

NEWS

Tech hits \$2 million endowed diversity scholarship goal

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Throughout decades, Tennessee Tech leaders have labored to establish a legacy of inclusiveness for Black students, and those passionate leaders now lead the celebration of a major milestone.

Diversity endowments have now reached \$2 million, and endowment monies continue to climb as donors realize their impact can be significant and soon. For the first time this fall, 13 students will attend Tech supported by money generated from two major endowments.



“This intentional and impactful effort means we have reached the point where we can sustain our scholarship efforts to make a direct impact on student’s lives,” said Tech Chief Diversity Officer Rob Owens.

“We will see the impact quickly, in the next two to three years, on our demographics,” said Owens. “Raising support and funds is connected to the strategic plan, which is an effective guide to this campus in diversity efforts.”

DeWayne Allen, director of corporate strategy and development at Raytheon Technologies, accepted the challenge to be a vocal and active leader in fundraising efforts. As an alumnus, his personal connection to the university is strong and lasting.

“Tennessee Tech and Cookeville make up a microcosm where African-American students can set themselves up for success in a place that is inexpensive and supportive,” Allen said.

As a high school graduate from Memphis receiving acceptance offers from most state schools, Allen transferred to Tech because he was looking for the most affordable and highly ranked engineering school in the state of Tennessee. He says he believes the key to his success is the financial and social support he received.

“People made me feel at home, and they made it happen financially,” he said. “I saw people who did it and knew I could do it.

“This scholarship effort is to keep us turning the page, taking ourselves and students through the university journey, creating lasting change on campus, and giving opportunity to those who graduate to see how Tech can be a part of their plans when they leave.”

The diversity scholarship effort is made up of 32 funds, with its two largest endowments – the African-American Scholarship Endowment and Ethnic Diversity Scholarship Endowment – now able to generate funds to sustain renewable scholarships.

As the university celebrates the \$2 million mark, it’s important to understand the significant impact other diversity scholarships have already had on students’ futures.

For instance, Fred Lowery, president of Life Sciences Solutions and Laboratory Products, Thermo Fisher Scientific, who is also a Board of Trustees member, greeted two recipients of his scholarship as they walked across the stage at Tech’s spring commencement.

All donors and leaders agree that the diversity scholarship story cannot be told without honoring Tech’s former Vice President for Student Affairs and first Chief Diversity Officer Marc Burnett, who recently retired. His tireless energy and personal experience has touched every donor.

“At our Centennial celebration, we were asking, ‘What will Tennessee Tech look like in the next 100 years?’” Burnett said. “Inclusiveness should always be part of our fabric. This is a way to leave something more than memories. To say, ‘I can help the next ones even if I am not there.’”

To be a part of this transformational effort as a donor, contact Amanda Fabrizio-Grzesik at 610-331-7254 or afabrizio@tntech.edu (mailto:afabrizio@tntech.edu) or Owens at rowens@tntech.edu (mailto:rowens@tntech.edu).

To meet scholarship recipients at Tech’s Diversity Scholarship Diversity Celebration on Aug. 14, register at <https://www.tntech.edu/univadv/cac/registration-diversity-initiative-celebration.php> (/univadv/cac/registration-diversity-initiative-celebration.php).

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