The mission of Northern Kentucky University is to deliver innovative, student-centered education and engage in impactful scholarly and creative endeavors. Our graduates are empowered to have fulfilling careers and meaningful lives, while contributing to the overall vitality of our region.

The university proudly announced the launch of Further, Faster: The Campaign for NKU in May 2019. Further, Faster is more than just a campaign slogan. It reflects our promise to elevate our university, our students and our region further and faster through educational, economic and civic pursuits.

Through our strategic plan, Success by Design, we remain focused on the three pillars that we believe are critical for our students’ overall success—access, completion, and career and community engagement. One goal of the Further, Faster campaign is to grow the NKU Foundation endowment and ensure the success of our students through these strategic pillars, now and into the future.
STUDENT IMPACT: JARETT LOPEZ
2019-2020 FOUNDATION STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNER

When speaking to 2020 graduate Jarett Lopez, you cannot help but be impressed. Bright, well-spoken and likable, his intelligence and confidence are striking. Jarett graduated from NKU this past May with a bachelor’s in political science and a minor in history. During his four years on campus, Jarett seized every opportunity to grow as a person, give back to the university and impact local communities.

Jarett’s academic achievements earned him a full-tuition scholarship, opening the door to a remarkable undergraduate experience. After adjusting to life on campus, Jarett began seeking opportunities to immerse himself in what the university had to offer. He started by getting involved with the Office of LGBTQ Programs and Services, a choice he claims had the biggest impact on his college career. “The LGBTQ office led to my persistence as a student, deepened my involvement in campus life and gave me the chance to better the community,” Jarett says.

Jarett’s involvement with the LGBTQ office ignited a spark for engagement; he began exploring new learning and service opportunities each semester. Throughout his four years on campus, Jarett served as secretary of NKU’s Model United Nations, became a member of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity and held several offices through the Student Government Association, including chair of Academic Affairs, student body president and student regent. These roles allowed Jarett to create change on campus by advocating for the student experience. Jarett also had an influence off campus, participating in the Future Leaders Internship Program in Frankfort and working with the Fairness Campaign to pass a city ordinance in Highland Heights that protects members of the LGBTQ community from discrimination.

Through the freedom provided by his scholarship, Jarett was also able to experience one of the most valuable aspects of his education: faculty-assisted research in his field of study. Working on research programs alongside respected faculty members, Jarett’s work was published twice, and he was able to present his research at two academic conferences. “More than just getting an education in the classroom, I was able to delve into my field and do hands-on research alongside faculty. This made a huge difference in expanding my learning and enriching my overall experience,” he says.

Today, Jarett uses his NKU degree and experiences to pursue his passion for advocacy, working to advance LGBTQ rights in the Commonwealth and progressing politics in his hometown. As for his intentions to stay involved with NKU, Jarett plans to work alongside Dr. Bonnie Meyer in building an LGBTQ alumni association and to serve as a mentor to LGBTQ students. He also plans to remain involved with Sigma Phi Epsilon’s alumni volunteer group.

Jarett understands how powerful private support and engagement is for universities. “Every dollar you invest in NKU and our students, you receive back tenfold. An investment in student scholarships is an investment in the economy and local communities, ensuring we maintain an educated and engaged population,” he says. Jarrett believes graduates who were once scholarship recipients will circle back to become donors themselves. “Donors are not just investing in students for the short term. They are investing in NKU and our region well into the future.”
DONOR IMPACT: MRS. ELLEN RIEVESCHL

Mrs. Ellen Rieveschl has a philanthropic spirit. It is one of the many things she and her late husband, Dr. George Rieveschl, had in common. George, a chemist, loved all things science and art which, coincidentally, are also Mrs. Rieveschl’s greatest passions. This laid the foundation for what she affectionately calls a “very blessed” marriage and a partnership that would make a lasting and widespread impact.

The Rieveschls began their relationship with NKU through their friendship with former president Jim Votruba and his wife, Rachel. “When Jim took us on a tour of the university, we were immediately impressed by what we saw and the potential of what we saw,” Mrs. Rieveschl says. “As time passed and we learned more, it became clear to us that NKU was a place where our investment would make a big impact and give us the chance to help people. That’s really what philanthropy is all about.”

At that time, the COI was nothing more than a concept. When the idea was presented to the Rieveschls, they immediately saw its potential. “We recognized the importance of informatics in the 21st century,” Mrs. Rieveschl recalls, “and we knew there was nothing else like it in the region—a college focused directly on addressing those cutting-edge subjects.” They saw an investment in the COI as a way to make a significant impact by moving NKU forward and opening new doors to students interested in pursuing this field. “A great idea can’t progress until you provide the support to make it a reality,” Mrs. Rieveschl says.

Thanks to the Rieveschls’ vision and generosity, the COI continues to draw attention. Their support played an integral role in the creation of the George and Ellen Rieveschl Digitiorium as well as the new video mural in Griffin Hall Commons. Mrs. Rieveschl serves as a special advisor to the dean and uses her time and experience to help position the college for continued growth and opportunity. “The COI should always be a catalyst for innovation, creating excitement and interest and pushing NKU forward,” Mrs. Rieveschl says.

Sadly, Dr. George Rieveschl passed away before he could see their contributions to the COI come to fruition. “I know he’d be beyond thrilled with what has been accomplished,” Mrs. Rieveschl muses. She hopes that the Rieveschls’ legacy at NKU shows that if you believe in something, you can make a difference. “I hope we are remembered as people who saw opportunities to help grow the university and seized those opportunities. What better thing is there than to be able to help other human beings find their career and their path in life? Students are the people who will shape the world.”
Scholarships pave the way for students seeking a college education. They provide the vital assistance necessary for an innovative educational experience, engagement within the campus and community and the resources needed to reach graduation.

One of the scholarships that NKU is most proud to offer is the Alumni Legacy Scholarship. Founded more than 20 years ago by NKU’s Alumni Association, this scholarship created an opportunity for family members of NKU graduates to be recognized. It established a collective way for supporters to advance the student experience and contribute to the lives of future alumni. “This scholarship enables our Alumni Association to advance NKU’s strategic pillars while supporting the students who are our legacy. This endowment serves as a bridge for future generations of graduates,” says Maria Reynolds (’87, ’18), Alumni Association president. Like so many others, this scholarship would not be possible without the initiative and dedication of our alumni and friends who see the long-lasting value of the endowment.

The intent behind the scholarship is well illustrated by a current recipient, Elise Bezold, who is a junior chemistry student. “It means so much that the Alumni Association initiated a way to support legacy students. It truly shows how important NKU is to its alumni family and how their time here influenced them in such a profound way as to want to give back and provide others the same experience.” Elise’s parents and siblings are all graduates of NKU. Elise noted that their education and experience as students played a significant role in her decision to attend.

The scholarship is also meant to perpetuate a legacy of giving. For Elise that holds true. “Receiving this scholarship has inspired me to give back to the university once I graduate. It helped me realize the importance of supporting and ensuring that future students are set up for success,” she says. Alumni, community members and friends of the university continue to invest in the Alumni Legacy Scholarship, ensuring its longevity and impact for generations to come.