



Forward Together: President's December 2022 Message



2022 has been a big year for Shocker Nation

It's been quite a year for Wichita State! As we bid adieu to 2022, it's truly remarkable to think about all that we've accomplished this year.

- Perhaps the biggest news and an indicator of our success has been the [enrollment announcement for](#) fall 2022. Combined enrollment by headcount across all Wichita State University locations for fall 2022 is 21,942. For the Wichita State main campus, the numbers represent an increase of 5.1% in fall student headcount from 16,097 in 2021 to 16,921 in 2022. That's the largest number of students choosing to enroll at Wichita State since 1989.
- Our alumni and friends were generous this year, and I couldn't be more grateful. The gifts we received led to the second-highest fundraising year in Wichita State's history, and will help us achieve our goal of making higher education affordable and accessible. Just a few of these include a \$5.5 million gift to fund scholarships from the estate of [Richard Smith](#), \$100,000 for health profession scholarships from the [Patterson Family Foundation](#) and a \$3 million pledge toward student resources from WSU alumnus [J. Robert Young](#). Gifts like these are furthering our goals to support need-based aid and development of the Shocker Success Center. As we continue increasing enrollment and improve our student support, it's exciting to see our campus grow. This year, Wayne and Kay Woolsey Hall opened, welcoming the Barton School of Business to its new, state-of-the-art home on the innovation campus.
- The northeast edge of Innovation campus got a little more Shocker pride with bright bold letters that spell out "Wichita State." In the months since [the sign has been installed](#), it's already become a popular spot for graduation photos and selfies.
- Former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates visited campus for the inaugural event of the Craig W. Barton Speaker Series, which was created as another opportunity to encourage free expression, critical thinking and the engaging in discourse of various perspectives. Stay tuned for an announcement on our 2023 speaker.
- The esports program in the College of Applied Studies is up and running with a new director appointed earlier this year. [Travis Yang](#) — who came to Wichita State from Texas A&M, where he helped establish that university's esports program — led the team to win the [Eastern College Athletic Conference Championship](#) for a direct bid to compete in the Collegiate Esports Commissioners Cup.
- Wichita State's National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR) had a big year, which was punctuated by a [\\$100 million award](#) from the U.S. Air Force to continue the digital engineering program. NIAR WERX has expanded its Flight Test Research Center and [Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul](#) program to include more partners and more passenger-to-freight conversion projects,



Dr. Rick Muma, president

which will not only give WSU and WSU Tech students unparalleled applied learning opportunities, but also full-time jobs for professionals in our community.

- From the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, student researchers are working with Dr. Nick Solomey, professor of physics, on the development of a [solar probe to detect neutrinos](#). Students Jonathan Folkerts, Jarred Novak and Trent English recently presented papers on the design of their neutrino detector prototype at the International Astronautical Congress in Paris, representing the NASA-funded Solar Neutrino Orbiting Laboratory Detector Development Project.
- [Dr. Shirley Lefever](#) was named as Wichita State's provost. Lefever was acting as WSU's interim executive vice president and provost since fall 2020, and she's been with Wichita State for 17 years, working as both a faculty member and administrator. Her institutional knowledge and long-established relationships both within and outside the university have been and will continue to be invaluable.
- Wichita State welcomed [Kevin Saal](#) as our new athletic director in July. Saal came to WSU from Murray State, and he is leading Shocker athletics during a time of significant change – including name, image and likeness, the transfer portal and conference realignment.
- It's been a big year for designations and recognition about some of the things that make Wichita State such an exciting and inspirational campus. In June, we received confirmation that WSU is an [age-friendly university](#), which makes us one of only 90 higher-education institutions in the nation that have committed to meeting the personal, educational and career needs of adults of all ages on our campus. WSU has also been designated by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities as an [Innovation & Economic Prosperity University](#), a designation held by only 80 universities in the nation — a nod to our efforts to support the economic growth of our state through our research and other activities. And finally, Wichita State is now an [Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution](#), which means that more than 15% of our students identify as Hispanic. This opens the door for the federal grants that will benefit all students.
- Three projects that are picking up steam at Wichita State are the [Shocker Success Center](#), Marcus Welcome Center addition and the [Wichita Biomedical Campus](#). Construction will begin in January for the Shocker Success Center, which will house 17 students services that are currently spread across 10 buildings. The plan to co-locate these offices will create an all-inclusive home to foster achievement and opportunities for our students. The Marcus Welcome Center addition (the [Millie Marcus Annex](#)) will allow for three offices to come together, Undergraduate Admissions, Career Development and the Shocker Career Accelerator to demonstrate to prospective students what it means to be an applied learner in Shocker Nation. And the Wichita Biomedical Campus, which is a collaboration among the University of Kansas and WSU Tech, will centralize health care education, collaboration and research from each institution. The state-of-the-art education that students will receive at the Wichita Biomedical Campus will ultimately improve the quality of health and health outcomes for all Kansans.
- And finally, our Innovation Campus is growing exponentially with new partners and construction projects. Woolsey Hall opened for classes in August, and it is extraordinary. It's as aesthetically remarkable as it is innovatively built, and it's clear that every nook and cranny was planned with

intention and purpose. We also broke ground on a new building to house the [National Institute for Research and Digital Transformation](#). The building will include a collaboration hub, data analytics area, testing labs, eight research labs and a 168-rack data center. We also celebrated the grand opening of Deloitte's [Smart Factory @ Wichita](#) and [NetApp](#); and in June, it was announced that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) will establish its [Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence](#) on the Innovation Campus. The Center of Excellence will be a model for the use of crime gun intelligence in supporting law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. It will also serve as a home for the National Crime Gun Intelligence Governing Board.

Looking back, it's exciting to see how far we've come this year, and we've got so much to look forward to in 2023!

I wish you the very best for the holiday season and in the new year!

Go Shockers!

Sincerely,

Rick Muma

President of Wichita State University