



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Meritrust Credit Union pledge will help WSU students develop real-world skills

Meritrust Credit Union has pledged \$324,000 to help Wichita State University launch a career-development program for students in the W. Frank Barton School of Business and enhance services provided by the WSU Office for Student Money Management.

The gift, to be made over three years, commits \$80,000 a year for the Professional Edge program in the Barton School and \$28,000 a year for Student Money Management. The contribution will count toward the WSU Foundation’s Shock the World campaign, which seeks to raise \$250 million in private funds for Wichita State by 2020.

“Meritrust continues to be a generous partner with Wichita State in supporting initiatives that equip WSU students with real-world skills,” said Keith Pickus, WSU Foundation vice president for corporate and foundation relations. “These programs are intended to help students succeed in their careers and lives upon graduation.”

Meritrust, the largest credit union in Kansas, offers one-on-one financial counseling for members and financial literacy programs for elementary, middle and high school students.

“The Professional Edge and Student Money Management programs at Wichita State are a natural fit for our mission and our expertise,” said Meritrust President and CEO James Nastars. “As a not-for-profit financial cooperative, we seek to improve the lives of our members and the communities we serve. Financial literacy and career development are vital to long-term personal success and we’re excited to help WSU students set the stage for a bright future.”

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In addition to the gift to the Shock the World campaign, Meritrust has supported Wichita State and the Barton School of Business through sponsorships and events and is a Lifetime Achievement Member in the WSU Foundation Fairmount Society.

“WSU President John Bardo and Barton School Dean Anand Desai have an innovative and compelling vision for the future of the university and its students, the community and beyond,” Nastars said. “This new partnership is a unique opportunity to support emerging leaders as they enter the workforce and build strong communities.”

Professional Edge is a program to help students identify career pathways, teach them how to interact with business professionals and develop their professional and interpersonal skills. Examples of skills and competencies that Professional Edge provides include networking, resume writing, communication etiquette, financial literacy, knowledge of the field in which the student has an interest and available career opportunities.

“Our commitment to our students goes beyond excellent classroom instruction and applied learning opportunities,” said Desai. “We also will show them how to be more effective searching for jobs and more professional once they land that job. Through this partnership with Meritrust, Barton students will have an edge in the workforce that will enhance their futures.”

The gift from Meritrust will help fund three separate services and initiatives in the Office for Student Money Management:

- Hire more peer financial coaches, who are WSU students who help other students gain financial literacy and make day-to-day money decisions.
- Fund an annual event called Game of Life, in which students navigate their way through simulated financial situations and learn what impact their decisions had on their lives.
- Host the College Success Conference, an event to train personnel from other Kansas colleges, high schools and middle schools how to help students improve financial literacy.

“College debt is a big issue, one that a lot of students are worried about,” said Kim Sandlin, director of the Office of Student Success at Wichita State. “Surveys tell us that 70 percent of college students wish they had had more information on how to handle finances. It’s critical that we provide resources that are free to students, and this gift from Meritrust will help make that possible.”

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Contacts:

- **Jamie Taulbee**, chief retail officer/vice president of retail banking, Meritrust Credit Union,
316-651-5170 or jamie.taulbee@meritrustcu.org
- **Keith Pickus**, WSU Foundation vice president for corporate and foundation relations,
316-978-7791 or keith.pickus@wichita.edu

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WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION | 1845 FAIRMOUNT STREET | WICHITA, KANSAS 67260-0002 | TELE: 316-978-3040
WICHITA.EDU/FOUNDATION | FACEBOOK.COM/WSUFOUNDATION | TWITTER.COM/WSUFOUNDATION