

‘The time to change the future is now’

ASU launches Changing Futures campaign to accelerate mission to tackle world’s most pressing problems and global issues

By Michelle Stermole, ASU News
April 6, 2025

More than two decades ago, Arizona State University reimagined higher education by evolving into a university focused on inclusion rather than exclusivity and combining broad access and excellence with impact.

The mission, though, was never just to change ASU, Arizona or even higher education.

“Our mission was to change the world,” says [President Michael Crow](#), “and now, we’re accelerating that mission.”

Arizona State University today kicked off the global Changing Futures campaign to attract philanthropy and new partnerships to fuel ASU’s commitment to prepare future leaders to solve the complex challenges facing society every day.

“Together, we must transform global education, inspire tomorrow’s game changers, reshape our relationship with the planet, empower community resilience, build the future of health and advance technology for good,” Crow said. “The world wants successful, happy people whose families are successful, whose local communities are successful. We must take responsibility for the educational outcomes and the social outcomes in the communities we serve.”

Learn more about the [Changing Futures campaign](#).

The campaign will be managed by the [ASU Foundation for a New American University](#) and will run until June 30, 2029. Campaign priorities include expanding high-quality educational access worldwide, developing tomorrow’s leaders, fostering a sustainable relationship with the planet, empowering resilient communities, improving health outcomes and advancing technology.

Areas of planned impact

Through the Changing Futures campaign, ASU plans to hit ambitious markers that include reaching 250 million learners worldwide. The university has more than 180,000 learners enrolled in a given year and leverages partnerships around the globe to provide education to students outside of the United States.

“We’re in service to all learners, at all stages of work and learning, from all socioeconomic backgrounds,” Crow said. “We are driven to make certain that human beings everywhere will have access to unbelievable levels of learning throughout their lives.”

Another marker of progress is for ASU to reach and sustain \$1.5 billion in annual investment in research. During the past two decades, ASU has increased the size and scope of its investment in research nearly sixfold, reaching \$904 million in fiscal year 2023.

“Arizona State University is a very brave place,” said [Sally Morton](#), executive vice president of ASU’s Knowledge Enterprise. “We’re trying things that people have never done before in a way that’s breaking the mold.”

Through the campaign, ASU aims to ensure that every qualified student who pursues an ASU degree can do so affordably through investments in student scholarships and growth of the university endowment to \$2.5 billion. The endowment enables ASU to attract and retain distinguished faculty and their research, provide additional scholarships to students, and offer enrichment opportunities and research to tackle world problems in perpetuity.

ASU’s endowment reached \$1.47 billion in fiscal year 2024. Only a few dozen public universities and less than a hundred universities overall have an endowment of \$2 billion or more.

“The Changing Futures campaign is dedicated to transforming futures, starting right here in Arizona with the most innovative university and extending regionally, nationally and globally to ensure learners, researchers, future leaders and society as a whole have transformational opportunities to learn, grow and thrive,” said Gretchen Buhlig, ASU Foundation for a New American University CEO. “By connecting donors with their passions, we can provide the support necessary for students to thrive and make a positive impact in the world.”

ASU is focused on accelerating learning by using technology to train future leaders and equip them to think in new ways to serve the greater good. The university is working to deploy technology, rather than trying to stifle it, to ensure that students have the tools they need to succeed into the future.

“We are literally on the leading edge of the ability to harness the most disruptive technology of our age, which is AI, in the service of allowing ASU to scale unlike anything we’ve ever seen before,” said [Lev Gonick](#), ASU chief information officer.

Campaign gifts already coming in

One of the major gifts already landed during the Changing Futures campaign is a \$22 million investment from the Mastercard Foundation to implement the second phase of its Scholars Program e-Learning Initiative. The initiative aims to transform global education by supporting 10 African universities as they modernize their learning technologies. ASU will lead the effort by training higher education personnel in areas like instructional design while supporting the development and implementation of transformation plans.

“We are constantly looking for ways to make sure that all people willing and ready to learn have opportunities to advance themselves and to participate in our efforts to build a better future for themselves, their families, their community and the world,” said [ASU Provost Nancy Gonzales](#).

Other notable philanthropic investments landed through the campaign so far:

The [W. P. Carey Foundation](#) committed \$25 million to partner with the [W. P. Carey School of Business](#) to expand the scope, strength and reach of its real estate programs. The W. P. Carey School of Business is partnering with the ASU Foundation to raise an additional \$12.5 million from the real estate community for experiential learning, scholarships and other efforts.

[Sue Hart-Wadley and Searle Wadley](#) gave \$10 million to help Arizona PBS, the ASU-affiliated PBS station, purchase and construct a new broadcast tower, fund a national science-focused series, and expand educational outreach efforts throughout the state.

[Don and Leslie Budinger](#) made a gift to help ASU establish a Center for Free Speech and an annual ASU Free Speech Forum.

A culture of philanthropy

This is ASU's second fundraising campaign since Crow became president in July 2002. Campaign ASU 2020 concluded Dec. 31, 2020, raising \$2.35 billion and bringing 213,473 new donors to the university. During the campaign, the university built a culture of philanthropy, and the endowment reached the \$1 billion threshold.

Each week in April, ASU will highlight two of its six Changing Futures campaign priorities. Learn more at asuchangingfutures.org.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Charity Bhebhe, a Mastercard Foundation Scholar at ASU, majored in molecular biology and biotechnology in the School of Life Sciences and earned a Gates Cambridge Scholarship. As a student, she conducted research in the Bean Lab, using breath biomarkers to diagnose infections and monitor human health. ASU photo

Gallery



Transform global educationASU serves learners at every stage in life, from K–12 to career development and beyond. We're evolving the American research university model, providing learning to everyone with accessible digital learning tools and resources for all ages.



Reshape our relationship with the planetGreg Asner, director of the ASU Center for Global Discovery and Conservation Science, and a team of divers survey coral growing on sunken warships. This research seeks to understand the biodiversity of different oceanic environments as part of ASU's collaboration with Mongabay.



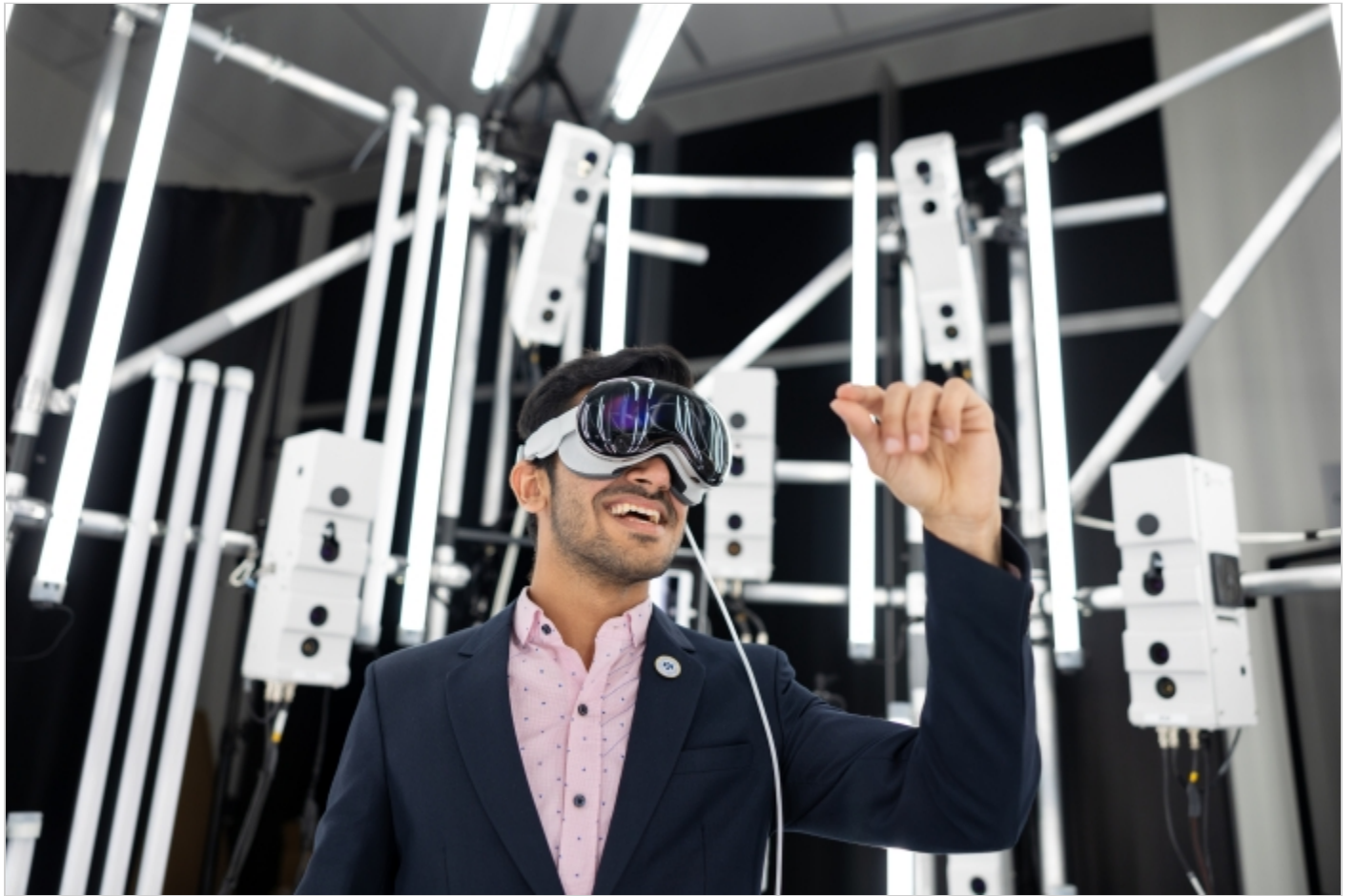
Inspire tomorrow's game changersFormer Sun Devil swimmers Léon Marchand (left) and David Schlicht, '24 BA in interdisciplinary studies, celebrate at the NCAA Championship where the Sun Devils dominated on their way to winning the title. Marchand, then a junior in computer science, became a professional swimmer after the championship and went on to win four gold medals at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, the most among individual participants.



Empower community resilienceASU's SolarSPELL Initiative empowers offline communities globally by providing localized libraries and building the 21st-century skills people need to make informed decisions, increase their self- reliance and improve their quality of life.



Build the future of healthThe Anatomage Table in ASU's College of Integrative Sciences and Arts is a life-sized, 3D imaging system that allows students to virtually examine a human or animal anatomy. ASU is accelerating its health-related efforts to tackle the state's urgent health care needs, now and into the future.



Advance technology for good After years at the forefront of education innovation, ASU is still pushing the boundaries of how we teach, learn and work.