



# president's report

**W**elcome to the latest President's Report, which offers a look back at some of Armstrong's most notable accomplishments over the past year.

Armstrong was originally founded in 1935, in response to a need for expanded higher education opportunities in our community. While much has grown and changed over the years, the university remains dedicated to student success and to being a strong community partner.

Today, we are known for our academic excellence, community service and extraordinary faculty, who offer our students transformative learning experiences and rigorous undergraduate research opportunities that many institutions reserve for graduate-level students.

We're also known for our impressive legacy in NCAA Division II athletics. Over the years, Armstrong has won 12 national championships and brought home 91 Peach Belt Conference titles.

As we celebrate the 80th anniversary of Armstrong's founding, we look back upon our rich history and look ahead to our bright future. From this vantage point, it's easy to see that the Armstrong community is working hard to cultivate the next generation of leaders.

I'm honored to be part of this proud tradition and am confident that we will continue to support student success for many years to come.

Warmest regards,

Linda M. Bleicken  
President

# president's report



## \$1.8 Million in Design Funding Approved for New College of Health Professions Facility

The University System of Georgia's Board of Regents and the Georgia General Assembly approved \$1.8 million in design funding for a new College of Health Professions center at Armstrong's main campus in Savannah. The new facility will be part of a vibrant complex of two structures, combining a renovated Ashmore Hall with a new state-of-the-art facility designed to encourage interprofessional healthcare education.

## Armstrong Awarded \$1.1 Million TRIO Student Support Services Grant

Armstrong was recently awarded a \$1.1 million TRIO Student Support Services grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This five-year grant will assist 140 eligible low-income, first-generation and disabled student participants with academic advising, an individual academic success plan with an academic coach, financial planning and tutoring. Students will receive assistance applying to graduate and professional schools, career counseling, peer and faculty mentoring, study skill development, direct financial support and exposure to cultural activities in Savannah.

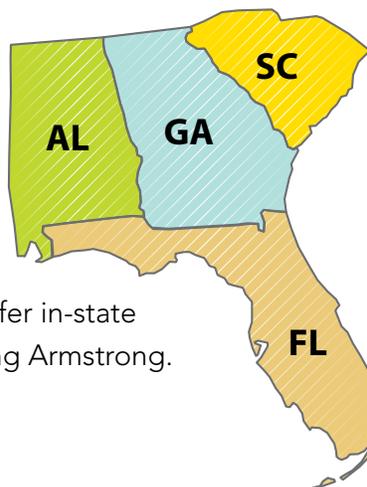
## \$1.5 Million Tennis Taking Shape on Armstrong Campus

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents approved the construction of a new \$1.5 million tennis complex, bringing the university's 12-time NCAA Division II National Champions back on campus to play home matches for the first time since 2009. The complex will be located along Compass Point Drive and will feature 12 hard courts, seating and scoreboards.



## In-State Tuition Now Offered to Fla., S.C. and Ala. Residents

Armstrong now offers in-state tuition to undergraduate residents of Florida, South Carolina and Alabama. In March, the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents voted to offer in-state tuition at 10 public universities, including Armstrong.



Armstrong enjoys unprecedented levels of social media engagement:

-  15,132 followers on Facebook
-  1,749 followers on Twitter
-  1,229 followers on Instagram
-  15,192 followers on LinkedIn



## Armstrong Signs Memorandum of Understanding with China's Yichun University

In August, Armstrong officials signed a memorandum of understanding with Yichun University, located in Yichun City, China, allowing faculty and students to exchange teaching and learning opportunities. Each university will aim for the exchange of students and faculty for program development, researching and teaching.

## Second Annual Moveable Feast Lecture Series

The second annual Moveable Feast Lecture Series, presented by the College of Liberal Arts, kicked off on Sept. 24 with History professor, Michael Hall, addressing an eager audience at the American Legion Ballroom. This popular lecture series, held in venues throughout Savannah, celebrates the vital role the liberal arts play in keeping the ideal of democratic education alive.



## TOP 10 UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS AT ARMSTRONG

1. NURSING/PRE-NURSING
2. BIOLOGY
3. REHABILITATION SCIENCES
4. PSYCHOLOGY
5. RADIOLOGIC SCIENCES/ PRE-RADIOLOGIC SCIENCES
6. HEALTH SCIENCE
7. CRIMINAL JUSTICE
8. LIBERAL STUDIES
9. COMPUTER SCIENCE
10. ENGLISH

## Savannah Graduates Initiative Launches

Savannah Graduates, a new initiative designed to create a more educated workforce in Savannah-Chatham County, officially kicked off on Feb. 6 at the Armstrong Center.

More than 100 community leaders, including Armstrong President Linda M. Bleicken, joined forces to launch this special collaboration between area businesses, universities and nonprofit organizations to increase college completion and post-high school credentials in Chatham County. The goal is to increase the percentage of the local workforce with post-high school credentials from 38 percent to 48 percent — or 85,000 individuals — by 2025.



# donors' report



As Armstrong celebrates 80 years in Savannah and 50 years on the southside campus, we all can look back and marvel at the changes this university has experienced.

From our early days as a downtown junior college to our current status as a renowned state university, Armstrong continues to impact the lives of students, our local community and the region in meaningful ways. Thanks to the generosity of Foundation Trustees, corporate donors, alumni, faculty and staff, we are able to make higher education accessible to more students than ever before.

During the last fiscal year, Armstrong's Office of Advancement worked closely with the Armstrong Foundation Trustees, The Alumni Association and friends of the university, raising more than \$1.1 million in private support. Most importantly, the university realized a significant increase in the number of overall donors, which jumped by more than 700 since FY13.

Armstrong is and will always be focused on student success. Donors have the power to change lives every day by offering not only financial assistance, but hope.

Thank you for your support. Thank you for your generosity and for helping us transform lives. Thank you for your commitment to Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Kelso".

William Kelso '88  
Vice President for Advancement

## THE POWER OF GIVING

Want to learn more about how you can support Armstrong?

Visit [armstrong.edu/give](http://armstrong.edu/give).



# CARLEIGH BUCK '17

Hinesville, Georgia  
*PSYCHOLOGY*

Recipient of a General  
Armstrong Scholarship

For Carleigh Buck, a second-generation Armstrong student, Pirate pride runs deep.

"Seeing my mother excel at Armstrong and then feeling so welcome when I came myself really cemented Armstrong as my number-one choice," she says. "I felt the warmth at Armstrong's campus more than at any other campus I visited."

Buck's positive experiences created the inspiration to pursue a degree in Psychology, a major she had never before considered.

"At Armstrong, I found the perfect balance," she explains. "The university environment is defined by support and devotion to knowledge."

During her first year, Buck took classes at Armstrong's Savannah campus and at the Liberty Center in Hinesville, earning a 4.0 GPA, as well as entrance into the Armstrong Honors Program.

"Whether I needed help, a quiet place to study, a new perspective on a difficult course or support from the faculty, Armstrong provided me with more than I could've ever asked for from my college," she says. "I know Armstrong will be a driving force in achieving all of my new goals for the future."

**ERIK LEON '16****Hilton Head Island,  
South Carolina  
COMPUTER SCIENCE****Recipient of a Goizueta  
Foundation Scholarship**

With financial assistance from a Goizueta Foundation Scholarship at Armstrong, attending college became a reality for Erik Leon, a Computer Science major who has dedicated many hours to volunteering with various campus organizations like CAMINO, Hispanic Outreach & Leadership at Armstrong (HOLA) and TechFest.

"The Goizueta scholarship has made it possible for my family to afford my college education," he says. "Not only that, the community of Goizueta Scholars is a wonderful support system. These are students who know exactly what I am going through, and whose life stories sound very similar to mine. Having this group of people who share an experience is like having a second family."

Leon has maintained a 3.8 GPA at Armstrong and hopes to work in software engineering or web application and development after graduation.

"I plan to stay local and own a business that provides IT services," he says. "I want to be my own boss and lead a team of people."

Leon is proud to start strong and says he knew Armstrong was the perfect fit the moment he set foot on campus.

"When I visited Armstrong, I didn't have the same overwhelming feeling I got when visiting the big schools," he recalls. "I really loved the small size and student-to-teacher ratio. It felt close-knit and comfortable."

# TAYLOR ALVAREZ '15

Mesa, Arizona

*POLITICAL SCIENCE*

Recipient of the Mary Ann & J.B. McDowell Honors Leadership Scholarship, the Steve Rhee Scholarship and the José de Arimatéia da Cruz Scholarship

Presidential Honors Scholar Taylor Alvarez doesn't mince words when she talks about her future. The soon-to-be graduate's dream job is to become a foreign service officer for the U.S. State Department, and she's well on her way to achieving her goal.

An Arizona native who attended high school in metro Atlanta, she once considered studying aerospace, but altered her course after enrolling at Armstrong and discovering the field of political science.

"Armstrong has opened up so many opportunities and brought great insight into my future," she says. "My interest in continuing on to graduate school for global security and intelligence has only grown over the past year due to the amazing faculty."

Alvarez excels in her classes while maintaining a 4.0 GPA, working as a resident assistant and holding a position on Student Court. This aspiring diplomat is currently applying for graduate programs and federal internships with the State Department and similar institutions.

"I wake up every day thankful that I am one step closer to reaching my goal of helping repay the generosity of my family and donors," she says. "I look forward to being a productive member of this inspiring world we live in."

# GRACE AGONSI '15

Imo State, Nigeria  
NURSING

Recipient of a  
Kaye Kole Scholarship

International student Grace Agonsi knew Armstrong would be the perfect environment to prepare her for a successful career in nursing.

"The fact that Armstrong is in every sector or business within the community was enough proof that Armstrong was the college I needed," she says. "I saw results everywhere."

A recipient of the Kaye Kole Scholarship, Agonsi appreciates Armstrong's top-notch nursing program and commitment to interprofessional healthcare. The university's high standards of performance have fueled her own commitment to excellence, as she serves on organizations like the board for the Armstrong Association of Nursing Students, a chapter of the National Student Nurses Association.

Receiving a scholarship, she says, has been instrumental in her success on campus. The financial support she receives is helping this talented student reach her goals.

"Nursing is a profession where you can wear many hats," she explains. "You can be a teacher, an advocate and a counselor. I look forward to joining other amazing nurses in our life-saving journey. I started strong, and now I am finishing strong, thanks to Armstrong."

# FISCAL YEAR 2015 BY THE NUMBERS

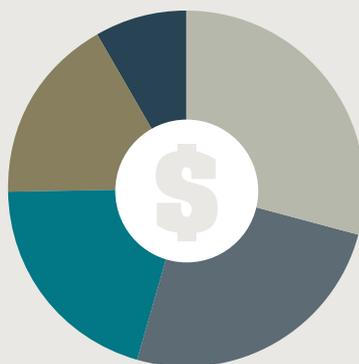
From July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

**2,853**  
DONORS   
CONTRIBUTED GIFTS AND  
PLEDGES TOTALING  
**\$1,162,795**

## Breakdown by total to fund type

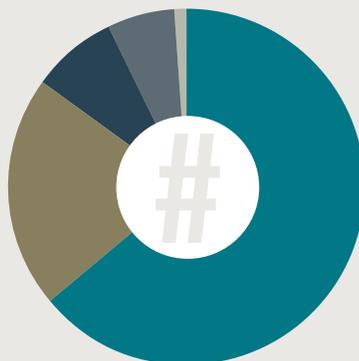
|   |                         |           |       |
|---|-------------------------|-----------|-------|
|    | Scholarships            | \$612,619 | 52.7% |
|    | Programs                | \$335,370 | 28.8% |
|  | Annual Fund             | \$120,440 | 10.4% |
|  | Athletics               | \$54,509  | 4.7%  |
|  | Armstrong<br>Commitment | \$39,856  | 3.4%  |

## OUR DONORS



### By Dollars Given

|   |                       |     |
|---|-----------------------|-----|
|  | Foundation            | 29% |
|  | Business/Organization | 25% |
|  | Alumni                | 20% |
|  | Friend                | 17% |
|  | Faculty/Staff         | 8%  |



### By Number of Donors

|   |                       |     |
|---|-----------------------|-----|
|    | Alumni                | 64% |
|  | Friend                | 21% |
|  | Faculty/Staff         | 8%  |
|  | Business/Organization | 6%  |
|  | Foundation            | 1%  |

## THANKS TO YOU

**ALUMNI  
GIVING  
increased  
22.7%**

**827**  
new donors gave  
**\$222,393**  
in gifts.

**106**  
ARMSTRONG SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS  
**303** students received an average  
scholarship of \$1,460 from  
the Armstrong Foundation.

**57%** of  
faculty and staff  
participated in the  
Campus Campaign,  
beating the national  
average of 25%!

## NEW FUNDS

Sheldon Kanis Music Scholarship • Margaret F. Perryman Scholarship Fund • Robert E. Lee Morgan Scholarship  
Kaye Kole Scholarship Fund • Lorrie and Kevin Hoffman Mathematics Faculty Research Award • The Landings Military  
Spouse Academic Assistance Fund • Georgia Power STEM Initiatives • Faye Kirschner Scholarship • Cynthia Howard  
Scholarship • William Donovan Perkins and Lalia Callaway Perkins Memorial Study Abroad Program Endowment

# Donor SPOTLIGHTS



## ROBERT & CASEY HOWARD

When Robert Howard arrived at Armstrong in 2012 to accept a position as chief information officer, he was coming home.

Howard was born and raised in Savannah and was thrilled to return to the area with his young family in tow and to spend quality time with his parents. Being able to once again live in the same city as his parents was “like a dream,” he explains. “It was the pinnacle of joy watching my parents with my kids. It was an unbelievable time.”

Just a few years prior, his mother, Cynthia Howard—affectionately known as “Grandci” to her grandchildren—was diagnosed with serious pulmonary issues, but was responding well to treatment. In May 2012, however, Cynthia’s symptoms returned with a vengeance.

When hospitalization became necessary, Cynthia felt better when respiratory therapists called in on the case treated her with a double dose of expertise and kindness.

“They gave her hope when hope was appropriate and comfort when hope ran out,” Howard recalls. The experience also taught this seasoned CIO that “behind every hospital chart is a person and a family.”

Sadly, Cynthia Howard died on May 20, 2012, at the age of 59. But Robert Howard says he won’t ever forget the care given to his mother by the respiratory therapists.

To honor his mother, he and his wife, Casey, established The Cynthia Howard Scholarship Fund at Armstrong. The award will be given annually to a respiratory therapy student who has an interest in autoimmune lung diseases.

As the parents of three young children, the Howards knew that funding the scholarship wouldn’t be easy, but it would be well worth the investment.

“We could have put that money in other places, but we wanted to honor my mom and keep her memory alive,” Howard says. At the same time, he adds:

“For anyone in our community,

this type of giving is not beyond the realm of possibility. Large or small gifts make a very real difference to the lives of students working hard to fulfill the dream of college. It feels good to help, and I know my mom would be proud of that.”

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“Large or small gifts make a very real difference to the lives of students working hard to fulfill the dream of college.”

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— Robert Howard

## THE ROBERT E. LEE "BOB" MORGAN ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP



Bob Morgan, a retired associate professor of Business Administration who taught at Armstrong in the late '60s and throughout the '70s, quickly became a figure beloved by many.

Former students love to share his stories, particularly his emphasis on the realities of the workplace, accountability and responsibility. Morgan left such a remarkable impression on previous students, in fact, that several anonymous alumni set up an endowed scholarship at Armstrong in his name to assist today's business economics students.

When informed of the Robert E. Lee Morgan Endowed scholarship, Morgan was greatly surprised and deeply honored by the gesture.

Please join the "Friends of Bob Morgan" in supporting this worthy scholarship. Each gift of \$100 or more to the Robert E. Lee Morgan Endowed Scholarship will be matched by a generous alumnus, up to \$25,000.

For more information, please contact Julie Gerbsch at [julie.gerbsch@armstrong.edu](mailto:julie.gerbsch@armstrong.edu) or visit [armstrong.edu/give](http://armstrong.edu/give) online. Please designate your gift by selecting "other" and then choosing the Robert E. Lee Morgan Endowed Scholarship.

## THA GROUP

Ellen Bolch, a healthcare pioneer and Armstrong State University Foundation board member, recognizes the value of Armstrong's scholarship opportunities.

That's why her in-home healthcare company, THA Group, served as a corporate sponsor for Armstrong's 2015 Paint the Town Maroon event, which raises scholarship money to support students with financial need and academic merit.

"I felt a strong sense of responsibility to make this corporate event a success," says Bolch, who holds a B.S. in Nursing and a graduate degree in Advance Practice Nursing and Healthcare Administration. "On the other hand, it's important to me personally to help find solutions because I am in the healthcare field."

As CEO of THA Group, a nationally recognized family of companies providing Medicare-certified home healthcare, nonprofit hospice care, private home care, telehealth, chronic disease management and population health delivery

services, Bolch has won Honeywell HomMed's National Lifetime Achievement Award in Telehealth and the AWWIN Monica LaRue Award, a regional honor given to a woman who motivates and inspires other women to pursue their dreams.

"I believe in getting more scholarship money out there," she explains. "We have to prepare this community for a 'silver tsunami' as Baby Boomers are retiring at the rate of 10,000 per day."

With 78 million Baby Boomers in the United States, there simply aren't enough healthcare workers to meet the growing demand. Every year, Armstrong produces more undergraduate health professionals than any public university in Georgia, connecting graduates with key healthcare jobs throughout the region.

"I would pit Savannah's healthcare system up against any community," she says. "I am so excited about Armstrong's growth and its leadership role in providing state-of-the-art healthcare education."



Ellen Bolch, CEO of THA Group