

THE BEACON

Spring 2026

BRIEF

Bushnell University Update

Wisdom • Faith • Service



Christ at the Center for 130 Years

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Beacons,

The danger of using glowing terms and exclamation points is that they possess an inclination toward exaggeration. They steal energy from occasional moments that are worthy of superlatives. I have a tendency to circumvent celebration and even understate gratitude and wonder for fear of exaggeration or in an eagerness to get on to the next thing.

Recent blessings at Bushnell University simply shouldn't be downplayed. Dare I say it? We are enjoying encouraging and historic gains! [There, an exclamation.]

In one grand moment after a season of arduous work and prayer, we purchased 125,000 square feet of excellent classrooms, science and nursing labs, offices, and much more. Two buildings directly adjacent to our existing campus will allow us to greatly expand our College of Health Professions and auxiliary athletic training facilities. At the same time, we are able to enlarge and reorder the stewardship of other academic and co-curricular spaces.

We still have work ahead to pay for the purchase and renovation of this new space. Yet we step forward with confidence made possible by God's provision in the last big campaign, along with the leadership of the Board of Trustees and the generosity of alumni, friends, and granting agencies.

I still don't care for exclamation points. But there is no denying this: the Lord is doing great things at Bushnell. Thank you for your part.

Sincerely,



Joseph D. Womack '89, Ed.D.
President



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10,659

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Beacon Classic**



**Family Weekend
Brunch**



**130 Year Celebration
and Founders Day**



Beacon Madness

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more photos!



**Christmas Tree
Lighting**



Fall ACE Day



**Winter
Commencement**



**Honoring
Coach Lipp's Legacy**



A Once-in-a-Century Expansion

On a crisp fall morning during Bushnell University's 130th Convocation Chapel, past and future converged in a powerful way.

As the community gathered to rededicate historic Goodrich Hall and cut the ribbon on the newly completed Donna Racine Pomajevich Bell Tower, President Joseph D. Womack, '89, Ed.D. announced news that would shape the next chapter of Bushnell's story. The University is acquiring two former PeaceHealth University District hospital buildings – marking the largest single expansion in Bushnell's 130-year history.

The acquisition adds 125,000 square feet of academic space immediately adjacent to campus and positions Bushnell for significant growth in the College of Health Professions, addressing some of Oregon's most urgent workforce needs.

"This expansion represents the greatest single acquisition in the University's history," said President Womack. "We celebrate the legacy of PeaceHealth while carrying forward the mission of healing and service in this historic space."

Two Buildings, One Shared Vision

The acquisition includes two major properties along East 11th Avenue:

- 770 E. 11th Ave. – formerly the Behavioral Health Unit (BHU), an 88,000-square-foot medical office building
- 722 E. 11th Ave. – formerly the Center for Medical Education and Research (CMER), a 37,000-square-foot facility long associated with clinical training and research

The CMER building is already familiar to many Beacons. For a few years, it has housed Bushnell's School of Nursing under a unique partnership with PeaceHealth – an early sign of the collaboration and trust that made this expansion possible. With full ownership, Bushnell will now expand into additional floors, significantly increasing instructional and laboratory capacity.

The larger BHU building offers immediate access to its upper floors, with PeaceHealth continuing to lease the lower levels until the completion of its planned Timber Springs mental health facility. Bushnell leaders have emphasized a commitment to being thoughtful stewards and collaborative neighbors during the transition.

Meeting Critical Needs Close to Home

At the heart of the expansion is a clear purpose: preparing healthcare professionals who will serve and stay in the region. Out of our nursing graduates, 80% of them stay in Oregon, and 65% of them serve in Lane County following graduation.

Oregon faces critical shortages in nursing, behavioral health, and primary care. Bushnell is already a key part of the solution. The University provides Oregon's largest pipeline of clinical mental health counseling graduates, and its nursing program has earned statewide recognition for excellence.

In fact, Bushnell's nursing graduates have achieved a 100% first-time pass rate on the N-CLEX licensure exam across the program's first six graduating cohorts. Over 160 new nurses are now prepared to serve.

"This timely acquisition aligns with our vision to meet the ever-growing demand for healthcare and behavioral health education in our region," said Dr. Reed Mueller, Vice President for Academic Affairs. "We are developing these programs in close partnership with industry and community leaders so our graduates are prepared to meet real needs."

With the added space, Bushnell plans to:

- Expand enrollment in nursing to address the statewide shortage
- Grow graduate programs in clinical mental health counseling
- Launch new programs supporting physical, behavioral, and public health
- Explore future pathways for mid-level healthcare providers and social work

A Legacy Renewed

The announcement also carried a powerful historical resonance.

More than a century ago, Bushnell founded Pacific Christian Hospital (which became Sacred Heart) to serve the Eugene community – a bold expression of faith in action. This expansion renews that legacy, transforming former hospital spaces into classrooms, labs, and learning environments where future providers will be formed.

As Dr. Corynn Gilbert, Director of Development, shared in a recent KLCC interview, "If we can train healthcare professionals here, they are far more likely to stay here – embedded in the community as caregivers. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to serve our region well."

Looking Ahead

Bushnell's leadership team is now developing a comprehensive campus and space-usage plan to ensure the expansion serves the needs of all students both inside and outside the classroom. Since President Womack's presidency began in 2010, Bushnell's campus capacity has grown by 151%, reflecting sustained momentum and strategic stewardship.

As the University celebrates 130 years of wisdom, faith, and service, this milestone stands as both a culmination and a beginning.

The bells are ringing. The doors are opening. And a new generation of healers is preparing to serve. 

To watch the Convocation Chapel announcement, view media coverage, or learn how you can support this expansion, visit news.bushnell.edu or contact the Office of University Advancement.



Listen to or read the full KLCC interview here: <https://tinyurl.com/3j45paa5>



Bushnell Named NAIA School of Character

On September 16th, the Morse Center was filled with celebration and gratitude, The Bushnell University community gathered for a special Champions of Character Chapel. During the event, an announcement was made that marked a historic moment for the University: Bushnell was named the 2024–2025 NAIA National School of Character by representatives of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

The recognition came as Bushnell was already celebrating a strong year across campus. During the chapel, Cascade Collegiate Conference Commissioner Rob Cashell also honored Bushnell as the 2024–2025 CCC School of Character, an award first announced in May.

With this recognition, Bushnell becomes only the second institution in NAIA history to earn the School of Character distinction, joining Carroll College, the 2023–2024 recipient.

“Bushnell’s commitment to developing well-rounded student-athletes and engaged graduates truly sets them apart,” said Jim Carr, NAIA President & CEO. “Bushnell University truly exemplifies the NAIA’s core values, and we are proud to recognize them as this year’s winner.”

The award was presented by Chesney Saltee, NAIA Vice President of Membership Value and Governance, who described the significance of the honor:

“The NAIA established the School of Character Award to recognize institutions that embody the Champions of Character values in every aspect of their athletics programs and across their campuses. Out of 250 NAIA schools nationwide, only one is selected each year for this distinction. This recognition is unlike any other in the NAIA. It is the only award that honors an entire institution. It doesn’t honor a single team’s victories or the achievements of one individual. Instead, it honors a culture, one defined by character, leadership, and service, woven into the fabric of the whole university. By earning this distinction, Bushnell University has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the values that make athletics such a powerful force for personal development and community impact.”

That culture of character has been shaped over many years through Bushnell’s Tri-Athlete Model, which emphasizes excellence in competition, academics, and character formation. At Bushnell, character development is not an add-on. It is woven into how student-athletes are recruited, taught, and mentored.

Programs like the Chaplain Captain initiative encourage student-athletes to lead spiritual growth within their teams. Peer-led groups and campus partnerships support daily character formation. These efforts reflect Bushnell's belief that athletics can be a powerful place for personal growth, leadership development, and service.

Service is a visible expression of that commitment. During the 2024–2025 academic year, Bushnell student-athletes contributed more than 6,600 hours of community service. Through campus-wide events, team service projects, and mission trips, student-athletes regularly serve their local community while also developing empathy and global awareness. These experiences are not one-time efforts, but part of an intentional system that shapes service as a way of life.

Academic excellence remains a strong foundation as well. All 16 NAIA programs earned Scholar-Team honors, and more than 60 percent of student-athletes earned a GPA of 3.2 or higher. The athletic department posted a 3.30 cumulative GPA and extended its streak to ten consecutive years as the recipient of the CCC President's Cup for Academic Excellence.

Bushnell also continues to prioritize the mental and emotional well-being of student-athletes. Its wellness program is led by alumna and former Dr. Leroy Walker Champion of Character Award winner Samantha Silver '22, M.A. '24. It includes a dedicated mental health coordinator, counseling partnerships, and access to nutrition and health professionals. Together, these resources support student-athletes in a holistic way – mind, body, and spirit.

The recognition from the NAIA also reflects Bushnell's long-standing reputation for sportsmanship and integrity. The Beacons have been named a Five-Star Champions of Character Institution by the NAIA for 11 consecutive years, including seven years at the gold level. In recent seasons, Bushnell teams and coaches have regularly earned CCC Character honors, further reinforcing a culture marked by respect, leadership, and service.

For Bushnell President Joseph Womack, '89, the award speaks to the heart of the University:

"This is not only a recognition of the athletic department. It's not only a recognition of our coaches and our athletic administrators and staff and student athletes. It is a recognition of the entire University. It recognizes something that has been very true at Bushnell University for a long time. All of our activity in and out of the classroom is an excuse to exercise the mission of the University in the lives of students. It is a testimony to the wonderful leadership of the athletic association we are in. We are very proud to be associated with it and honored and humbled to receive this today."

Athletic Director Corey Anderson echoed that sentiment, reflecting on the deeper purpose behind the recognition:

"To even get selected at the conference level was very humbling and rewarding," Anderson said. "We don't do things for awards. We do things because we are Beacons, trying to put the right foot forward in representing Jesus and trying to lead the right way. Twenty years later it's good to know that we are continuing to take the right steps together. We will continue to do this moving forward. I am thankful and have so much gratitude and hope that we continue to do things the right way. But even better, not for recognition but because it's the right thing to do." 🏆

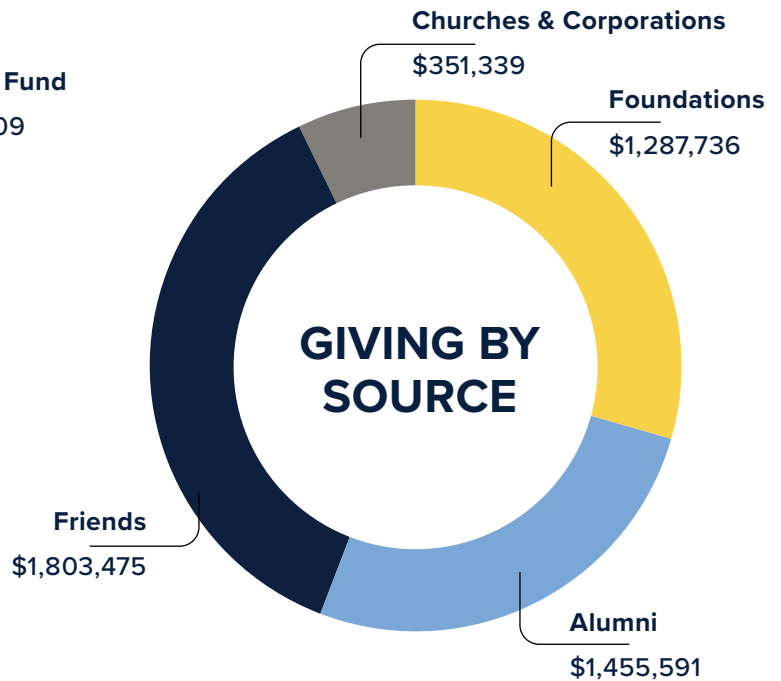
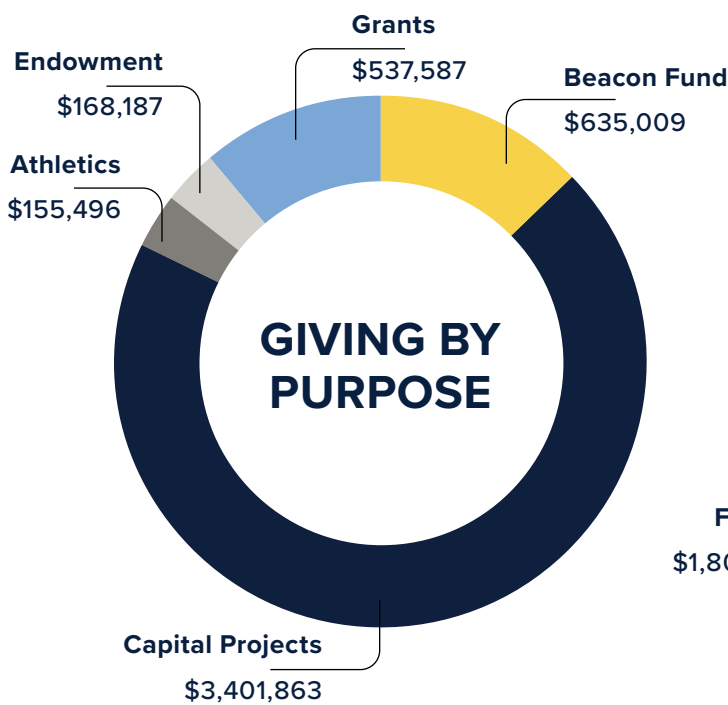


Bushnell to Add Men's and Women's Wrestling to their Athletic Roster in 2027



Scan the QR code to read the full story

INVEST IN OUR IMPACT



Scholarships have given me the opportunity to focus on school and my faith rather than the financial burdens of college. I have been able to buy my books and other necessary materials to fulfill my degree requirements. This opportunity has given me the security to fully enjoy my learning experience. I truly never thought that college would be possible for me. I am a first-generation student, and I never thought it would work out financially. I kept praying and God has been providing. Thank you so much for being an answer to prayer.”

– Savaun Deng '26



Beacon Fund scholarships are distributed based on financial need after all other forms of aid are awarded in order to make a Bushnell education a reality.

This is our students' greatest area of need.

Help us reach our 2025-2026 goal to distribute \$800,000 in Beacon Fund scholarships by June 30, 2026.

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**Thursday, May 14, 2026
5 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

Bushnell University
Morse Center

*Buffet dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m., program at 6 p.m.
Information & Tickets at [Bushnell.edu/tribute](https://bushnell.edu/tribute)*

Please RSVP by May 1, 2026.

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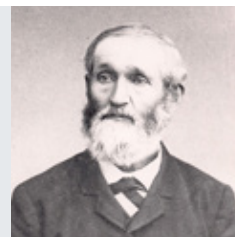


32nd Annual Beacon Classic Golf Tournament

Friday, August 14, 2026

Pine Ridge Golf Course

[Bushnell.edu/beaconclassic](https://bushnell.edu/beaconclassic)



Founders Day Weekend & Celebration of 130 Years

**Friday, October 23 –
Sunday October 25, 2026**

[Bushnell.edu/foundersday](https://bushnell.edu/foundersday)

UPCOMING EVENTS

bushnell.edu

