

Winter 2025

reflection

———— The Montreat College Magazine ————



*President Paul J. Maurer standing in McAlister Hall
Gymnasium basement after Hurricane Helene*

A VISION OF INSTITUTIONAL GREATNESS

**President Paul J. Maurer
Guides Montreat College
Through His First 10 Years and
Hurricane Helene**

Pages 5, 12

+ President's Report Inside

Page 30





in this
ISSUE

- 5** Paul J. Maurer Reflects on a Decade of Leadership
- 12** Hurricane Helene Interrupts the Fall 2024 Semester
- 19** Cybersecurity Bachelor's Degree Celebrates 10th Year
- 25** Alayne Frith's Internship Fast Tracks His Career
- 28** Jill Lossiah Makes a Difference for the Cherokee Nation
- 30** 2023-2024 President's Report





A Vision for Institutional Greatness: Paul J. Maurer Reflects on a Decade of Leadership at Montreat College

When Paul Maurer first heard about the open presidency at Montreat College from Bill Peterson, a partner with Carter Baldwin Executive Search, he didn't take long to make up his mind.

"Montreat had a reputation as a struggling institution," he recalled, sipping a cup of coffee in his office just inside the main entrance to Gaither Hall. "After an hour on the phone, I said, 'Bill, I'm a rational man, and a rational man does not take the presidency at Montreat College. Thank you for the call. Goodbye.'"

That was the last time Maurer expected to hear from the small Christian college neatly tucked into a cove of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Western North Carolina. However, less than a month later, Peterson was back on the phone, urging the former president of Sterling College and father of four to travel to Charlotte for a conversation with Montreat's search committee. While in his heart he was running away from the position, Maurer agreed to come to gain some interview practice.

Three days after the interview, however, Peterson called yet again. This time, he informed Maurer that all 12 members of the search committee had unanimously chosen him as their top candidate for the position.

"The single biggest thing for me was his drive," remembered Justin Ramb ('94), who chaired the search committee. "We needed somebody to come in with an internal drive, motivation and appropriate aggressiveness to keep the school going."

Over the next few days, Maurer began to sense that God's plan was unfolding in a much different direction than he had expected.

"Joellen said to me, 'I think the Lord might be in this, and if so, we should pay attention,'" he remembered. "We came to Montreat as an act of obedience to what we understood to be God's call. I came in the fear of the Lord because saying no to God is not a great idea."

Ten years later, their decision to follow God's call has been affirmed in countless ways.

"It has been clear to us the entire time we've been here that God has been present in this," Joellen said. "That doesn't make everything easy, but it is clear that Paul is the right leader for this time and place. Our kids — Jon, Elizabeth, Daniel and Sarah — they've been a part of this journey. They've given their love and support for what he is doing, and all of them are extremely proud of the work that he's done."

Rhythm

Maurer is a man of rhythm, not in terms of musical talent, but in his sense of order and structure. Almost every morning, he goes on a brisk, purposeful walk. The first half of the hour is devoted to worship and prayer. For the remaining time, he listens to an audiobook or podcast. No matter the location or the weather, he begins his day with his personal trifecta of spiritual refreshment, intellectual stimulation and exercise.

"Words cannot capture how much strength I derive from this simple habit," he said.

A former Division I athlete, Maurer played goalie and served as co-captain of the men's soccer team at the University of Cincinnati. Although he admits to being more of an athlete than a student at the time, he began his preparation for a career in law or law enforcement. In fact, during his first

semester at the University of Cincinnati, he had a job application for the FBI sitting on his desk. By Christmas, however, that desire was replaced by a sense that God was leading him in a different direction.

During the week between Christmas and New Year's of 1979, Maurer attended Urbana, organized by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Urbana brings together 10,000-20,000 college students every three years on the campus of the University of Illinois to explore the world of mission and ministry with speakers and thought-leaders from around the globe. That year, Billy Graham delivered the closing keynote address.

"I'll never forget his address because it changed my life," Maurer recalled. "He told us we should get well-prepared for the ministry God was calling us to. By the age of 20, I had decided to set aside the decade of my 20s as a decade of preparation for the years 30 to 70 in ministry. Everything I did during the decade of my 20s was focused on preparation for the years 30 to 70."

After graduating from the University of Cincinnati in 1983, Maurer traveled the globe, witnessing extreme poverty firsthand. He visited missionaries in Egypt and Taiwan, had the opportunity to see Mother Teresa's ministries in Calcutta and met with Vatican officials. He then returned to the United States to attend Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

"I did my Master of Divinity thinking that my call was to be a pastor," Maurer recalled. "After finishing my M.Div., I got halfway through my ordination exams, and I said, 'I don't think this is it.' By that point, I had met Joellen. We got married right after I graduated from seminary, and the next few years were spent trying to discern the vehicle for my call."

Eventually, Christ-centered higher education came into focus, leading him to enroll at Claremont Graduate University, where he earned a Ph.D. in political science. Following stints at Westmont College and Trinity International University, Maurer was named the 12th president of Sterling College in 2009. However, after three and a half years at the Kansas school, the board of trustees informed him that his contract wasn't going to be renewed. It was devastating and disorienting.

"The chief takeaway from that experience was that I had not appropriately connected the dots of my Christian faith to my leadership," he reflected. "I'm Type A. I'm intense and driven. I'm going to make a list and check off boxes. I love getting stuff done, and I push hard. I have high expectations for myself and the people around me, and I had defaulted to being effective."

Values

Drawing from his previous experience, Maurer knew his presidency at Montreat College needed to be reoriented. As soon as he started at Montreat College in July 2014, he shared at his first all-employee meeting his "suite of values" that he developed during his self-described "year of wilderness" following Sterling. Rooted in biblical principles, Maurer identified seven prioritized values: **humility, trust, relationships, effectiveness, urgency, belief that God is at work and extraordinary commitment.**

"I ordered my priorities around what I believe to be a biblical teaching of leadership," he said. "I identified humility as the quality Jesus seemed to consider most important in leadership. I knew I needed to grow in my own personal humility. If I could grow in this, it would influence *how* I got the job done."



President Paul J. Maurer and Joellen Maurer, Welcome Week 2023

President Paul J. Maurer and Joellen Maurer with members of the president's executive leadership team and board of trustees, Fall Convocation 2024



“He came in with a sense of who he was,” noted Dr. David Bruce, the former executive assistant to Rev. Billy Graham who joined Montreat’s board of trustees months after Maurer’s arrival. “He knew his gifts and abilities. He had a very clear understanding of who he was. We look back now and know that’s been central to the whole growth of the school.”

Sensing that the institution had drifted from its foundation, Maurer initiated a thorough review of the school’s core documents. This deliberate and transparent effort culminated in revising the college’s statement of faith and introducing a community life covenant that went into effect on July 1, 2017.

“I believed then and I believe now that was the most important thing that we did toward the growth, stability, and strength of Montreat College,” Maurer reflected. “We had to do a lot of other things, but the most important part was to clarify our identity.”

“This was a new day for Montreat,” Dr. Bruce recalled. “All of it relates to the strength of a biblical perspective and a Christ-honoring, Christ-exalting educational process. He planted a flag of biblical fidelity. Once that was done and he had the strength of the board behind him, then the rest was sailing with his creative thoughts and bringing others around him who could help do the work.”

Growth and Progress

With the college refocused on its mission, Montreat College made substantial progress under Maurer’s guidance:

- Traditional undergraduate **enrollment has increased 65%** since Fall 2014.
- The institution achieved **record enrollment** in nine of his first 10 years.
- Enrollment for the 2024-25 school year set an institutional record with **270 new traditional undergraduate students, the largest incoming class in the college’s 109-year history, including a new record of 214 full-time freshmen.**

In addition, thanks to historic new levels of gift and grant income that began with an anonymous couple making a catalytic \$6 million pledge in 2014, the college has been able to invest in many new programs and campus improvements. A capital campaign was launched in January 2020, the first in over 30 years. To date, over \$90 million in gifts, pledges and grants has been secured. With much to do and continued momentum, the campaign has been extended.

During Maurer’s tenure, the college constructed a new outdoor athletic complex on its Black Mountain campus and completed major renovations of McLeod Hall, Abbott Hall and Howerton Dining Hall as well as over four dozen minor and medium-sized renovations and upgrades.

Over the past decade, Montreat College has also emphasized STEM-related programs, emerging as a national leader in cybersecurity education and workforce development as recognized by the National Security Agency and the White House.

“I think back 10 years at his amazing amount of vision and how quickly he grasped the whole cyber angle,” Ramb marveled. “I think there are other colleges that look back and go, ‘Man, we should have thought of that.’”

For Maurer, collaborating with top policy and security leaders in North Carolina and the United States government has been a “full-circle” experience, reconnecting him with his early aspirations to work in the spheres of law, enforcement, and the public good.

“There are just so many elements that I enjoy about the job, but the most fulfilling part is that I believe I’m doing what the Lord has gifted me to do,” Maurer said.

President Paul J. Maurer and Joellen Maurer with students, Fall Welcome Week 2024



Vision

“Being an elite or wealthy college does not make it great,” said Maurer. “We are neither elite nor wealthy, but we think we can become increasingly great. What makes an institution of higher learning great? We think it revolves around the relentless pursuit of truth and the development of humans toward fulfilling their God-given potential. We think that combining belief in a sovereign and good Creator with the liberal arts way of educating human beings is the best form of education ever developed for human flourishing.”

Maurer is currently the fourth longest-serving president among the 36 independent colleges and universities in North Carolina, and he signed a five-year contract extension in 2023. Though he is grateful for the strength of the institution today compared to 10 years ago, Maurer knows there is much more to do.

“The vision is qualitative, not quantitative,” he said. “I believe Montreat can and will increasingly become one of the finest educational institutions in the United States. Montreat is a remnant of what used to be the norm in American higher education, a school that sees its students as intellectual, spiritual, and relational beings, and whose job is to develop virtue and character. Our students are three-dimensional human beings, not one-dimensional economic beings. We provide a healthy culture that shapes people, not one that simply helps them to get a job. Our vision propels us every day, and we hire through that lens. In the end, what makes Montreat such a special place is the people. We will continue to build.”

“With a Christian-oriented university, there will always be cultural headwinds of change and pressure on the school, but Paul is an

extraordinary pilot,” emphasized Dr. Bruce. “President Maurer is a man of vision and clear understanding of the times that we live in. There was no doubt a Holy Spirit moment for him 10 years ago because none of the statistics at the time would compel a man of his strength to come our direction, but he did, and we’re grateful.”



“Being an elite or wealthy college does not make it great. We are neither elite nor wealthy, but we think we can become increasingly great. What makes an institution of higher learning great? We think it revolves around the relentless pursuit of truth and the development of humans toward fulfilling their God-given potential. We think that combining belief in a sovereign and good Creator with the liberal arts way of educating human beings is the best form of education ever developed for human flourishing.”

Paul J. Maurer
President and CEO of
Montreat College



Bridge damage connecting Assembly Drive and Lookout Road after Hurricane Helene

God's Light on Dark Clouds

When Hurricane Helene made landfall at 11:10 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 26, 2024, the storm made history as the first recorded Category 4 hurricane to strike Florida's Big Bend region since records began in 1851. By that time, however, the town of Montreat and its Western North Carolina neighbors were already drenched.

Because of a line of slow-moving showers and a stalled cold front, the region had already received at least two months' worth of normal precipitation in just 48 hours. Then Helene barreled her way 500 miles north, unleashing relentless rain that caused catastrophic flooding and unimaginable damage in the mountains and southern foothills.

The devastating flooding also left its mark on Montreat's campus and, unfortunately, brought extreme damage to the homes of some of our employees and students' families. Ten campus buildings sustained damage. McAlister Hall,

Montreat's gymnasium, was consumed by the waters of the roaring Flat Creek, severely damaging the building and displacing several athletic teams for their seasons. McAlister remains offline for the remainder of the academic year while the building undergoes months of extensive restorations.

While Hurricane Helene lashed out on North Carolina's mountains, President Paul Maurer was en route home from South Korea, where he had attended the Fourth Lausanne Congress, a global gathering of evangelical Christian leaders. Upon landing in Charlotte, he learned that although all Montreat students on campus were safe, they were without electricity or running water. With roads impassable and power lines down, the college issued a shelter-in-place order. Thanks to rapid assistance from Samaritan's Purse and Coca-Cola Consolidated in Charlotte, bottled



Classroom in McAlistier Hall after Hurricane Helene

water was quickly delivered to sustain students through the weekend. By Monday, all students had been safely relocated off campus.

“The reality of the magnitude of the devastation is shocking,” Maurer told The Gospel Coalition. “It is utter devastation. You can see all the pictures and videos online, but it is completely different to drive through it, to live in it. Words cannot describe how bad it is.”

Over the following weeks, the Montreat College Emergency Response Team, led by Maurer, met daily to assess damages, pray and formulate a plan to resume classes and reopen campus. Through the tireless efforts of the frontline team, Montreat was able to begin classes online on Oct. 14 and reopen campus to students on Oct. 20, less than a month after the storm’s impact.

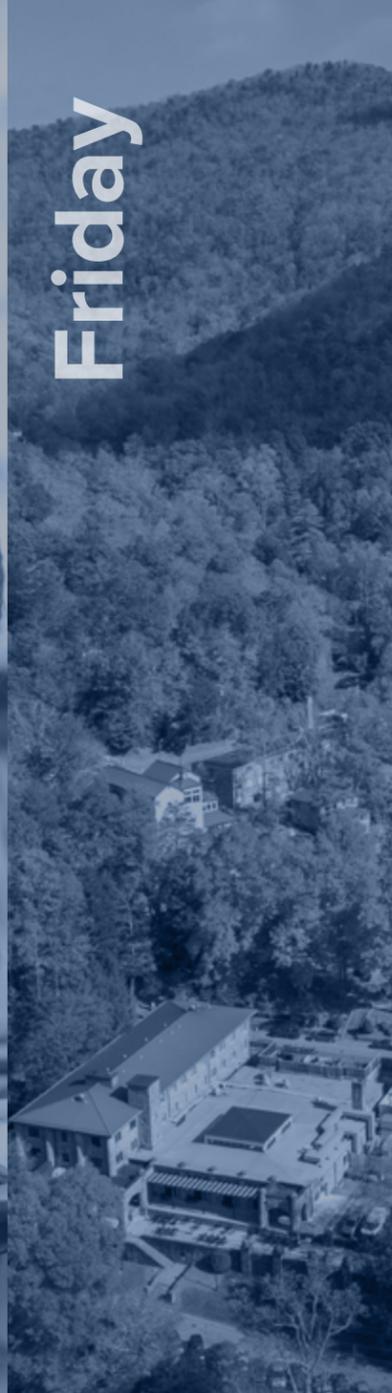
“I want to give special recognition to our Student Life team (especially our residence hall directors), Sharon Randall (Aramark Dining Services), Tommy Hendrix (TKC Management Services) and Bill Hensley (Director of Campus Safety), along with all who worked alongside them,” remarked Maurer in a communication to the Montreat College community. “Their selflessness, dedication, hard work and commitment to ensuring the safety and readiness of our campus have been nothing short of extraordinary, and I am extremely grateful for their servanthood, grit and perseverance over the last few weeks.”

While the reopening of campus marked an important step for Montreat College, the recovery process remains ongoing. The effects of Hurricane Helene are still visible across campus and throughout the region, but the deeper impact will endure for much longer. Yet amid her dark clouds, Hurricane Helene also provided an opportunity for Christ’s light to shine through the unity, resilience, compassion and faith witnessed within the Montreat College community.

“Although this has been a difficult time, I am reminded that our true foundation remains unshaken,” Maurer professed. “When the storms of life come, it is Christ who is our firm anchor. He is our strength and refuge in all seasons, and it is this unshakable hope that sustains us and allows us to grow through any trial.”



McAlistier Hall Gymnasium during Hurricane Helene



Thursday

Friday

Monday

Friday

Tuesday

Monday

Thursday

Thursday

Sept. 26

Sept. 27

Sept. 30

Oct. 4

Oct. 8

Oct. 14

Oct. 17

October 24

Classes after 2:30 p.m. and Friday classes are canceled out of caution.

Shelter-in-place order is given with approximately 450 students safe on campus.

All students are safely relocated off campus.

The main campus has power and partial water restoration.

Power and internet services are fully restored on campus.

Virtual classes begin.

Boil order is lifted in the Town of Montreat.

In-person classes resume.



President Paul J. Maurer with former U.S. Senator Richard Burr and others



Cybersecurity Bachelor's Degree Celebrates 10th Year

When Kelli Burgin arrived on the campus of Montreat College in January 2016, the cybersecurity program had just eight students. Initially introduced in 2012-13 as an information security concentration and minor within the computer information systems major, Montreat College officially launched a dedicated cybersecurity bachelor's degree for the 2014-15 academic year. Although the program was small, adding Burgin to the faculty was an important step in an ambitious plan to establish cybersecurity as a flagship program at the college, even before the first graduate of the program had earned a diploma.

Dr. Jeff Teo had already begun compiling the necessary documentation to pursue designation as a National Center of Academic Excellence, but he needed assistance, and hiring Burgin was part of the solution. A successful information security officer and IT coordinator at an Iowa hospital, Burgin enjoyed her job but was looking to escape the on-call hours. After earning her Certified Information Systems Security certification, she began searching for a teaching job in higher education. She was excited for the opportunity at Montreat, even though it required a 1,000-mile move from Iowa, the only place she'd ever called home.

"I was excited that it was a Christian college," Burgin said. "I had applied for a couple of other positions in Iowa and eastern Nebraska, but this was the best fit and the most exciting to me because not only could I utilize a lot of my career experiences but also I was encouraged to share my faith with my students. That combination was very exciting."

With Burgin's support, Dr. Teo's hard work and vision for the program paid off in September 2017 when Montreat College was designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education by the National Security Agency. Montreat College became the first member of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities to receive the designation.



“
You can't know it all in cybersecurity. It's a constant learning process. That's why we focus on teaching our students the basics but also how to continue to learn.
”

Kelli Burgin
Program Director for the Faculty of Technology and Human Industry and Assistant Professor of Cybersecurity



“That designation gave us the stamp of approval,” Burgin acknowledged. “It also opened some doors with federal agencies because it signifies that your students are getting a good, solid education. We’re still seeing more doors open as we have more graduates entering the workforce. When those students are hired, then we often have interns going to that same company and more graduates being hired in that company. With Charlotte being a major hub for the financial industry and home to several prominent auditing firms, we’ve seen a lot of our graduates step into these roles, contributing to some of the most dynamic and influential companies in the region. It’s been incredibly exciting to witness their impact and success.”

The program’s visibility as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense prompted an increase in requests from area companies for interviews and workshop training. In addition, many students sought opportunities to gain industry-standard certifications such as CompTIA A+ and entry-level credentials such as Network+ or Security+. To meet those demands with an eye on workforce development, the Carolina Cyber Center was established, supported by state funding and a new relationship with Fayetteville Technical Community College.

“With a growing program, it was difficult to provide those resources to others and also teach,” Burgin said. “I met Fayetteville Tech’s point of contact at the Centers of Academic Excellence Symposium, and we immediately struck up a partnership and started working together on projects and grants. We also created an articulation agreement so that their students could transfer to Montreat and continue their bachelor’s studies online.”

This model for workforce development has grown into the Carolina Cyber Network, a consortium of

18 colleges and universities across the state that has caught the attention of national leaders. In 2024, Montreat College and Fayetteville Tech co-hosted White House leaders like National Cyber Director Harry Coker Jr., who praised the Carolina Cyber Network as a model of success that other states should follow to strengthen the nation’s cybersecurity workforce.

In addition, President Paul Maurer has been invited to Capitol Hill to discuss strategies for building and sustaining the national cyber workforce required to face current and future challenges. In 2024, he co-authored *The Code of Honor: Embracing Ethics in Cybersecurity* with nationally recognized cybersecurity expert and Montreat College trustee, Ed Skoudis. This influential book is being integrated into the curricula of leading cybersecurity programs across the country, providing future cybersecurity professionals with a strong ethical foundation.

“Every five years, the NSA requires colleges and universities to apply for redesignation as a National Center of Academic Excellence. Going forward, colleges are required to demonstrate that they’re teaching their students ethics, and a lot of the materials that we’ve developed are being utilized for that purpose,” said Burgin. “We’ve been able to work with other schools that have been teaching cybersecurity a lot longer than we have. They appreciate that we bring professionalism and employability to the curriculum.”

For Burgin, graduates of Montreat’s cyber program stand out because they receive a well-rounded education that goes beyond theory.

“You can’t know it all in cybersecurity. It’s a constant learning process,” Burgin stressed. “That’s why we focus on teaching our students

the basics but also how to continue to learn. By the time you graduate, things are going to be different, so we talk about what’s going on in the world.”

While students who major in cybersecurity are aware of the job security and competitive compensation their future careers can offer, the primary focus of many Montreat students lies elsewhere.

“Our students who come to Montreat and graduate from Montreat understand that their role in cybersecurity is to seek the best for others and to protect others,” said Burgin.

Another advantage of Montreat’s cyber program is that small class sizes allow students to form personal connections with their professors.

“We meet with our students every semester, and one of the first things we ask about is their goals,” Burgin said. “If they don’t know, then we talk about what they feel are their strengths and interests. From there, we talk through some options and opportunities in cyber they could pursue.”

While new technologies such as expanded artificial intelligence continue to emerge and shape the field, Montreat College’s small size provides a distinct advantage in staying at the forefront of cyber education.

“Because we’re small, our process doesn’t take a long time and we can implement those changes within the next academic year,” Burgin said. “A lot of schools can’t do that, so we stay on the cutting edge rather than being five or six years behind because of red tape and bureaucracy.”

In just 12 years of cyber education and a decade of offering a bachelor’s, Montreat College has risen to become a national leader. At the heart

of this success is the college’s long-standing dedication to making a positive impact on the world for Jesus Christ, a commitment that has been present ever since the cyber program’s humble beginnings.

“Bring your curiosity and bring your excitement to learn and your excitement to problem-solve and make the world a better place,” said Burgin in response to what she hopes to see in the next generation of cyber professionals. “That’s the perfect student.”



2012 Montreat College offers information security as a concentration and minor to the computer information systems major.



2014 The program is expanded to offer a cybersecurity major.

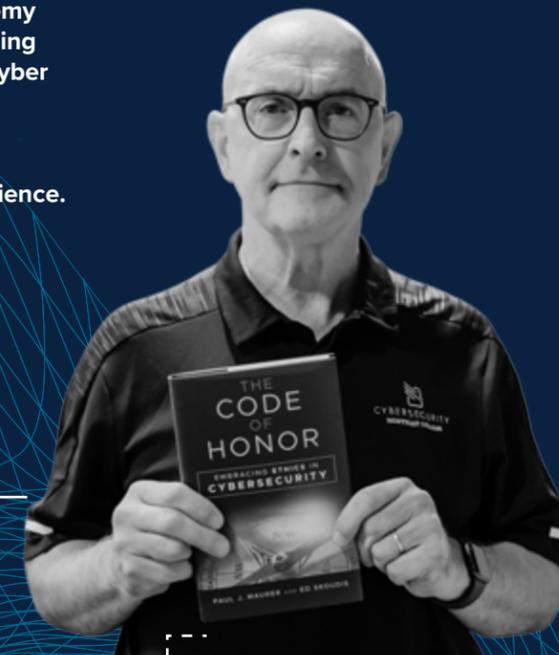
12 YEARS OF CYBERSECURITY

2020 The Carolina Cyber Network is founded as a comprehensive workforce development initiative among select NC educational institutions.



2021 Carolina Cyber Center Academy begins providing accelerated cyber training as an alternative to a traditional college experience.

2023 Madeline Sides ('19) becomes the first cyber graduate to earn a Ph.D.



2016 Akira Shavers becomes the first graduate of the cybersecurity program.



2017 Montreat College earns designation as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education by the National Security Agency.



2019 The Carolina Cyber Center is launched as an innovative path to cybersecurity careers.



2024 President Maurer co-authors *The Code of Honor: Embracing Ethics in Cybersecurity*.

Three current students are awarded prestigious Department of Defense scholarships, bringing the total number of recipients to eight since 2019.

Montreat College co-hosts National Cyber Director Harry Coker Jr. at Fayetteville Tech.



Alayne Frith ('24): Fast Track to Success

After lacing up his spikes, Alayne Frith doesn't stay on the track for long. While wearing the Cavalier navy and gold, the sprinter from the Carolina Sandhills clocked a 60-yard-dash in under eight seconds and ran the 200-yard-dash in less than 25 seconds. After completing a summer internship and graduating from Montreat College in December, Frith is also on the fast track toward a successful career in the music business.

Although Frith lists Hope Mills, North Carolina, as his hometown, he spent his high school years in Germany, where his family was stationed. While attending Vilseck High School in northeastern Bavaria, he set his sights on returning to the United States for college. Wanting something more specialized than a traditional music degree, Frith was intrigued by Montreat College's music business program.

Montreat's program has provided Frith with more than technical knowledge. Through his involvement in the rock ensemble, choir and orchestra, as well as helping organize the annual CODA music festival, Frith has gained a wealth of meaningful experiences. This past year, he also had the opportunity to help produce an album for Ashes & Arrows, an Asheville-based country/rock band and a semifinalist on Season 19 of *America's Got Talent*.

"All the opportunities that I've been able to receive have been great," he said. "I've been able to meet different people in the industry, and I've gotten to work with great people and learn from amazing professors like Professor Auman and Professor Buchwald. They care and want to see you grow and develop. I've been allowed to be in charge of different events to run sound, which has enabled me to grow my skills."

This summer, Frith's hands-on experience extended beyond the Montreat campus through an internship with GNTV Media Ministry, a production company based in Macon, Georgia. Originally launched as a cable television channel, GNTV is celebrating 50 years of partnering with churches, nonprofits and organizations such as The Salvation Army.

The internship allowed Frith to travel and gain real-world experience in live event production. His crew worked at events in Minnesota, Louisiana, Boston and Pittsburgh. One highlight of his time at GNTV was building an LED wall for a conference in West Virginia.

"I got to experience different equipment that I never thought I would use," he said. "They made sure we got hands-on experience."

The experience also deepened his passion for audio production, giving him insights into various aspects of the industry.

"I like seeing people enjoying themselves," he expressed. "That's why I get a lot of joy from wanting to do live events. At the same time, I always thought of music concerts or festivals, but there are many other types of events folks want to put together. I appreciated seeing that."

Frith credits Montreat with preparing him for the internship by teaching him essential liberal arts critical thinking skills and working cooperatively, along with core values such as character, honesty and integrity.

"There is always some way to grow or something new you can learn, and Montreat makes sure you're prepared," he shared. "One day I got to experience a new soundboard, and I didn't know how to use it. I had to challenge myself with how this board works and runs, and I was able to figure

it out. You also have to be able to communicate because you do a lot of talking with co-workers. You have to manage your time well, you have to be teachable and you have to be willing to listen. I learned a lot just by listening and being able to do something repeatedly."

Looking ahead to his future, he hopes to find a job on the live side of the music industry. Wherever his career takes him, Frith is confident that his faith will remain a guiding influence in his life.

"My faith allows me to understand where God's taking me and how He wants to use me," he reflected. "Something may seem like it could be the best opportunity in the world, but God may have a process and another door I should go through that will set me up for something even better and greater."

Similarly, Frith encourages others considering Montreat College to fully embrace the journey.

"You may not know where you want to be or who you want to be, but Montreat College allows you to find God and explore different opportunities and expand your knowledge," he said. "There's something about being at a small school where you get to grow more as an individual and meet people who can help you be where you want to be later in life. It's a great school."



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Alayne Frith
Montreat Alumnus

Instant Impact: Jill Lossiah ('25) Makes a Difference With New Skills

A testament to resilience and determination, Jill Lossiah is dedicated to creating a brighter future not only for herself but also for her five children and many others.

Raised in a blend of Cherokee and non-Cherokee cultures, Lossiah currently serves as the senior office administrator for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian Public Health and Human Services. She's also on her way to earning a Master of Science in Management and Leadership (MSML) through the Adult and Graduate Studies (AGS) program at Montreat College. In addition to those demands, she's raising her five children, ranging in age from 19 to 3, on her own. Yet, through it all, her focus remains on others.

"My main goal and aspirations are simply to help people, as we try to guide the community through social needs. As an admin, knowing all the services we offer can really help fulfill a person's needs," she said. "I try to tell people that their situation won't last forever. That's what I tell myself every day. It may feel like a struggle now, but you know the final outcome will be worth it."

Although she became a single parent at a young age, Lossiah didn't allow that to deter her from prioritizing her education. Since 2008, she has accumulated four associate degrees from Southwestern Community College and a business administration and law bachelor's degree from

Western Carolina University. Now, she's taking the next step by pursuing a master's degree at Montreat College.

On track to graduate with her MSML in 2025, Lossiah hasn't waited until the completion of her degree to apply her new knowledge from her master's courses.

"Within the first week that I started my job, I was prompted to help create charters for a committee meeting that we have started," she said. "It just stuck with me because I had just learned how to do it, and before my class, I had never heard of it. It just tickled me because I could instantly use the knowledge that I gained."

"When you have a team, you have to figure out what your objective is and what you're working toward," she explained. "Then, you list out any project cons or obstacles you might face and try to remedy those. You also assign job titles for different people to accomplish what the team is pursuing."

Balancing work, family and education is no easy feat, but Lossiah faces these challenges head-on. Whether it's working late into the night after her children are asleep or dedicating weekends to homework, she remains focused on her goal. Despite setbacks along the way, Lossiah has persisted and remains determined to achieve her dreams.

"Life doesn't stop for anything, and it's just how you overcome it," she said. "In the back of my head, I know I have a goal set and it requires a certain commitment. I'm always hard on myself, and there have been times I've needed to reach out to my advisor, but he's always been very understanding."

Following the completion of her master's in management and leadership, Jill intends to continue her education. Her plan is to pursue a Master of Business Administration or Master of Public Administration while continuing to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those her program serves.

"I want to indulge in the Cherokee language and history. I want to be a leader and hopefully one day obtain a managerial or director's position within our program," she said. "I want to continue to do great work and identify needs for the tribe because there are a lot of different lives this program touches, and I just want to ensure that I'm doing my best."



PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Fiscal Year 2023-2024



Mission Statement

Montreat College is an independent, Christ-centered, liberal arts institution that educates students through intellectual inquiry, spiritual formation and preparation for calling and career, all to impact the world for Jesus Christ.

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Rev. Dr. David Swanson
Rev. Dr. Mark Toone
Ms. Lynne P. Veerman
Mr. Yasser Youssef

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A Letter From the President and CEO

Dear friends of Montreat College,

For over a century, Montreat College has been committed to excellence in providing a private, Christian, liberal arts education that emphasizes intellectual inquiry, spiritual formation and preparation for calling and career. The college's Christ-centered experience ensures that faith is not only discussed but also lived out in every aspect of campus life.

We believe families across North Carolina and the Southeast want and deserve a place like Montreat College, where they can send their sons and daughters with confidence and trust. Here, students receive a high-quality education in a welcoming environment that's friendly to families of faith.

As we reflect on the highlights of Montreat College's 108th academic year, I am filled with gratitude for the ways God continues to bless our community and extend our mission to impact the world for Jesus Christ.

May this prayer surround you with a sense of God's presence in your life as together we continue to grow and learn about our Lord and Savior.

"May God go before you to lead you, God go behind you to protect you, God go beneath you to support you, God go beside you to befriend you. Friends of Jesus Christ, do not be afraid. May the blessing of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be upon you. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen."

Soli Deo gloria,



*Paul J. Maurer, Ph.D.
President and CEO*



Montreat College Achieves Record Enrollment for Ninth Time in 10 Years, Welcomes Largest Incoming Class in College History

For the ninth time in 10 years, Montreat College has achieved record enrollment. Fall Semester 2024 set an institutional record with the largest incoming class in the college's 109-year history, a testament to the college's growing reputation for excellence in Christian higher education.

A total of **656 students** are enrolled in **Montreat College's School of Arts & Sciences (SAS)** for the 2024-2025 academic year, including the highest number of new full-time students in the college's history.

- **270 new full-time students**, marking the largest incoming class ever
- **214 full-time freshmen**, setting a new school record
- **56 transfer students** joining from other institutions
- **373 returning students**, demonstrating continued support for student success

Montreat College Fall 2024 Enrollment Statistics



Total College Enrollment

962



Total Adult & Graduate Studies Enrollment

306



Total School of Arts & Science Enrollment

656



Academic Highlights



[1] Montreat College Celebrates 189 Graduates at 2024 Commencement

Montreat College celebrated its 108th academic year with its spring commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 11, at Anderson Auditorium. The Class of 2024 represented 17 states and three foreign nations: Hungary, Portugal and Spain.



1

[2] Ethics Bowl Team Continues Streak of Success

Montreat College's Ethics Bowl debate team reached the semifinals of the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) Ethics Bowl for the fourth straight year and placed 2nd out of 36 NCICU colleges and universities at this year's competition at the North Carolina Legislative Office Complex in Raleigh.



2

[3] Seniors Shine at Carolinas Psychology Conference

Seniors Karlie Gwyn and Kilia Hasty became the first Montreat College students to present at the esteemed Carolinas Psychology Conference on Saturday, April 13. Hosted by Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina, the event is one of the nation's longest-running undergraduate psychology conferences.



3

[4] White House Praises Carolina Cyber Network

In March 2024, Montreat College and Fayetteville Technical Community College, co-founders of the Carolina Cyber Network with RBX Solutions, co-hosted National Cyber Director Harry Coker Jr., from the White House to discuss the critical role of cybersecurity in national security. Coker is the highest-ranking cybersecurity official in the U.S. government, reporting directly to the president of the United States.



4

Montreat College Signs Transfer Partnerships with four North Carolina Community Colleges

Thanks to new academic partnerships, students at four community colleges in North Carolina can now pursue their bachelor's degrees at Montreat College. Throughout the 2023-24 academic year, Montreat College signed agreements with Gaston College in Dallas; Fayetteville Technical Community College; Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory and Wake Technical Community College in Raleigh, North Carolina's largest community college that serves 70,000 adults annually. Each agreement allows students with associate degrees to seamlessly transfer to Montreat College with junior status to pursue bachelor's degrees in various programs, including criminal justice, cybersecurity and visual communication and experience design.

Honors Program Earns Prestigious Membership

Montreat College's Honors Program has been named an Associate Member of the American Association of Liberal Education (AALE), an organization dedicated to upholding the highest standards of liberal arts learning. The AALE promotes excellence in education by recognizing schools and programs that uphold these standards. By articulating standards, offering rigorous peer-review accreditation and fostering dialogue, the AALE plays a crucial role in advancing liberal arts education in the United States.

New Agreement Increases Opportunities for Latinos

Montreat College and Latin Americans Working for Achievement (LAWA) signed a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) that solidifies its commitment to advancing Latino student access to higher education. Under the new agreement, students receiving a LAWA scholarship receive matching funds equivalent up to 50% of annual tuition costs at Montreat College, providing deserving students with an opportunity to thrive academically and personally.

Montreat College Publishes Groundbreaking Cybersecurity Ethics Book

President Paul Maurer and Ed Skoudis, a member of Montreat's Board of Trustees and a leading cybersecurity expert, co-authored *The Code of Honor: Embracing Ethics in Cybersecurity*. The National Security Agency commissioned the new book, which significantly impacts the field of cybersecurity.



Athletic Highlights



[5] Top 10 Cross Country Teams Compete at Nationals

Ethan Stamey (Franklin, North Carolina) earned All-American honors, leading the men to a 10th place finish, their best finish in school history, while the women's cross country team finished 17th and recorded their second-best nationals finish.



[6] Blevins Wins National Title in Long Jump

Dustin Blevins claimed the first national championship for Montreat's program since 2020 with a school record jump of 7.66 m in the men's long jump. The senior from King, North Carolina, was named Most Outstanding Athlete at both the Appalachian Athletic Conference (AAC) indoor and outdoor championships. In addition to Blevins, junior Ruchen Blaauw and senior Dylan Branch earned All-American honors on the indoor oval. This year's outdoor track and field championships also included All-American performances from Ali Ray in the 10,000 m event, Branch in the 3,000 m steeplechase and a second honor for Blevins in the triple jump.



[7] Women's Soccer Claims Top Four Conference Finish

Montreat College earned a home playoff game en route to a 10-4 conference record and an 11-6 season overall. Senior JJ Aalbue (Winona Lake, Indiana) was named Player of the Year in the AAC.



[8] Women's Basketball Enjoys Postseason Qualification in 2023-24

The Montreat women's basketball team equaled its longest win streak in over a decade en route to a 16-13 (13-9 AAC) record and a berth in the conference tournament during its 2023-24 season.

Baseball Ends Season Among AAC Tournament's Final Four

Montreat College baseball posted its first winning record in conference play since 2009 and came within a game of reaching the AAC title game and an automatic bid to the national tournament. The Cavaliers ended their season with a 29-25-1 overall record.

[9] Softball Reaches Highest Season Win Total in Two Decades

The Montreat softball team closed out its 2024 home slate with a nonconference sweep against the Carolina University Bruins, giving the Cavaliers their most victories in a single season since 2004. Overall, the Cavaliers finished 31-19.

[10] Thirteen Montreat Athletes Honored at Cavalier Court of Excellence Event

The annual Cavalier Court of Excellence ceremony honored 13 student-athletes for demonstrating high levels of academic achievement, responsibility, respect, integrity, sportsmanship and servant leadership. Sydney Jordan of the women's soccer team took home the Cavalier of Excellence Award, one of the highest accolades a student-athlete at Montreat can obtain.



2024-2025 New Faculty



Dr. Michelle Coleman – Assistant Professor of Business

B.A., Literature (UNC Asheville)
M.S.S., Sports Marketing and Administration (United States Sports Academy)
Doctor of Strategic Leadership (Regent University)

Dr. Coleman has served as a sales leader for the National Basketball Development League and led a successful marketing campaign for “The Cause Within You” by Matthew Barnett, which became a New York Times Bestseller.



Dr. Merry Leigh Dameron – Assistant Professor of Psychology and Human Services

B.A., Communications (Gardner-Webb University)
M.A., School Counseling (Lenoir-Rhyne University)
Ph.D., Counselor Education and Supervision (UNC Charlotte)

Dr. Dameron’s areas of expertise include social justice in education, multicultural education and competency, and school counseling praxis.



Micajah Durham – Reference Instruction Librarian

B.A., Anthropology (University of North Carolina Greensboro)
Master of Library and Information Science (University of North Carolina Greensboro)

Durham’s expertise lies in library instruction, instructional design, information literacy, research, and working with archives and special collections.



Dr. Abigail Grant – Assistant Professor of Counseling Psychology and Marriage and Family Therapy

B.S., Applied Biotechnology (University of Georgia)
M.S., Marriage and Family Therapy (Mercer University School of Medicine)
Ph.D., Medical Family Therapy (Saint Louis University School of Medicine)
Postdoctoral Fellowship (University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center)

Dr. Abigail Grant specializes in marriage and family therapy, medical family therapy, and integrated behavioral health.



Dr. Michael W. Halcomb – Assistant Professor of Humanities

B.S., Bible/Youth & Family Ministries (Kentucky Christian University)
M.Div., (Lexington Theological Seminary)
M.A., Biblical Studies (Asbury Theological Seminary)
M.A., Linguistic Theory & Typology (University of Kentucky)
Ph.D., Biblical Studies (Asbury Theological Seminary)

Halcomb brings a wealth of knowledge in New Testament studies, Koine Greek, linguistics, language pedagogy, composition and rhetoric. In his 14 years of teaching experience, Dr. Halcomb has taught at a range of institutions.



Dr. InChan Hwang – Assistant Professor of Cybersecurity (Data Science)

B.S., Computer Science (Georgia Southwestern State University)
M.S., Software Engineering (Ajou University)

With experience as a software engineer at NPCore and an assistant research engineer at Creative Solutions in South Korea, Dr. Hwang has a background in cybersecurity software development, radio frequency signal repeater design and future internet architecture research.



Dr. Tara Kenyon – Assistant Professor of Business

B.A., Education (Nicholls State University)
MBA, Finance (Louisiana State University)
Ph.D., Management (International School of Management)

With eight years of teaching experience and specialized knowledge in corporate finance and international business, Dr. Kenyon has served as an adjunct professor in the MBA program at the International School of Management in Paris and taught real estate finance at Columbus State University and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.



Dr. Tora Kincaid – Visiting Assistant Professor for Clinical Mental Health Counseling

B.S., Psychology and Human Services (Montreat College)
M.A., Clinical Mental Health Counseling (Montreat College)
Ph.D., Counselor Education and Supervision (Capella University)

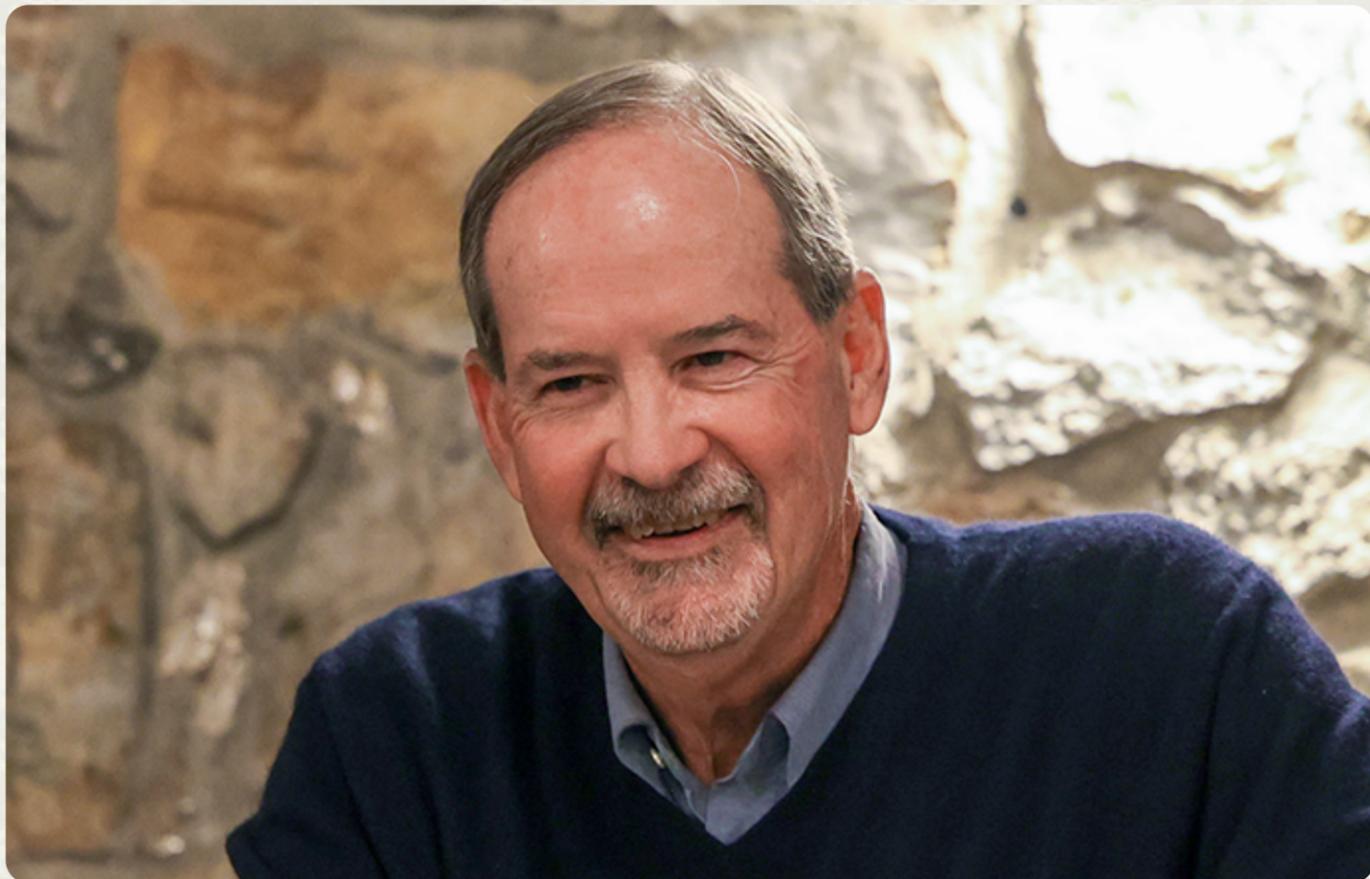
Kincaid specializes in clinical mental health counseling and counselor education and supervision, bringing six years of teaching experience from institutions such as Lenoir-Rhyne University, Capella University and Montreat College.



Melissa Watkins – Visiting Assistant Professor of Outdoor Recreation

B.S., Outdoor Education (Montreat College)
M.S., Environmental Education (Montreat College)

Melissa Watkins has served as a trip guide with the Blue Ridge Hiking Company and facilitated nature camps and outdoor skills workshops throughout Western North Carolina. With over a decade of experience in roles such as rock climbing instructor, kayaking coach, and course director for Montreat’s Discovery program, Melissa is passionate about equipping students with practical skills and fostering a deep appreciation for the outdoors.



Don King Reaches 50 Years at Montreat College

“For my wife and I, when we first drove into Montreat that first time and went up the little rise and saw Lake Susan on the right-hand side after having been in the Midwest, we looked at each other and said, ‘We think we’ve come to the promised land,’” King recalled. Since then, the father of four adult children and grandfather to 13 has called Montreat home with his wife, Jeanine. The 2023-2024 academic year marked the conclusion of his 50th year at the Christian college in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

“What I hope people will recall about me is someone who really cared about students, someone who really cared about his discipline, and someone who did what he could to bring together faith and learning within his discipline.”

Don King
Professor of English

Scan the code to read King’s full reflection on half a century of service:



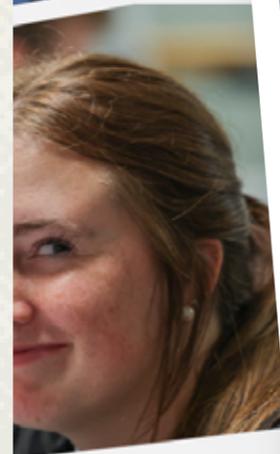
More Than a Summer Camp



SUMMER EXPERIENCE
MONTREAT COLLEGE

Providing an opportunity to live and learn together, COMPASS offers an academic and social setting where you can meet new friends from a variety of places while you develop your skills and interests. COMPASS provides key insights into a potential career path and gives a glimpse into the joys of college life in a Christian community.

Students who attend COMPASS receive a \$2,000 Montreat College Scholarship!



To learn more, visit www.montreat.edu/compass.

Keystone Scholarship Dinner

Montreat College donors generously gave more than \$650,000 to the Keystone Scholarship Fund in conjunction with the Keystone Scholarship Dinner held on April 25, 2024, at The Revelry in Charlotte.

Approximately 215 guests listened to Dr. Vincent Phillip Muñoz's keynote address titled "What in the World Is Going on at American Universities?" An award-winning teacher and a popular lecturer, Dr. Muñoz is the Tocqueville Professor of Political Science and Concurrent Professor of Law at the University of Notre Dame as well as the Founding Director of Notre Dame's Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government.

All gifts to the Keystone Scholarship Fund directly support the success of our students through academic and need-based scholarships.

These scholarships are often a key factor in a student's college choice, removing barriers and empowering students to pursue their degrees at Montreat College. Annual support of the Keystone Scholarship Fund is critical for the college to attract, recruit and retain students who desire the Christ-centered education that we offer.

To make a tax-deductible gift to the Keystone Scholarship Fund, please visit www.montreat.edu/give.

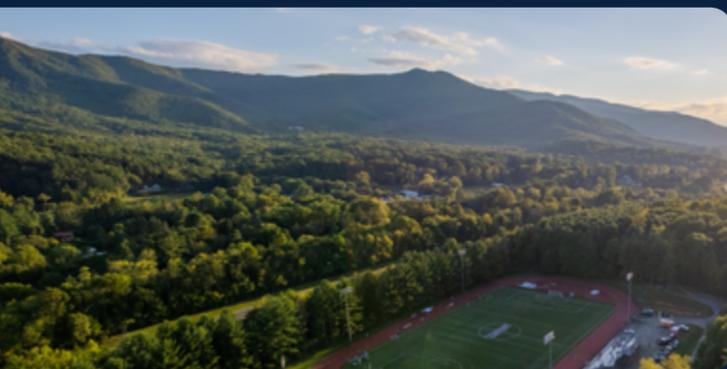
Watch a recap of the 2024 Keystone Scholarship Dinner at www.montreat.edu/keystone.



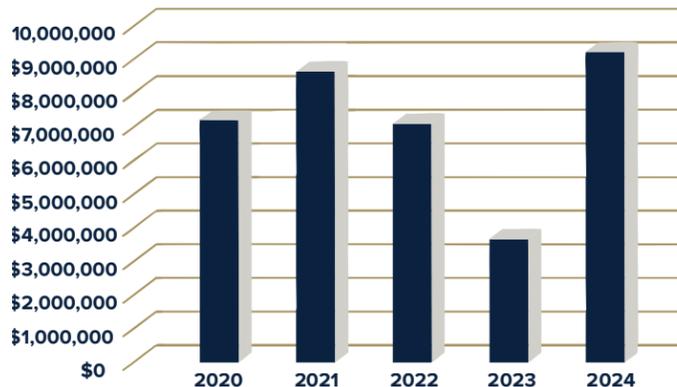
“Montreat College is where students can learn to do the work that God equipped them to do. Here you can find Christ and be educated as a whole person, mind and soul.”

Dr. Vincent Phillip Muñoz
Professor at University of
Notre Dame

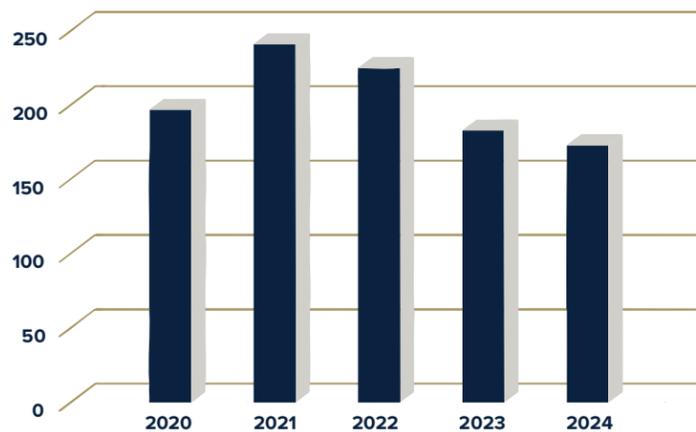




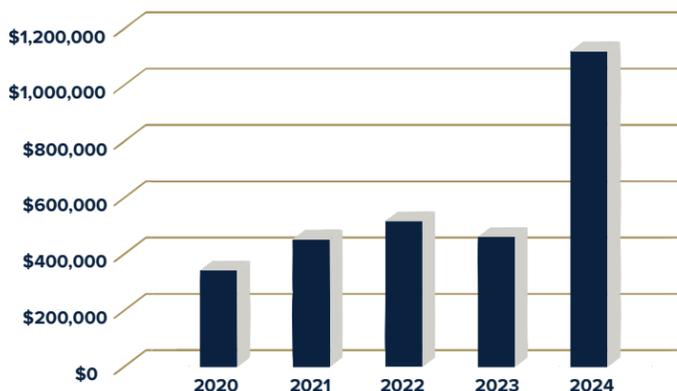
Giving



Alumni Donors



Alumni Giving

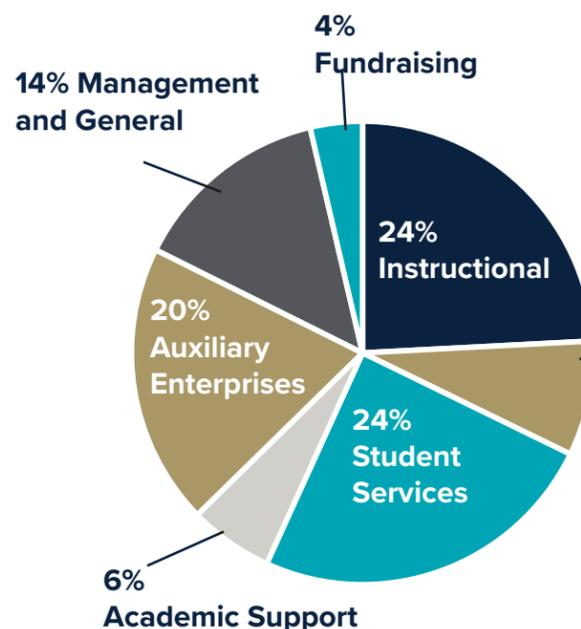


Budget and Expenses

Expenses

Instructional: \$7,369,249	24%
Public Service: \$2,474,813	8%
Student Services: \$7,529,294	24%
Academic Support: \$1,791,837	6%
Auxiliary Enterprises: \$6,057,625	20%
Management and General: \$4,519,162	14%
Fundraising: \$1,113,979	4%

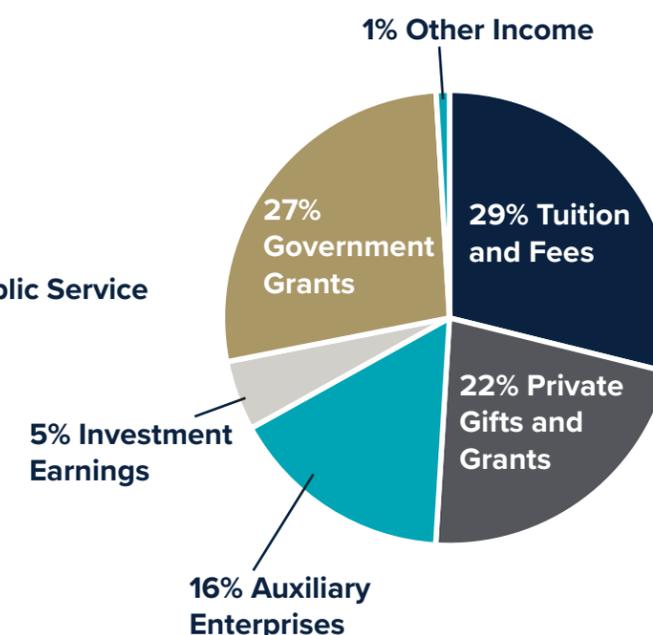
TOTAL EXPENSES: \$30,855,959



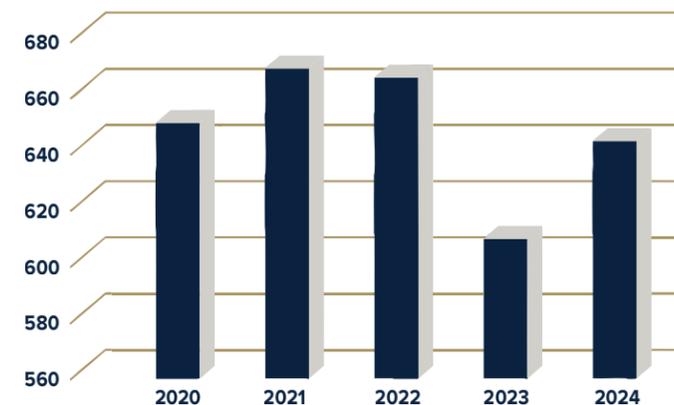
Revenue

Tuition and Fees: \$12,230,500	29%
Private Gifts and Grants: \$9,366,385	22%
Auxiliary Enterprises: \$6,764,911	16%
Investment Earnings: \$2,104,911	5%
Government Grants: \$11,498,680	27%
Other Income: \$402,961	1%

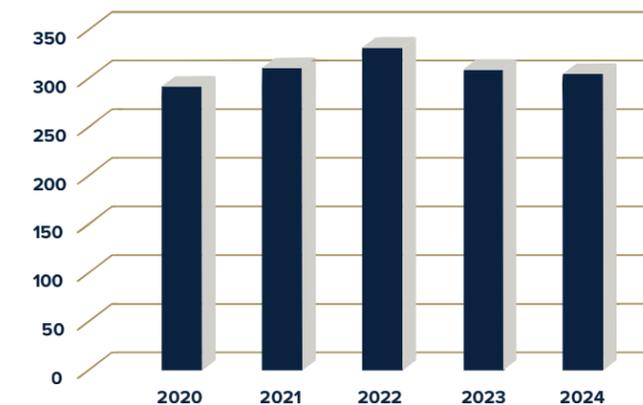
TOTAL REVENUE: \$42,368,348



Enrollment



School of Arts and Sciences



School of Adult and Graduate Studies



Office of the President
310 Gaither Circle | P.O. Box 1267
Montreat, NC 28757

SECURE YOUR LEGACY

When you include a gift to Montreat College in your estate plan, your legacy supports the next generation of students and ensures the college's growth into the future.

For more information, contact
Garrett Luck, vice president for advancement, at
828-419-2107 or garrett.luck@montreat.edu.



“As a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ, I greatly admire the Montreat College commitment to delivering strong academics wrapped in the content of the Christian faith. Therefore, I have included the college in my estate plan to help secure the future for generations of Montreat College students.”

Rev. Dr. Howard Edington
Former Chair, Montreat College Board of Trustees

Learn more at www.montreat.edu/legacy.

