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Giving Back

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Former President **David E. Shi '73** and his wife, **Angela Halfacre Shi '92**, have long championed sustainability.

Former Furman President David E. Shi '73 and his wife, Angela Halfacre Shi '92, have given \$500,000 to the university to provide additional financial support for students who are actively involved in the work of the David E. Shi Center for Sustainability.

The gift, which creates an endowed fund to support student fellowships in the Shi Center, was made in honor of specific individuals who “have made extraordinary contributions to Furman and its commitment to sustainability or to the larger national effort in recent years,” says David Shi. The Shi Center Sustainability Fellowships will be named for those individuals.

Giving Back

Gift from former President David Shi and Angela Halfacre Shi to support student fellowships

BY VINCE MOORE

“Angela and I were eager to step up in support of President (Elizabeth) Davis’s recently announced strategic focus on The Furman Advantage, which ensures that every student has opportunities for engaged learning experiences, and the

Shi Center Fellowships do just that,” says Shi.

The Shi Center was established in 2008 to foster and promote interdisciplinary research and teaching in support of sustainability on campus and in the greater community.

One of the center’s signature programs has been the Student Sustainability Fellows program.

The Fellows program supports Furman undergraduate students in sustainability research, service and internships focused on campus and community-based projects. The fellowships are open to students with any major who are interested in sustainability-related work and are available during the academic year and summer. To date, the program has supported 236 student fellows from almost every major across campus, including 82 summer fellowships and 154 academic year fellowships. The new endowed fund will help expand the fellowship program.

“This timely and important gift will create even more quality experiences for Furman students who are interested in sustainability and who want to make a difference in the communities where they live,” says President Davis. “The Shi Center fellowships will also support The Furman Advantage, our new vision to transform the student experience and redefine a liberal arts and sciences education. We are grateful to both David and Angela for their extraordinary generosity and their commitment to the university.”

The Shi Center has developed innovative, award-winning programs that provide educational and research opportunities for students,

Those honored by the Shis’ gift with named endowed student fellowships include:

Carroll Rushing and Billie Cleveland
 Judy Cromwell '70
 Richard Cullen '71
 David '72 and Frances Ellison
 James Grantham
 Francie Heller

Carl '65 and Lynne Kohrt
 Jaime '79 and Mary Anne Lanier '79
 Erwin Maddrey
 Richard Robb
 Todd Rupert
 Frank '61 and Susan Shaw

Minor Shaw
 Tom Skains
 Fred Stanback
 Mary Sterling
 Peace Sterling
 Jim Thompson '65

faculty, staff and community members. In addition to the student fellows program, the center oversees the Community Conservation Corps, in its sixth year, which partners students with community volunteers to weatherize homes for underserved families in the greater Greenville community.

The center also hosts applied research projects centered on sustainable food and farming, energy conservation,

renewable energy, water quality, transportation, economic development, campus practices and other quality of life issues. Upon Shi’s retirement as president in 2010, the Furman Board of Trustees voted to name the center in his honor to recognize his commitment and national leadership in sustainability and energy conservation during his 16 years as president.

Furman has been widely recognized for its commit-

ment to sustainability. The University received the 2016 Campus Sustainability Achievement Award from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) “for outstanding achievements and progress toward sustainability.” AASHE also awarded Furman a STARS Gold Rating in recognition of its sustainability achievements nationwide. ●



NEXT

Reflection on Furman going forward

Obesity, Autism-spectrum disorders. Food and insect allergies.

All of these conditions are seen with increasing frequency in America’s children, and none of them can be “cured” by the health care industry acting alone. How do we harness the collective power of health care providers, public health experts, advocacy groups and others to create communities that support the health of these children? Furman’s new Institute for the Advancement of Community Health (IACH) is tackling such issues and making Greenville a model for improving the health of the whole community.

(See feature on page 22.)

Traditionally, health care systems have focused on treating patients when they enter the doctor’s office or emergency room. Recently, though, many have been asked to promote health and prevent illness in populations as part of the effort to contain health care costs. This means understanding not just the anatomy and physiology of the human body, but also the social, legal, educational, political and religious factors that affect people’s health where they live and work.

Our faculty and students are already doing this. For more than 20

years, Furman students in medical ethics and medical sociology courses have spent time in local health care practices, seeing how these disciplines inform professionals in their daily work. Nearly a decade ago, Furman led the creation of a program at Greenville Health System (GHS) that continues to provide pre-med students exposure to practicing physicians to better know if this is their vocation before spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on medical school.

Our students have been working with LiveWell Greenville (a network of organizations that promotes healthy eating and active living) since its inception to deliver community health programs and conduct faculty-supervised research to assess their effectiveness. Our new minor in medicine, health and culture and major in public health are preparing students to address health issues in all of their scientific, social and human dimensions.

IACH is connecting these efforts, creating a “home” for faculty, staff and students from different

departments, and in the community with our partners. Our partnership with GHS continues to expand as we work together to address social determinants of health and envision the future workforce that will best support the health of our community. Recognizing that this workforce must reflect the diverse populations it serves, we are partnering with the Riley Institute, the USC School of Medicine–Greenville, and regional historically black colleges and universities to increase diversity and support inclusion.

IACH is helping create forward-thinking education and research opportunities. As communities across the country grapple with these same issues, we are establishing Furman and Greenville as models to help guide others. Ultimately, though, our goal is to help communities support the health of our children and adults.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eli Hestermann is executive director of IACH at Furman and pre-professional studies at GHS.