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Going Green in a Big Way

University of Dayton

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Going Green in a Big Way

The George and Amanda Hanley Foundation made a $12.5 million gift to establish the University of Dayton as a national leader for innovation in sustainability education. It's the largest single gift in University history.

"At many universities, sustainability education is focused solely on the environmental sciences," said President Daniel J. Curran in announcing the gift Sept. 19. "This gift will extend sustainability education
across multiple disciplines, creating innovative learning opportunities for undergraduates and graduates, enhancing faculty and student research while expanding community and corporate partnerships and experiential education.

"It is a call to action for the University as a whole to infuse our commitment to sustainability throughout everything we do. We're deeply grateful to the Hanleys for their generosity and vision."

Through the Hanley Sustainability Institute, the University's current sustainability programs will be extended campuswide through a distinctive, highly integrated approach that will prepare students for the growing demand for sustainability skills in the workplace, as well as for civic leadership on sustainability issues.

"It is our intent with this gift to allow students and faculty throughout the University to think creatively about how to put their knowledge to work in real-world projects that extend learning beyond the classroom," said George Hanley, a 1977 business graduate and member of the University of Dayton board of trustees. "We want to educate and prepare students for careers — in every sector — that will help create a more sustainable future."

Added Amanda Hanley: "This innovative, collaborative institute will uniquely bring together students and faculty from science, business, engineering, law, art, journalism and other departments to address environmental and social justice challenges. We are thrilled with UD's national leadership and hope one day interdisciplinary sustainability education will run deep at every university."

With the Hanleys' lead gift, the University will launch a comprehensive campaign to raise additional funds from foundations, corporations and other donors to bring total funding for the institute to $25
"We at the Sierra Club are thrilled about this substantial investment in eco-literacy," said Avital Andrews, who oversees Sierra magazine's annual ranking of America's greenest schools. "It's rare to hear about philanthropists who directly support college students' environmental education — which is even more important than supporting brick-and-mortar sustainability improvements on campus, since it'll empower young people to create a more sustainable world."

Initial objectives of the institute include:

- Developing an interdisciplinary graduate certificate in sustainability.
- Creating an urban agriculture demonstration project with community partners in Dayton.
- Establishing Hanley Research Fellows and Hanley Scholars-in-Residence to support student and faculty research.
- Inaugurating the Hanley Conference on Sustainability Education to convene dialogue on innovations in sustainability learning.
- Achieving a gold STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System) designation from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education and eventually becoming the top-rated Catholic university on that list.

"The University of Dayton is both a distinguished member and a participant in STARS to measure its performance in campus sustainability," said Stephanie Herrera, AASHE Executive Director. "We are greatly encouraged that the University is making this very concerted effort to bring sustainability curriculum to a multidisciplinary base of coursework affecting generations of future graduates. It is our hope that this effort inspires other higher education institutions — and their supporters — to take similar steps," she said.

Ryan Schuessler, senior mechanical engineering student and director of the University's Sustainability Week, said he's seen interest in sustainability take off and expects the Hanleys' gift will be welcomed enthusiastically by students.

"A record number of first-year students selected sustainability as their learning-living community this year," Schuessler said. "The sustainability movement is growing so fast. Students are looking for ways to link academics with action and will be excited about the opportunities the institute will offer to make a difference."

The gift will fund grants for curriculum development and research, community-based partnerships, an innovation fund, and new endowed faculty dedicated to the institute's work, among other initiatives, said Paul Benson, interim provost.
The institute will allow the University to connect programs in environmental science with programs in innovation and entrepreneurship, renewable and clean energy, public policy, and community building, with a special emphasis on intersections between human rights and environmental justice, he added.

"Addressing the complex challenges of creating a more sustainable world calls for expertise from a variety of disciplines and a culture of collaboration and creativity," Benson said. "Through the Hanley Sustainability Institute our students will be well prepared for careers and civic leadership roles now and in the future that demand broad, interdisciplinary understanding grounded in real world experience."

The Chicago couple have long been generous donors to the University. Their gifts have supported a number of educational initiatives and student scholarships in minority engineering and law, among others.

In 2007, they established the Hanley Trading Center in the University's School of Business Administration. A recent gift supported the University's ETHOS program (Engineers in Technical Humanitarian Opportunities of Service-Learning), which allows students to use their engineering skills to implement locally sustainable technologies for humanitarian purposes around the world.

"We hope this gift will encourage other people to support their passions through a gift to the University," said George Hanley.

During his more than 35 years in the trading business, George Hanley is best known for founding Chicago-based Hanley Group, which was acquired by INTL FC Stone, and for his membership at the Chicago Board of Trade and Chicago Mercantile exchange, now CME Group. He presently serves as a co-founder and principal of Level 5 Trading.

Amanda Hanley is a strong advocate of environmental protection and innovative ideas for a healthier planet, people and economy. She has been working toward sustainable solutions for more than 25 years. She is a 1990 graduate of Northern Illinois University, serves on various environmental boards and frequently blogs about green issues.

About the George and Amanda Hanley Foundation
George and Amanda Hanley created their family foundation in 1997. It has come to support organizations that are advancing environmental, educational and social empowerment solutions, both on a local and global scale. They are particularly drawn to innovative models in sustainability that can lead to wider systemic change and greater impact.

About the University of Dayton
Founded in 1850 by the Society of Mary and now the largest private university in Ohio, the University of Dayton has taken a comprehensive approach to environmental sustainability through academic programs, research, service, community responsibility, leadership programs. A member of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, committing the University to being carbon neutral by 2050, the University of Dayton is listed in The Princeton Review's Guide to 322 Green Colleges. The University also has earned a silver STARS rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. Last June, the University became the first Catholic university to divest from fossil fuels as part of its overall sustainability initiatives and in alignment with its social justice mission.

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