

MOUNT UNION

MOUNT UNION MAGAZINE | [MOUNTUNION.EDU/MAGAZINE](https://mountunion.edu/magazine) | #MOUNTUNION

WINTER
2025



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW MOUNT UNION IS ON
THE FRONTIER OF AI IN HIGHER EDUCATION.



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FIRST DAY
OF
SCHOOL
UMU 2024

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#BeExceptional

The mission of the University of Mount Union is to prepare students for fulfilling lives, meaningful work, and responsible citizenship.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



On the following pages, you'll have an opportunity to learn more about how the University of Mount Union is on the cutting edge of artificial intelligence (AI) education (see p. 12). With two new undergraduate minors in the field, the institution is committed to developing ethical and responsible AI leaders while also using this emerging technology in its administrative and academic functions with integrity.

Admittedly, public opinion on AI usage in higher education is mixed, with many seeing the potential benefits of the technology – personalized learning and streamlined administration – while others share significant ethical concerns related to academic dishonesty and student overreliance. No matter on which side of the argument one may stand, we can likely all agree on one thing – AI is a fact of life, and it's here to stay.

AI is rapidly transforming higher education, and its technologies are being integrated into university life. From adaptive learning platforms that customize content to each student's pace of understanding to the automation of time-consuming routine administrative tasks, AI can result in more personalized learning, increased efficiency, and enhanced nimbleness. At an institution like Mount Union, AI can be a game-changer, and we are committed to exploring this technology in a way that allows us to reap the benefits while staying on the right side of AI ethics.

To that end, a group of faculty and staff joined forces to research, discuss, and reflect on what should guide our use of AI across academic and operational

contexts. The result of this work was the development of Mount Union's AI Guiding Principles, which are detailed to the right. The purpose of these principles is to outline our commitment to responsible, ethical, and beneficial AI development and deployment, ensuring that our AI systems align with our mission and values and contribute positively to society.

Our Guiding Principles will lead our institution as we innovate with this emerging tool. Ethics and the willingness to evolve as AI evolves will drive our actions as we further infuse this technology on campus, and we will focus on using it wisely – not to do our work but to enhance it. At Mount Union, AI isn't a replacement for people but a way to make our people more efficient, and human judgment remains critical to the process. And, as our institutional commitment to data security efforts and privacy continues, we need to apply these same principles to the AI environment to protect the institution and our community.

By addressing these challenges, I wholeheartedly believe that AI can be a valuable tool at Mount Union and in higher education in general, making us more efficient, inclusive, and accessible. When used thoughtfully, AI has the potential to transform the learning experience while upholding the values of trust and fairness that are central to educational institutions like ours.

Sincerely,

Gregory L. King '89
President

MOUNT UNION'S AI GUIDING PRINCIPLES

MAKE ETHICAL CHOICES.

We will ensure integrity is the highest priority. We will address bias, fairness, privacy, transparency, and accountability in all AI-related decisions.

LEVERAGE AI TO EMPOWER INSTITUTIONAL SUCCESS.

We will embrace AI's potential to enhance our capabilities, stimulate innovation, and drive operational efficiency.

KEEP "HUMANS IN THE LOOP."

We will maintain the perspective that AI cannot substitute for human judgment. Human judgment should never be replaced by AI.

RESPOND TO CONTINUOUS CHANGE.

We will balance careful consideration, agility, and urgency to respond to continuous change.

SAFEGUARD CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

We will protect confidential information through security measures. We will follow data privacy regulations and strive to protect UMU faculty, staff, and student data.



NCAA AWARD WINNERS

MOUNT UNION STUDENT-ATHLETES HONORED AT THE NCAA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

During January's NCAA Annual Conference, Mount Union women's track and field graduate Madison Miles '24, M '26 was honored as one of nine 2024 NCAA Woman of the Year Award finalists, and softball team member Emily Denney '26 was named a top-five finalist for the NCAA Division III LGBTQ Student-Athlete of the Year Award.

The Woman of the Year Award recognizes female student-athletes who have completed their undergraduate studies and distinguished themselves in their community – in athletics and in academics – throughout their college careers.

Miles was an undergraduate major in exercise science and is a current graduate student in the University's physician assistant studies program. On the track, she has earned multiple U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Association All-American honors and has won multiple conference championships in the 400 meters and various relay events, while setting a national record and several school records in relay events. She has served on the International Education Committee and as president, vice president, and social media chair of Mount Union's chapter of Active Minds, an organization dedicated to promoting mental health.

Academically, Miles graduated magna cum laude and earned a pair of College Sports Communicators All-District honors

in addition to multiple USTFCCCA All-Academic honors and Academic All-Ohio Athletic Conference (OAC) recognitions. She has participated in Case Western Reserve's Cancer-focused Summer Undergraduate Research program and volunteered at a local domestic violence shelter.

The LGBTQ Student-Athlete of the Year Award honors the academic achievements, athletics excellence, and service/leadership of LGBTQ student-athletes in Division III.

Denney, a history major with minors in religious studies and peacebuilding and social justice, is a two-year starter at third base for the Purple Raiders. She has helped lead Mount Union to two OAC Regular Season Championships, an OAC Tournament Championship, and two NCAA Regional Championship appearances – the best finish in program history. She was named to the 2024 NCAA Regional All-Tournament Team. Denney has a career batting average of .320 with career totals of 11 runs batted in and five doubles. Off the field, she has been named to the OAC Academic Team and the College Sports Communicators Academic All-District® Team.

On campus, Denney has participated in the Peacebuilding Society, Pre-Law Society, SAGE, Mental Wealth Champs, and Residence Life Staff.

NURSING, PA GRADUATES ACHIEVE 100% PASS RATES ON NATIONAL EXAMS



BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Mount Union's Department of Nursing is proud to announce that its entire Class of May 2024 nursing graduates – 19 in total – passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) on the first attempt. This bests the national baccalaureate NCLEX pass rate of 94% for 2024 and 90% for 2023, according to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

Mount Union's Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program boasts a 98% overall first-time pass rate on the NCLEX since its program's inception. The University also offers a second-degree accelerated BSN program and a Master of Science in Nursing degree program.



MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

The August 2024 graduates of the University's Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (PA) Program earned an impressive 100% pass rate on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination® (PANCE).

All 38 students who graduated from the program's most recent cohort passed the PANCE on their first attempt. Mount Union's impressive 100% pass rate tops the five-year national first-time test taker average of 93%, as reported by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

MOUNT UNION ACKNOWLEDGED BY NUMEROUS RANKINGS BODIES

MONEY

Mount Union is pleased to be ranked by Money as one of the top 10 institutions in Ohio as part of a recent study published by the outlet. The University was ninth among the 24 Ohio colleges and universities listed in the ranking that included 745 of the country's top colleges. Money's methodology included graduation rates, cost of attendance, financial aid, alumni salaries, and more.

TRANSFER HONOR ROLL

For the second year in a row and fourth overall, Mount Union has been named to the 2024 Transfer Honor Roll by the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society for its dynamic pathways to support transfer students. The University was one of only eight Ohio institutions and 244 across the country selected for this honor.

NICHE

As part of Niche's 2025 Best Colleges in America rankings, Mount Union was ranked in the Top 5% of the country for Best College Athletics, the Top 10% of the country for Best College Campuses, and the Top 15% of the country for Best College Dorms, Best College Food, and Colleges with the Best Student Life. Along with its national rankings, the University was prominently cited in the state of Ohio as well, ranking in the Top 10 for Best College Athletics, Best College Campuses, Colleges with the Best Student Life, Best College Food, Best Greek Life Colleges, and Best College Dorms.

U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT

Further establishing its status as a leading institution for students today, Mount Union climbed eight spots to 24th in U.S. News and World Report's Best Regional Universities Rankings. The University also rose to ninth for Best Value Universities in the Midwest and second among all institutions in Ohio. Mount Union was also once again ranked as a Top Performer in Social Mobility, further illustrating its commitment to an education accessible to all students. A mainstay in the U.S. News and World Report rankings, the University has been recognized by the national affiliate for 34 consecutive years.

GUIDE TO GREEN COLLEGES

Continuing its dedication toward sustainable practices, Mount Union was once again named to The Princeton Review's Guide to Green Colleges for 2025. Mount Union is one of 511 institutions across the world to receive this recognition.



AXO AWARDED NATIONAL COUNCIL TROPHY

Mount Union's Alpha Eta chapter of Alpha Chi Omega sorority was one of three chapters in the United States awarded the National Council Trophy at the organization's National Convention. Alpha Eta earned the award for the third time in its history (1968 and 1972).

According to the organization, the National Council Trophy is presented annually to chapters with the highest cumulative score across a number of categories, including member retention, chapter growth, real strong women experience, member wellness, chapter operations, diversity and inclusion, chapter innovation, and chapter progress.



FONTGALLAND '25 WINS COMPETITION

Mount Union senior Glauco Filho Fontgalland '25 took home first place in the Student Hardware Competition, which is part of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Electromagnetic Compatibility. This competition involves constructing an antenna to locate radio transmitters within an hour time limit. He was the only solo competitor and was up against teams of students from other schools at the graduate level.

As a result of his win, he earned \$2,000 and an invitation to speak at NASA's Glenn Research Center about the impact that his innovation in antenna design could have.



2024 HALL OF FAME

INDUCTEES AND AWARD WINNER



The 2024 Mount Union M Club Hall of Fame Class and the Duke Barret Award of Excellence winner were recognized Friday, October 18 at the Giese Center for Performing Arts and announced at halftime of the football game against Heidelberg on Saturday, October 19 at Kehres Stadium.

The eight-person Hall of Fame class includes Rob Adamson '03 (football), Derek Blanchard '08 (football), Larry Kinnard, Jr. '10 (football), Nate Kmic '09 (football), Matthew Kostelnik '08 (football), Greg Micheli '09 (football), Eric Safran '08 (football), and Marcell Stephens '87 (track and field).

In addition, the Duke Barret Award of Excellence was given to Jim Jones '91 (cross country and track and field).

MOUNT UNION ONE OF THREE INSTITUTIONS NATIONWIDE RECOGNIZED FOR INNOVATIVE DIGITAL LEARNING

Mount Union is proud to be one of three institutions across the United States to earn the inaugural Quality in Course Sharing (QICS) recognition from Quality Matters for its efforts in digital learning innovation.

According to a release from Quality Matters, which calls itself “the global organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments,” the QICS recognition resulted from the institution’s commitment to offering high-quality shared online courses that meet rigorous academic and student support standards. The Community College of Baltimore County and Western Texas College also earned this honor alongside Mount Union.

Mount Union has a history of achievements in digital learning from Quality Matters, with seven courses earning national certification for academic quality from the organization. Learn more about Quality Matters at qualitymatters.org.



MOUNT UNION’S ONLINE MBA EARNS ACBSP ACCREDITATION

Mount Union’s online Master of Business Administration (MBA) program has earned accreditation from The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). This accreditation complements existing ACBSP-accredited programs in the School of Business, including accounting, finance, human resource management, management, and marketing. The University earned its initial ACBSP accreditation in 2018 with a 10-year term of accreditation.

“Accreditation serves as an independent validation of the program’s academic and operational excellence, ensuring it meets elevated quality standards in curriculum, faculty qualifications, and student outcomes,” said Dr. Wendy Ziems-Mueller, director of Mount Union’s MBA program. “Our MBA students will have added value with career opportunities, resources, and networking.”

Mount Union’s online MBA program was launched in 2021 and features concentrations in business analytics, leadership and innovation, and strategic healthcare administration.

MOUNT UNION’S ONLINE M.ED. #1 IN OHIO, TOP PRIVATE INSTITUTION PROGRAM IN U.S.

Recognized for its continued excellence and strength, the University’s online Master of Education (M.Ed) program has been named the best online education program in Ohio by U.S. News and World Report for the second year in a row. Mount Union’s program was also ranked as the top private institution in the nation for online education programs, a title it shared in 2024.

The program climbed 12 spots from 2024 to become tied for the 15th-best online education program in the country out of the 313 programs listed nationwide. In addition, the program is tied for first in the nation in faculty training and credentials and student engagement.

Mount Union’s M.Ed. has been offered in a fully online capacity since 2018. Its four concentrations in athletic coaching, instructional design and technology, educational leadership, and Ohio principal licensure offer a versatile experience tailored to the goals of leaders in education at all levels. The program also launched a certificate for its Ohio principal licensure concentration in January 2025.

SHATTERING RECORDS



The University of Mount Union campus was buzzing this fall as the institution officially welcomed its newest class. It was a historic moment for both the students and Mount Union, as the incoming class brought a record-setting 743 students to the University.

This incredible group of students is also Mount Union's most diverse class ever, as more than 25% of the incoming class is comprised of students of color. The Class of 2028 also features a unique international footprint with students from five different countries - Japan, Italy, Peru, Germany, and Georgia.

At a time when enrollment woes are plaguing colleges and universities nationwide, a challenge from which Mount Union has not been immune in recent years, this record-breaking class is especially gratifying. Although the institution can't point to a singular specific driver of this enrollment growth, there are several factors that the institution believes contributed to this year's exceptional success.



“Women’s wrestling strongly impacted my decision to attend Mount Union. Wrestling is such a great sport because it’s more than a sport, it’s a culture and lifestyle that gives you so many tools for life. I liked that Mount Union was a Division III school because being a student-athlete can be challenging, so knowing that school would be prioritized was nice.”

Ilani Jones-Wallace '28
Biology Major
Salem, OH



IN-DEMAND PROGRAMS THAT ATTRACT STUDENTS

For the past decade, Mount Union has focused on exploring new and dynamic academic programs and strengthening existing programs – undergraduate, graduate, athletic, and co-curricular – to meet the needs of today’s students. During this time, the University has welcomed students into new graduate programs and undergraduate fields such as engineering, nursing, and data science while expanding student involvement opportunities to include men’s volleyball, esports, and competitive cheer and dance.

This fall, the institution launched women’s wrestling and a Master of Science in Nursing program, which welcomed more than 20 students combined. In addition, existing academic programs made a significant impact on this year’s record-breaking enrollment, with nursing, exercise science, management, and sport business bringing in more than one-third of the new class.

“Our recent efforts to modernize the curriculum have definitely impacted our enrollment, and I feel fortunate to work alongside faculty, coaches, and administrators who are continually seeking programmatic growth and innovation,” said Caitlin (Carroll ’07) Clark, vice president for enrollment services. “Staying in tune with what today’s students want in terms of a major, athletics, and extracurricular activities will continue to be critical to our success in enrollment as it often enables us to attract students who wouldn’t otherwise consider Mount Union as an option.”



\$1.2

MILLION IN ADDITIONAL
INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING
ALLOCATED FOR
FINANCIAL AID

20%

INCREASE IN CAMPUS
VISITS FOLLOWING THE
LAUNCH OF THE
CAMPUS VISIT AWARD

FROM DELAYS TO DEPOSITS

In the fall of 2023, the University announced that it was investing an additional \$1.2 million in institutional financial aid, highlighting its commitment to making a Mount Union experience accessible to students of all backgrounds. This investment increased the average of institutional grants and scholarships awarded to first-year students from \$26,701 to \$29,201.

Despite this investment, Mount Union's financial aid awarding process, and that of colleges and universities nationwide, was compromised by significant delays in the availability of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), resulting from the U.S. Department of Education's revision to the FAFSA filing form. These delays pushed back financial aid offers by months, but the University's financial aid team was quickly able to turn what could have been a significant negative into an undoubtable positive.

"While we awaited the opening of the FAFSA, our financial aid team jumped into action, helping families navigate this process through consistent and clear communication and an individualized approach to each family's unique needs," said Clark. "Once schools started receiving FAFSA data, it would be an understatement to say that our team responded quickly. We were one of the first institutions to get aid offers into families' hands, and I believe this may have helped bolster our enrollment numbers for the year."

In addition, the University also launched a new \$1,000 renewable (for four years) Campus Visit Award, given to any student who schedules and attends a campus visit or admission event and subsequently enrolls at Mount Union. According to Clark, campus visits were up 20% last year as a result. The University also launched a crowdfunding campaign – Week of Welcome – to provide Student Emergency Fund support for this year's large entering class (see the inside back cover to learn more).



“The Go-to-Raiders program impacted my decision to come to Mount because it was a one-on-one personal experience that I was not getting from other universities and made me feel comfortable and at home at Mount before I was even on campus.”

Anthony Richards '28
Sport Business Major
Sharon, PA

PERSONALIZED CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

While attracting new students is essential, creating a welcoming, supportive, and collaborative environment that motivates students to stay is equally important. These efforts begin very early in the process – specifically upon a prospective student’s payment of an enrollment deposit – and are focused on controlling what the admission world refers to as “melt,” defined as the unexpected loss of students who paid a deposit to a college or university but don’t ultimately enroll.

Recently, the University launched a personalized retention effort – Go-to-Raiders – that pairs each incoming student with a campus mentor who serves as a personal guide throughout the student’s transition to college. The Go-to-Raiders program, an effort of the University’s Center for Student Success led by Director Marci Muckleroy, helps incoming students understand campus culture, plan their fall schedules, and navigate any challenges they may encounter along the way.

“The launch of this innovative, new effort aligns with a decrease in the institution’s average melt, which now stands at 10% in comparison to 13% two years ago,” said Clark. “The national average for melt is between 10% and 12%, so we are now on the lower end of that with hopes of working our way toward outperforming it in the years to come.”



100+

UNDERGRADUATE AND
GRADUATE STUDENTS
FEATURED ON LIGHTPOLE
BANNERS ACROSS CAMPUS

20+

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS IN
THE GARTNER WELCOME
CENTER AND HOOVER-
PRICE CAMPUS CENTER

SHOWING OFF HOW WE “SHOW UP”

In the spring of 2022, Carnegie, a higher education marketing firm with which Mount Union has partnered for market research and reputation strategy work, began an effort that would result in the launch of a new marketing campaign for the University. The work commenced with research that included on-campus workshops and a survey, with more than 1,500 alumni, students, faculty, staff, trustees, and members of the general public providing input.

The resulting strategy – what the institution refers to as the “Show Up” campaign – was launched in the fall of 2023, highlighting Mount Union’s welcoming campus environment, the leadership strength of the community, and the resilience and tenacity of the University and its people. To support this campaign, new admission materials and marketing collateral were created. In addition, the institution launched a revised website and infused the brand throughout campus, including exterior light pole banners as well as interior wall graphics and imagery in the Gartner Welcome Center and Hoover-Price Campus Center (HPCC).

“The marketing staff has pulled out all the stops to implement this campaign, and the team’s work is paying off,” said Clark. “The first impression for students and families visiting campus has been elevated, as there is a much more energetic feel in the Welcome Center and HPCC. Now, when you visit, there is no doubt that you are on the Mount Union campus. You see purple at every turn. Alumni spotlights that highlight our graduates’ successes and student images that emphasize the vibrancy of the campus experience are everywhere. The brand is represented, and it’s making an impact.”





“When Notre Dame College closed, I thought I’d have to go back to Maryland for college. Then I met Darrell Gaitor ’10, who introduced me to Mount Union, and everything just clicked. After talking with him about my goals and plans, I realized that Mount Union was the perfect fit. Now, I couldn’t be more excited to be here, surrounded by opportunities to grow and succeed!”

Maurice Smalls '26
Psychology Major
Waldorf, MD



A SAFE PLACE TO LAND

In recent years, the University has ramped up its efforts to be an attractive landing place for students looking to transfer to another institution, and this fall, the fruits of that labor became apparent with the enrollment of 70 total transfers, nearly doubling the previous year’s arrival of 40. Over half of these transfer students are committed to playing an intercollegiate sport as a Purple Raider.

Among these 70 students were 13 individuals transferring from the now-closed Notre Dame College (NDC) of South Euclid, Ohio, who came to Mount Union as the result of a teach-out partnership established between the two institutions following NDC’s announcement of its closure last March.

“Historically, the vast majority of our transfers have come from other four-year institutions like NDC,” said Clark. “We are now working to build pipelines with two-year degree-granting institutions as a means of further growing our transfer population. We have worked strategically to ease the transfer process and are one of only eight Ohio institutions to be named to Phi Theta Kappa’s Transfer Honor Roll for 2024 in recognition of our dedication to providing an accessible experience for transfer students.”

The University’s record-setting enrollment this fall is a testament to the institution’s strategic efforts as the implementation of *Students First – A Strategic Action Plan 2024-2027* enters its first year. To learn more about *Students First*, visit mountunion.edu/strategic-plan.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

GENUINE IMPACT

Artificial intelligence did not write this story. Not that it would be unhelpful, but the words can be pasted into an online detector to indicate the story was not, in fact, authored by machine learning. Thus, receiving a gold star from...a machine. Is it simply ironic, or is it the actualized future?

Artificial intelligence, or AI, is inescapably ubiquitous today. Whether found sort of scary or curiously alluring, millions of jobs are being created, and the field is leading the next generation of technology. With the addition of two innovative AI programs — artificial intelligence and applied artificial intelligence — Mount Union is positioned to develop ethical leaders in this rapidly emergent space.



UNPARALLELED GROWTH AND RELEVANCE

Before Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator was created by (and eventually fought) Skynet on the big screen, AI was first defined in a 1955 research project at Dartmouth University. Only a few years after the development of the computer, McCarthy et al. determined AI was "making a machine behave in ways that would be called intelligent if a human were so behaving." Nearly 70 years later, that definition remains at the core of advancement efforts in the booming industry.

The overarching goal of AI usage in the workforce is efficiency. Reports from Forbes, IBM, and The Chronicle of Higher Education in 2024 all focus on streamlined productivity as one of the hallmarks of implementing AI into various fields. The gut reaction to that for many has been that several jobs, especially those at the entry level, would be eliminated by AI. The World Economic Forum's (WEF) 2023 Future of Jobs Report tells a different story.

Of the 803 worldwide companies surveyed by the WEF, nearly 75% said they are likely to adopt AI by 2027. While some jobs could be displaced, roughly 26% more jobs would be created than eliminated because of AI implementation, with the most significant growth estimates in the automotive, aerospace, personal well-being, information technology, and educational training fields. With such a wide industrial net cast and an increase in demand, developing professionals with appropriate AI skills and leadership is more imperative than ever.

AI THE MOUNT UNION WAY

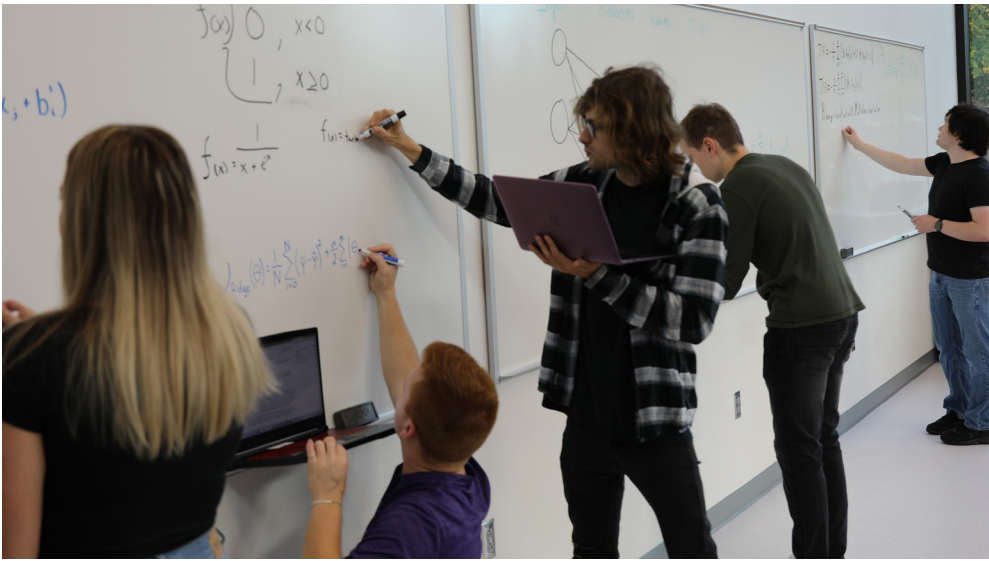
Responding to this growing need, Mount Union announced its minors in AI and applied AI in the summer of 2024. While each program is rooted in preparing students for the evolution of the workforce, they are designed to fill various needs across those unique industries.

The AI minor is the more technical program for individuals seeking specific careers in the AI landscape. The curriculum focuses on areas such as programming, scientific modeling, and machine learning and was designed to comple-

ment established majors in computer science, computer engineering, data science and analytics, and multi-platform software development. Students receive foundational knowledge and utilize it through hands-on projects that keep them on the leading edge of their peers.

"AI is a rapidly evolving field that is dramatically impacting how we live and work," said Dr. Colin Campbell, associate professor of physics and astronomy and AI minor program coordinator. "Mount Union is committed to providing discipline-appropriate training in AI throughout our curriculum so that every student will be empowered to use AI ethically and effectively."

Applied AI is the more accessible of the two minors. Its intent is to prepare students in myriad fields with the knowledge and training to, as the name implies, apply AI to their respective majors. No prior programming knowledge is needed, and applied AI equips individuals with the fundamentals of AI. This ensures Mount Union graduates can use AI ethically while being at



the forefront of the technological trends in their industries.

Regardless of one's feelings or preconceived notions of AI, it is inarguably here to stay and make a difference in society at large. Bloomberg reports that generative AI could balloon to a market worth \$1.3 trillion by 2032, and responsible stewards of this technology are vital for future success. With Mount Union's mission at the core, faculty and staff in its AI programs are ready to foster the unique skills necessary to develop the next generation of influential Purple Raider leaders.

ALUMNI IN AI

VIRGINIA RHODES '83

Utilizing her more than three decades of experience in the oncology field, Dr. Virginia Rhodes '83 is forging a new path using AI in healthcare. As the medical director of oncology studies at Tempus AI in Chicago, Rhodes' work supports the company's mission to improve the ability of practitioners to select the best therapy for patients and to integrate data that can advance therapeutic research and development.

"In oncology, there is no aspect of patient care that AI will not touch in some fashion," Rhodes said. "Clinically and diagnostically, the amount of data generated on cancer patients will only increase, and physicians will be aided in real-time clinical decision-making by AI algorithms that can integrate all of this data to make the best therapeutic decisions. This is true not only for oncology but for all medical specialties."

With the FDA already approving more than 950 AI-enabled technologies in medicine, Rhodes believes that Mount Union's new AI programs will serve students in a variety of technical fields.

BRIAN KELLER '04

At LexisNexis Risk Solutions, Brian Keller '04 and his team are working to improve efficiencies within agencies used by millions daily. Keller's role as vice president of AI and data science focuses on how the insurance industry can utilize the AI systems developed by LexisNexis to help those companies identify risk and aid in claim response in a more expedient way than ever before.

While Keller's role is focused on a specific and important field, he believes Mount Union students in all majors can benefit from learning how to apply AI tools.

"New graduates from Mount Union's AI programs will enter the workforce with an AI-first mindset, which many industry veterans do not have," he said. "Already, employers are looking for candidates who have experience using AI so they can help transform the company operations and workforce. Mount Union's new programs will provide graduates who can help power that transformation."

KYLE QUINN DREGER '14

Computer science graduates like Kyle Quinn Dreger '14 know that machine learning has been around for a long time, so he feels the current inflection point of AI in culture should not be viewed as scary. The CEO of Patriot Software in Canton, Ohio views AI as a tool, not a replacement for the people who make his company what it is.

"I like to tell people that AI tools are like having 10 interns at your disposal 24/7," he said. "They can help make a 10-minute project a 10-second one, and you would always double-check their work anyway. The programs still need oversight, but the efficiency is what makes them so exciting."

Dreger believes that adapting to these ever-changing needs is one reason Mount Union's new programs are vital.

"AI will not take your job, but someone who uses these tools more effectively might," he said. "My late mother always said, 'Learning is a milestone and not a finish line.' Those who are continually prepared will be able to navigate these changes much better in the long run."

“Mount Union is committed to providing discipline-appropriate training in AI throughout our curriculum so that every student will be empowered to use AI ethically and effectively.”

Dr. Colin Campbell
Associate Professor of Physics and
Astronomy and AI Minor Program
Coordinator



BRENTON GIFT PAVES WAY FOR INNOVATION ON CAMPUS

The Flint '77 and Meg Gerlach '78 Brenton Charitable Trust provided a transformative gift to the University of Mount Union this fall that will have a profound impact on the institution. They have established an endowed fund dedicated to developing new engineering majors that align with a growing job market, launching a new Center for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, and creating an endowed award to recognize exceptional students.

Flint, a longtime Silicon Valley executive, and Meg, a retired physical therapist, have generously given to Mount Union throughout the years. In the past decade alone, they established The Meg Gerlach Brenton Endowed Scholarship to assist students majoring in the life sciences. The Meg Gerlach Brenton Physical Therapy Teaching Lab in Gallaher Hall was named to honor Meg's impactful career. Flint has served on Mount Union's Board of Trustees since 2018.

In recognition of the Brenton's extraordinary contribution, Mount Union has named its School of Engineering the Samuel W. and Dolores E. Brenton School of Engineering in memory of Flint's parents.

“We are excited to invest in the future of Mount Union. With this gift, all students will benefit. New curricula and majors will allow our engineering graduates to be placed in new, fast-growing fields,” said Flint. “Mount Union's liberal arts majors will benefit by learning to apply AI, data science, and automation as students and again in their chosen professions. We hope that Mount Union students develop best-in-class digital competencies and then apply them in their careers.”

The Brentons' establishment of the endowed award, Center for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, and Endowed Fund for the Samuel W. and Dolores E. Brenton School of Engineering comes on the heels of the University unveiling two new minors in artificial intelligence and applied artificial intelligence.

“It is a privilege to honor Flint's parents in this manner and to be able to help Mount Union position itself as a leader in AI – especially to encourage non-tech majors to utilize it in their chosen field of study,” said Meg.



VIRGINIA RHODES '83



BRIAN KELLER '04



KYLE QUINN DREGER '14



Aaliyah Kinnard '24

Advocate, Leader, Learner, and Performer



passion WITH PURPOSE

Passionate about creating a sense of belonging on campus for all students, Aaliyah Kinnard '24, a psychology major from North Canton, Ohio, has built a strong network, allowing her to create inclusive opportunities for others.

“My interest in promoting inclusion opportunities at Mount Union arose from my involvement in the Black Student Union (BSU) and Sister Circle,” said Kinnard. “I want students of all backgrounds to understand that their goals are important and that they have a place to succeed, and Mount Union has begun to enhance the community by opening the Wayne Manzilla Inclusion Center (WMIC).”

As a mentor to underclassmen in BSU and Sister Circle, in addition to coordinating events for the WMIC, Kinnard has been able to enhance her communication skills, becoming a voice for students. Kinnard also hopes to use her leadership skills as a school psychologist after graduation, making a larger impact in students' lives.

“I view psychology as the foundation to a successful work environment as it is the field that explains why people do and say what they do,” said Kinnard. “I want to be a school psychologist to continue helping kids achieve their dreams while building a more equitable environment in which all students can thrive.”

Kinnard explains that she wants to go into the education field because her mom, Tiffany Parker-Kinnard, works in higher education and has taught her about its importance. Therefore, upon graduating, Kinnard plans to pursue her teaching licensure to work in elementary schools. Pairing her teaching

license with her psychology expertise will help Kinnard work toward becoming a school principal.

“Looking back at my academic journey at Mount Union, my favorite memories are participating and helping organize the BSU fashion show along with performing in several theatre productions like *Pippin* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*,” said Kinnard.

On campus, Kinnard served as a Preview guide, resident assistant, student ambassador, and Student Senate representative during her collegiate career, and she explained that Erin West M '24, campus tour coordinator, has had a significant impact on her as a supervisor.

“If there was someone to thank for my experience at Mount Union, it would be Erin,” said Kinnard. “She encourages me to continue working toward my goals and has kept me standing on my feet.”

Kinnard described her collegiate journey as rocky, but with a successful turnout. College taught Kinnard that while people plan things, the result may not be what they expected. Therefore, while some of Kinnard's plans did not turn out as she had hoped, she is still grateful for the experiences and opportunities of which she took advantage.

“If I were to meet myself from freshman year, I would advise the girl in front of me to step outside her comfort zone and do things she is not used to because she will regret not doing so,” said Kinnard. “I would tell her to take opportunities when they are offered to her and to not be afraid to be herself.”

CLASS NOTES

Class Notes to be included in the Spring/Summer 2025 Issue of *Mount Union Magazine* must be received before March 31, 2025.

Material for Class Notes is obtained online or through news passed along from alumni to the offices of Alumni Engagement, Advancement, and the Mount Union Fund. Notices sent by the Post Office are not printed in Class Notes. You may also submit your class note via email at alumni@mountunion.edu or the form found at mountunion.edu/alumni.

1960s

Julie (Fulmer '61) Cummins has written a new book titled *Remarkable Women of the Finger Lakes* published by History Press. It profiles 20 women rarely known such as Pearl White, silent movie star, and Maud Humphrey, fashion illustrator and Humphrey Bogart's mother.

1970s

Mark Allen '77 was recently awarded The Pillars of Excellence Award from the University of Memphis School of Law. Mark recently retired as executive vice president, secretary, and general counsel for FedEx after 42 years and had responsibility for international and domestic legal, security, regulatory, and government affairs. His tenure included over 25 years living and working abroad.



Martha (Wyatt '76) Springstead received the College and Community Service award from Tidewater Community College (TCC) in Norfolk, VA. She was nominated by the dean of arts and humanities. She currently teaches applied voice and leads the TCC Chorale. She is also on the faculty at Old Dominion University, where she teaches piano.



1980s

Susan (Spagno '84) Ramlo was recently named to the Physics Editorial Committee of arXiv.org along with many notable physicists from around the world. ArXiv, pronounced as "archive," is an international repository for research in physics, chemistry, biology, and other fields.

1990s

Jeff Chenevey '90 has joined Cohen & Company, headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, as a managing director, leading their Technology Consulting Practice. He resides in Medina, Ohio with his wife, Renee, and has four sons, two daughters-in-law, and three grandchildren.



2000s

Maureen (March '02) Wise has written a devotional titled *Strength for My Path*:

52 Devotions from the Hiking Trail, which includes Biblical outdoor reflections and nature facts to accompany individuals as they hike.

2010s

Jessica (Sopkovich '16) and Andrew '17 Decker announce the birth of a son, Leo Joseph, on October 4, 2024.



Amanda (Oberster '16) and Tre '15 Jones announce the birth of a daughter, Lola Mae, on September 23, 2024.

Emma Kilbreath '18 graduated from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in May and was sworn into the Minnesota Bar in October.

Alyssa (Wigal '16) and Justin Kuhn announce the birth of a son, Marshall Leland, on June 30, 2024.



Sarah (Jansen '16) and Anthony '15 Ocasio announce the birth of a son, Carter James, on August 22, 2023.



Alexis (Swartz '16, M '20) and Collin '16 Peters announce the birth of a son, Bowen Stuart, on October 12, 2024.



Angela (Paridon '14) and Rob '14 Sassa announce the birth of a son, Thomas Joel, on July 17, 2024. Thomas' grandparents are Kathy (Johnson '79) and Joel '78 Sassa.



Katie (Kukucka '15) and Christian St. Peter announce the birth of a daughter, Maisie, on August 3, 2024.



2020s

Danielle (Yanssens '20) and Charles '21 Cope announce the birth of a daughter, Emerson Marie, on July 1, 2024.



A MESSAGE FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Greetings Fellow Raiders and Friends,

I hope this message finds you well! First and foremost, I'd like to introduce myself to those who may not know me. My name is Nick Walker, and I am the new president of the Mount Union Alumni Association. I am a 2011 graduate of Mount Union and reside in Mayfield Heights, Ohio with my wife Lizzy and four boys (hopefully future Raiders) – Mason, Brayden, Cameron, and Anderson. During my time at Mount, I was a member of the baseball team, a Preview guide, and a Student Senate representative to name a few of the many ways that I was involved around campus.



Mount Union is such a major part of the person that I am today and a place where I was able to develop some of my most cherished relationships. I'm sure I don't have to tell you what a special place Mount Union is. What has surprised me, however, is just how far our sense of community and family reaches from our little campus in Alliance, Ohio.

Almost every time I wear my Mount Union gear, I am waved down by another alum, parent, or friend of someone who attended Mount Union who is at my grocery store, gym, golf course, or my kids' school! At all these places, and many more, I've met someone with a connection to the school, excited to share their experience and Purple Raider passion.

Now, I'm obviously a little biased here but I just don't see that same passion and sense of family and community from many other universities. It's what makes us special and just one of the reasons I'm proud to call myself a Purple Raider.

This new school year is an exciting one as it has brought a record number of new students into our Purple Raider family. On behalf of the Alumni Association and Raiders around the world, we welcome them with open arms as we Raiders do best.

I am excited to be stepping into the role of Alumni Association president for the next two years and look forward to being a pillar of support for the alumni, students, and friends of this great university.

Go Raiders!

Nick Walker '11
President



2024 ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS

(l-r) Sandra (Goff '74) Thomas, Dodie Davis Alumni Service Award; Stephen Craig, McKinley Fellow Award; Elizabeth Haavisto '13, Young Alumni Award



ALUMNI WEEKEND, HOMECOMING





COMING, AND FAMILY DAY 2024



SEE YOU NEXT YEAR! OCTOBER 3-5, 2025

ALUMNI IN THE NEWS

CARRIE COON '03

Carrie engaged with Mount Union students during a Q&A in conjunction with the Massillon Museum's exhibit *Gilding Northeast Ohio: Fashion & Fortune 1870-1900*. This exhibit featured a dress of hers from HBO's *The Gilded Age*, in which she stars and for which she was a nominee for outstanding lead actress in a drama series at this year's Emmy awards.

During the event, students and other guests had an opportunity to enjoy an episode of *The Gilded Age* on the big screen, followed by a Q&A with Carrie and costume designer Kasia Walicka-Maimone.

Carrie is one of Hollywood's most sought-after talents with a wide variety of roles across film, television, and theatre. Recently, she has appeared in *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*, *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire*, and *His Three Daughters*. In addition, Carrie stars in season three of the Emmy-winning anthology series *The White Lotus*, set to premiere on HBO in mid-February.



DEATHS

1950s

Marilyn (Emrick '55) Bland of Canton, Georgia passed away on July 7, 2024.

David Bloor '59 of Sebring, Ohio passed away on June 10, 2024.

Douglas Daniels '59 of Hampton Falls, New Hampshire passed away on August 27, 2024.

William Fronk '57 of Chattanooga, Tennessee passed away on September 22, 2024.

John Patterson '57 of Salem, Ohio passed away on October 25, 2024.

Mary (Carr '56) Petrich of Munroe Falls, Ohio passed away on July 21, 2024.

Mary Lou (Schmutzler '52) Shollenberger of Alliance, Ohio passed away on October 13, 2024.

1960s

Shirley (Unger '69) Anderson of Morristown, Arizona passed away on March 15, 2024.

David Blood '69 of Conneaut, Ohio passed away on November 6, 2024.

Kenneth Cunin '60 of Worthington, Ohio passed away on September 19, 2024.

Judy (Robinson '64) Denny of Alliance, Ohio passed away on July 5, 2024.

Lon Gaumer '68 of The Villages, Florida passed away on July 30, 2024.

Mona (Brunie '67) Henderson of Alliance, Ohio passed away on April 30, 2024.

Michael Lindamood '67 of Findlay, Ohio passed away on August 22, 2024.

James Lindsley '64 of Alliance, Ohio passed away on June 30, 2024.

Susan (Crouch '64) Nichols of Columbus, Ohio passed away on April 7, 2024.

Marilyn (Kayem '62) Palermo of Toledo, Ohio passed away on October 12, 2022.

Richard Schillig '67 of Davenport, Iowa passed away on September 20, 2024.

Donald Stryffeler '66 of Massillon, Ohio passed away on June 29, 2024.

David Swarts '61 of Cleveland, Ohio passed away on September 9, 2024.

Diane (Nock '62) Syfer of Fort Mill, South Carolina passed away on August 17, 2024.

Marcie (Bradley '67) Zumbrunnen of Inverness, Illinois passed away on June 24, 2024. She was the mother of Joni (Zumbrunnen '76) Teragawachi and Jan (Zumbrunnen '79) Stadler.

1970s

Mark Altier '70 of Columbus, Ohio passed away on June 28, 2024.

Deborah (Singerman '71) Gorencik of Parma, Ohio passed away on September 26, 2024.

Jayne (McBride '71) Hall of Alliance, Ohio passed away on July 12, 2024.

Carol (Stewart '71) Hermann of Waltherboro, South Carolina passed away on January 7, 2024.

Linda (Smith '74) Johnson of Walker, Minnesota passed away on June 26, 2024.

Frank Roys '71 of Fredericksburg, Virginia passed away on July 27, 2024.

1980s

Tamara (Richter '82) Bennett of New Philadelphia, Ohio passed away on July 12, 2024.

Allison (Indorf '89) Godard of Sandy Springs, Georgia passed away on October 11, 2024.

Douglas Webb '82 of Madison, New Jersey passed away on October 8, 2024.

1990s

Daniel Lazzaro '96 of Cleveland, Ohio passed away on August 17, 2024.

Andrew Sawka '91 of Aurora, Ohio passed away on July 11, 2024

2000s

Jessica (Garrod '03) Dieter of Mentor, Ohio passed away on September 24, 2024.

Trina (McKelley '03) Carlisle of Columbus, Ohio passed away on September 15, 2024.

2010s

Ryan Renbarger '10 of Wickliffe, Ohio passed away on June 17, 2024.

Friends

Rosemary Braid of Worthington, Ohio passed away on September 26, 2024. She attended in the late 1940s.

James Tolerton, spouse of Judith (Rennels '63) Tolerton, of Hilton Head, South Carolina passed away on August 24, 2024.

TRUSTEES

Janice (DiNezza '82) Sanders of Willoughby, Ohio passed away on September 28, 2024. After graduating from Mount Union with a Bachelor of Arts degree in accounting and economics, she went on to earn a Master of Business Administration degree in finance from Case Western Reserve University. Janice retired as the director of Citigroup after holding various roles in risk management, including chief administrative and chief operating officer roles. She joined the Board of Trustees at Mount Union in 2019 and was a member of the Forever Mount Society and 1846 Society.



FRIENDS

James Oelschlager, spouse of trustee Vanita (Bauknight '63) Oelschlager, passed away on September 29, 2024. As president and chief investment officer of Oak Associates in Akron, Ohio, Jim achieved remarkable professional success. A graduate of Denison University with a J.D. from Northwestern University, Jim, alongside Vanita, left an indelible mark on Mount Union, becoming the largest individual supporters in the history of the institution. Their extraordinary generosity funded projects such as Bracy Hall of Science, Oak Hall, the Kolenbrander-Harter Information Center, and the student investment team. Jim and Vanita also created one of the largest scholarship endowment funds the University holds, ensuring future generations of students have access to world-class facilities. Lifelong advocates for the University's mission, they are distinguished members of the Diamond Circle, the Forever Mount Society, and the 1846 Society.



EMPLOYEES

Carl Kandel of Edmonds, Washington passed away on September 22, 2024. Professor Emeritus Kandel taught in the Department of Music from 1961 until his retirement in 1989. He established the Mount Union brass choir, led the marching band, and conducted the concert band.

William (Bill) Kirkwood of Wooster, Ohio passed away on September 3, 2024. Coach Kirkwood joined the Mount Union community in 2014 as the head golf coach, taking the women's team to nationals three years in a row. Bill also headed up the fundraising effort for a golf center at Mount Union.

Mark McConnell of Alliance, Ohio passed away on September 27, 2024. He joined the Mount Union faculty in 2007. He served the School of Business as an associate professor, including a stint as department chair, before his retirement in 2024, when he was granted faculty emeritus status.

A portrait of Dennis Sabol, a middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt, with his arms crossed. The background is a solid blue color.

A GIFT OF OPPORTUNITY

IN REMEMBRANCE OF
DENNIS SABOL '74

When Dennis M. Sabol, a 1974 graduate of Mount Union, passed away in March 2024, his family, friends, and former colleagues sought a way to honor his memory and celebrate a life well-lived. Together, they established the Dennis Sabol Endowed Scholarship Fund, a lasting tribute to his unwavering love for Mount Union and his commitment to supporting others.

Sabol, who studied sociology at Mount Union, always spoke fondly of the education and experiences that shaped his life. His time at Mount Union instilled in him the values of hard work, community, and service that he carried throughout his personal and professional life. Sabol remained closely connected to his alma mater, serving on the Business Advisory Board and advocating for future generations of students.

The endowed scholarship fund reflects Sabol's enduring belief in the transformative power of education and his desire to pay forward the opportunities he received. The fund will provide support for students in the School of Business who demonstrate financial need, enabling them to participate in experiential learning opportunities such as conferences, internships,

and competitions. These experiences – often critical to professional and personal development – will open doors for students to gain real-world insights and pursue their dreams.

For those who knew and loved Sabol, this scholarship is more than a tribute – it is a way to continue his legacy of generosity and mentorship. His family and friends came together with the shared vision of helping others, just as Sabol had done in his lifetime. Through this gift, they ensure that his impact will continue to grow, enriching the lives of Mount Union students for generations to come.

Sabol will be remembered not only for his professional achievements and leadership but also for his kindness, loyalty, and dedication to those around him. This scholarship reflects the values he held dear and is a celebration of the Mount Union spirit he cherished. In helping others achieve their goals, Sabol's legacy will live on – a legacy of opportunity, support, and the belief in a brighter future.

To make a contribution to the Dennis Sabol Endowed Scholarship Fund, visit giving.mountunion.edu/forms/sabol.

WEEK OF WELCOME

In kickstarting the new academic year strong, this past August, Mount Union welcomed students to campus with care during its Week of Welcome! In just one week, the Mount Union community came together, raising \$16,022 in Student Emergency Fund support, surpassing the \$5,000 goal for the week and successfully unlocking a \$5,000 matching gift from the generosity of an anonymous donor.

The University is grateful for those who provided students the opportunity to continue their Mount Union education, ensuring that they have the resources they need to thrive this academic year. Week of Welcome donors showed Mount Union students the strength and generosity of the Raider community and that once again, together, the Raider community is stronger!

\$16,022
TOTAL RAISED



VIRTUAL STADIUM SELL OUT

Mount Union celebrated Purple Raider athletics in October with teams competing in the University's fifth-annual Virtual Stadium Sell Out. In just one week, 458 Purple Raider fans came together, raising \$78,876 in support for M Club and the institution's student-athletes and filling 7,687 virtual seats.

The competition was fierce all week, and all of the Purple Raider teams are thankful for the overwhelming support contributors gave. At the top of the leaderboard was women's golf, which filled 1,969 seats and secured an additional \$1,000 for its program, thanks to Athletic Director Mike '83 and Karen Parnell.

LEADERBOARD

Sport	Donors	Total Raised
Women's Golf	56	\$19,690
Men's Wrestling	46	\$9,145
Women's Soccer	25	\$4,215
Baseball	25	\$4,040
Softball	106	\$3,550

VIRTUAL STADIUM SELL OUT
BY THE NUMBERS

458
DONORS

\$78,876
RAISED



mountunion.edu

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