One after another, Georgia State University broke records over the past fiscal year. The university had its best fundraising year ever — $43.5 million in gifts — headlined by the largest single gift in its history. Total research funding, too, set a new high, breaking the $100 million mark for the first time. And innovations such as the university’s crowdfunding site set impressive marks in their first year.

On the academic side, our students broke records as well. Even with total enrollment reaching a new all-time high, graduation rates continue to rise at a rate that leads the nation. Both the graduating class and the incoming freshman class were Georgia State’s largest ever, and that freshman class had the highest grade-point average of any in university history, not to mention record numbers of African-American and Latino enrollees.

It is no coincidence that we are breaking these records all at the same time. The incredible support shown by Georgia State’s growing community of alumni, fans and friends is what builds the foundation for amazing achievement. And it builds the kind of momentum that puts us in position to break these same records — many times over — in the years to come.
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LETTER FROM PRESIDENT MARK P. BECKER

When Georgia State kicked off the Burning Bright campaign in Woodruff Park this past October, I asked our supporters and friends to be our ambassadors and help tell our university’s amazing story. I can confidently assure them they will not be telling it alone.

Georgia State’s increasing prominence is evident in the headlines being made by our academic innovations, cutting-edge research, talented sports teams and difference-making outreach programs. It is also evident in our fundraising. The $43.5 million raised in fiscal year 2014–15 — our highest single-year total ever — is a symbol of the community’s increasing trust and confidence in our university to provide unique educational opportunities, prepare tomorrow’s leaders for the challenges ahead, and point the way to a brighter future for our city and our world.

In this report you will read about a few members of that community and why they entrusted our university with their philanthropic support. They include Regynald Washington, whose success in the food service industry has been based on hard work and visionary thinking, and who felt that GSU students demonstrated the same traits; alumnus Phil Oneacre and his wife, Jeanne, whose generous legacy gift will benefit students from the Honors College to our athletics programs and beyond; and the Woodruff Foundation, whose record-setting grant is underwriting direct inroads for our students into a new-media industry that will impact Atlanta’s economy for decades to come.

Allies such as these provide fuel for the achievements that define our university as a model of innovation, diversity and student achievement for the rest of the nation to follow. I thank them, and all of Georgia State’s loyal supporters, for not only spreading the story of that success, but helping us add inspiring new chapters to that story every day.

Sincerely,

Mark P. Becker
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Georgia State University enjoyed another year of record-breaking results, from graduation rates to funded research to fundraising.

Our record-breaking fundraising success over the past year is a point of pride for me both as chair of the foundation board and as a Georgia State alumnus. This university opened the door to wonderful opportunities in my life, and it is truly inspiring to watch GSU provide those opportunities to many thousands of other students.

I am particularly proud that the open doors at Georgia State have led to success for students from all backgrounds, including those students whose needs higher education has long failed to meet — students who are first-generation, lower-income or from a racial or ethnic minority. Our students’ success has made Georgia State a national role model as our graduation rate has risen faster than any other public university in the country. And the rest of the country has noticed — so much so that our Georgia State administrators have devoted substantial time sharing these success stories with other educators and our elected officials.

Scholarship funding by the foundation, which contributed to these improved graduation rates, has grown an average of 19 percent annually from $2.9 million in 2011 to $5.9 million in 2015 — yes, another record. But more important, this annual report tells the story of what those resources have the power to make possible. A growing community of support — alumni, parents, businesses, foundations and friends of the university — has witnessed this success and is continuing to invest in an even brighter future.

Beyond a physical diploma, our university’s success is helping lead the way to a brighter future for our own students and our community, while a nation learns from our good example.

With much gratitude for all your support,

Brad Ferrer (B.B.A., Accounting, ’81)
Regynald Washington: Making Future Leaders Feel at Home at the Robinson College of Business
Regynald Washington has overseen food and beverage operations for Disney’s entire global collection of resorts and chaired the board of the National Restaurant Association, but to him, how his career started is just as important as what it later achieved.

“Busing tables,” he says. “Nowadays they call it a server assistant, but it was a bus boy, that’s what we called it.” He pauses, then laughs. “I’m real, by the way. I haven’t forgotten where I came from.”

Nor has he forgotten that every person in a restaurant operation, from managers to dishwashers and busboys, is vital to its success. Throughout his self-made rise to the top of the food service industry, that knowledge is what has kept him grounded — a quality, he says, shared by students at Georgia State’s J. Mack Robinson College of Business. That is why he recently created a $1 million endowment at RCB’s Cecil B. Day School of Hospitality, the school’s largest single gift since the Day family first endowed the school in 1988.

“Georgia State students are very humble,” says Washington, who earned his own hospitality degree from Florida International University and has spent 15 years on the Day School’s Industry Board. “They’re very grounded, they’re respectful, they’re hungry for knowledge, they want to learn, they want to move forward, they’re not egotistical. They’ve got all the elements you look for in a successful hospitality leader.”

Washington’s gift will support student scholarships in the Day School’s graduate program, now called the Regynald G. Washington Masters of Global Hospitality. It will also fund technology upgrades and new study-abroad opportunities. His personal and professional example, though, may prove to be one of his most important gifts to Georgia State.

“Being able to meet with him in person was something I really appreciated,” says senior Maria Bustamante, who aspires to a leadership position in human resources. “He explained how important it is to give the people you hire the right resources, the right tools, the right mentorship to help them succeed. No matter what position you’re in, you should always strive to be excellent in it.”
Georgia State Alumnus Phil Oneacre Leaves a Wide-Ranging Legacy

Earning an MBA from Georgia State, says Phil Oneacre, helped him grow as a business professional. More important, though, it helped him grow as a person.

“When I was young, I was never one for high confidence — I was always kind of doubtful of myself,” he explains. “But I met a lot of smart people when I went through the Executive MBA program and being able to compete with them gave me a lot of confidence. I knew I had the tools to do what I needed to do.”

To show his thanks for the way Georgia State changed him, Phil and his wife, Jeanne, are helping to change Georgia State. Last year they revised their wills to include a substantial legacy gift that will impact students across numerous programs, focusing specifically on the Honors College, J. Mack Robinson College of Business and Panther Athletics.

“[Founding Dean] Larry Berman emphasized that the Honors College is an important piece for getting the university to a higher level,” Phil says. “I got to meet some of the staff, and to me, what they were doing was very impressive. With the quality of the students coming through, it’s a truly unique environment at Georgia State.”

Berman describes the Oneacres’ contribution — the largest single gift ever given to the Honors College — as “transformative.” “This generous gift will provide scholarship support for future generations of Honors College students,” he says. “Those scholarships will help remove financial burdens so that students will be able to pursue the types of enhanced research, leadership and study-abroad opportunities that prepare them for lifetimes of achievement.”

The Honors College, which technically did not even exist while Oneacre was earning his master’s, is just one example of the “tremendous changes” Georgia State has undergone since then, he says. He is gratified to see that change directly benefiting students.

“I really wanted to see the fruits of my life’s work help produce fruits for the students at Georgia State,” he says. “This institution is producing the next crop of people who will lead their generation in making the world a better place, and it just makes me feel good to be a part of that.”
The Creative Media Industries Institute: A Big Gift Creates Big Opportunities

Long before production crews for films ranging from “The Hunger Games” to “Ant-Man” set up shop in the Atlanta area, Georgia State’s art and design, communications, and music programs were training students to work in the film and creative media industries. Former communications department chair David Cheshier estimates more than 4,000 students currently major in the creative media arts — everything from film and TV to graphic design and work in the music and games industries.
Keeping up with those industries’ rapid growth in Atlanta has not been an easy task. Through the Creative Media Industries Institute (CMII), though, Georgia State aims to meet the challenge. Supported by a $22.8 million grant from the Woodruff Foundation — the largest single gift in the university’s history — the CMII, nick-named “The Cube,” will immerse students in the latest communications technology and put them shoulder to shoulder with established artists and entrepreneurs. “This institute will help us more fully meet the workforce demands of the industry and connect students with the digital creative careers to which they aspire,” says Cheshier, now the CMII director.

The CMII will be housed in the three-story annex connected to Georgia State’s 25 Park Place facility, formerly SunTrust Plaza, at the south end of Woodruff Park. Each floor will focus on a different aspect of the industry — workforce development, entrepreneurship, and media arts research.

Students will even be able to refine their skills in areas such as virtual reality and video-game design. “We will be able to offer specific programs that address content creation across a number of different platforms, which we really think is the key to 21st-century creative industries work,” Cheshier says.

That is a thrilling prospect for Weston Manders, currently working toward a master’s degree in video production. “Each of my production classes is dedicated to taking our lessons from the classroom and into the workplace without sacrificing any of the art. And I am looking forward to the in-house studio space coming with The Cube,” Manders says. “After I leave GSU, I am confident that I will be joining filmmakers in the industry who are not afraid to work both commercially and artistically.”

Through students like Manders, Cheshier says, Georgia State and the CMII will not only respond to the media industry’s growth but drive it.

“One hopes that Atlanta’s creative industries might employ 200,000 more people 20 years from now than today,” he says. “But that isn’t likely to happen because CNN or Turner will multiply their Atlanta operations. It’ll be because of a new generation of entrepreneurs with its own Ted Turner or Tyler Perry. We want to be the place that prepares those artists.”
NEW ENDOWMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

With gratitude, Georgia State relies on the invaluable support provided by the following new endowments established between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015.

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Jim and Kathryn Adams

Apperson Family Scholarship
Frank and Julianne Apperson

Joseph O. and Louise P. Baylen Scholarship Endowment
James L. and Valerie Baylen

Bradford Scott Beerman Memorial Scholarship
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Arts and Sciences Dean’s Early Career Award Endowment
Edward H. and Nancy Bullwinkel

Peggy and Keith Cooley Scholarship
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Judith Ottoson Scholarship
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Harrower Endowment for the Summer Opera Workshop
Irene C. Harrower and Andres Diaz and Julie Harrower-Diaz

J. Rhodes Haverty Scholarship in Nursing and Health Professions
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Phil and Jeanne Oneacre Athletics, Business and Honors Scholarships
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Regynald G. Washington Endowment
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THAN PREVIOUS YEAR
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015
Georgia State University Foundation Inc.

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for the benefit of Georgia State University

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FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT POOL BALANCE

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FOUNDATION TOTAL ASSETS

FISCAL YEAR

DOLLARS IN MILLIONS


372.7 446.5 416.3 399.9 420.0 435.4 462.6 479.5 505.1 340.1

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FISCAL YEAR

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2011 2012 2013 2014 2015

21.3 22.0 38.2 30.3 43.5
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INCREASE OVER FY14 FUNDRAISING TOTAL
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**Cover photo**
Georgia State University’s physical presence in downtown Atlanta continues to expand with the opening of the new College of Law Building (which is depicted throughout this report) headlining that growth. Located at the corner of Park Place and John Wesley Dobbs Avenue, the college’s new home officially opened for fall semester 2015. The effort that secured funding for the building is a perfect symbol for the partnership between government, nonprofit foundations and private citizens that has powered transformative progress throughout the university. Photos by Brian Robbins and Bob Toomy.

p. 6
Regynald Washington (center), CEO of Hojeij Branded Foods, one of the nation’s largest airport food service providers, describes Georgia State students as “grounded, respectful and hungry for knowledge.” He is pictured with two such students, seniors Joshua Laster (left) and Maria Bustamante. Photo by Tony Benner.

p. 9
Phil Oneacre (left, with wife, Jeanne) says his feeling of connection with Georgia State was rekindled by the Panthers’ headline-making upset in the first round of the 2001 NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament. Part of the Oneacres’ legacy gift will support scholarships for new generations of Georgia State student-athletes. Photo by Tony Benner.

p. 11
David Cheshier (center), director of Georgia State’s Creative Media Industries Institute, says the CMII will put Georgia State students in better position than ever to take advantage of the explosion of growth in Atlanta’s film, music and new-media industries. He is pictured on the roof of the CMII’s future home at 25 Park Place with (left-right) senior Ajahn Richard, senior Cody Stapleton, junior Dee Parker, and senior Nicholas C. Smith. Photo by Tony Benner.

p. 13
For now, the building that adjoins Georgia State’s 25 Park Place facility is empty, but thanks to a record-setting grant from the Woodruff Foundation, it will soon be filled with opportunities for Georgia State communications students. When the building’s transformation into the Creative Media Industries Institute is complete, students will be able to work side by side with artists and entrepreneurs in a vast array of communications specialties, exploring everything from film production and web design to video game programming and virtual reality — and gaining a foothold in an Atlanta media industry that has rapidly become one of the most dynamic in the world. Photo by Rebecca Breyer.