

CORNERSTONES

SPRING/SUMMER 2025



THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

FOUNDATION

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The University of Toledo

Dean Wyrick '86

Practice Director
Randstad Engineering



DEREK GROVES, PH.D.

Interim President

The University of Toledo Foundation



ANDRÉ SWINERTON '98

President, 2024-2025

The University of Toledo Alumni Association
Board of Trustees

A New Era for UToledo Alumni Engagement

I am honored to address you for the first time as interim president of The University of Toledo Foundation alongside our Alumni Association Board President for 2024-2025, André Swinerton '98. As I make my return to the Foundation and step into this new role, I do so with a profound respect for the legacy built by those who came before me. We look forward with great optimism for what we will accomplish together in the months ahead.

We are excited to share with you some of the Alumni Association highlights from fiscal year 2025 along with recent celebrations and inspiring alumni stories.

As we look to the future, our purpose remains clear – to strengthen the bonds within our alumni network while advancing the mission of our University. We aim to elevate engagement with innovative approaches like our new virtual engagement officer, increase regional events for alumni and friends, and further levels of support for students through expanded philanthropic opportunities.

Your ongoing generosity continues to shape the UToledo experience by providing enhanced learning opportunities for students, empowering faculty, researchers and clinicians, and fostering lifelong connections among graduates.

We are excited for the journey ahead and look forward to working together to strengthen our connections and embrace this new chapter for The University of Toledo.

With gratitude,

DEREK GROVES, PH.D.

ANDRÉ SWINERTON

In Brief

SPRING/SUMMER 2025



Dr. Thomas Bridgeman, professor and director of the Lake Erie Center shows Aryana Aoavinikoo, a graduate Student in Clinical Psychology, his latest work.



Hundreds gathered for the research celebration on April 2.



The UToledo Grass Carp Strike Team brought a frozen carp for their display.

UToledo Earns Prestigious R1 Classification

The University of Toledo earned the recognition for very high research activity in the latest Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education announced in February 2025.

There are 187 total institutions of higher education with an R1 classification in the nation, and seven total in Ohio including UToledo, which is the only one in the region.

The campus community commemorated the monumental achievement with a research celebration this past April. Faculty and students representing colleges across the University, including artists, astronomers, cancer biologists, ecologists, educators, engineers and historians, showcased their research during the event through poster presentations and interactive table displays.

"At UToledo, we have built strong research programs through the efforts of our faculty and researchers while engaging students throughout the process and creating a pipeline of experienced scientists," said Dr. Constance Schall, interim vice president for research. "This work is not only important to advance knowledge, but university research is relevant and applicable to solving real world challenges. We are proud to be recognized as a research leader."

Recognizing Philanthropic Impact at Annual Donor Celebration

The University of Toledo Foundation hosted its annual Donor Celebration on April 9, 2025. Attendees had the opportunity to engage with faculty and student research through poster presentations and interactive table displays throughout the building, illustrating the tangible impact of donor support.

Interim President Matthew Schroeder provided brief remarks, highlighting the meaningful impact of donor support and expressing gratitude to all in attendance who make progress at UToledo possible.

Donor Celebration is one of the Foundation's favorite moments to express our heartfelt thank-you to the individuals whose generosity drives innovation, scholarships and academic excellence across campus.



An oversized paint-by-number of University Hall offered a fun activity for attendees.



A Cosmetic Science and Formulation Design student walks through her interactive display.



The evening was a time to reconnect, celebrate all we have accomplished and look to the future.

Dr. James Holloway Named 19th President of The University of Toledo



The University of Toledo Board of Trustees has named Dr. James Holloway as the University's 19th president following an extensive national search. The announcement was made during a special board meeting held on May 22.

Dr. Holloway, most recently served as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the

University of New Mexico, before assuming the role on July 15, succeeding Interim President Matt Schroeder.

A native Midwesterner with a national reputation for collaborative, data-driven leadership, Holloway brings decades of experience at both public universities and on nonprofit boards. Since 2019, he has led academic and budget planning across departments at the University of New Mexico.

Prior to that, he spent two decades at the University of Michigan, where he held roles including vice provost for global engagement and

interdisciplinary academic affairs and associate dean of undergraduate education for the College of Engineering.

Throughout his career, Holloway has championed inclusive excellence, expanded research capacity, fostered civic partnerships and invested in the kind of student-focused innovation that strengthens both campuses and communities.

At the University of New Mexico, Holloway has led efforts to boost student retention, deepen faculty support and expand externally funded research.

"I'm excited to return home to the Midwest and serve The University of Toledo, an institution that so clearly lives its values by bringing together research, student opportunity, and public impact," Holloway said. "I look forward to working with the entire Rocket community to deepen relationships with the city and region, to create amazing and joyful student learning experiences, and to build a future for all based on opportunity and discovery."

The presidential search process, launched in late 2024, was led by a Presidential Search Committee representing faculty, students, alumni and community leaders.

UToledo Continues Work on Campus Master Plan

The University of Toledo continues to work on improving our campuses. The most recent changes are helping to create a more inviting campus for our students, staff and visitors.

In early May, demolition began on Academic House, International House and the Sullivan Hall office building. Klumm Brothers are heading the demolition project estimated at \$2 million. It is expected to be completed by the beginning of fall semester, with students returning to greenspace where the buildings are currently located along West Rocket Drive.



An excavator begins the demolition of the exterior of the academic office building Sullivan Hall.

The demolition project this summer is in line with the University's Campus Master Plan, which encompasses construction and renovation proposals aimed at reinvigorating the core of Main Campus around Centennial Mall and investing in both clinical and student spaces on

the Health Science Campus.

Additional investments include a \$3.4 million project to more directly connect Main Campus to UToledo's engineering complex and improve campus safety with the installation of the footbridge spanning over Douglas Road. Work was completed and a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on July 8.

It is exciting to see the continued support and investment in our campuses as we enter a new chapter of growth, improvement and innovation.



A pedestrian crosses the closed section of Douglas Road after the bridge was securely anchored in place.

MULTIPLE-CAMPUS MASTER PLAN



Read more on the exciting improvements in UToledo's Campus Master Plan at utoledo.edu/facilities/master-plan

Alumni Association Awards and Highlights

The University of Toledo Alumni Association had a lot to celebrate in fiscal year 2024. Our community achieved remarkable milestones that reflect the continued growth and engagement of our alumni, friends and supporters.

As we celebrate these accomplishments, we're proud to also recognize the dedication of our volunteers and alumni leaders who exemplify the spirit and values of our institution.

The **Affiliate of the Year, Chapter of the Year and Volunteer of the Year** are recognized yearly during the annual meeting. The affiliate and chapter of the year awards are based on their collaborative efforts. Recipients are selected by the awards committee, comprised of alumni board members and alumni volunteers. The Volunteer of the Year honors a member of the UToledo community making a positive impact by lending their time, talent and support.

A Year in Review



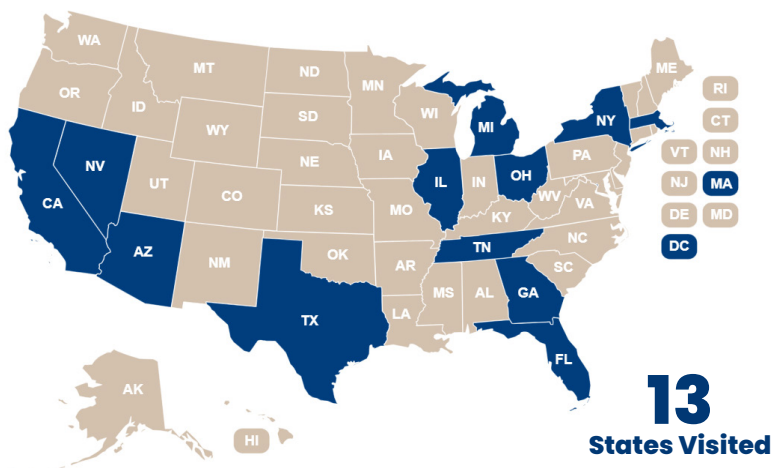
74k+
Awarded in Alumni Scholarships



184
Alumni Events
Hosted



173k+
Alumni



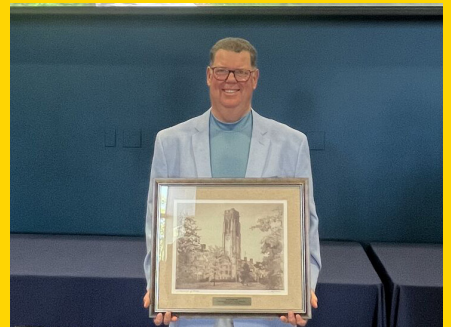
Facts and figures are based on data from fiscal year 2024 running July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.



The College of Engineering Alumni Affiliate was named Affiliate of the Year for their wide range of events, programs and fundraising efforts. The affiliate's initiatives have provided valuable opportunities for members to network, learn and grow professionally, strengthening the overall impact of the University's engineering community.



The Cleveland Chapter has earned the Chapter of the Year award for its exceptional commitment to fostering community, collaboration and growth among its members. Through innovative initiatives and a strong focus on building connections, the Cleveland Chapter has set a high standard for excellence within the UToledo network.



Kevin Szyskowski '85 was named the Alumni Association's 2025 Volunteer of the Year. What started as a way to stay connected to the game day experience quickly expanded as Szyskowski discovered more opportunities to serve the University community.

Keeping the Rocket Spirit Alive Across the Nation

The University of Toledo Alumni Association's primary goal is to keep Rocket alumni connected to their alma mater – wherever they may be. Over the last 12 months, the Association and UToledo Foundation hosted events across the country for UToledo alumni to reconnect with one another along with University faculty, staff, deans and other members of Rocket Nation.

Overcoming Adversity at Rocket Retreat

One of these road trips is the Alumni Association's highly-anticipated annual weekend in Florida, now known as Rocket Retreat. This year's retreat was initially canceled due to a challenging hurricane season. However, feedback from local alumni suggested quite the opposite plan. Our Florida-based graduates were yearning for something to look forward to; a reason to celebrate; and people to celebrate with. So, the Alumni Association retracted its idea to cancel and charted course for Tampa Bay.

Rocket Retreat was comprised of a special dinner boat cruise aboard the StarShip yacht. Highlighting the evening were remarks from Associate Vice President of Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving Billy Pierce '99, '09 and Jennifer Schaefer, associate vice president for development, who spoke about



the strength of the UToledo spirit and the importance of staying connected, especially in trying times.

It was an evening of laughter, stories and renewed bonds – a reminder that no matter the distance or the storm, Rocket pride runs deep.

Reestablishing the Dallas-Fort Worth Alumni Chapter

After a successful football watch party this past fall, it is clear that Rockets in the Dallas-Fort Worth area are itching for connection opportunities with fellow graduates. So, the Alumni Association delivered a full



weekend of fun and fellowship in February. The festivities kicked off at PINSTACK, a modernized bowling alley located in Las Colinas. After several gutter balls and strike celebrations, the group enjoyed video arcade games and plans were already being discussed about forming a new Dallas-Fort Worth Chapter Board.

The following day was comprised of a guided "Booze and Bites" food tour through Uptown Dallas. Guests ate Mediterranean and Thai dishes with drink pairings from two local restaurants. Attendees also received a lesson on the district's fascinating trolley system from engineer Tony.

If you are in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and interested in helping reestablish the alumni chapter, please contact Chris Bils at chris.bils@utoledo.edu.

Annual Phoenix Alumni Chapter Events Bolstered by Alumni Couple's Generosity

Each year, the UToledo Phoenix Alumni Chapter hosts at least one event for local alumni to reconnect. Typically the visit includes dinner with visiting UToledo deans, University leaders, athletics staff or the president's office.

This year, nearly 40 alumni and friends braved the near-record heat as the Reds beat the Guardians on fan appreciation day.

All attendees had a chance to receive a limited-edition Guardians/Reds coaster, ballpark bucks for concessions and UToledo swag.

That same weekend, Rocket alumni Mike '77 and Kathy '78, '84 Hanley hosted UToledo and Medical College of Ohio alumni of all ages to meet UToledo Interim President Matthew Schroeder '98 and Vice President and Director of Athletics, Bryan Blair. Guests heard about the current state of affairs within the University and athletics as well as the strategic vision and goals that the respective leaders of these areas are looking to achieve.



Gene Smith, former athletic director at Ohio State, Arizona State and Eastern Michigan, attended as a surprise guest and co-led a panel discussion with Blair on the current challenges and opportunities in the world of collegiate athletics.

Special thanks to Mike and Kathy Hanley for graciously opening their home to University leadership and alumni from the Phoenix area!

Building Community, Providing Support

Inspiring Recent Alumni Stories

Three recent alumni are turning their passions into purpose, making a meaningful impact on the greater Toledo community. With strong entrepreneurial spirits and a commitment to connection, they are building spaces that inspire and support others.



Matt Bell '24, '25 standing in front of Team Recovery sign.

Rocket Uses Experiences to Create Good, Provide Hope

Matt Bell '24, '25 came to The University of Toledo in 2006 on a full scholarship to play baseball and study international business.

A shoulder injury, a surgery, an opioid prescription and a few short years later, he was homeless and addicted to heroin.

Bell, who dropped out in the middle of his sophomore year, didn't think he'd ever complete a degree. He

didn't even think he'd live to see the opportunity.

Now 38, Bell has been sober for nearly a decade and has used his experience to support others. Serving as founder and chief executive officer of Team Recovery, a Toledo-based addiction treatment center offering detox services, inpatient and outpatient treatment, and recovery housing, Bell found a way to help others while also working to finish the education he started. In May 2025, he earned his master's degree, only one year after finishing his bachelor's degree, both in social work at UToledo.

"It hits me here," Bell said, putting his fist over his heart. "It started there at The University of Toledo. I thought it ended there. Now it really does end there, in a fairytale type of story. I thought dropping out was going to be a regret I had for the rest of my life. The University was very supportive from day one of me trying to come back and laid out the plan and told me exactly what I needed to do."

Bell got the idea for Team Recovery in 2015, while fighting sleeplessness in what would be his final detox experience. The concept was simple — he'd use his own experience to help others overcome addiction. There was value, he reasoned, in what he'd learned and as someone who had been in and out of multiple treatment programs.

The organization found early success in its grassroots outreach efforts, but Bell didn't have the formal educational background expected of someone running a full-fledged treatment center.

"I have an entrepreneurial mind and I love business, but I didn't have the credentials," he said. "That was one thing that a lot of people used against me, used it to minimize my credibility and Team Recovery's credibility." Bell can now support his organization with confidence while continuing to make an incredible impact.

Over the last decade, Team Recovery has served more than 10,000 clients and provided family support to an additional 50,000 individuals. Bell, and members of his team, have collectively educated more than 1 million students.

"All I knew is that I wanted to stop using drugs, stop doing what I was doing," he said. "I just knew I was capable of so much more. But I had no examples to look at — 'I want to be like that person.' I want that to be different for people."

Graduating from UToledo provided Bell yet another example he can hold up to show what's within reach for those who take the right steps and hold hope.



Kayla Kirk '17, '17 stands in front of her workshop space, pottery wheels.

Alumna Returns to Toledo to Cultivate Community, Create Art

Wanting to explore her passion for art in a close, collaborative community, **Kayla Kirk, '17, '17** knew that studying fine art at The University of Toledo would provide her with the experience she needed. Now, less than a decade later, Kirk is bringing that community back a little closer to home by providing a space for others to experience art as she does.

After graduation, she found herself at Detroit's historic Pewabic Pottery as a production potter and educator, until she and her business partner, Ryan Thompson, were approached with an exciting offer. The former owners of Gathered Glassblowing, Adam Goldberg and Mike Stevens, hoped to pass the torch to the pair, allowing Thompson to carry on the glass tradition and Kirk to expand into ceramics. Huron Street Studios quickly came to life and Kirk's vision for her studio, Charmed Ceramics, was within reach.

Kirk brings magic to the mundane, not only through her own work but in her ability to lead students into their own creativity. Providing moments for people to experience and embrace the playful nature of pottery, whether that be through sipping morning coffee out of a

whimsical, handmade mug or getting to experience learning a new skill by taking on the challenge of wheel-throwing. Kirk's vision is to help others find joy in the little moments.

Thrilled to be making and selling her work out of the studio she owns, Kirk has already welcomed dozens of students into the space weekly for a variety of offerings.

"My time at UToledo showed me this was possible," she shared. "When I'm alone in the studio, I find myself looking around in disbelief."

The warm environment Kirk creates in the studio was built on her belief that when you, "find and foster community, that's where the true magic happens." Kayla Kirk is certainly creating her own magic by sharing her passion for pottery with the world.



Isabella, Weik '22

Alumna Inspires with Infectious Love of Toledo

There are some people you meet who bring so much joy and passion to the world, it overflows and naturally causes you to join in their excitement. **Isabella Weik '22** is one of those people. Her infectious love for The University of Toledo sets the standard for Rocket pride.

As a recent alumna, like many Rockets, Weik's UToledo experience helped shape her future success

by illustrating the impact she could make on her peers and the community.

Even with two of her four years falling during the pandemic, Weik was able to find ways to be present and active. She spent time working on campus in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and at the UToledo Recreational Center. In addition, Weik held memberships and leadership positions with Blue Key National Honor Society and Delta Phi Epsilon.

These experiences provided the foundation she needed to start exploring a career path outside of UToledo. To her surprise though, she found herself guided back to her family's wellness organization, The Toledo Mindfulness Institute, where she stepped in as president and chief executive officer in January of 2024.

"Seeing the benefits of mindfulness and the impact it's had on my life, I knew that's what I wanted to bring to others. My ability to show up how I do in the community is directly related to my mindfulness and self-care practice. It was a natural fit to step into this role and continue the amazing work we are doing in the community that I love."

Weik was surrounded by other entrepreneurs in Toledo doing extraordinary things to help the community and that inspired her to make her own impact.

"The University of Toledo is such a special place. I was able to fully embrace who I was there and that is what helped lead me to a position where I can continue to cultivate that for others – which is really amazing! For the community I love to recognize something in me has really meant the world."

READ THE FULL STORIES



toledoalumni.org/news



Rockets Show Their UToledo Love During Day of Giving



The University of Toledo recognizes that our success is built on an incredible community of support. This community includes our alumni, students, faculty, staff, clinicians, researchers, fans and the greater Toledo region. Together we continue to make northwest Ohio and the world a better place to live, work and play.

This spring, we recognized that community for coming together on Feb. 26-27 for our Rocket Forward Day of Giving. Celebrating the eighth-annual campaign, the 36-hour effort generated 3,882 gifts through online donations and live event participation leading to more than \$2.1 million in support. The 2025 campaign finished with a 58% increase in gifts when compared to the previous year. Even in a time when people continue to be extremely intentional about how they spend their time, energy and funds, UToledo witnessed the

dedication of Rocket Nation and our gratitude goes well beyond what we can express in words.

Support from local businesses continued to expand our reach this year. Participating businesses included Bubba's 33, The Casual Pint, Home Slice Pizza, Table Forty4, Jake's Saloon, Jed's (North Holland Sylvania Rd.), Rooster's, UToledo Health Four Seasons Bistro and Jupmode. Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Jim White Toyota, Medical Mutual and Paramount, and the city of Toledo Department of Utilities also served as community partners by making outright donations on behalf of their business and by encouraging patrons to join the campaign.

"As a result of the incredible support received, we not only reached — but exceeded — our goals. Rocket Forward Day of Giving helps ensure that students, faculty, staff and programs continue to thrive at UToledo. Every gift matters and each donation fuels the groundbreaking research, transformative learning experiences and strong networks that UToledo offers," UToledo Interim President Matt Schroeder said. "Thank you

for sharing your love for UToledo and helping us shape a brighter future for our University and our community."

This year, 126 advocates generated 270 gifts, for a total of \$29,444, using their unique participation links. Donors were able to support areas across our campuses including scholarships, athletics and educational programs, research, healthcare and community services. This included 66 match and challenge gifts where supporters leveraged their gifts to encourage others to give back through dollar-for-dollar matches or donor goals to unlock extra funding.

This campaign was just another example of the power that collaboration and innovation have on all we do. The University of Toledo would not be here today without our community standing with us and we are proud to be part of Toledo and Rocket Nation.

WATCH THE THANK YOU VIDEO



Scan or visit give.utoledo.edu to see the campaign results and watch our thank you video.



Embracing Innovation to Increase Engagement

In an exciting, new partnership, The University of Toledo Foundation has connected with Givzey, a Boston-based digital fundraising and engagement company, to bring added innovation and technology to the Foundation's engagement strategy. As the first nonprofit to utilize these tools in the entire state of Ohio, this partnership aligns the Foundation with The University of Toledo's belief in innovation, effectiveness and advancing research.

In 2024, Givzey introduced the AI Research and Development Design Lab, Version2.ai. Version2 looks to build the world's most experienced fundraising and engagement officer using autonomous Artificial Intelligence (AI) so organizations can add trusted fundraising capacity to programs of any size.

Introducing Doug

The University of Toledo Foundation introduced their first virtual engagement officer, Doug Reynolds in April. Doug, powered by artificial intelligence, is the first of his kind. Doug has been developed to help organizations like The University of Toledo and the UToledo Foundation

accelerate their engagement efforts in new and unique ways.

Doug will interact with and provide touchpoints to alumni, donors and community members by sharing information on events, engagement opportunities and other areas of the University. Doug is an example of UToledo's pioneering leadership in AI for social good, supporting an innovation that will empower nonprofits worldwide to achieve their life-changing missions.

Building Success and Moving UToledo Forward

The University of Toledo Foundation's mission is to help secure the future of the University through engagement, philanthropy and prudent asset management. Autonomous Fundraising created Virtual Engagement Officers, using AI and other tools to personally connect with supporters and constituents, helping the Foundation reach more individuals and maintain stronger connections to the University.

"We are honored to be one of the first higher education partners and the first collaborator in the state to introduce this new technology

to Rocket Nation," said Brittanie Kuhr, executive director for main campus development. "As we continue to grow and move forward, it is the Foundation's responsibility to support not only our campus community but also alumni and friends by continuing to engage and connect with them in new ways."

Virtual engagement officers have brought great success to their partners, adding trusted fundraising capacity to their operations, allowing organizations to bring a personal touch back to constituents who were previously reached only by direct mail and marketing campaigns.

The University of Toledo Foundation is thrilled to be leading the way, finding new approaches to meet alumni, friends and supporters where they are with exciting, groundbreaking solutions that build connection and community.

WANT TO "MEET" DOUG?



Scan or visit
utoledofoundation.ai to
join Doug's mailing list.

FORGING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE FUTURE



Cenovus Energy Provides Transformative Gift to Support Students at UToledo

At The University of Toledo, we collaborate with organizations who align with our values and strive to strengthen our future workforce. This is why we are excited to announce a brand-new partnership between UToledo and Cenovus Energy. Cenovus has committed \$1 million to support the University, student scholarships and impactful programs.

Cenovus is an integrated energy company committed to maximizing value by developing assets in a safe, responsible and cost-efficient manner, and is the perfect partner to join forces with UToledo's College of Engineering and College of Natural Science and Mathematics. Their mission to energize the world to make people's lives better is one that UToledo can stand behind as it mirrors our own commitment to improving the human condition.

As a special acknowledgment of their generosity, the High Bay Atrium, a shared programming and event space in the North Engineering complex, was named the Cenovus Energy Hub. A special ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on April 17, 2025 unveiling the newly named space.

The collaboration provides Cenovus benefits through the College of Engineering's Corporate Partners Program, like engaging with college leadership and taking part in events like the Senior Design Expo helping them recruit well-rounded, skilled leaders for their workforce, while students benefit from impactful engagement opportunities and events with current Cenovus experts.

Supporting the UToledo Student Experience

Part of the contribution will directly support student scholarships. The Cenovus Energy STEM Student Scholarship Program will provide



From left to right: Marc Seigar, Dean of UToledo College of Natural Science and Mathematics; Heidi Hurst, Vice President, Toledo Refinery, Cenovus; Helashika Wijemanne, UToledo Chemical Engineering student; Mohammad Elahinia, Dean of UToledo College of Engineering; Eric Zimpfer, Head of Downstream, Cenovus; Matt Schroeder, former UToledo Interim President

support for high-performing students, ensuring Rockets are able to complete their programs and enter the workforce without being limited by financial barriers.

Cenovus has also agreed to help bolster programming and networking opportunities with support for speaker fees, space enhancements, equipment, software and other needs that will enhance the student experience. Programming will include hands-on learning and discussions focused on experimenting, designing, prototyping and idea sharing through workshops, experienced guidance and engagement with Cenovus Energy's industry leaders.

Additionally, access will be provided to the Cenovus Energy Professional Headshot Booth offering consistent, high-quality professional headshots at no cost to UToledo Rockets, helping them prepare for their future careers. The organization has taken this one step further by creating the Cenovus Energy STEM Student Organization Grant Program, which will assist

student groups at both the College of Engineering and College of Natural Science and Mathematics with access to additional funds for programming, service and research projects, and conference attendance.

The University of Toledo's success is built, in part, on the strength of our collaboration. Partnerships with our community, corporate partners and supporters help to establish more opportunities for our students, faculty, staff, and ultimately the entire region. We are grateful to be able to connect and build relationships with trusted organizations, like Cenovus Energy, that help create a stronger, more successful future for northwest Ohio and beyond.

BECOME A CORPORATE PARTNER



Looking for ways to make an impact? Work with UToledo to reach your company's workforce, research and community engagement goals.



Welcoming the Next Class of Rocket Alumni

UToledo conferred more than 2,100 degrees and graduate certificates throughout its 2025 spring commencement ceremonies, including 183 doctoral, 426 master's, 1,418 bachelor's and 78 associate's degrees.

The College of Law will recognize an additional 86 candidates for degrees during a separate ceremony, and the College of Medicine and Life Sciences recognized their 221 graduate and medical students on May 16.

Amongst the recent graduating class was **Stacey Alphonse**, who received her bachelor's degree in political science and criminology from Florida State University and came to The University of Toledo to earn her juris doctor.

"What attracted me to UToledo was the tight-knit community," Alphonse said. "I wanted to experience that type of community once in my life. UToledo also gave me the opportunity to pursue a legal career that didn't strain my pockets. The out-of-state fee was nothing compared to what other states

were charging, and some of the scholarships I was able to receive were generous."

She served as president of the Student Bar Association, was co-captain of the Mock Trial Team, an articles editor for the University of Toledo Law Review, and previously served as vice president of the Mindful Advocates Association and treasurer of the Black Law Student Association.

"One of my greatest successes at UToledo law was becoming the first Black woman elected as Student Bar Association president," Alphonse said. "This means a lot to me because this achievement is less about me and more about paving the way and encouraging other people who look like me to continue forward."

Joining the alumni ranks alongside Alphonse is **Kyle Hollar**, a former political science major who took advantage of UToledo's GEM program to pursue nursing and qualify for the registered nurse national council licensure exam.

Hollar said he plans to continue

▶ COMMENCEMENT RECAP



Visit youtu.be/i_qI_lwkiXA to watch the joy, smiles and proud moments during UToledo's 2025 spring commencement.

working at The University of Toledo Medical Center after graduation.

"I was first hired as a medical assistant in UTMC's Care Clinic three years ago," Hollar said. "Ultimately, I want to keep working at UTMC. I love the Intermediate Care Unit I work on now and I really enjoy the nurses and staff I work with every day."

Hollar said he is thankful for the opportunities UToledo has given him in his education and career.

"The most memorable thing for me about UToledo is getting to go through all the chaos of nursing school with the best cohort I could have ever asked for. I'm so thankful for every single one of them and I know I have made some true friends for life," he said. "Nursing school is hard, but nursing is the most rewarding and fulfilling career. I can't see myself doing anything else."



All four selfie-taking Rockets graduated with bachelor of science in nursing degrees.



All May 2025 graduates receive a complimentary one-year membership to the Alumni Association.



Special thanks to all of the family and friends who support our Rockets throughout their college experience.



ABOUT US

We're here to help you make a difference.

Since 1872, The University of Toledo has been empowering and preparing driven individuals to make an impact on the world. The University of Toledo Foundation and The University of Toledo Alumni Association are committed to supporting the global Rocket alumni network and ensuring the University's future through prudent asset management and philanthropy.

We provide financial and strategic support for The University of Toledo to give our students the power to do more than they've ever imagined.



ABOUT CORNERSTONES

Your support and generosity provides UToledo students, educators, researchers and caregivers the power to do even more than they've ever imagined.

As stewards of that generosity, **Cornerstones** is how we demonstrate the returns on the investments made in us by stakeholders in the state of Ohio and beyond — including parents, taxpayers and neighbors in surrounding communities.

In addition to this twice yearly publication, we share stories each day about how your support is empowering Rockets to enact change as the coming generation of leaders, critical thinkers and problem solvers. Read more at:

utfoundation.org | toledoalumni.org



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Upcoming Events

Sept. 21-28 Rocket Run Virtual 5K

Complete your 5K walk, run or jog at your convenience between Sept. 21-28 from any location – inside on a treadmill, outside around the neighborhood or somewhere else you enjoy visiting!

Register at tol-edo.org/virtual5k



Celebrate Homecoming Weekend With Us, Sept. 26-27

Homecoming is one of the best times to return to The University of Toledo. In addition to traditional events like the Annual Edward C. and Helen G. Schmakiel parade and UToledo Rockets football game, the UToledo Foundation and Alumni Association host a number of events for alumni and donors to enjoy.

As it becomes available, information will be added to: toledoalumni.org/events/homecoming