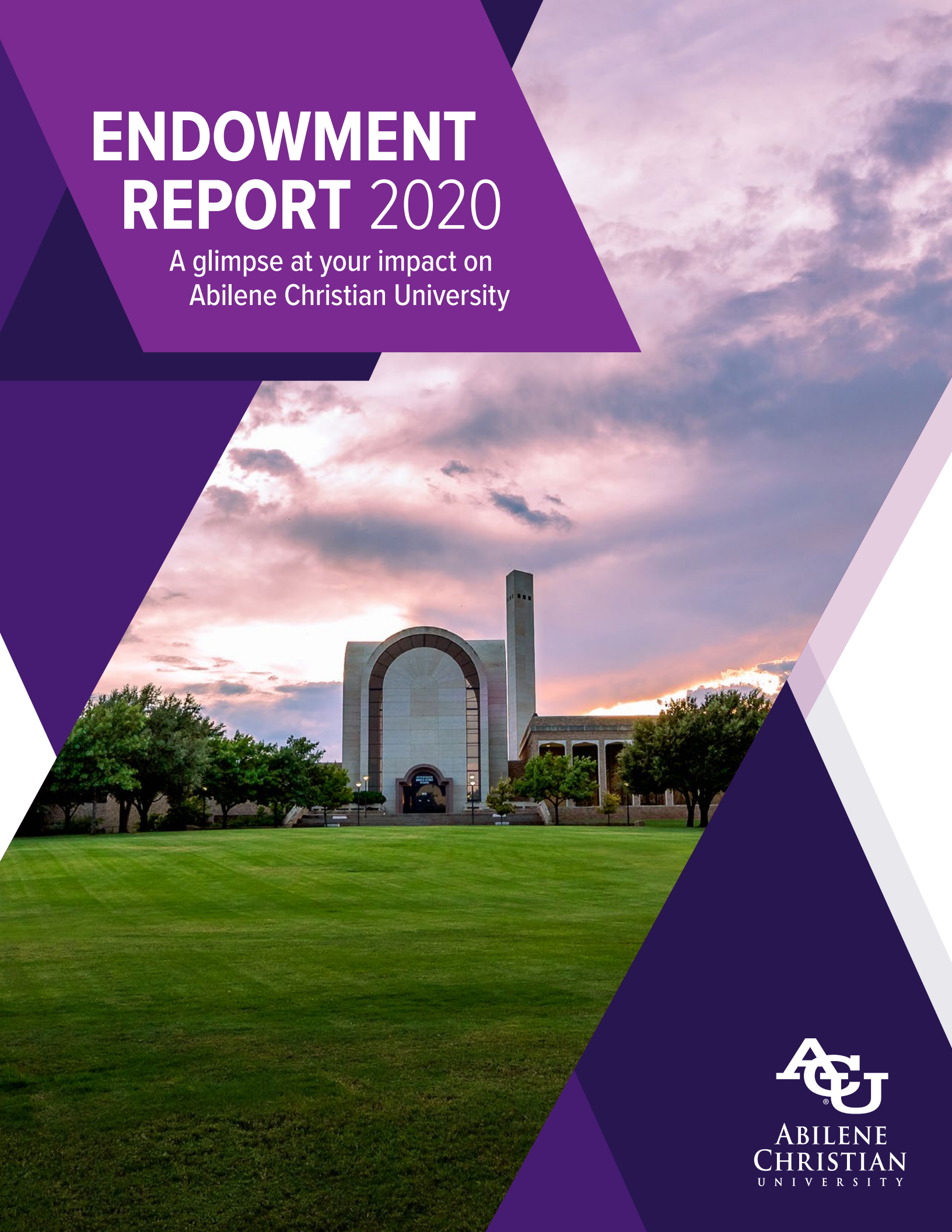


# ENDOWMENT REPORT 2020

A glimpse at your impact on  
Abilene Christian University

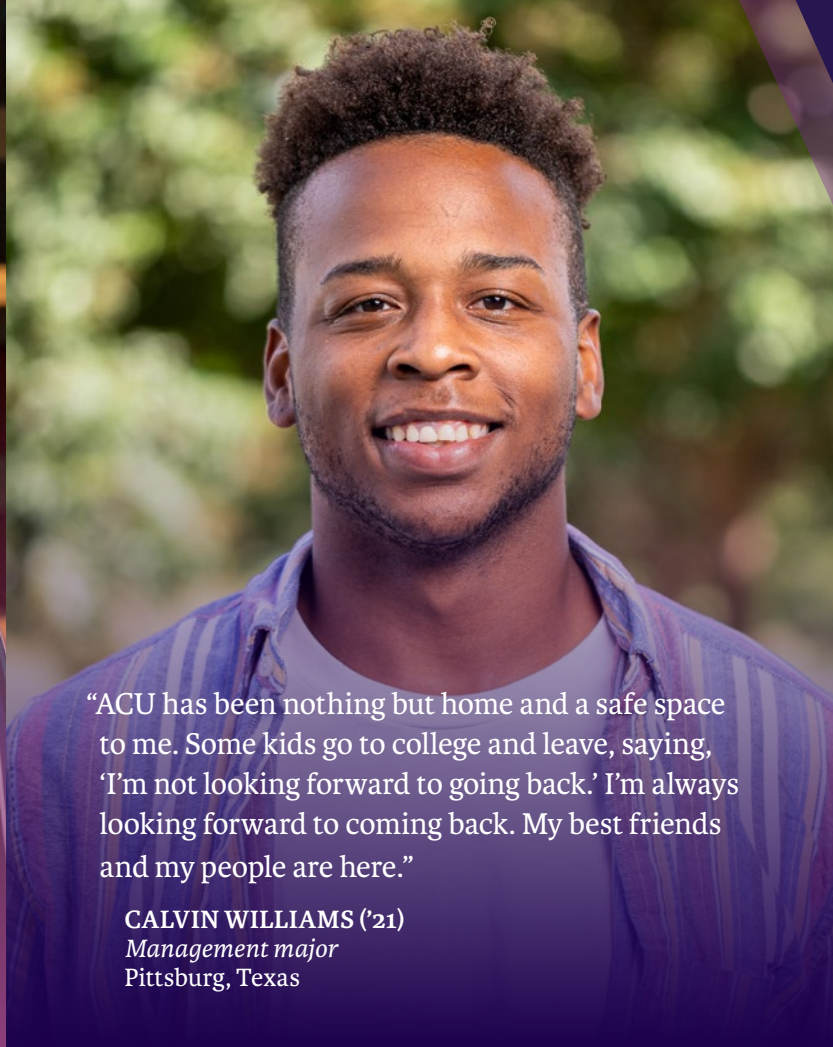


ABILENE  
CHRISTIAN  
UNIVERSITY



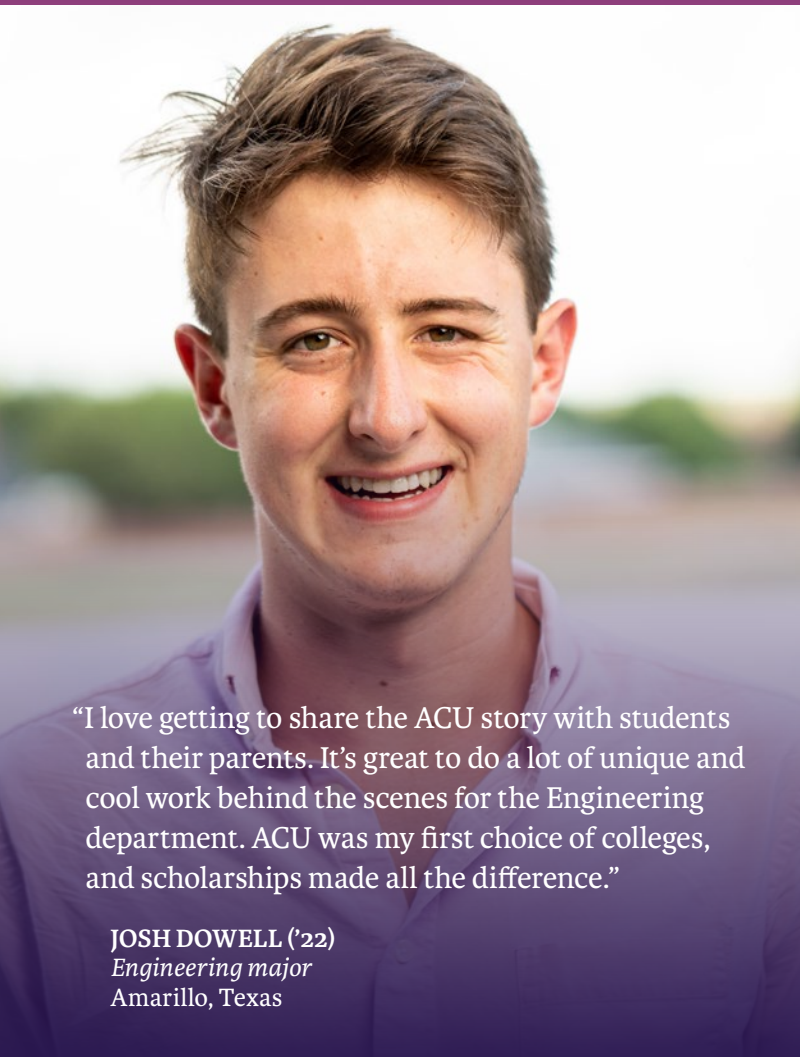
“Throughout my time at ACU, I’ve taken on areas of study that complement the opportunities that God and ACU have provided. When people ask me how I got to where I am today, I say, ‘I didn’t do this – God did.’”

**KENNEDY GUERRA ('21)**  
Global studies and Spanish major  
San Antonio, Texas



“ACU has been nothing but home and a safe space to me. Some kids go to college and leave, saying, ‘I’m not looking forward to going back.’ I’m always looking forward to coming back. My best friends and my people are here.”

**CALVIN WILLIAMS ('21)**  
Management major  
Pittsburg, Texas



“I love getting to share the ACU story with students and their parents. It’s great to do a lot of unique and cool work behind the scenes for the Engineering department. ACU was my first choice of colleges, and scholarships made all the difference.”

**JOSH DOWELL ('22)**  
Engineering major  
Amarillo, Texas



“I love studying at a beautiful, well-respected private Christian university that’s so close to home. It’s the little things I can do to try and make my own community better that are really fulfilling, and if I can do the little things, the big things later on will be that much more rewarding.”

**LAUREN WALLER ('22)**  
English major  
Baird, Texas

## ENDOWMENT BY THE NUMBERS: FISCAL YEAR 2020



**718** people made  
**913** gifts and pledges to  
**256** endowment funds.



**604** endowments funded  
**1,242** scholarships.



**\$7.88 million** was  
committed to the endowment.



**\$63 million** has been given  
to ACU through estate  
gifts since 1982.



**202:** Operational endowments  
supporting faculty, staff,  
research, facility maintenance  
and athletics equipment.

## OPERATIONAL ENDOWMENT SPOTLIGHT

### Reeves Research Endowment



**F**or Dr. Perry Reeves ('65), research has always been about adventure – “going where no one has gone before,” he said.

The sense of discovery initially inspired Reeves, professor emeritus of chemistry, as an undergraduate, and it continues to shape his contributions as a researcher and an endowment benefactor. He helped establish the Reeves Research Endowment in 2013 to fund a departmental fellowship awarded to a student researcher by the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry.

“Having students participate in research alongside faculty is formative to becoming a scientist,” Reeves said. “The endowment recognizes student participation in research and rewards excellence.”

The department has a long history of engaging with research, funding faculty and student projects for more than 40 years through a combination of grants, endowments and scholarships, and faculty were heavily engaged in research when Reeves attended Abilene Christian.

“My experience as an undergraduate researcher kept me in the field,” he said. “I worked in the lab every minute I had to spare. I fell in love with research, and 50 years later, I still love it.”

**Dr. Autumn Sutherlin**, department chair and professor of chemistry and biochemistry, strongly supports student engagement in research and praises ACU’s small class sizes and tight-knit community.

“Our department is small enough that, by the time our students are seniors, they’ve grown close thanks to their time in the lab,” Sutherlin said. “We get to know one another really well, and we often stay in touch years after graduation. That makes a big difference.”

Thanks to the support of funding such as the Reeves endowment, ACU students gain vital hands-on research experience and contribute to meaningful projects with real-world applications. Their partnership with faculty and fellow students often results in co-authored publications in peer-reviewed journals, and several departmental faculty and students

participate in ACU’s groundbreaking Nuclear Energy Experimental Testing (NEXT) Lab project dedicated to developing innovative techniques for producing cleaner nuclear power.

The passion, curiosity and self-discipline necessary for research comes naturally to ACU students, Reeves said – the department only has to ask.

“You don’t have to sell our students on research,” he said. “Our challenge as faculty members is to find the time and energy and the space to accommodate that interest.”

Sutherlin saw students’ commitment to research persist in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic in Spring 2020. “Several faculty members had students ask for ways to stay involved, even when the labs were closed,” she said. “Our students were really inspiring, saying, ‘We’re not going to give this up.’”

Though Reeves retired in 2013, his sense of adventure hasn’t dimmed – he still teaches classes every semester for the department and continues to conduct research. In fact, the recipient of this year’s Reeves fellowship is **Mallorie Coltharp**, senior biochemistry major from El Paso, who is working with him to develop more environmentally friendly catalysts for industrial reactions.

Through his endowment, Reeves is glad to have helped build a firm foundation for supporting student research for decades to come.

“Getting students out of the classroom and doing the work is an incredibly important part of science,” Reeves said. “It’s why I set up the research endowment – to help students discover a love of research at ACU like I did.”

## ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

### Jennifer E. Graham Endowed Scholarship

**G**abriella “Ella” Wasser’s grade school teachers changed her life by believing in her abilities. Now, she wants to do the same for the next generation of students.

The education in teaching and learning graduate student from Dallas, Texas, didn’t have any easy childhood, and she remembers the ways her elementary school teachers mentored her and invested in her life. “School was a place I felt safe and valued, and my teachers really cared,” she said. “Those relationships spurred me on to realize this is what I’m supposed to do in my life – mentor and teach young children.

From her first visit to ACU, Ella knew she would find the same encouragement and mentorship in the Department of Teacher Education. Whether in the classroom, working as a teacher’s assistant or serving in leadership roles in campus organizations, she’s found community on the Hill. “At ACU, I feel known, valued and supported,” she said.

In Fall 2020, Ella will get the opportunity to pay it forward as a student teacher in a fourth-grade classroom, working with students the same age she was when she discovered a love for learning. “I had so many great teachers who cared about me,” she said. “I want to make sure my students feel

the same – to know they belong and are capable, and that learning is for everyone.”

Ella was the recipient of the Jennifer E. Graham Endowed Scholarship for the 2019-20 academic year, which was established by M. Patrick and Doris J Graham to honor their daughter, Jennifer, who intended to attend ACU and become an elementary school teacher before her untimely death from cancer. The scholarship supports students who want to become elementary school teachers and is awarded based on character, academic ability and financial need.

Scholarships, along with Ella’s on-campus employment, made it possible for her to graduate in May 2020 and pursue her Master of Education in Teaching and Learning this fall. She is currently taking online courses this summer in preparation for student-teaching and research during the 2020-21 academic year. “My scholarships helped me immensely to not worry so much about tuition,” she said.

Ella is grateful for the support that made her ACU experience possible. “My time at ACU was incredibly special,” she said. “From mentorship and academics to student organizations and mission work, there’s just nothing like it.”

## ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

### Jeannette and Harold Lipford Endowed Music/Theatre

**F**or LJ Brodie, the conviction that art can challenge, bless and inspire motivates everything he does.

The senior musical theatre and dance major from Mesquite, Texas, has been dancing since childhood, participating in his church’s step team, as well as acting, dancing and arranging choreography for performances throughout middle and high school. “Dance has always come naturally to me,” he said. “It’s how I express myself when words fail.”

LJ brought his talent to ACU’s Department of Theatre, where he was instrumental in implementing a new dance track and will be the new program’s first graduate in May 2021. He has performed in shows ranging from *Wonderful Town* to *James and the Giant Peach*, arranged choreography for two ACU dance shows and had roles in Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast*, the 2019 Homecoming Musical.

He also found recognition in the Abilene community theatre space, with roles in regional productions of the musicals *Newsies* and *Pippin* at the Historic Paramount Theatre, and the Abilene Opera Association’s production of *West Side Story*, where he worked alongside performers

from film productions and national touring companies.

LJ loves to use art to express truth and to bless people, no matter the story. “Art is a living thing that can touch your heart and soul,” he said. “I love seeing Christ-like themes of human decency, kindness and love come to life on the stage.”

The conviction that art can make an impact even through challenging subject matter – such as this year’s Cornerstone production, the play *American Son* – has shaped LJ’s sense of personal mission. “One of my favorite lines from the musical *Hamilton*,” he said, is “If you stand for nothing, Burr, what will you fall for?” “Being at ACU in this time and this age, I’ve found how to fight for what I stand for.”

LJ, a recipient of the Jeannette and Harold Lipford Endowed Music/Theatre Scholarship, is ready to make a difference in the world thanks to your generosity. “I’m the first in my family to go to college, and I’ll be the first one to get my degrees, so your support has been a blessing,” he said. “At the end of the day, when I graduate, I know I’m making myself and my family proud.”



## WHAT IS THE ENDOWMENT?

Endowment gifts and the support they provide make an extraordinary difference in defining the strengths, quality and success of Abilene Christian University. The endowment provides the third-largest revenue stream for ACU, accounting for 15 percent of annual income in a typical year.

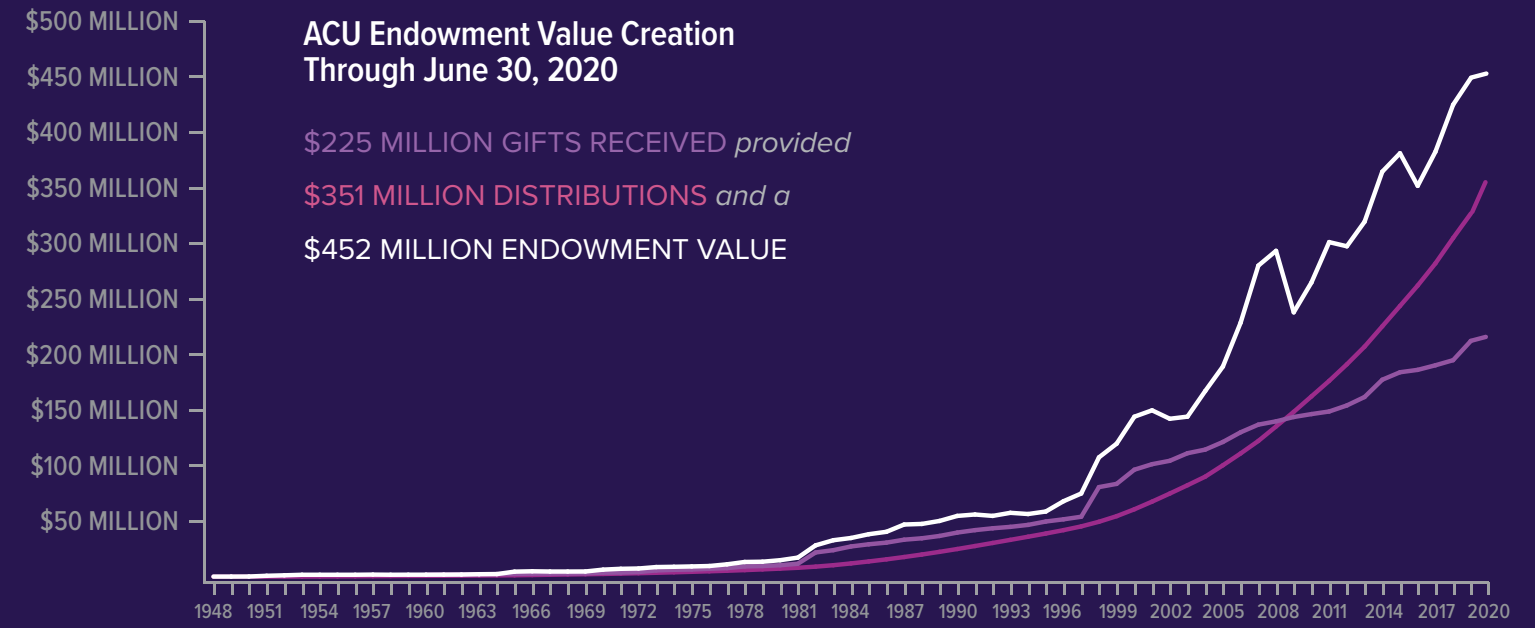
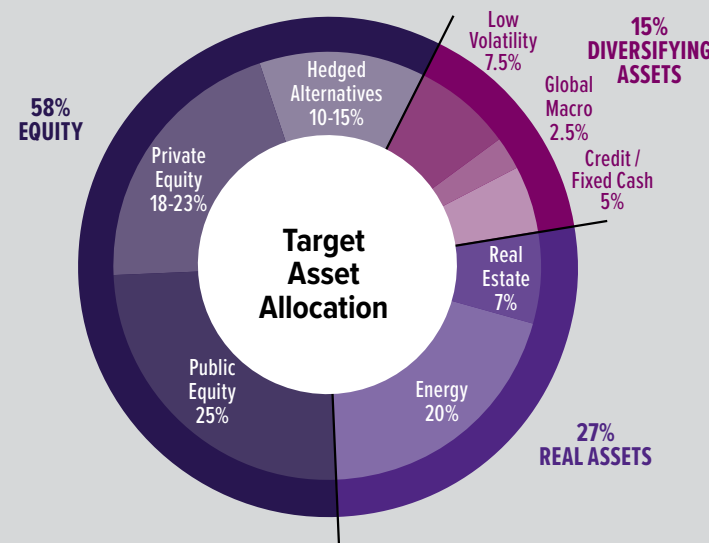
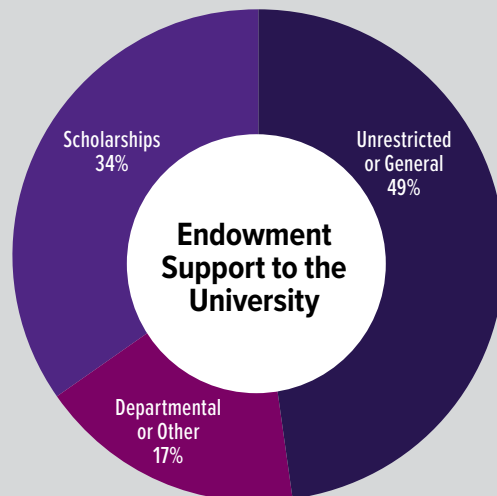
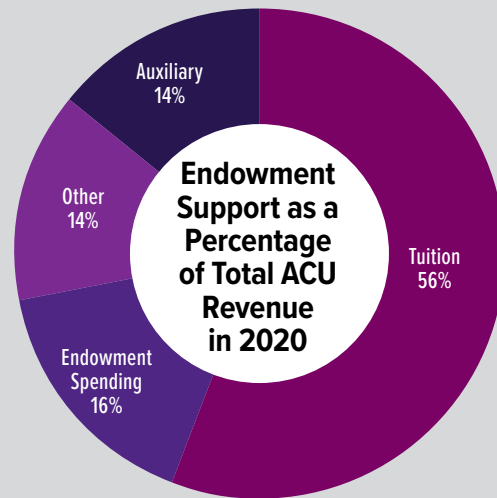
An endowment is a fund intended to benefit the university every year in perpetuity. Unlike current-use gifts, which are spent completely for immediate needs, endowed funds are invested for long-term growth and a portion of the return on those investments is spent each year.

At ACU, our average distribution is 4.5 percent per year. The most flexible endowment gifts are unrestricted, allowing the university to use resources where they are most needed. Endowment funds cannot be redirected to purposes contrary to donor instructions. For example, a donor's gift restricted to supporting a scholarship cannot be repurposed to support departments. All such gifts honor in perpetuity the donor, the institution and those students and families who benefit from the support endowments make possible.

ACU's endowment is a collection of more than 975 individual funds invested for the long term. Most of the funds have their own sets of restrictions and guidelines as to how they may be used. Some of these endowment gifts are more than 65 years old and reflect a donor's wishes based on what was known or expected at the time of the gift.

## INVESTMENT PHILOSOPHY AND POLICIES

Endowment investment policies are designed to maximize long-term results at an acceptable level of investment risk. Endowed gifts are invested in ACU's pooled endowment, a globally diversified portfolio of assets including publicly traded stocks and bonds, hedged strategies, private equities, real estate and natural resources. The endowment's target asset allocation – the percent exposure to each asset class – is shown as of June 30, 2020.



## PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The diversified nature of ACU's endowment has helped protect returns in a market environment that, during the past decade, has been characterized by significant volatility. Throughout this 10-year period, the endowment has produced an annualized return of 9% compared to the benchmark return of 7.9% annually.

## TYPES OF ENDOWMENT FUNDS

- **Unrestricted endowments** support the general purposes of the university.
- **Student scholarship endowments** strengthen our ability to attract and retain the most talented students, regardless of their ability to pay. Endowed financial support enables ACU to attract and educate one of the most diverse and selective student bodies among our peers.
- **Endowed chairs, professorships and fellowships** are a powerful vehicle to recognize and invest in groundbreaking research, exemplary teaching and faculty leadership, as well as recruit and retain pre-eminent scholars.
- **ACU's departments, centers and programs** (including ACU Athletics) foster environments encouraging new areas for interdisciplinary thinking and collaboration, and advance innovative research and teaching. Endowed program funds provide ongoing support allowing faculty and staff, across a range of disciplines, to combine their unique expertise to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges.

*Each year since 2006, ACU's returns for 10-year periods consistently ranked in the top 5 percent of all university endowment returns.*

Performance as of June 30, 2020

	ACU	Benchmark*
3 year	12.5%	8.7%
5 year	7.5%	4.8%
10 year	10.3%	8.1%
5 year Stdev	5.4%	8.6%
5 year Sharpe	1.3	.05

\* 70% MSCI All Country World Index / 30% Barclays Global Aggregate Bond Index



## GOVERNANCE

The Abilene Christian Investment Management Company (ACIMCO) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Abilene Christian University. ACIMCO is governed by a board consisting of current and former ACU trustees, the president of the university and independent members.

- President, Chief Investment Officer – Jack Rich ('76), CFA, CPA
- Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer – Kent Rideout ('80), CPA ACIMCO

### ACIMCO Board

- Rick Wessel ('81) – Chair, ACU trustee, public company CEO
- Todd Miller ('62) – Vice chair, former ACU trustee, real estate private equity partner
- Mark Anthony ('86) – Investor
- Mike Calvert ('67) – Former ACU trustee, business owner
- Kyle Hammond ('83) – ACU trustee, energy executive
- Eric Oliver ('81) – Hedge fund manager
- Scott Orr ('84) – Investment and governmental relations executive
- Danny Phillips ('81) – Former ACU trustee, investor
- Jim Porter – ACU trustee, venture capital
- Doug Robison – Energy executive
- Dr. Phil Schubert ('91) – ACU president



# ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

To learn more about the endowment and how to make a gift, please contact the  
**OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT**  
 ACU Box 29134, Abilene, Texas 79601-9134  
 325-674-2659

To learn how you can support ACU through endowment funds in your planned giving, contact  
**THE ACU FOUNDATION**  
 ACU Box 29200, Abilene, Texas 79699-9200  
 325-674-2508  
 Toll-free: 800-979-1906  
 theacufoundation@acu.edu  
 theacufoundation.org