



Dr. Kimberly Andrews Espy  
President

## UNIVERSITY REPORT December 11, 2024

**WSU [won the top national prize for innovation and economic engagement](#) from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), which represents all 250 public universities nationwide.** The prestigious Innovation and Economic Engagement Connections Award was presented to President Espy and university leadership Nov. 12 during the APLU annual conference in Orlando for exemplary economic engagement.

Our award-winning application noted that WSU contributes \$2.75 billion in annual economic impact to Michigan and is Detroit's 11th largest employer. Of our 300,000 alumni, 80% continue to live and work in Michigan following graduation. In TechTown's 20-year history, the university's nonprofit entrepreneurship hub has raised more than \$408 million in startup and growth capital and created more than 2,346 jobs. In 2023 alone, TechTown supported 1,059 entrepreneurs from all backgrounds, where 80% identify as persons of color (63% as Black/African American) and 65% identify as women.

Receiving the APLU's top IEP award is a first for Wayne State and adds to the APLU awards the university received in 2018 (Project Degree Completion Award) and 2019 (IEP Talent Award).

**Wayne State's research expenditures increased 3.6% according to the annual Higher Education and Development Survey (HERD).** The National Science Foundation released the annual HERD for fiscal year 2023. This report is the primary source of institutional information on research and development (R&D) activity at more than 900 colleges and universities in the United States. The HERD survey systematically defines and quantifies R&D activity through expenditures across broad disciplinary, agency, purpose and other dimensions. WSU headlines from the 2023 HERD Survey:

- Total R&D expenditures increased 3.6% to \$250.9 million in FY23 from \$242.2 million in FY22
- Wayne State ranks in top 100 in four areas: Chemistry (54), Health Sciences (60), Physical Sciences (77), and Life Sciences (87)



- Our federal and nonprofit R&D expenditures increased at a higher rate than our [10 peer institutions](#)
- Wayne State's growth in institutional R&D investments was larger relative to our peers
- Our overall ranking declined six places to 118, and our public ranking fell three places to 78, due to higher rates of growth in R&D expenditures at other universities

**Wayne State was recently ranked No. 93 on [Time magazine's 2025 list of "The Best Colleges for Future Leaders."](#)** This achievement underscores the university's commitment to inclusive excellence and real-world learning. Based on an analysis of more than 4,000 leaders' resumé and educational backgrounds, the ranking recognizes Wayne State's role in preparing graduates who excel in their fields and in leadership positions nationwide. WSU continues to stand out on the national stage as a public university driving equitable access to career and leadership pathways.

### **Division of Academic Affairs**

The Academy of Scholars (AoS) annual membership event was celebrated in November. For 45 years, AoS has recognized academic excellence in scholarship and creative achievement among faculty. This appointment is the highest recognition bestowed upon faculty by their fellow colleagues. AoS reflects scholarly excellence across all disciplines of the university and the academic reputation of our outstanding faculty. It recognizes exemplary faculty who strive every day to make Wayne State an exceptional place to learn – faculty who are at the cutting edge of discovery, innovation, scholarship and creative performance. This year, the academy celebrated six newly elected members and two outstanding Junior Faculty awardees. The pioneering research from these faculty members is helping solve today's most pressing challenges. Congratulations to the new AoS members and awardees.

### **Applebaum**

The Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists recognized **Dr. Michael Rybak**, professor, Department of Pharmacy Practice, with its Outstanding Mentor Award in recognition of the more than 50 fellows he has trained during his illustrious career. The Pharmacy Practice department is integrated in leadership in a number of roles: **Dr. Candice Garwood**, professor, Department of Pharmacy Practice, is on the Board of Regents; **Dr. Insaf Mohammad**, assistant professor, Department of Pharmacy Practice, is the past chair of the Ambulatory Care Practice and Research Network; and **Dr. Melissa Lipari**, assistant professor, Department of Pharmacy Practice, serves as chair. **Dr. Joseph Fava**, assistant professor, Department of Pharmacy Practice, is chair of the Community Pharmacy PRN. In addition to leadership, third-year students Marisa



Marcath and Kayla Craig presented their poster with advisor **Dr. Mary Beth O’Connell**, professor, Department of Pharmacy Practice, and received The Best Student Research Award. Meanwhile, the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences faculty continue to be highly productive and recognized for their outstanding abilities. Since the last report, faculty have published six articles and submitted four grants. **Dr. Anjaneyulu Kowluru**, distinguished professor and VA senior research career scientist, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, was appointed to the scientific review and advisory board for the VA and the college’s Board of Visitors. His new VA merit grant was approved for funding from January 2025 through December 2028. **Dr. Wanqing Liu**, professor, Department of Pharmacology, and **Dr. Steven Firestine**, chair and professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, received notice of a five-year continuing renewal of an R01 on spore germination inhibitors, while **Dr. Amanda Bryant-Friedrich**, professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, received the prestigious Founders Award from the American Chemical Society Division of Chemical Toxicology.

### **Education**

The Community Health Worker Academy received two new contracts from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (Award #1: May 1, 2024-Sept. 30, 2024, \$1,181,901; Award #2: Oct. 1, 2024 – Sept. 31, 2025, \$1,164,228) to manage the Community Health Worker-led health education and social determinants of health services at 14 Neighborhood Wellness Centers (NWC) across the southern half of Michigan. The WSU Academy team also established standard operating procedures (SOP) for the 14 locations they manage as well as the seven additional locations managed by the Detroit and Ingham County health departments. The SOP established the standardized policies and procedures that govern all aspects of the operations at the NWC, including staffing, service delivery to community residents, health information documentation, case management, marketing and communications, and impact evaluations. The project is implemented in collaboration with MDHHS, Everyday Life Consulting, local health departments, community stakeholders, site-based testing and diagnostic screening teams, and other related constituencies. Lead investigators include faculty from the College of Education, **Dr. Nate McCaughtry**, assistant dean, Division of Kinesiology, Health, and Sport Studies, and **Dr. Cheryl Somers**, professor, Division of Kinesiology, Health, and Sport Studies, as well as **Dr. Phil Levy**, associate vice president for translational science, Division of Research and Innovation, and director of the Center for Population Health Accountability for Wayne Health.

### **Engineering**

The newly established Engineering Clinic, under the James and Patricia Anderson Engineering Ventures Institute, has actively engaged with student groups on a range of innovative projects,



including batteries, robotics, efficient fuels and semiconductors. Currently, three projects with General Dynamics Land Systems are in the final stages of contract negotiation, and three capstone design projects with Oshkosh Corporation are under the final stages of consideration. Additionally, two projects from Starz Engineering and GEKOT Robotics are under review, while three student groups are exploring potential commercialization opportunities for their work.

### **Fine, Performing & Communication Arts**

The Maggie Allesee Department of Theatre and Dance produced the enchanting musical *Into the Woods*, by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, Nov 1-10 at the Hilberry Gateway. Co-directed by **Michael J. Barnes**, chair and associate professor, and **Laura Quigley**, a second-year M.F.A. theatre performance student, the production invited audiences into a world where fairy tale characters explore wish fulfillment, consequences and the complexities of life. Iconic figures like the Baker, Cinderella, Jack and Little Red Riding Hood embark on a journey through the woods to realize their deepest desires, revealing the unexpected outcomes and interconnectedness of their dreams. Quigley described the show as a magical yet deeply human experience, emphasizing themes of choice, consequences and interconnectedness. The talented cast of WSU students offering a unique perspective on each of their roles and breathed new life into these timeless characters.

### **Ilitch**

Mike Ilitch School of Business Wayne State University's Global Supply Chain Management program continues to produce outstanding talent, and one of its rising stars has been recognized on the national stage. Last month, Wayne State student Ahmed Saeed was one of 18 college students invited to the American Trucking Association's Trucking U in Nashville, a competitive and prestigious program aimed at cultivating the next generation of leaders in the trucking and logistics industry. This opportunity gave Saeed the chance to engage with executives, learn about cutting-edge technologies and discuss the most pressing issues facing the industry. Saeed's selection to the four-day event reflects both his academic dedication and the strong mentorship he has received from Wayne State faculty. Together, their collaboration exemplifies how the SCM program helps students translate classroom knowledge into real-world impact and guides them through the college-to-career journey.

### **Information Sciences**

A \$264,000 bequest from alumna **Karin Goosby** has created the largest scholarship fund in the School of Information Sciences' history, making a library and information science education more accessible. Goosby, a 1975 master of library science graduate, received her bachelor's



from Wayne State in 1965. After completing her degrees, she served as a public-school librarian for nearly two decades. With her bequest, she wanted to ensure that students interested in library and information-related careers could focus on their education without worrying about how to pay for it, so she gave back to the institution that gave her the career she loved.

### **Law**

The Law School concluded a novel million-dollar match fundraising challenge in September with strong results. Law School alumnus **E. Powell Miller's** promise to match, dollar-for-dollar, all donations raised within a limited time resulted in an influx of nearly \$1.2M in gifts, including two sizeable six-figure gifts. Together with Powell's own \$1M contribution, the million-dollar match challenge raised nearly \$2.2M toward future law school projects spanning student support, faculty scholarship, and the creation of a dedicated program in class action law and litigation. Contributions also included pledges and gifts toward the Law School building project, which will help fuel momentum as the project progresses into more detailed planning stages.

Wayne Law graduates achieved an impressive first-time pass rate of 87% on the July 2024 Michigan bar exam, the results of which were just released. This is 10 percentage points above the Michigan statewide average and a 14-point increase in Wayne Law's bar passage rate from the year prior. The achievement highlights the success of Wayne Law's new bar preparation program with JD Advising, made available free of cost to all Wayne Law students and designed specifically to augment their success on the recently adopted Uniform Bar Examination. Key elements include a supplemental bar preparation program in 2024 and a full-scale, comprehensive bar preparation program in 2025 and beyond. Both programs provide highly personalized, individual tutoring to graduates to address their unique needs and challenges. Notably, 95.5% of the first-time takers who participated in that tutoring passed the exam. The results underscore the dedication, hard work and collaborative efforts of the Law School's students, faculty and the Office of Career Success staff who worked closely with JD Advising to make the program a success.

### **Liberal Arts & Sciences**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences hosted the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium on Friday, Nov. 22, in the A. Paul Schaap Chemistry Building. This event showcased diverse research across the humanities, STEM and social sciences, highlighting their commitment to intellectual exploration and community impact. Through original research presentations, students shared their insights with the WSU community and public, demonstrating the important work emerging from CLAS.



## Medicine

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine board of directors has appointed **Dr. M. Safwan Badr**, chair of internal medicine, as the third editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*. Dr. Badr, who served as president of the AASM from 2013-14, is chair of the School of Medicine's Department of Internal Medicine. He is also a professor of internal medicine and physiology, a staff physician at the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center, and the chief clinical officer of the Wayne State University Physician Group. *The Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine* is the exclusive source of AASM clinical practice guidelines, position statements and other guidance, as well as peer-reviewed sleep and circadian research, systematic reviews, commentaries, and editorials. As a renowned physician-scientist and research mentor, Dr. Badr has expertise in sleep-disordered breathing, central sleep apnea, and spinal cord injury, and his research publications have been cited more than 31,000 times. Leveraging his experience as an associate editor of the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, *Respirology*, and the *Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine*, Dr. Badr will be responsible for elevating the journal's position as the premier scientific publication for human sleep and circadian science. His five-year term will begin Jan. 1, 2025.

School of Medicine M.D. student **Katherine Sommers** was awarded the 2024 People's Choice Award for her case report on transcranial magnetic resonance and intravenous ketamine therapy in an out-patient setting at the American Psychiatric Association's 2024 Mental Health Services Conference, held Sept. 26-28 in Baltimore. Sommers was the primary author of the poster, "Concurrent transcranial magnetic stimulation and ketamine therapy: a more accessible alternative to electroconvulsive therapy for treatment-resistant depression?" co-authored by her brother, Ronald Sommers, M.D., a psychiatrist in Spokane, Washington. Katherine Sommers is a member of the M.D. Class of 2026, former president of the Senior Citizen Outreach Program student organization, and a student advisor for the Robert R. Frank Student-Run Free Clinic.

## Social Work

**Dr. Megan Hicks**, assistant professor, is collaborating with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Michigan Racial Health Equity Think Tank (MiRHETT) to address health disparities impacting marginalized communities. Facilitated by the Michigan Public Health Institute, MiRHETT brings together experts to develop solutions that tackle social determinants of health (SDOH) like economic stability, education and health care access. Through virtual sessions combining education, coaching and think tank activities, Dr. Hicks and her colleagues are driving systemic changes for health equity across Michigan. As part of Wayne



State's commitment to community health under the Prosperity Agenda, Dr. Hicks bridges research with community work, exchanging knowledge statewide to support urban and Black health outcomes, especially in Detroit.

### **Graduate School**

The Graduate Research Symposium (GRS), the Graduate School's flagship event, returns in February 2025. The GRS typically includes 200 graduate students and postdoctoral scholars who showcase their research as individual poster presentations in a group setting. However, next year's event will feature more public speaking opportunities, with some presenters showcasing their research to a full room of attendees. This shift aligns with WSU's College to Career initiative, preparing graduate students and postdoctoral scholars for future speaking engagements.

### **Honors**

The Irvin D. Reid Honors College held a workshop for students, "How to Apply to Graduate School for a Ph.D. in a STEM Field." The workshop was hosted by **Dr. Elena Past**, professor, Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures, and facilitated by **Dr. Lori Pile**, associate dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The workshop was focused on students interested in pursuing careers in STEM fields that require a Ph.D. These careers include academic, government and industrial research scientists; faculty at community colleges, four-year colleges and medical schools; patent lawyers; science writers; and consultants. The workshop covered multiple aspects of becoming a competitive candidate for Ph.D. programs in STEM. Topics included resume building, how to identify Ph.D. programs and faculty mentors, and what to include in your personal and research statement.

### **University Libraries**

On Oct. 23, the Libraries held their first campuswide Research Day at the David Adamany Undergraduate Library. The event, coordinated in conjunction with Open Access Week, connected students and faculty with campus research resources and expertise. Alongside 12 campus research partners, including Institutional Review Board (IRB), Research Development, SPA, Research Integrity, C&IT, Research Design and Analysis, and more, the event consisted of a Research Resource Fair and a series of lightning talks covering all aspects of the research process at Wayne State, from understanding IRB protocols and effective data management techniques to getting assistance with research analysis or participating as a human subject.

### **Student Success, Support and Engagement**

The [Warriors Vote](#) initiative is a student-centered campaign focused on increasing voter



engagement at Wayne State University. This year, it featured weekly tabling sessions and collaborated with key partners including the Office of Multicultural Student Engagement, fraternity and sorority organizations, the Michigan Secretary of State's Office, and the Campus Vote Project. A highlight was the Secretary of State Mobile Unit's campus visit in October to make voter registration more accessible. Wayne State also hosted the Michigan Student Vote Summit on Sept. 20, promoting voter education statewide. Through Warriors Vote, more than 100 students registered, contributing to Wayne State's strong voting culture. The university achieved a 90% voter registration rate in 2020 and 70% in 2022, both above the national average. On Election Day, more than 220 people — mostly students — voted at the on-campus precinct, led by **Brandon Shamoun**, assistant dean of students, and supported by student poll workers. A \$4,000 grant from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition funded expanded outreach efforts.

### **Department of Athletics**

The NCAA national office recently released the 2024 Division II Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) and Academic Success Rate (ASR) data. For the 2016-17 cohort, WSU's student-athlete Academic Success Rate (ASR) is 80%, a 2% increase from the previous year. In addition, WSU's overall FGR score of 73% tied for second among current GLIAC members.

Wayne State Athletic Department conducted the third annual [Warrior Strides campaign](#), which collected over 700 pairs of new socks to support Alternatives for Girls (AFG), a Detroit-based organization whose mission is to help girls and young women avoid violence, early pregnancy and exploitation. Warrior Strides collected new socks throughout October, which is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The slogan "making strides to end the silence surrounding domestic violence" is a testament to WSU's commitment to supporting community organizations like AFG, and their goal in reducing homelessness and providing support to the girls and young women who need it most.

**Dr. Laurel Whalen**, associate professor, College of Education, Division of Sport Management and Administration, was named the new Faculty Athletics Representative. Dr. Whalen is currently an associate professor of teaching and the program director for the Sport Management and Administration programs; she also serves as the program manager for the Building Healthy Communities program.

### **Division of Development and Alumni Affairs**

As of Nov. 26, Wayne State's fiscal year-to-date fundraising activity is approximately \$3.4 million





ahead of the same time last fiscal year.

We held a successful soft announcement of our upcoming capital campaign at an event at Huntington Tower on Nov. 7. In late January, we will begin the next phase of our campaign readiness work with our deans, in close partnership with the provost. This work will include further fundraising training opportunities. All deans and unit development leaders will be asked to attend a group session in the new year, followed by a series of individualized coaching calls to work through key prospective and current donor relationships for each unit.

Alumni engagement continues through the end of 2024 and into the new year, including the Alumni Holiday Social and Dance Concert, Pharmacy's 100th Anniversary Alumni Celebration, our "Legal Briefs" alumni series, and an Alumni Day at an upcoming Warrior basketball game. New alumni graduating in December will begin receiving invitations to participate in Alumni 101 programs, which aim to help new graduates connect professionally and socially to their Wayne State network. Additionally, alumni in southern California, Arizona and southwest Florida will soon be invited to meet President Espy during an event scheduled in their regions in early 2025. Additional details are available at [alumni.wayne.edu](http://alumni.wayne.edu).

### **Division of Enterprise Planning and Operational Excellence**

The consolidation of desktop services project has been successfully completed, with the final phase of migrations this fall. During the past four years, C&IT has migrated more than 15,000 computers to secure and centralized management and has secured 119 terabytes of data. The project has resulted in an annual savings of over \$1.2M through reduced technology expenditures and has minimized our cybersecurity risk exposure by applying encryption, patch management and reduced overall maintenance costs.

### **Division of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development**

[WSU OPEN](#) has fielded 83 inquiries since launching in late October 2024. A little more than half of these inquiries came from the website, with the remainder split between alumni, faculty and word-of-mouth referrals. External requests and interests are largely for volunteer opportunities and to hire WSU students. Internal inquiries from faculty (10) requested assistance in connecting to for- and non-profit businesses. The majority of inquiries request engagement with the university in multiple ways (boxes are checked for information to start a business, to hire Warriors and to donate, etc.). Customer discovery with these inquiries shows that there is real enthusiasm for a deeper connection, but that many people don't know where to start. The WSU OPEN team is having one-on-one conversations to meet respondents' needs and make



referrals.

One early success took place when the Department of Energy contacted WSU OPEN with an opportunity to participate in the EnergyTech University Prize. This unique competition awards prize money to faculty who support student teams and awards grand prizes to students. After connecting with faculty across campus in College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), Engineering and at the Mike Ilitch School of Business (as well as having the opportunity distributed through the research communications channel), faculty have identified five students to participate.

WSU has a long history of involvement in Midtown's annual [Noel Night event](#) and the Division of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (DEED) leads that effort with the coordination of more than 10 different units across campus. Noel Night is an important community event that brings tens of thousands of visitors to our campus neighborhood and activates several university buildings, including the Welcome Center, Old Main, WDET and the Hilberry Gateway. This year's event took place Saturday, Dec. 7, and included art exhibits, dance performances, planetarium shows, arts and crafts activities and a holiday pop-up marketplace. DEED has also partnered with the Downtown Detroit Partnership to bring eight large winter light installations to campus for the holiday season:

- Enchanted Snowflake (2) Outside of the main entrance of Old Main (off Cass Ave.)
- Nova Arch (1) Fountain Court
- Majestic Star (2) Fountain Court
- Pandora Flake (3) in Keast Commons, in front of Chatsworth Suites student housing

### **Division of Health Affairs**

**Dr. Sonia Hassan**, associate vice president and professor in the Department of Physiology, helped lead the launch of WSU's Maternal-Infant Health collaborative, [SOS Maternity](#), with a community-based event in Detroit in late October. The event included the official launch of the collaborative and included MI Department of Health and Human Services Director Elizabeth Hertel, state elected officials from the Detroit area, hospital and community partners, and more.

The public health executive committee approved three concentrations for master's degrees in public health (as required for accreditation): population health analytics, environmental health and community medicine. The next executive committee session will suggest the two (or potentially three) Ph.D. programs required.



## **Division of Research & Innovation**

On Oct. 2, key WSU researchers met with Google executives and leaders to discuss Wayne State's research focus areas and how Google's commitment to scientific computing can benefit the research community. The Google team highlighted how its secure, high-performance private data network can address demanding research workloads with machine learning, high-performance computing, data analytics, graphics and more. WSU's existing partnership with the company will allow the university to leverage the Google Cloud Platform and Google Professional Services to provide researchers with advanced analytical tools and storage resources for greater flexibility and reduced time to science. A public announcement paired with an intensive training kickoff for faculty will take place early in the year ahead.

With the FY24 fiscal year now closed, DORI tabulated the annual Research Awards, which totaled \$294.3M, a decrease of 16.5% compared to FY2023. Reasons for this decrease included a reduction in clinical trials of \$4.6M at the Karmanos Cancer Institute, the ending of a few large one-time awards, a decrease of \$5.2M in NSF awards. Awards from the NIH were up \$2.9M. The division launched the [weekly Research@Wayne e-newsletter in November](#). The publication highlights our research accomplishments, upcoming grant opportunities or important notices gathered from Lewis-Burke, and upcoming research events needing extra promotion.

On Nov. 15, WSU hosted officials from the [U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Ground Vehicles Systems Center \(GVSC\)](#) to sign an Educational Partnership Agreement. The agreement is intended to spur innovation and inspire the minds of those we educate. The signing of this agreement makes official a relationship that will allow the GVSC to loan and transfer, as appropriate, research equipment, software and data to WSU. It will allow us to have federal laboratory personnel teach and assist in the development of science courses and materials, especially in areas important to the U.S. Army. It will allow our faculty and students to have more involvement in defense and laboratory research projects and provide our students with academic and career advice so that they may consider a variety of options for their futures. The partnership will offer an opportunity to expand and grow our research portfolio and increase opportunities for our students.

## **Division of University Relations**

The winter 2025 magazine will be distributed soon. The publication was refreshed and redesigned by Wayne State University's Office of Marketing and Communications, in collaboration with the Division of Development and Alumni Affairs. The print publication will



reach 65,000 WSU stakeholders and will arrive in mailboxes in mid-December 2024. An electronic version will also be published in mid-December.