

WINTER 2020



WARRIORS

HIGHLIGHTING WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Finding peace

How WSU conflict resolution specialist Barbara L. Jones spreads the gospel of nonviolence and social justice even as she faces down her own tragedy

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As the publication devoted to covering Wayne State's community involvement, we encourage readers to share stories about the work the university does in and around Detroit.

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President's Letter



In a climate where words like “inclusion” and “engagement” have become common to institutional parlance, Wayne State is constantly working to ensure that they not only reflect our stated values, but also drive our actions.

Far from simply giving lip service to the notion of community involvement, we immerse ourselves in the work, whether through formal outreach and interaction efforts or through more personal, intimate endeavors. Community engagement isn't simply what we do, but is a large and critical part of who we are.

This issue of *Warriors* looks at some of the various ways in which that work unfolds, from the streets of the city we call home to the far-flung corners of the world where we serve daily as ambassadors for Wayne State's aims, traditions and values.

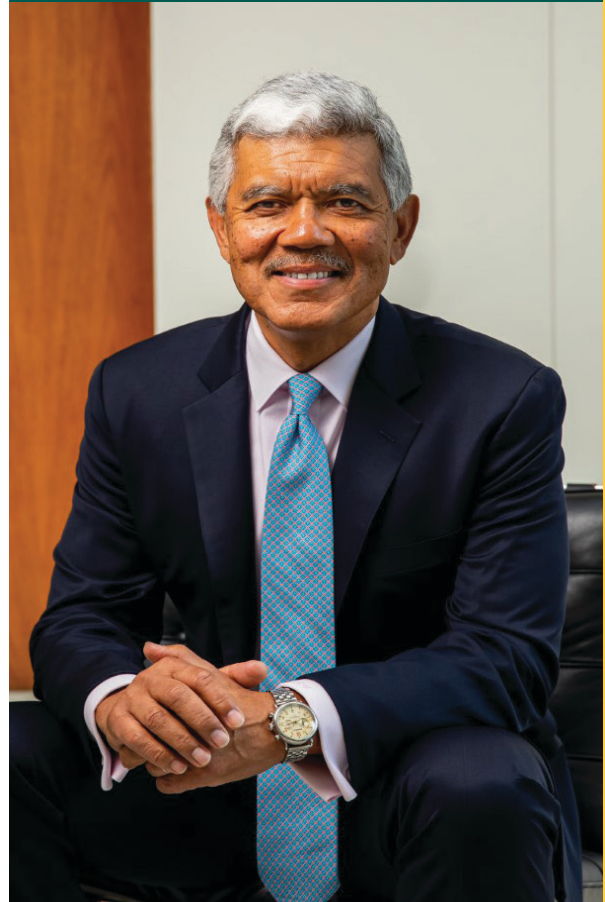
We see that work in the expansive generosity of WSU employees like Lavinia Lamar-Smith (pg. 22), associate director of the WSU Cashier's Office, who twice a year enlists her family and friends to join her in the city's parks to serve hot meals to the homeless and other Detroiters grappling with food insecurity.

We feel it in the unrelenting push by staffers like Barbara L. Jones (pg. 6), a dispute resolution specialist/faculty instructor in our Center for Peace and Conflict Studies and director of the university's Ralph Bunche Summer Institute, to spread the message of nonviolence, conflict resolution and restorative justice to some of the city's most challenged neighborhoods — even as Jones still struggles to make sense of the violent death of her own child.

We hear it in the dulcet sounds of faculty members like globe-trotting music professor Chris Collins (pg. 10), the director of jazz studies at Wayne State, who toils not only to find the next generation of talented students for our music programs, but also takes extraordinary measures to expose them to contemporary jazz greats and provide them opportunities to perform with these modern-day giants.

Our campus may rest in the heart of Detroit, but — thanks to the tireless efforts of individual Warriors who dedicate themselves personally and professionally to our community engagement mission — our reach knows no bounds.

President M. Roy Wilson





Former CEO Shirley Stancato joins WSU Board of Governors

When Gov. Gretchen Whitmer appointed Shirley Stancato, former president and CEO of New Detroit Inc., to the Wayne State University Board of Governors, she knew she was investing in improving race relations in Detroit. She also knew Stancato would bring calm and a firm resolve to focus on conducting the business of Wayne State.

"I'm thrilled to join Wayne State's board," Stancato said. "I've watched with admiration as President Wilson and his team have elevated the university's stature and public profile, and helped turn it into one of the best urban research universities in the nation. I'm excited to be a part of the university's continued success."

Stancato led New Detroit from 2000 until her retirement in December 2018. New Detroit is a coalition of leaders working to achieve racial understanding and racial equity in metropolitan Detroit; during her tenure with the organization, Stancato presided over many new initiatives aimed at improving race relations in the region.

Stancato said she looks forward to working with her colleagues on the board for the greater good of the university. "My focus is on the issues at hand," Stancato said. "I want us to work together to accomplish our goals as a cohesive board, because

nothing is more important than the university itself. As Dr. King said: 'The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.' We can take this opportunity to rise to the occasion."

Stancato views Wayne State as a citadel of opportunity, inclusion and outreach. "To have this jewel of a university situated in the heart of Midtown Detroit while providing first-generation college students with a multicultural, multiracial experience is a boon to the city, the region and the state. Our responsibility to serve all our constituents — students, faculty, staff and visitors — is one I take quite seriously."

Stancato said she developed her upbeat, positive outlook from her parents. "My parents taught me and my brothers and sisters the meaning and value of opportunity and moral conviction. They instilled in me the virtues of integrity, honesty and always working toward the greater good."

She also said that one of the guiding principles during her time at New Detroit was reflected in another quote by Dr. King. "'Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.' I carry those words with me to this day."

WSU celebrates life, work of civil rights icon MLK

The Wayne State University community joined with students, activists and local leaders at the Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center on Jan. 21 to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as part of the university's annual MLK Tribute.

Hundreds of metro Detroiters packed into the center's main auditorium for the celebration, which featured musical performances, short speeches and poetry, as well as the keynote address from featured guest W. Kamau Bell, a comedian and host of CNN's *United Shades of America*.

Hailing the impact of King's work throughout the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and '60s, Bell encouraged attendees to continue King's fight against racism, poverty and structural inequality.

"That legacy doesn't mean anything if we're not building," said Bell. "You've got to take this legacy and these ideas out into the world and build on them and be yourselves, even in the most difficult moments."

The tribute also featured an address by WSU President M. Roy Wilson.

"(King) refused to accept that things could not be changed for the better," said Wilson. "He refused to accept that he personally couldn't make a difference ... He could have taken the easy road, but he chose the hard one — and he paid the ultimate price. We, all of us, are beneficiaries of his sacrifice."

Metro Detroit TRUE Project to offer advanced training for recent grads, mid-career STEM professionals

Through support from the U.S. Department of Education, Wayne State University announced it is launching the Metro Detroit Teaching Residency for Urban Excellence (TRUE) Project, an innovative multi-sector partnership that aims to positively impact student learning, address the critical shortage of STEM teachers and support the region's workforce development. The \$2.5 million project will target recent graduates and mid-career professionals with science, technology, engineering and mathematics expertise in the metro Detroit region, especially those in the automotive and technology industries who may be impacted by recent and planned plant closures.

Without the ability to produce the next generation of breakthrough technologies and discoveries — or a STEM-based workforce capable of these advances — the U.S. will be eclipsed by other nations. Critical to remaining competitive is the need for American students to excel in STEM education, and in order for this to happen, the number of STEM educators must grow.

The Metro Detroit TRUE Project will prepare 36 diverse and highly qualified professionals as K-12 STEM teachers over an 18-month period, during which they will complete a

master's degree and receive their teaching certification, followed by a two-year induction period of mentoring and professional development.



"The Metro Detroit TRUE Project's curriculum will integrate two research-based innovations — culturally responsive STEM education and trauma-informed, socio-emotional learning — that are crucial in students' academic and personal development in urban schools and communities," said Roland Sintos Coloma, Ph.D., assistant dean and professor in the Division of Teacher Education at Wayne State and principal investigator for the TRUE project. "The project will also allow us to develop a new curriculum that will ascertain teaching competency of the state's new K-12 computer science standards."

The project will offer year-long residencies in Detroit Public Schools Community District and Dearborn Public Schools, Michigan's largest urban school districts. Embedded in two cohorts, TRUE residents will be immersed in urban ecologies, work closely with school-based mentor teachers and university coaches, and employ high-leverage practices for student engagement and achievement. Each TRUE resident will also receive a \$40,000 living stipend during the first 12 months of the program.

Ilitch School students team up with Detroit Blight Busters

Students from PwC Multicultural Professional Readiness Education Program Scholars, a Mike Ilitch School of Business learning community, joined together to support a local community service initiative over their Thanksgiving break. Volunteers worked with Detroit Blight Busters, an organization whose mission is to stabilize, revitalize and rebuild Detroit neighborhoods.

Detroit Blight Busters, in conjunction with its coalition of community partners, can proudly claim 120,000 volunteers. The network has contributed more than 658,000 volunteer hours to paint 684 homes, board up and secure 379 abandoned buildings, renovate 176 houses, and build 114 new ones to make suitable housing for 1,160 people. MPREP students contributed to that legacy.





THE PEACEMAKER

Barbara L. Jones inside her office on the WSU campus.

WSU conflict resolution strategist Barbara Jones works to end neighborhood violence even as she mourns her own murdered child

Inside her office on the second floor of Wayne State University's Faculty Administration Building, Barbara L. Jones dabs at the tears streaking down her face and inhales, pausing to reflect on a visitor's question about the toll that personal tragedy can take on professional drive.

Jones, the community dispute resolution specialist and faculty instructor for Wayne State's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, has spent a good chunk of her professional career preaching to youth and adults alike about the futility of violence and the value of peaceful problem-solving. From teaching at the center to organizing as the program director for its annual Ralph Bunche Summer Institute, in addition to her year-round collaboration with activist organizations like the Detroit Justice Center, Jones has become a highly visible and critical grassroots liaison between WSU and local efforts to promote community stability and secure social justice for rank-and-file Detroiters.

She loves what she does, she explains, and

has since she started at the center in 2011. She has dedicated her life to it, in fact. "But there are also times every day," Jones confesses as the tears trickle, "when I say I just want to quit this work."

In her head, she knows she can't give up. She knows how important her work is, not only to the university, but also to the local communities where Jones' efforts have helped stem conflicts and inspired a generation of young Detroiters seeking solutions to neighborhood violence.

But just as that bloodshed has traumatized many of the lives her work has touched, so has it scarred Jones's own life. And it has often forced her to question her own purpose.

After all, Jones sometimes wonders, how can she continue to devote so much of her time, energy and resources to stemming violence in the lives of others when she couldn't stop that violence from swallowing the life of her own child?

Three years ago, in 2017, Jones' only son, 24-year-old Conte Emanuel Smith-El, was

brutally slain during a robbery in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where he had gone to escape violence in Detroit. Two men were ultimately arrested and imprisoned for the murder, but the incident continues to haunt Jones — who a few years ago established a scholarship at Wayne State in her son's name — so much that she questions herself and her work on a near-daily basis.

"I really do quit every day," says Jones, still pressing damp tissue against her face. "But then I realize that I'm not doing this just for me, that I have to find a way to continue on because this is about so much more than my own life. It's about helping to save the lives of all of our young people... But it still hurts so much to know that, for everything I've tried to teach about nonviolence and solving problems peacefully, none of it could save my own son."

Pushing back against bullying

For Jones, part of her ongoing devastation over her son's death stems from the fact that she had spent years trying to shield Smith-

El, who suffered cognitive impairments, from bullies and bloodshed. In fact, it was her efforts to protect her son that helped transition Jones, a former senior ad salesperson for local cable and radio, into conflict resolution work in the first place.

"When he was in high school, during his freshman year, my son was attacked inside his school," says Jones. "A group of young men who didn't attend the school came in and were trying to recruit people into their gang. They targeted him and a classmate, but neither of them wanted to join, so they threatened them. The classmate got away. My son didn't. They pistol whipped him."

That attack changed her life.

"That's where my frustration, my anger, my purpose and the work that I'm doing now really started," Jones says. "I had already started my master's program here at Wayne State. And I knew that's what I wanted to do with my degree; I wanted to not only just help my son, but to teach my son and others how to use their voices to avoid conflict."

In 2013, a year after receiving her master's and beginning her graduate certificate studies in peace and security studies, both from Wayne State, Jones stumbled across the teaching tool that would jump-start her work. Serving then as a student assistant in the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Jones was rummaging through the center's archives when she ran across information about a dormant summer program that, before it lost funding, had been crafted to help youth hone conflict resolution skills.

Immediately, Jones knew that, if revived, the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute — named for a famed civil-rights activist and confidante to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. — would be an ideal vehicle for her efforts.

"I'm going through all this stuff, looking at the curriculum, looking at the program-ming," she recalls. "I look at it, and I'm like, 'My god, where was this type of program when my son was in high school and in middle school?'"

Jones went to center director Fred Pearson, Ph.D., and asked if she could be given a chance to revitalize the summer program.

"I said, 'If you let me take on this program, I'll find money,'" she says. "I knew that if I found the money, I'd want to take full ownership of it — not to change the integrity of the program, but to see how I could modernize it after it had been dormant for several years."

After a few discussions, Jones eventually



Jones listens to Amanda Alexander, founding executive director of the Detroit Justice Center; inset: Fred Pearson, Ph.D., director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, and Jones.

won permission to take on the program, along with responsibility for funding it. Despite the Summer Institute having been inactive for more than a decade, Jones never doubted her ability to resurrect it.

"Remember, my job in media was PR, marketing and media promotions — so I knew how to ask for money," says Jones with a chuckle. "I told them that, if they let me, I'd do it my way. I had relationships already established in the community and knew they'd help because this is a phenomenal program."

Giving new life to an old initiative

With backing from WSU partnerships such as the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights, Detroit Youth Violence Prevention Initiative, city government and community organizations, as well as groups such as the Detroit Rotary Club, Jones was able to raise enough money to restart the program in the summer of 2013. "I was able to start small, get it off the ground, make it more focused," says Jones. "It wanted to make sure it wasn't so 'academic-y' for these young people, because we needed their engagement. I explained to the university that you've got to meet them where they are. And trust me, I know: I'm a mama. I'm not everybody's mama, but I try to be sometimes."

For the next six years straight, Jones toiled to grow the program, increasing funding as well as student participation. The number of students involved in the institute increased annually, going from 25 in 2013 to as many as 75 students in 2018. And with each passing year, Jones' faith in her work grew as well.

"Barbara is such a builder," says attorney Amanda Alexander, founding executive

director of the Detroit Justice Center, who has partnered with Jones to help promote social justice initiatives citywide. "And she's someone who sees that [anti-violence work] is what needs to happen. She has helped to build this pipeline of young people who are equipped with skills when it comes to dispute resolution, conflict resolution, who can be ambassadors for healing and peace. This is what people need in order to heal. Barbara doesn't wish or what-if. She builds — again and again."

Jones confesses that, despite her fundraising skills honed in media ad sales, the effort grows exponentially tougher each year.

"We did wonderfully," she says. "But of course, the more successful a program is, the more pressure and higher expectations you have on those existing and valuable relationships because you need to grow it, to make it more sustainable, and that involves more money, more community partnerships, more proving that this program works. But I never doubted that we would keep going and growing."

But five years into her work as program director of the institute, Jones endured the tragedy that would rock her faith and the very foundation of her life.

Growth in the midst of grief

On Oct. 30, 2017, Smith-El was working alone inside a store in Colorado Springs — the city he'd moved to with his sister shortly after graduating high school in Detroit — when two gunmen burst in carrying a semiautomatic rifle. Smith-El tried to escape but was caught, tied up and tortured for hours. As he begged for his life, Smith-El was fatally shot seven times with an AR 15 semi-automatic rifle.

Somehow, the following year, Jones was able to organize the Summer Institute one

more time, even as she flew to and from Colorado Springs to deal with her son's death and support her only daughter, who suffered the complicated effects of losing her only sibling as well as enduring the subsequent court cases for the young men who were directly responsible in his homicide. In 2018, she also set up the Conte Emanuel Smith-El Annual Scholarship "to recognize scholastic achievement, to encourage continued progress, and to provide assistance to students in financing their education in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences," according to its official description. Eligible students must be full- or part-time students enrolled in Wayne State's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and are encouraged to seek being a co-major in the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies or a graduate certificate in disabilities.

Still, the tragedy has taken a serious toll on Jones and her work. Last year, she says, the mourning and the burden of travel became too great and, for the first time since she started the institute, Jones had to take a summer off.

Nevertheless, Jones' work continues, not just within the community but within herself as well. A staunch advocate of restorative justice — which seeks the rehabilitation

of offenders in the criminal justice system through reconciliation with victims and affected communities — Jones says she has determined that she will, despite her grief, put into practice the very same principles she so ardently preaches: Jones is working toward establishing a dialogue between herself and one of the young men convicted of killing her child.

"I have to do restorative justice in my own life," she says. "I can't continue to only learn and teach about restorative practice. I have to walk in my vulnerability and in my truth, because this is what I believe is going to help one of the young men now convicted for playing a significant role in my son's death.

"Being on the other side of this as a practitioner, now I'm a whole part of the system from so many angles. If I'm going to learn and teach and preach about restorative practice, reconciliation, justice, restorative justice, I cannot really operate in my divine purpose if I don't play a role. I have to be a part of the young man's rehabilitative life as it relates to restoration on how he is going to lead his life after he comes out of the juvenile justice system. I have to be a huge part of that in advancing my own healing journey."

Even as she's doing this, Jones also plans to bring the Summer Institute back in July 2020. In fact, she's already seeking new donors and re-establishing ties with previous ones.

"I'm coming back with it this year, but I've got next-to-nothing dollars and I need to produce this program to start July 13 through 24," she says. "I have my dates, I have my community partners but, because I, along with others, was able to grow it, my critical focus is to keep this at a zero cost for parents to send their kids to attend the Summer Institute, and I need help in doing so."

So Jones presses forward, her soul scarred, her face tear-stained, her heart impossibly hopeful. Yes, she will continue to "quit" her work in fits and bursts during her worst moments — but she will always return. And she will never give up.

"It starts with me," says Jones. "I constantly feel like I cannot continue to do this work — but I have to. I know I can't just quit, no matter how badly I may feel at times. Given what I've been through and what I talk about to our young people, this is not separate, it never has been, and if I can't make this work in my personal situation, then why am I doing this?"



Jones stands with Angel McKissic, the Just Cities Lab Project Manager for the Detroit Justice Center, and Amanda Alexander.

// I really do quit every day. But then I realize that I'm not doing this just for me, that I have to find a way to continue on because this is about so much more than my own life. It's about helping to save the lives of all of our young people...But it still hurts so much to know that, for everything I've tried to teach about nonviolence and solving problems peacefully, none of it could save my own son."

— **Barbara L. Jones**





The Detroit Jazz Festival All-Stars — (left to right) Cliff Monear, Chris Collins, Dwight Adams, Marion Hayden, Sean Dobbins — perform in 2016 at the Yokohama, Japan Jazz Festival.

One world. One song.

Chris Collins, Wayne State jazz bring Detroit to the world — and vice versa

For nearly three decades, Chris Collins' musicianship has led him around the world. From Italy and Japan to South Africa and Scotland, Collins has seen it all. But early on, he realized the intrinsic value of engaging these cultures through music and language.

"It helped me better understand some of the cultural realities of communication and the arts," said Collins, Valade Endowed Chair in Jazz, professor and director of jazz studies at Wayne State University. "In my case, it was about experiencing the jazz and cultural influences in different countries to find out what their artistic priorities are. These experiences continue to enlighten me. Over the years, I was able to develop my own perspective on the world — politics and everything else — based on firsthand experiences and how I engage with individuals."

Collins has performed at jazz festivals around the globe, released albums, been credited on film soundtracks and won numerous awards — including the Brusoni Award in Italy, which he was the first American to receive. It would have been easy to continue being a professional musician first, with a teaching gig to fall back on.

"But when I got to the point at Wayne State where I received tenure, I realized there was great value to our students and

to the university to find ways to leverage those professional opportunities and experiences I had and turn them into unique, memorable moments and learning opportunities for our students," he said.

Helping Collins make those opportunities a reality is Gretchen Valade. As founder and chair of Harper Woods-based jazz record label Mack Avenue Records, owner of the Dirty Dog Jazz Café, and heir to the Carhartt apparel company, Valade founded the Detroit International Jazz Festival Foundation in 2006, subsequently renamed the Detroit Jazz Festival, and took over the fest's production and management.

In 2011, Collins was offered the job of artistic directorship of the largest free jazz festival in the country. He launched many initiatives, such as jam sessions, competitions for young musicians, programs in local schools and a jazz festival alumni band. Four years later, Valade and the board took another big leap, Collins joked, and asked if he would serve as the foundation's president. He was hesitant at first, but soon realized he had much to offer.

"I came to understand it sent a message that the Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation — unlike most other foundations of its sort — is being led by artists. The artists are our primary goal," Collins





▲ The Detroit Jazz Festival All-Stars at an opening press event in 2019 in Tottori, Japan, for the Tottori Jazz Festival.



Chris Collins (left) proposes the Havana-Detroit Jazz Project to Victor Rodriguez Garcia (seated across from Collins), president of the Havana International Jazz Festival. Also in attendance are Cuban artist Omar Sosa; Raul Cuza, artist liaison; and other dignitaries. ▼

said. "As I got into the position, I started to implement some things to understand where we might have voids in what we're doing."

"We are them. They are us."

One of those voids showed itself after Collins conducted a cultural survey on the Detroit Jazz Festival. To his dismay, he found that one of the lowest numbers of participation was self-identified Latino patrons.

He was perplexed. After all, Collins said, jazz and American music are based on traditional African rhythms, concepts of communication, call and response interaction, and community participation. Through diaspora and slavery, traditional African music came out of the continent. But America wasn't the first stop. Before it reached American shores, where it was allowed to flourish,

particularly during slavery, the music was in many of the Spanish-speaking countries — Puerto Rico, Panama and Cuba.

"These were places where a lot of African music was distilled and then brought up into cities such as New Orleans," Collins said. "The music — and the musicians from those countries — became some of the cornerstones of what evolved into American jazz and American culture. This is really important in today's world, where people think in terms of prejudice and separation — us versus them. We are them. They are us. They are the rock 'n' roll, jazz, and folk music we're talking about. A lot of it is because of those countries."

Travel, language, communication and a "feeling that they're not invited to the party" were all





▲ Chris Collins conducts the Tottori University Big Band in 2019 thru Thad Jones' "Us" at Main Hall in Tottori, Japan.

The Tottori Jazz Festival program features Detroit Jazz Festival All-Stars Chris Collins, Rob Pipho, Chuck Newsome, Marion Hayden and Nate Winn. ▶

barriers to participation, Collins found. He embarked on a personal mission with the Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation to collaborate and create initiatives that engaged Latino artists and patrons. He began locally in southwest Detroit, working with various organizations — including the Ford Resource and Engagement Center — to reach out to the community. Collins found that transportation was a barrier that prevented people from coming to the event, so the foundation worked with Ford and others to remedy it.

"We also started to do concerts on their series and with their artists," Collins said. "We translated all the Jazz Festival Foundation materials into Spanish for patrons and invited artists, so the announcements welcomed everyone. We then started to extend the international programs."

In 2016, the foundation expanded its international outreach with performances and workshops at the world-renowned Panama Jazz Festival. Drummer Nate Winn, a former student of Collins' and current member of the Detroit Jazz Festival All-Stars band, performed during that first trip. Winn was one of 10 Wayne State students who played as part of the Pan-American Detroit Big Band in front of 15,000 jazz fans from around the world.

After sharing that stage in Panama with Grammy-winning artist Danilo Perez, Winn was personally invited by Perez, the artistic director at the elite Berklee College of Music's Global Jazz Institute, to apply for graduate school. Only 20 musicians are accepted per year.

"After that concert, Danilo looked at me and said, 'Nate, you need to come to Boston.' Being a fan, I couldn't believe it," said Winn, who graduated from Berklee in 2019 with a master's in jazz performance.

"But these are the types of experiences and opportunities that Chris and these programs are able to provide."

As of January 2020, Winn, Collins and other Detroit artists continue to play the festival and engage Panamanian musicians in workshops that focus on individual instruments. Collins also recently appeared as a guest at the Havana Jazz Festival in Cuba, planning for an upcoming collaboration and yearlong engagement that will culminate at the 42nd annual



▲ Masatsugu Matsumoto and Himiko Kikuchi, directors of Tottori Jazz Festival, and Chris Collins in 2019 as they celebrate a beautiful collaboration.



▲ Chris Collins jams with Masatsugu Matsumoto at a local jazz club, with Detroit drummer Nate Winn behind the kit.

Detroit Jazz Festival, which will be held Sept. 3-6, 2021, in Detroit.

"The visionary that Chris is, he wanted to make the work we were doing global. So they started the collaboration in Panama and then Japan," Winn said. "Chris is constantly making moves. I admire his work ethic and his desire to really put Detroit on the map. It's been an ongoing thing, and it continues to skyrocket."

In the Eastern hemisphere, Collins, Winn and the Jazz Festival All-Stars have served as ambassadors of Detroit culture for the last four years, performing in Japan at the Tottori Jazz Festival, the Yokohama Jazz Festival and other jazz clubs around Tokyo. They also hold all-day workshops at Japanese universities, where they share with and learn from their Japanese jazz counterparts on a personal level.

"Not only do we get to perform in front of hundreds and thousands of people who appreciate this music, but we get fulfillment from these workshops," Winn said. "This last Japan trip in Tottori, we had people starving for knowledge, which I think we take for granted here. The educational side of what we do is just as important. We get to collaborate with young musicians, older musicians — anyone who's willing to learn and wants to get better. We're making ourselves available to them, and it's an amazing thing to be part of someone's growth."

For Collins, it's exactly what he envisioned.

"There's this two-way street in how we engage with each other. We do a lot of social media, too, so the world sees this unfolding and the beauty of what's happening," Collins said. "The end result is not just a one-time hit. It's to create long-term relationships with these countries and communities and offer





▲ Chris Collins and the Detroit Jazz Festival All-Stars gather with Panamanian students following a day of jazz workshops after their 2020 Panama Jazz Festival performance.

them opportunities here in the states — in Detroit — to be part of our world and share with us what they're all about."

Eliminating barriers

For anyone who wants to see an example of diversity and inclusion in action a bit closer to home, Collins encourages them to stick their heads into a summer jazz week class at Wayne State.

Started in 2007, Collins and WSU's Department of Music embarked on a long-term partnership with the Detroit Jazz Festival with Jazz Week@Wayne — a one-week workshop that provides 40 high school students with an intensive and rewarding jazz education.

In 2012, the program's name was changed to J.C. Heard JazzWeek@Wayne in honor of jazz drummer extraordinaire J.C. Heard and the generous support from the Heard family. The program nurtures students with a time-tested curriculum that blends formal academic discipline with the historic models of the Street School.

But students can't pay to play. Instead, they're chosen through competitive audition. There's no burdensome tuition fee, Collins said, which allows the program to bring together a diverse collection of talented youth from urban, rural and suburban settings. "We try to eliminate a lot of the dividing lines," Collins said. "It's free, and lunches are provided."

The program is at capacity every year, with a significant number of returning students. The positive impact of the J.C. Heard JazzWeek@Wayne collaboration is evidenced by its high success rate and scholarship offers to participants who choose to continue their jazz education at the university level.

Guided by Wayne State jazz faculty, guest artists from the Detroit community and



Detroit Jazz Festival All-Star Chuck Newsome, director of Wayne State University's jazz guitar program, tears it up at the 2020 Panama Jazz Festival.

national artist/educators sponsored by the Jazz Festival, students study improvisation, theory and ensemble playing. They also work in master class settings, jam sessions, and small and large ensemble rehearsals, culminating with two public performances.

Jazz guitarist Chuck Newsome has been part of J.C. Heard Jazz Week@Wayne since its second year, taking over in 2020 as the program's educational director. His musical connection to the university runs deep; Newsome earned a bachelor's in jazz studies and a master's in jazz performance from Wayne State. Soon after graduation, he became a faculty member in the

Department of Music and, in 2016, was named coordinator of the university's jazz guitar program.

"I've always seen teaching as a two-way street. As a teacher, I get a lot out of it," Newsome said. "For me, working with younger people who have optimism, energy and new ideas and revisiting the fundamentals of music — those are some of the reasons I got into music in the first place."

In addition to cost, Collins and Newsome recognized another barrier for students — reliable transportation. If the students can't come to the audition, they bring the audition to them.

In his capacity as the Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation's education coordinator, Newsome and several teachers — who are all world-renowned Detroit jazz musicians — work with Detroit Public Schools students at Martin Luther King Jr. Senior High School, Detroit School of the Arts, Cass Technical High School, Renaissance High School, Duke Ellington Conservatory and Bates Academy.

"We go to the schools and do the auditions right there in the class," Newsome said. "If any student has an interest, all they have to do is raise their hand and tell their teacher. They don't have to go anywhere. We found that it's been pretty successful."

Collins, Newsome and the rest of the Wayne State jazz program will have a new space in the coming years that will provide greater flexibility to expand their community outreach. With a total \$9.5 million commitment from Valade, the Gretchen Valade Jazz Center will renovate the Hilberry Theatre into a world-class jazz performance venue. The center will host an array of high-profile concerts and serve as



▲ The Detroit Jazz Festival All-Stars celebrate a successful concert in 2019 at the Tottori Jazz Festival in Japan with festival directors and Japanese University jazz musicians.

an educational hub for Wayne State’s jazz students and faculty. In addition, the center will feature a secondary jazz performance area. The Jazz Underground will feature jam sessions, jazz workshops, community engagement programs and a venue for jazz on film. The adjacent lobby will be named the Detroit Jazz Festival Café, where patrons can enjoy refreshments amid Detroit Jazz Festival memorabilia.

Collins sees the center as the next step to what he’s always been passionate about — removing as many barriers as possible for everyone. When diversity and inclusion happens, “we are all that much better for it and it reflects what Wayne State has always embraced,” he said.

“All of these initiatives have the power to break down barriers,” Collins said. “In this day and age, it’s easy to become jaded or even prejudiced toward people based on assumptions. Art and music can be the bridges that connect people, even in the face of political differences. There’s an overarching message here that goes beyond music — we are all one and share many more commonalities than differences.”



▲ Chris Collins congratulates Detroit student finalists of the 2019 Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation’s Youth Jazz Vocal Competition at the Dirty Dog Jazz Club in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan.



Chris Collins works and rehearses with students in 2019 at the Detroit School of the Arts in Detroit. ▶



Beat of a different drum

Detroit drummer, WSU alumnus continues musical journey

Nate Winn was ready to be done with school.

After a 10-year hiatus from pursuing his undergraduate degree, the Detroit drummer was back at Wayne State University and on the cusp of earning his bachelor's in music. At 31, he was also a newlywed and ready for the upcoming post-school chapter in his life and music career.

But when Grammy Award-winning Panamanian pianist virtuoso Danilo Pérez personally invites you to audition for one of the most prestigious music schools in the world? Well, Winn had some thinking to do.

"I was floored by it. I told my wife, Lauren, and she said, 'Let's make it happen,'" said Winn, now 34. "But to be honest, I had only come back to close this chapter and that was it. I wasn't thinking bigger picture, about the opportunities that would come later on."

Pérez's formal invitation came in 2016 as Chris Collins, professor and director of jazz studies at Wayne State, and the Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation expanded their international outreach with performances and workshops at the world-renowned Panama Jazz Festival. Winn was one of 10 Wayne State students who played as part of the Pan-American Detroit Big Band in front of 15,000 jazz fans from around the world.

After the concert, Pérez, artistic director at the elite Berklee

College of Music's Global Jazz Institute, looked at Winn and said he needed to come to Boston. With only 20 musicians accepted each year, Winn applied, auditioned, and that following fall he and his wife made the move.

"I built great relationships, especially with Danilo," Winn said. "I toured and traveled with him to Italy, Haiti and Puerto Rico. He and his family have been very instrumental in our life. I've been really blessed to have these relationships with him, Chris, and everyone at Wayne and Berklee."

In between that time, aside from earning a master's in jazz performance from Berklee, Winn and his wife moved back to Michigan in 2018 to raise their 3-year-old daughter. "I wouldn't have went back to school, if it weren't for her," Winn said of his wife. "Having her in my life is what I needed."

When he's not touring or recording, Winn teaches at the Detroit Institute of Music Education. In addition, he, Collins and the rest of the Detroit Jazz Festival All-Stars also serve as ambassadors of Detroit culture, performing annually in Japan, Panama, and at jazz festivals and clubs around the world.

"I had dreams and hopes, but you never know until it happens," Winn said. "I never could have imagined that I would perform in these places. To this day, it blows my mind. I'm grateful for it and enjoying the journey."



A portrait of the artist as a young woman



Adjunct professor and photo artist Ricky Weaver is earning acclaim for her introspective study of lineage, spirituality and the power of identity



Ricky Weaver can still see the images, a triptych of photos she'd taken of herself while in undergraduate school, self-portraits of a blossoming adult unpacking her identity, of a new artist groping for a style to call her own, of a young black woman trying to figure out just what that meant.

"It was me," Weaver says of the decade-old photos, some of her first attempts at artistry. "There was a closeup of my eye as I put my contact on. Then there was one of me straightening my hair. And there was one of me mixing a perm. That was me, like, really trying to figure myself out because I had these crazy gray contacts and blonde hair — but I had really damaged my hair, and I was just like, 'What are you really doing? What are you trying to do?'"

"I think that work was called 'You Only Feel as Good as You Look.' That was because my grandmother taught me that even if you don't feel good, get up and get dressed anyway."

In the years since, Weaver — now an adjunct professor in the photography department in WSU's College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts — has certainly matured as an artist, her work more nuanced, evolved, expanded. Just as importantly, that work is also enjoying increased success, with Weaver having

earned a growing number of accolades as well as heightened recognition in artists' circles both locally and nationwide.

These days, Weaver's images are featured (among other places) at the newly reopened Carr Center in Midtown Detroit as part of the inaugural Beyond Space exhibit, an awe-inspiring collection of works from a group of young black artists honing their craft under the watchful eye of highly acclaimed photo-art virtuoso Carrie Mae Weems.

But in spite of the growth and success she has begun to see, Weaver says, she's still in some ways the same young artist in that triptych, still curious and searching, still prone to unflinching self-dissection in her use of stark imagery to explore themes such as spirituality, identity and lineage.

"Ideas about legacy and what we leave behind are really a huge part of my work," says Weaver, an Ypsilanti native and Eastern Michigan University alum. "I understand that I'm living my grandmother's legacy and my mother's legacy and my aunt's, so that's a huge part of my work ... My grandma was 103 years old when she passed away. She was born in 1915. Thinking about the context of the time she grew up in in relation to the things she was



“Ideas about legacy and what we leave behind are really a huge part of my work.” — Ricky Weaver



saying became a huge part of my work because she taught me so much.”

Weaver says the lessons are only part of what she took from her grandmother. Years ago, she also decided to take her grandmother’s surname as part of an exercise in reinvention. In an instant, the young woman born Erica Williams restyled herself as Ricky Weaver — although she notes that the transformation wasn’t all that thought out initially.

“I was named after my father, Eric Williams,” explains Weaver. “I also have a brother named Eric Williams. One day in undergrad, my professor says, ‘You guys want to be called anything other than your name?’ And I was like, ‘Actually, I do. I do. Call me Ricky.’ So that’s where Ricky started. Nobody had called me Ricky

up until then, but people just started doing it. I really think I was in a place where I was reaching for a different identity. So Weaver is my grandmother’s name, and that’s my mother’s maiden name also, my matriarchal lineage ... And then I noticed, ‘Oh, I’ve been making work about my matriarchal lineage.’ And this is really what that has to do with.”

Her work is rife with lineal references, some subtle, many not so. In one of the more striking images in the Beyond Space exhibition, for instance, Weaver is photographed laying atop an open grave in an old cemetery.

“That’s my grandmother’s grave,” she says. “I lost her not long ago, so I was working through my grief, working through different ways about thinking about spirituality, the idea of ancestors and



really thinking about my grandmother transitioning. I was trying to stay with her and listen to her spirit around me. Something kept telling me to be closer to the dirt, to the earth. Then something was like, You need to lay in it. I was like, 'Why am I thinking this?' I mentioned it to mom, and she ended up telling me about a parable in the Bible where this man had to go lay on top of someone else's grave to receive his anointing. I was like, 'I think that's what needs to happen.' So I went and did it with my cousin, and it's been transformative."

Of course, Weaver says she's had plenty of artistic influences beyond family, counting the celebrated Weems, multimedia artist Lorna Simpson and painter Kara Walker chief among them. "Those three were my triumvirate for forever," says Weaver. "I've always been inspired by that '90s period of the work that they were making."

These days, she's also trying to be more of an inspiration to others. She fulfilled a longtime dream, she says, when she began teaching college courses, joining the WSU faculty nearly two years ago.

"I always wanted to be a professor," says Weaver, who attended graduate school at Cranbrook Academy of Art. "When I took my first photography class in college, I was like, 'This is what I want to do: I want to make my work and I want to teach because I think photography is so much about the images that form our reality.' So how do I teach these young image makers to be responsible for what they're putting into the world? How do they contextualize themselves?"

Weaver says she loves teaching at Wayne State in large part because of the campus culture.

"I love the students at Wayne so much," she says. "It feels like there's more energy. They're more assertive. They let me know what's on their mind. So the communication is there where I feel like I can be more personable with them. It's always a good time."

Meanwhile, she continues to create. With her work having taken her to New York City, Cuba and other places, Weaver says she constantly looks for new ways to expand her horizons and broaden the scope of her personal lens.

"What I'm doing is important," she says. "I always believed when I was younger that I was going to do something important, and I think that I've found that thing."





Anatomy of a promise: An FAQ about the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge

Describe the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge.

The Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge will provide free tuition for eligible students who either live in Detroit or graduate from a high school within the city. The initiative will potentially benefit the more than 49,000 students currently enrolled in Detroit high schools, plus thousands of city residents who are currently attending high school outside of Detroit.

When will the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge launch?

It will be available for students enrolling at WSU beginning in fall 2020.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible, students must meet the following criteria:

- Live in the city of Detroit (verified by mailing address) and graduate from any high school in 2020 or after
- OR
- Graduate from any Detroit high school (public, private, charter, parochial, home school or GED program) in 2020 or after.
- Be admitted to Wayne State University as a first-time, full-time freshman in fall 2020 or after.
- Complete the Free Application for



Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the following fall.

How will Wayne State pay for the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge? Are there new funds being allocated for it?

Wayne State dedicates significant dollars for scholarships. This year, our institutionally funded financial aid was \$81.7 million. Additionally, our recently completed Pivotal Moments capital campaign raised \$92.6 million to support endowed scholarships, a portion of which could be used to support the Heart of Detroit program. And since our announcement, we have been approached by several people interested in making financial contributions to support Detroit students through this program.

How will this affect funding for other scholarships the university offers? Will need-based awards be reduced to help pay for the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge?

No, need-based awards will not be reduced to fund this program. The Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge is just the latest evolution of Wayne State's drive to make college more affordable and to help students pay for tuition. It was not created at the expense of existing scholarships.

Will I need to take out a loan to cover any gaps in the award?

No. Tuition and fees will be completely covered by the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge.

Additional expenses such as housing, books, transportation and meals are not covered. However, we also offer housing scholarships, emergency grants, a food pantry and completion scholarships as part of a comprehensive financial support system for students.

What are the baseline academic requirements for admission to Wayne State University?

The baseline grade point average required for admission to Wayne State is 2.75, with an ACT score of 17 or higher,

and an SAT score of 930 or higher. However, we take a holistic approach to admission, so other factors may be considered.

Will tuition need to be raised to cover the cost of the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge?

No. We don't raise tuition to pay for scholarships and awards. Over the past few years, we've been able to hold tuition increases to low levels, while at the same time continuing to grow our institutional financial aid.

What doesn't the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge cover?

Additional expenses are not covered, including, but not limited to, housing, books, transportation and meals. We also offer emergency grants, housing scholarships, a food pantry and completion scholarships as part of a comprehensive financial support system for students.

How much funding will be needed for each recipient?

The amount of funding needed for each student will be determined based on their FAFSA information, tuition and fee costs, and any outside scholarship amounts the student may bring with them.

How did the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge come about? What was the genesis of the idea?

It is no secret that the cost of a college degree has grown significantly over the last couple of decades. Wayne State is committed to opportunity and access and does not want cost to be a barrier to higher education. We've always been committed to supporting local Detroit students, and we continually look for ways to supplement the programs we already have in place.

Our partnership with the Detroit Regional Chamber in support of the Detroit Promise program has provided numerous scholarships to Detroit students since 2011. Additionally, Detroit was designated a Talent Hub by the Lumina Foundation, with support from The Kresge Foundation, in 2017. As a Talent Hub, the city and its stakeholders — including Wayne State University — have committed to work together to help address the growing demand for workers with an education beyond high school. The following year, WSU launched the Warrior Way Back program—a program



that seeks to specifically provide aid to all students. Through initiatives like these, we aim to help the Detroit Regional Chamber fulfill the goal of its Detroit Drives Degrees program: To increase the number of individuals with postsecondary accreditation to 60% by 2025.

Eligibility is limited to students who are current residents of Detroit or who go to high school in Detroit. Is Wayne State doing anything to help make education more affordable for students from other parts of Michigan?

Wayne State is committed to access and affordability for all students. In addition to the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge, WSU is proud to offer a robust suite of scholarships for incoming students from across the state, including:

- The Warrior Award, which offers up to \$6,000 per year for four consecutive years and is given to the strongest admission applicants based on GPA and ACT/SAT scores.
- The Detroit Leadership Award, which is offered to incoming freshmen from Macomb, Oakland or Wayne counties or the cities of Flint, Saginaw or Ypsilanti who have demonstrated academic excellence and community leadership. This award provides up to \$5,000 per year for up to four consecutive years to eligible students.
- The Gold Award and the Green Award, which are available to all eligible full-time students, offering \$4,000 and \$2,000, respectively, per

year for four consecutive years.

- The Wayne Access award, which covers up to the full cost of tuition and standard fees for eligible students, and is renewable for up to four years.
- The Scholar Award, which offers up to \$500 per year for four consecutive years for eligible full-time students.

Students are also encouraged to apply for the hundreds of departmental scholarships through our shared-application portal.

Will the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge be available for spring and summer semesters?

Because we offer a 30% tuition discount to students enrolled during spring and summer, it will only be available for the fall and winter semesters.

How will the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge affect students in terms of affordability and accessibility?

It will have a tremendous impact. Recipients will get free tuition and fees, making their four-year journey toward a degree completely tuition free. A university-sponsored scholarship will fill the gap between these costs and other applicable aid. We also offer emergency grants, housing scholarships, a food pantry and completion scholarships as part of a comprehensive financial support system for students.

Is Wayne State working with Detroit Public Schools and city leadership on this initiative?

The Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge continues the longstanding partnership between the people of Detroit, Wayne State and the educational landscape of Detroit. We have an excellent relationship with the city and consider its residents honorary members of the Wayne State community. We have a moral and economic duty to partner with the city to provide opportunities for all of its citizens to achieve their full potential through earning a Wayne State degree.

Will this be an ongoing scholarship award, or is this a pilot program that will be evaluated after a certain amount of time?

We plan for the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge to be available on an ongoing basis.

Comfort FOOD

*Wayne State staffer builds family tradition around giving
Detroiters a home-cooked meal for the holidays*



▲ Leonard Hucklebuck, Lavinia Lamar-Smith, John Smith, Cyndi Brown, and Tony Brown volunteer together to help feed Detroiters.

“Once you see the difference simply sharing a meal and a smile makes in someone’s life, you can’t help but want to volunteer.”

— Lavinia Lamar-Smith



▲ The Smith Family Christmas brings together colleagues, family, and friends to help prepare home-cooked meals at The Matrix Center kitchen.



Lavinia Lamar-Smith and her husband, John, believe in the comforting power of a home-cooked meal, but for the last eight Christmases, their holiday meal has consisted of Cheerios or Chinese takeout. After preparing and distributing dinners to hundreds of Detroiters every year, the Smiths have found themselves — and their kitchen cupboards — exhausted. They wouldn't have it any other way.



work.”

Armed with carryout boxes and a home-cooked spread consisting of ribs, chicken, greens, corn, string beans, dinner rolls and dessert, the couple loads up their truck and drives downtown to distribute hot meals, as well as donated hats, gloves, scarves, coats and personal hygiene products.

Since the first “Smith Family Christmas” in 2011, the couple has provided meals to more than 2,000 homeless Detroiters.

The tradition began when Lamar-Smith — associate director of the Wayne State University Cashier’s Office — decided she wanted to help feed the homeless, but found herself on a waitlist to volunteer with local organizations like Gleaners, Meals on Wheels and Capuchin Soup Kitchen.

“I guess it was a good thing that there were so many people who wanted to help,” she said. “But John and I didn’t want to wait. We wanted to help right then, so we got into the kitchen and got to

In their first year, they distributed 50 meals along Woodward, Second and Third avenues and by the Rosa Parks Transit Center. “The food went fast, and it just hit me so hard when we ran out,” Lamar-Smith said. “I knew we had to do this every year, and we had to do more.”

And so, they did more — with the growing support of their friends and family, the Smiths have gradually

increased the number of meals they prepare each year and distributed 600 meals last December. In recent years, they have outgrown their home kitchen and now use the kitchen at The Matrix Center on 6 Mile and Gratiot to package their meals and as their volunteer headquarters.

Lamar-Smith’s husband, John, a former caterer now working at a security firm, is passionate about cooking.





"He takes so much pride in this food — I have to remind him that he can't feed the whole world, even though we'd like to," Lamar-Smith said. "We want this meal to really be special because it's about more than food. We're giving them dinner, sure, but we're also reminding them that people care."

Recognizing that there's hunger year-round, the Smiths recently expanded their efforts. Along with family and friends, they hosted their first summer meal in July 2018 — a community fish fry just outside the Masonic Temple. More than 100 attended the event, and the Smiths expanded their efforts to provide meals to more than 250 people at similar events in summer 2019.

"We're always overwhelmed by the number of people who reach out and want to help us," Lamar-Smith said. "Once you see the difference simply sharing a meal and a smile makes in someone's life, you can't help but want to volunteer."



▲ Lavinia Lamar-Smith, John and a team of volunteers fed more than 100 people during their first summer meal, a community fish fry, in July 2018.



The Engaged Q&A:

A conversation with... Dawn Medley, associate vice president for enrollment management



Dawn Medley

For far too many middle- and low-income students throughout the country, traveling the road to a college degree has become akin to negotiating a financial gauntlet, one marked by rising costs, crushing debt, dwindling government help and limited options for pocketbook relief.

Nevertheless, Wayne State is rising to meet these challenges, sometimes with little notice, sometimes to great fanfare. In October, the university announced a potentially game-changing initiative — the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge, which offers to cover tuition needs for all admitted students living in Detroit and/or attending a city school.

Dawn Medley, associate vice president of enrollment management at Wayne State, took some time to explain the groundbreaking program and its potential to open a new path to college for many Detroit schoolchildren.



What is the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge?



This is our commitment to knock down barriers to college for every student in the city of Detroit. We want to create a college-going mindset.



Why is this pledge necessary?



Too often, students and families who haven't had someone graduate from college previously think that college is too expensive or that they won't be able to afford it. With ongoing media coverage regarding student loans, we wanted to make sure that every student in Detroit knew that Wayne State University had their back and would support them.



Where does the money come from?



This is a "last dollar in-gap pledge." A student will use any federal grants and merit awards and WSU will cover the rest up to their full cost for tuition and general fees. That way, a student can live at home and not have to take out any loans for the cost of their classes. They can use loans to live in the residence halls, commute to school or purchase books, but this way, their classes are covered. We use federal dollars, institutional funds and private funds to build students' aid/scholarship packages.



How many new students is the pledge expected to attract to WSU in the fall?



I expect we'll have 100 to 125 more students who might have chosen to go elsewhere previously. Many of these students were already choosing Wayne State and this just makes it easier for them to come here and know that we'll support them and their education.



Why does the pledge specifically target schoolchildren who live in Detroit and schoolchildren attending Detroit schools?



We had to start it somewhere. We have our ACCESS program, which benefits all students who have financial need, and we fund them in the same way. We also have a number of merit awards that students usually receive. We just wanted to double down on our commitment to the city of Detroit and our students here. We've always been the hometown university and we wanted to make that message loud and clear.



Are there any persistent misconceptions about the pledge that you'd like to correct?



It's an amazing opportunity for students and the city of Detroit. People are concerned that students will move to Detroit to become eligible and we'd be thrilled for that to happen. Again, we are part of this amazing city, and we want everyone to have a chance to thrive.



What are some of the other major scholarship programs at WSU that readers should know about?



We have our Med-Direct program for aspiring physicians and ACCESS, which funds high-need students. We also have amazing merit aid.



What does Wayne State's investment in these programs say about the university's commitment to broadening college accessibility and improving college affordability for Detroiters?



We have always been in Detroit and we never left. Our president and provost live and breathe our commitment to this city and its children every day, and it is central to our mission of opportunity and support. We called it the Heart of Detroit because we are in the heart of Detroit and our institutional heart beats with the city.

For more information about financial assistance at Wayne State, please visit the following:

- wayne.edu/scholarships/
- wayne.edu/financial-aid
- wayne.edu/heart-of-detroit





HEART OF DETROIT

Tuition Pledge

 WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

For more than 150 years, Wayne State University has pledged to provide access to higher education in our community. We're proud of our connection and commitment to the city of Detroit, the place we call home, and we're honoring that relationship with an opportunity that puts a Wayne State education within reach for all Detroit students.

Introducing the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge, offering free tuition for 2020 graduates of Detroit high schools or Detroit residents earning a high school diploma or GED in 2020.

Heart of Detroit builds on programs such as Detroit Promise, Wayne Access and Warrior Way Back to expand opportunities to Detroit youth. That's Warrior Strong.

To be eligible for the Heart of Detroit Tuition Pledge, students must meet the following criteria:



Live in the city of Detroit and earn a high school diploma/GED or graduate from any Detroit high school in 2020.



Be admitted to Wayne State University as a first-time, full-time freshman in fall 2020 or after. Apply at wayne.edu/apply.



The RaiseMe requirement has been waived for the 2020-21 academic year.



Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the following fall.

For eligibility requirements and additional program details, visit go.wayne.edu/heart-of-detroit. Questions? Email studentservice@wayne.edu.

This program fills the gap to cover tuition and mandatory fees. Additional expenses are not covered, including, but not limited to, housing, books, transportation and meals.





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