here, I just didn't have the funding to reach it," she says. "This aid has allowed me to get the most out of my time here. I couldn't have done it otherwise."

# Investing in Excellence

*Holistically supporting the academic programs of UAFS and the faculty and staff who drive progress and invention*

**\$296,421**

allocated by the Foundation to support endowed chairs in FY25

**3,230**

Gifts given through the Intrepid Ambition Campaign...

totalling  
**\$43.685m**

in support for academic excellence

## What Philanthropy Means

Assistant professor of mathematics Roberta Parks gives to UAFS every month.

Not just because she teaches here, but because years ago a gift made her education possible.

Since she first arrived at UAFS, Parks has made investing in her students a priority in the classroom and beyond. Through a payroll deduction to the UAFS Foundation, Parks helps fund scholarships for students who need a little extra support.

"I just think it's an important part of society for those of us who've been given benefits to help pay that forward," she said.

The university invested in Parks when she was a first-year student at Westark Community College, opening the door to higher education.

"I would not have had the educational opportunities I had without that scholarship," she said.

And though she hopes she's already inspiring the next generation of mathematicians, she doesn't earmark her monthly gifts, instead trusting the university to direct them to the students who need them most.

Parks has also named the UAFS Foundation as the beneficiary of her university-provided life insurance policy, setting up a future endowment that will help math students for generations.

"Philanthropy is helping other people make their lives better," she says. "And here at the university, we can make their lives better permanently because they have this education."



*"Philanthropy empowers nursing students to turn their passion for caring into meaningful impact across the communities they serve."*

*– Dr. Paula Julian, Associate Dean, College of Health, Education, and Human Sciences, Executive Director, Carolyn McKelvey Moore School of Nursing*



# Empowering Our Economy

*Redefining economic impact in the river valley while supporting every phase of business development*

**\$7.5m**

Anonymous gift to launch and endow  
the Center for Nonprofits at UAFS

**2,732**

Gifts given through the  
Intrepid Ambition Campaign...

totalling

**\$17.019m**

in support of fueling our local economy



## What Philanthropy Means

"Everyone in this community has benefited in some form or fashion from UAFS," said Travis Beshears, president of Beshears Construction.

He's speaking from experience. He took his first college courses at Westark Community College in 1991, and decades later, he's still connected as an alum, the parent of a current student, and a member of both the UAFS Foundation Board and the Jim Walcott Family Enterprise Center.

"It's so important to our community and to our region to have a strong university that's educating our future," he said.

Since his first day on the job at just 13, Beshears has seen his family's business build his hometown campus, hire generations of graduates from his alma mater, and forge lasting partnerships with fellow family business owners.

"I'm seeing what all the university is doing, how it's helping, and all of the positive things it does for our community."

He points to the university's new Advanced Manufacturing degree as a prime example, designed in direct response to feedback from regional employers like him. "That degree is going to help with local talent and keep those jobs and people here," he said.

"It's crucial. And the stronger our university can be, the more it's going to benefit us as a whole."



*"David McMahon, Sr. established our family's scholarship at UAFS to provide a path for local students to continue their education, gain confidence – and set long-term life goals. That's exactly what UAFS does for our community. Together, we seize development opportunities for the River Valley because UAFS provides the resources for people of all ages to learn, develop ideas, and envision a better tomorrow."*

**–Julie McMahon French, Belle Point Ranch, Lavaca**

# Thank you!

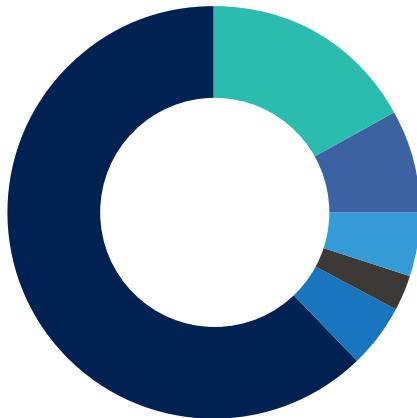
We continue to be grateful for your generosity, commitment, and faith in the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith’s calling to be a place where students thrive and futures are built.

Your selfless investment has fueled the future of UAFS. Because of you, lives are being changed, opportunities are expanding, and a legacy of learning continues to grow stronger with each passing year.

Now, with the public launch of the Intrepid Ambition campaign, every endowed dollar carries even greater impact—and every gift helps further shape a university that gives more and aims higher.

Together, we’ve already raised more than \$76 million to make this place you’ve helped build even stronger.

The momentum is real. The future is bold. And it’s all possible because of you.



<b>Unrestricted</b>	624,299	17%
<b>Endowed Chairs</b>	296,421	8%
<b>Equipment</b>	203,254	5%
<b>Library</b>	105,848	3%
<b>Other Purpose</b>	199,841	5%
<b>Scholarships</b>	2,325,387	62%
<b>Total Endowment Spend Allocation</b>	<b>3,755,050</b>	<b>100%</b>



## To continue your impact...

We've created a number of ways to make your tax-deductible year-end gift to the UAFS Foundation.

As always, you can reach out to the Foundation office at **(479) 788-7020** or **foundation@uafs.edu**.

To mail gifts, please use the enclosed remittance envelope or send your own to:

UAFS Foundation  
P.O. Box 3649  
Fort Smith, AR 72913

To transfer stocks, email **Blake.Rickman@uafs.edu**, or **Anne.Thomas@uafs.edu**, or call the Foundation at **(479) 788-7020**.

And to give online, visit **www.giving.uafs.edu**

*More than \$76M  
raised in the  
Intrepid Ambition  
Campaign*



“Philanthropy impacts a community so much. I know that those who’ve helped me along my career path want to give because they can, because they care—but it’s an investment, and to pay them back their kindness, I plan to one day do the same.”

*-Mitchell Collins, senior, political science major*