

# CORNERSTONES

A Quarterly Publication of The University of Toledo Foundation



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## BLUE CREW ALUMNI GIVE BACK TO ORGANIZATION THAT GIVES SO MUCH

**B**rian Weinblatt remembers Blue Crew's first public appearance: Sept. 2, 2000, as The University of Toledo football team faced Penn State in Happy Valley.

"There were four of us in all-white Blue Crew coveralls. The Penn State fans were laughing at us as we went into the stadium. They weren't laughing on the way out, as UT trounced Penn State 24-6," he said. "Blue Crew played a big part among the raucous group of UT fans in attendance on that glorious early September day."

Blue Crew has evolved from a group of unofficial cheerleaders to a driving force in building UT spirit. Along the way, a

strong camaraderie has been forged among the group's current and past members.

Building upon friendships and shared experiences, Dr. Weinblatt and other past members, including CJ Murawski, formed a Blue Crew Alumni Association in 2006.

"We have a strong sense of fellowship among us," said Mr. Murawski, "and we are all drawn to Blue Crew because of the amazing people who have been, and continue to be, initiated into its ranks."

Aiding current and future Blue Crew members in their mission was a natural next step. And soon, the alumni group began talking about growing those gifts into a permanent fund.

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The Blue Crew Alumni Association has created an endowment to assist current and future Blue Crew members with travel, tickets, uniforms, and other costs.

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## BLUE CREW ALUMNI GIVE BACK

Creating an endowment at the UT Foundation (requiring \$25,000 in gifts) seemed a daunting goal, considering the age of the alumni. “Even our oldest member at the time was under 30, just starting his career,” said Mr. Murawski ('05), a Toledo area custom home builder and remodeler.

Surprisingly, however, contacting Blue Crew alumni and friends about contributing has proven to be “an easy ask,” he said, thanks to a shared affinity.

Gifts and pledges to the recently endowed fund total \$35,000, and the organization has a goal of \$100,000.

The endowment will assist current and future members with travel, tickets, uniforms, and other costs.

“From the beginning, we always envisioned alumni of Blue Crew giving back to support the current members, much like a fraternity or sorority,” said Dr. Weinblatt, who holds three degrees from UT and serves as senior director of development for the University of Miami.

Fundraising for specific student organizations, departments, and projects has a way of garnering support from donors who would otherwise not consider giving to the university for more general purposes.

“Philanthropy is about personal choices, about what means the most to donors individually,” explained Dr. Weinblatt.

Blue Crew’s current president, known as J-Soup, said gifts to the new endowment mean a great deal to the current student members.

“It’s rewarding to see an alumni group so committed and involved,” he said. “Being a part of Blue Crew isn’t about us, as members. It’s about representing the Rockets of the past, present, and future in the best way possible. This fund will strengthen our efforts in building UT pride.”

For information on making a gift to support Blue Crew, contact Nick Butler, director of development, at [nick.butler@utoledo.edu](mailto:nick.butler@utoledo.edu) or 419-530-5413.

## DANA, COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, AND TOLEDO EXCEL JOIN FORCES

For nearly 30 years, UT’s Toledo Excel program has provided college preparation programs and scholarships to underrepresented students, including African, Asian, Hispanic, and Native Americans.

A \$250,000 gift from Dana Inc., will now enhance these opportunities: through the Dana Excelling into Engineering Scholarship Program.

The initiative aims to increase the enrollment, retention, and success of minority students in UT’s College of Engineering, according to Dr. Lesley Berhan, director of engineering diversity initiatives and associate professor of mechanical, industrial and manufacturing engineering.

“Through this partnership with Dana Inc. and Toledo Excel,” said Dr. Berhan, who will lead the new program, “we hope to develop a sustainable pipeline to the College of Engineering for underrepresented students in the Toledo area, introducing them to the exciting world of engineering and enhancing their academic and professional preparation.”

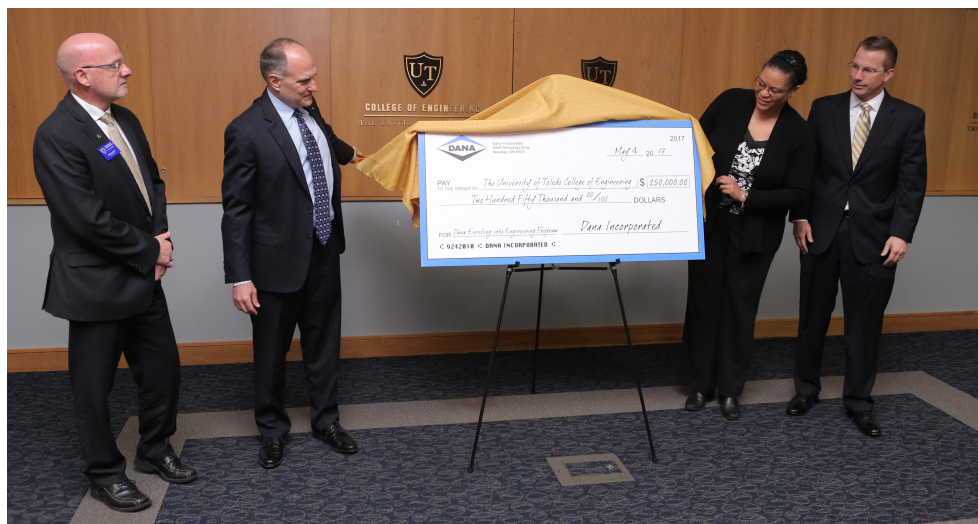
The Dana Excelling into Engineering Scholarship Program is a four-stage program that will start after the completion of 11th grade with a summer institute,

beginning in July. Mentorship and professional development opportunities will continue through the completion of a degree from the College of Engineering.

“Dana is proud to partner with The University of Toledo in this endeavor to better connect students from underrepresented communities to career paths in engineering,” said George Constand, chief technology officer at Dana Inc. “We believe this will help to promote greater diversity and inclusion among the engineering workforce of the future.”

“The Excelling into Engineering Scholarship Program is a wonderful opportunity for our Excel students who are interested in careers in engineering,” David Young, director of the Toledo Excel Program, said. “It provides them with a great introduction to the field through amazing faculty in the University’s College of Engineering, mentorship and guidance from a fantastic company like Dana, and continued support from the Toledo Excel staff that has invested in them since the time they left middle school. I am thrilled that the idea Dr. Berhan discussed with me many months ago has now become reality.”

To support this program, contact Nick Kulik, director of development, at [nicholas.kulik@utoledo.edu](mailto:nicholas.kulik@utoledo.edu) or 419-530-5428.



Celebrating the new Dana Excelling into Engineering Scholarship are, from left to right: Dr. Steven LeBlanc, professor and former interim dean for UT’s College of Engineering; George Constand, chief technology officer for Dana Inc.; Dr. Lesley Berhan, UT director of engineering diversity initiatives and associate professor of mechanical, industrial and manufacturing engineering; and Michael Harders, UT vice president for Advancement.

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## SAVE THE DATES: 2017 HOMECOMING AND INAUGURAL UT GIVING DAY

Alumni, friends, and others in The University of Toledo community will want to mark their calendars for two upcoming opportunities to celebrate UT.

Homecoming 2017, with the theme "Aloha Rockets!" is Saturday, Oct. 7. Game time for the Eastern Michigan University football match is still to be determined, pending ESPN's broadcast schedule.

Other events include the annual Gala on Friday, parade, and a slate of additional activities.

For updates, visit <https://give2ut.utoledo.edu/homecoming.asp>

In addition, the University's first annual "Giving Day" is planned for Thursday, Oct. 12. Coinciding with UT's Founder's Day, the goal is to provide a designated day for raising awareness and funds for UT's varied needs and opportunities. This year's theme is "Rocket Forward-You Launch Lives!"

More details on the annual one-day campaign will follow at [utfoundation.org](http://utfoundation.org).

## UT FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES NAMES NEW OFFICERS

The University of Toledo Foundation Board of Trustees has named the following officers, effective July 2017: *chair*: **Connie Zouhary**, executive vice president of Buckenmeyer & King, CPAs; *vice chair*: **Mark Luetke**, management strategist

and retired president, FLS Group; *secretary*: **Susan Palmer**, former director of development for the Toledo Museum of Art; and *treasurer*: **John Huber**, vice president - director of operations support for HCR Manor Care.



Connie Zouhary



Mark Luetke



Susan Palmer



John Huber

## HONORROLL

The following donors have become eligible for special recognition:

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as of July 25, 2017

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## MEET OUR BOARD



Gerald F. Miller is vice president of Miller Diversified, Inc., and Miller Danberry Commercial Realty. A former vice president of Tomahawk Development Company in Maumee, Mr. Miller is a graduate of The University of Michigan.

To make a gift, contact a member of the fundraising staff:

VP, Advancement  
Michael Harders: 419-530-4249

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