What’s so special about chairs and professorships? In a word, they have the power to be transformative.

First and foremost, chairs and professorships are recognized as the highest tribute a university can bestow on a faculty member. For that reason, they are coveted by the most accomplished educators, scholars and researchers. Universities compete fiercely to recruit and retain these faculty by awarding them chairs and professorships.

In more practical terms, endowed positions give outstanding faculty the critical funds they need to sustain and expand their research and to launch innovative initiatives. These faculty members also attract and inspire the finest students and they help Wichita State recruit other top educators who want to work at an institution that invests in its people. The generous gifts of friends and supporters like you will allow Wichita State to honor and fund the work of current and future faculty leaders.

HOW TO ENDOW A PROFESSORSHIP OR CHAIR: Donors contribute an amount that is dependent on the academic discipline, title and other factors. This investment may be made over a period of five years, and is partially matched through the state of Kansas’ Faculty of Distinction program. Donors are recognized with a naming opportunity for the position. They typically help define its focus and purpose.

HOW THE DONOR’S GIFT IS USED: Contributions create an endowment that will exist in perpetuity. The gift principle remains intact and is managed as part of the WSU Foundation’s investment portfolio. Investment earnings provide the funds for the annual payout, which may be used to support a faculty member’s scholarship and responsibilities in teaching, research and service.

ANNUAL PAYOUT AMOUNT: A gift of $2 million for a chair would provide an annual payout of about $80,000. A gift of $1 million for a professorship would provide an annual payout of $40,000.

Photo above: Dr. Sue Abdinnour, who holds the Verne and Helen Omer business professorship, consults with a colleague.
Through this professorship, I have been able to combine two of my greatest passions, opera and teaching. I’m able to take my experiences and knowledge from a 30-year career in opera and concert performance to the students in the WSU College of Fine Arts as well as be part of a university and community that have meant so much to be me and my family since I was a student here in 1981.

— Alan Held
Ann and Dennis Ross Faculty of Distinction in Opera

Holding this position has allowed me to achieve things I couldn’t dream of without additional funds and support. I’m able to provide educational opportunities for students and encourage faculty to dream of pursuing things they wouldn’t otherwise be able to do. Because of the position, I also have the opportunity to partner with Envision, a nonprofit organization that assists those who are blind or visually impaired.

— Alex Chaparro
Carl and Rozina Cassat Professor in Aging

A professorship like the one I hold is a powerful tool to attract the best faculty to Wichita State and keep them here. It is recognition that the work I do is valued and essential. I have expanded my research and recently won the Wichita Business Journal Innovation Award for an algorithm I wrote that is helping companies improve their operations. All this work happened because my position allowed me the time and funds to explore and innovate.

— Sue Abdinnour
Verne and Helen Omer Professor in Business

When my father endowed four chairs in the W. Frank Barton School of Business, he said he was doing it to help repay the community where he had achieved so much success, and he was doing it to invest in the future of that community. That legacy of supporting bright individuals and helping them contribute to our world is something that will endure for decades to come. It’s a permanent and personal bond between Wichita State University and my family.

— Craig Barton, son of W. Frank Barton

AN ENDURING LEGACY

WHICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION

*Shock the World*