



PHOTOS BY MATT LESTER

# 2014-15 REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT



PHOTO BY RYAN SMITH

**W**ilson College has long been distinguished by the individual nature of the education it provides to students. While this remains true, it is the act of working together that allows us to realize our mission to prepare students for “ethical leadership and humane stewardship of our communities and our world.” Teamwork is also the essence of the liberal arts tradition that we continue to practice at Wilson.

Togetherness at Wilson springs from the institution’s long-standing values that seek to nurture—the individual, the mind, the community. As I looked back on the accomplishments of the past year, it was evident that these values still drive the College today.

In this *Report of the President*, I will share some of the achievements of the past year that would not have been possible without people from the Wilson community coming together. And I’m sure that many of you will see that the same spirit of Wilson that you experienced is alive and well today.

Last September we announced the exciting news that Wilson was awarded the largest federal grant in the College’s history. The \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Strengthening Institutions Program is part of the federal government’s Title III program. The award was both the culmination and beginning of a collaborative effort by the Office of Institutional Advancement, the library, academic support, information technology, academic affairs and student development, first in creating and now in implementing a plan to improve academic quality and support for low-income students.

The resulting plan ties directly to the new learning commons of the John Stewart Memorial Library. Upgrades to the campus technology infrastructure and new software systems set the table for a variety of services intended to increase enrollment and strengthen retention. Among these programs is a new learning management system that provides improved tracking of academic performance, increasing our ability to provide timely academic support.

The grant has also brought about a restructuring that brings together the library, academic support and information technology under the newly created position of associate vice president for information and library services. This new position will work with another initiative under the grant, the new Office of Institutional Effectiveness. As part of the College’s plan to build our capacity for data-driven decision-making processes—both at the academic and institutional levels—the associate dean for institutional effectiveness will help improve our data collection and analysis, which will have an impact on a range of programs.

The implications of the Title III grant, which were reviewed in detail last fall, reach much deeper and require a consortium of departments to successfully implement. This past year we have reached a number of benchmarks in the Title III process and we look forward to welcoming new staff that will help propel the programs in the next year.

Connected to the Strengthening Institutions grant is a reworking of the First-Year Seminars (FYS). Improved retention efforts are embedded into the Wilson Today plan and as academic affairs and student development began the process of redesigning the FYS program, Wilson’s faculty stepped forward to drive the process. Intended to prepare first-year students for the rigor and expectations of coursework at Wilson, the new program was unveiled this fall with an improved structure and greatly increased faculty participation.



Clockwise from left: students on campus, Master of Fine Arts class, nursing, First-Year Seminar.

FYS was not the only academic program in which a group effort led to a successful launch. The initial on-campus residency portion of the new Master of Fine Arts degree program—which kicked off its first session in late May—has collaboration as its core philosophy. The program, which has concentrations in the visual arts and choreography, had degree candidates in both concentrations working side by side, incorporating the perspectives and experiences of each discipline into their own work. You can read more about it in this issue on page 30.

Wilson's new Bachelor of Science degree program in nursing received approval this summer from the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing. This, of course, was very late in the admissions process. But through cooperation between the Department of Nursing and our Office of Admissions, we were poised to begin enrolling students immediately, resulting in an inaugural class of 22 students in the onsite BSN program.

Academic opportunities and enrollment met again when, at this time last year, we began a partnership with FriendlyPA—a nonprofit organization formed to increase cultural and educational exchange between Pennsylvania and China. I traveled to China and had the opportunity to meet with counterparts at Chinese universities, as well as having the chance to speak with some prospective students and their families. The advantage of having a partner like FriendlyPA is that it has staff members in China who know Wilson and the Chinese educational system. And by traveling there, we are able to interact and develop the kind of relationship that yields positive results over time.

An outcome of my visit to China, this summer we entered into an agreement with the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics (SWUFE) in Chengdu, China. The pact provides opportunities for Wilson professors to serve on SWUFE's summer faculty and reserves two spots for Wilson students to attend the university during a sum-

mer session. These relationships will take time to fully develop, but when combined with our Office of Admissions presence in the Middle East last year, we have begun to see the results. The latest *U.S. News* ranking for "Most International Students" put Wilson ninth in our region for most international population, with seven percent of students coming from outside of the United States.

Enrollment, as these examples demonstrate, is an effort of the whole campus. That was true once again this year as we welcomed a new class of 166 students—the largest we have seen since 1969. This marks two years in a row that we have reached traditional undergraduate enrollment levels not seen in 40 years or more. The overall enrollment now sits at 923, a 21 percent increase over last fall. The largest increase was in graduate programs, which now stand at 234 students in six programs—a 54 percent increase over fall 2014. In aggregate, we have seen a 39.4 percent increase in enrollment since fall 2013, and none of that could have occurred with the combined efforts of so many campus constituencies.

Alumnae and alumni also came together this year to have an important impact on the quality of life for our students. The Wilson Fund has a direct impact on our students' lives, with all donations going directly to the current operating budget in support of, among other things, scholarships and the academic program. The College has been working to strengthen the donor base for the fund and, recognizing the strength of community among our alumnae, one of Wilson's most ardent supporters, Marguerite Brooks Lenfest '55, made a \$300,000 matching challenge gift through the Wilson Fund.

And Wilson alumnae responded. Many donors chose to increase their gifts, with 184 giving more than the previous year. Another 103 who did not give at all during the 2013-14 fiscal year made gifts and 52 alumnae who had not supported the College since the Wilson Today



From left: vegetable literacy program, field hockey practice, students on alternative spring break.

plan was approved made donations of support. What I value most in the challenge—more than the fact that it helped us exceed the Wilson Fund goal for the first time since 2007—is the demonstration of the strength we have when we come together as a community, in this case to support our students and their future.

The Alumnae Association of Wilson College provides another example for us that you can read about on page 42, with the introduction of the Silver Lining Fund. This association fund will help provide financial assistance to students who are experiencing a crisis or unexpected financial need. Events of this nature happen to students each year, and the compassion and community that AAWC demonstrates through this program is truly admirable.

This past year we began to see a much wider degree of interaction between the College and the local community, as well. The partnership between Wilson and the Borough of Chambersburg on the Streetscape and Pedestrian Safety program, as well as the Fulton Center for Sustainable Living's "Vegetable Literacy" program—which was developed with funding from Summit Health and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for elementary school-age children in Franklin County—serve as examples of the College working together with local groups.

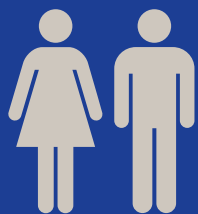
But perhaps no project captures the interaction of the College and the community like one that took place this October. Internationally acclaimed sculptor Patrick Dougherty came to Wilson to produce one

of his "stickworks" installations. These sculptures are interactive, public art pieces and his process very purposefully gives a sense of ownership to the community by using local volunteers to assist with the construction of the piece. For three weeks in October, faculty, staff and students were joined by area residents and organizations in the physical task of bending and weaving saplings and branches to create an amazing sculpture on the campus green (a feature article about the process is scheduled for the winter issue of *Wilson Magazine*). The project also drew an array of co-sponsors to the project, including Downtown Chambersburg Inc., the Chambersburg Council for the Arts, Volvo Construction Equipment, the Penn State Mont Alto School of Forestry and Shippensburg University. Events of this nature broaden the College's reputation and help to strengthen existing connections or create new ones.

There are many more accomplishments from this past year that speak to the power of working together: the women's field hockey team won the National Collegiate Academic Team Award for team grade-point average from the National Field Hockey Coaches Association; the 50th anniversary of the Orr Forum; the "No More" campaign against domestic abuse and sexual violence and the "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" efforts; and the support of our Nepali students, who initiated a fundraising campaign to help their homeland after the tragic earthquake earlier this year.

## WILSON BY THE NUMBERS

FALL 2015 ENROLLMENT



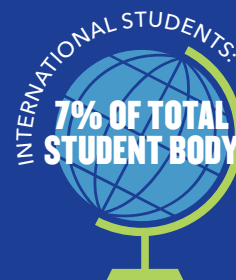
**923**  
21.6% INCREASE



FALL-TO-FALL  
RETENTION  
**72%**  
NATIONAL AVG. = 67%



total  
applications  
**16%**  
increase

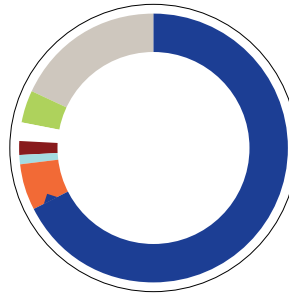


**17.7%** INCREASE IN NEW STUDENTS  
**166 IN TOTAL**

# WILSON COLLEGE

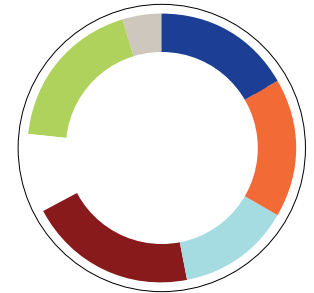
## 2014-15 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### REVENUE



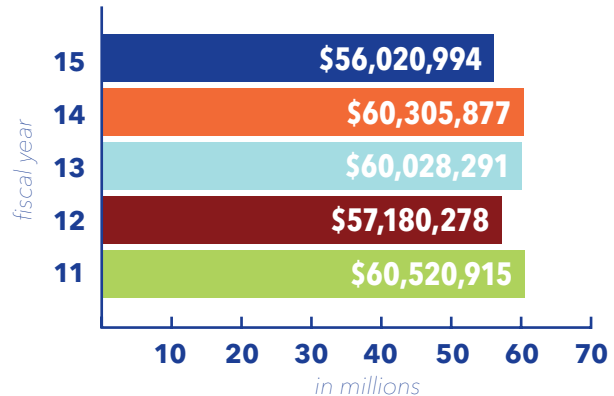
- STUDENT TUITION/FEES ..... 67.5%
- PRIVATE GIFTS ..... 5.8%
- GOVERNMENT GRANTS ..... 1.1%
- INTEREST & DIVIDENDS ..... 1.7%
- INTEREST RECEIVED FROM TRUSTS HELD BY OTHERS ..... 2.0%
- OTHER SOURCES ..... 3.9%
- AUXILIARY REVENUE ..... 18.0%

### EXPENSES



- INSTRUCTIONAL ..... 16.8%
- ACADEMIC SUPPORT ..... 16.8%
- STUDENT SERVICES ..... 13.5%
- INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT ..... 20.2%
- AUXILIARY ENTERPRISES ..... 9.5%
- FINANCIAL AID ..... 18.6%
- INFRASTRUCTURE/DEFERRED MAINTENANCE ..... 4.6%

### ENDOWMENT VALUE



So much of what happened this past year could not have occurred without the Wilson community coming together, determined to make our collective future brighter. But to bring this report to a close, I want to tell you about one more event. March marked a notable milestone for the College's Alternative Spring Break. For 20 years, Wilson students have been forgoing their spring break time on sunny beaches or in the comfort of their own homes to build houses for others through Habitat for Humanity. This year they were in the Ohio communities of Athens and Logan. In her fourth Alternative Spring Break trip, Kellen Kissinger '15 summed up the power of working together when she said, "Sometimes you're at the edge of your comfort zone with some of the work, but everyone supports you. There's no fear of failure with a support system like that." **W**

  
more than  
**40%**  
of students  
are first in  
their family to  
attend college

**29**  
MAJORS 

**11:1**  
STUDENT:  
FACULTY RATIO 

NUMBER OF DONORS TO THE  
2014-15 WILSON FUND  
**1,491**  
16% INCREASE

**WILSON FUND TOTAL GIVING \$1,092,674**

