

# NIGHT HAWK NATION

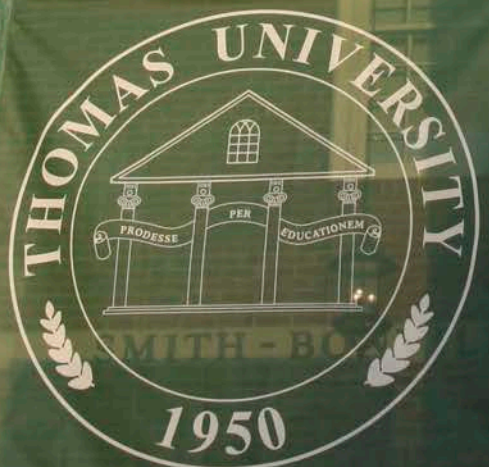


  
**Thomas**  
UNIVERSITY

**Annual Report 2018-2019**

Thomas

University



NOTICE



# NIGHT HAWK NATION

Night Hawk Nation, a network of talented students, caring faculty, accomplished alumni and generous donors. share a common bond that begins here at Thomas University.

Night Hawk Nation offers unmatched opportunities for students to learn more, experience more, and achieve more inside and out of the classroom. Students become leaders committed to making a difference in their communities, their families, and their world.

“ My time as a student at Thomas University was a life-changing experience. Now I enjoy sharing with prospective students all that TU has to offer.

– Joshua Barrett, '19,  
B.S. in Business Administration

At Thomas University, we're not just in the business of educating students. We're in the business of transforming lives.”

– Dr. Pauline Patrick, Associate Professor,  
Chair of Division of Counseling & Psychology

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A real education goes far beyond the classroom. It goes to the heart of a student and makes each one a better person overall. At Thomas University, we don't teach just academic subjects; we teach students how to be difference-makers. That's why you'll find TU students throughout Thomas County giving of their time and effort to make the community a better place.

Somewhere along the way, there was a person – or several – who believed in each one of our students and set them on the path toward a college degree. Often it was a role model who never let them give up. Sometimes that encouragement came in the form of scholarship dollars that made their journeys possible. Now our students realize the importance of paying forward on what they received. For them, volunteering in the community isn't an option; it's a calling.

The experience of giving back makes a tremendous impact on our students. In 2018-19, our athletes provided 1,727 hours of service to the local community. And that's just our athletes. That does not count our many other students who also volunteer in the community.

After graduation, many of our students choose careers in service fields. Those who don't still find ways to give back to their communities through churches or nonprofit organizations. You'll read more about some of our recent graduates who went into teaching, veterinary medical school or physical therapy school in this publication. You'll also read about some of our outstanding alumni and the impact they're making in their communities.

What's most important is that the students of today cultivate the next generation of difference-makers who create thriving communities. They will become the encouragers and role models of tomorrow providing that much-needed inspiration for the next generation of students to start on their paths toward a college degree. They are Night Hawk Nation.

To be a member of Night Hawk Nation means "aptitude for altitude." We strive for greater heights in everything we do. It's not an attitude. That means we can change our minds. We are driven by our inherent ability to be better. How high can you fly?

Sincerely,



James A. Sheppard, Ph.D.  
President



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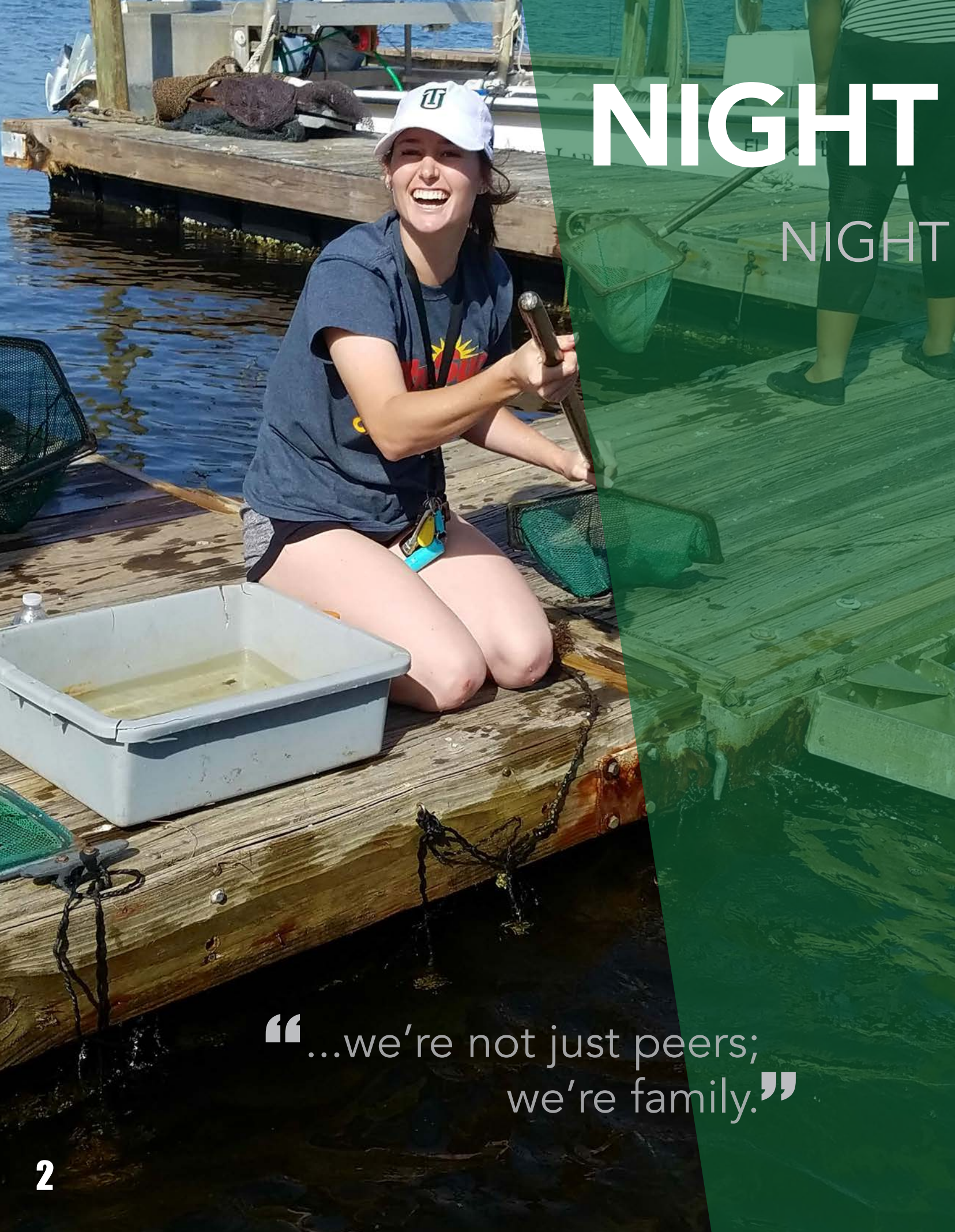
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# NIGHT

# NIGHT

“...we're not just peers;  
we're family.”

# HAWK NATION

## HAWKS MAKE AN IMPACT

### TU STUDENT SHARES EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATION'S BERRIEN COHORT

In the fall of 2016, Thomas University began an undergraduate program in Berrien County to help career changers – especially paraprofessionals – who wanted to become teachers.

The students who began in the program already had at least an associate degree. They completed the last two years of coursework in either Middle Grades Education, Early Childhood Education or Secondary Education to earn a bachelor's degree and teacher certification. Students took classes on five Saturdays per each eight-week course. In May 2019, students in the first cohort graduated and began teaching in August.

Caitlyn Riggins, a non-traditional student from Atkinson County

maored Middle Grades Education and participated in the Berrien cohort.

"I just think that at Thomas University, especially with the cohort program that we have here in Berrien County, we're not just peers; we're family," Riggins said. "I've made connections with women I would not have made if it wasn't for Thomas University, and they're lifelong connections."

Riggins said she appreciates the encouragement and support she received from TU faculty.

"I don't think I'd be where I'm



*Caitlyn Riggins*

at if not for Thomas University," Riggins said. "I don't think I would've gotten the same support and encouragement from any other program."

### BIOLOGY GRADUATES START ON ROAD TO DOCTORATES

Three Thomas University biology majors who graduated May 11, 2019, with their bachelor's degrees are now enrolled in graduate programs that lead to doctorate degrees.

Gabriela Mora from Albuquerque, New Mexico, is attending Gannon University in Ruskin, Florida, in the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program.

"I was interviewed by a professor and a student at the school and had to wait for a response for about two weeks. I then received an acceptance email, and I felt on top of the world."

Jeleah Nunez from Kissimmee, Florida, is attending the University of Florida's Veterinary Medical School.

"It was always a dream of mine

to go to this school, and my mentors spoke highly about their veterinary program," Nunez said. "Also, it is closer to home."

Dante DiSipio from Lakeland, Florida, is attending the University of Florida's Doctor of Physical Therapy Program.

"At TU I learned how to study different ways for a variety of subjects,"

he said. "My degree has given me a background in many fields and the confidence to pursue any graduate degree I desire."



*Dante DiSipio, Jeleah Nunez, Gabriela Mora*

# NIGHT HAWKS MAKE AN IMPACT



## CAIRO TU STUDENT INTERNS AT GULF SPECIMEN MARINE LAB

When Dana Blough talks about her summer internship at the Gulf Specimen Marine Lab in Panacea, Florida, one thing becomes apparent – just how much she enjoyed the work, even the not-so-glamorous behind the scenes tasks of cleaning tanks and scrubbing sea turtles' shells.

A Thomas University senior Biology major, Blough was one of just 12 students interning from May 12 through Aug. 2, 2019, at the lab.

"We did a lot of educational tours," she said. That's where we have kids' camps or just tourists come in. We basically talk about the animals and give a lot of background information on them."

The internship was an opportunity for her to spend time with some animals that she always loved – sea turtles.

"We had two different types of stingrays," Blough said. "We had the Southern Stingray and an Atlantic Stingray. They are the most social creatures you'll ever meet. It is so interesting to watch them.

Blough said taking Prof. Elizabeth Harrell's zoology class at Thomas University helped prepare her for the internship by learning about the classification of animals.

"I think we have a super great biology program here," she said. "One of the things I really like about



*Dana Blough*

the school is the classes are so small. I like the fact that you have so much one-on-one time."

## HARRELL RECEIVES TEACHING AWARD, PARTICIPATES IN ESRI EDUCATIONAL SUMMIT

Elizabeth Harrell, Biology Instructor at Thomas University, participated in the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Educational Summit held in San Diego, California. During the event, Harrell met with fellow geoscience educators as she attended workshops on geographical science implementation for higher education. Harrell is also the director

of TU's Geospatial Analysis Planning and Preservation (GAPP) Lab and teaches geographic information science (GIS) courses.

TU previously recognized Harrell's efforts as a faculty member by presenting her with the 2019 Vulcan Teaching Award, sponsored by the Vulcan Materials Company and the Georgia Independent College Association (GICA).



*Elizabeth Harrell receives the 2019 Vulcan Teaching Excellence Award*





## O'NEILL NAMED TU'S PROFESSOR OF THE YEAR

In addition to graduating a record number of students during its 64th Commencement ceremony, Thomas University honored Dr. Marty O'Neill as its 2019 Professor of the Year. O'Neill is an Associate Professor of Nursing. She joined Thomas University in 2008.

O'Neill has served as the Faculty Counselor and Governance Chair for TU's Phi Tau Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society, on TU's Faculty Affairs Committee, as Chair of the Division of Nursing's Curriculum and Program Evaluation Committee, on TU's Institutional Review Board,

on TU's Academic Program Review Committee and is the immediate past Speaker of TU's Faculty Senate. O'Neill is active in the American Organization of Nurse Executives and the Council for Advanced Practice Nurses.

O'Neill earned her Ph.D. in 2014 from the University of Florida, where she was named the Graduate of the Year.

Her nomination letter states, "Students both domestic and abroad keep in touch with Dr. O'Neill to share their experiences in nursing and the impact that she has had on their lifelong learning and the ability



*Dr. Marty O'Neill*

to accomplish their goals through her shared knowledge."

## MBA STUDENT INTERNS IN HR AT OIL-DRI



*Aron Wimberly*

Aron Wimberly, a student in the MBA program from Mayo, Florida, interned in the HR office with Oil-Dri over the summer of 2019. Oil-Dri produces, markets and sells sorbent mineral technology for use in pet products, animal health, fluids purification, crops and horticulture.

"From the beginning, the position allowed me to immediately get hands-on experience," he said. "I was involved in recruiting, on-boarding, terminating, policy reconstruction and writing proposals for the HR manager. My assigned tasks varied day-to-day, but there was always something that needed to be done in the office."

"I was also given the opportunity to develop relationships with different departments within and outside of the organization," he said. "For instance, I was assigned to work in the logistics department for a few weeks in order to get them back on track with the large number of invoices they were receiving daily. It gave me an insight into the functions of other departments within Oil-Dri."

Wimberly said the internship was a great opportunity that provided professionalism and expertise that he'll use in his future career.

# NIGHT HAWKS MAKE AN IMPACT

## TU HONORS OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AT HOMECOMING DINNER

During its annual Homecoming Alumni Dinner, Thomas University recognized three of its most outstanding alumni. Nancy Hall of Moultrie, Amanda Lanphere of Thomasville and Linda Conti of Thomasville were honored.

Hall, a 2015 graduate with a Master of Science in Nursing degree, received the Distinguished Alumni Award, which is presented in recognition of personal and professional accomplishments, as well as continued support of the Thomas University mission.

Hall was inducted into TU's Phi Tau Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing in 2017. Later that year she was elected as chapter president and represented the chapter as a delegate to the 2017 STTI Biennium Convention.

Hall is currently a nursing instructor at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College's Bainbridge campus, where she teaches a wide variety of courses. She serves as the Simulation Coordinator for Obstetrics and was the Chair of the Search Committee at the ABAC Bainbridge Campus to select instructors for its Associate of Science Degree in Nursing.

Lanphere, a 2015 TU graduate with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology, received the Outstanding Recent Alumni Award, which is presented to an individual who graduated in the last five years in honor of his or her personal and professional accomplishments.

Over the past few years, Lanphere has risen through the ranks of the Florida Department

of Environmental Protection to an Environmental Specialist III position. She currently works in the Division of Mining and Mitigation for the FDEP, where she is responsible for statewide compliance of large-scale operations.

Conti, a 2009 TU graduate with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology, received the Alumni Ambassador Award, which is presented to an alumnus in appreciation of exceptional commitment to Thomas University.

Conti has served as a member of the Alumni Board of Governors and its Homecoming Committee for several years. She also regularly volunteers to assist with TU events. Conti currently works as a bereavement coordinator with Hospice of Southwest Georgia.



*Marvin Dawson, President of the TU Alumni Board of Governors, and Dr. Andy Sheppard, TU President, presented Nancy Hall with the Distinguished Alumnus Award.*



*Amanda Lanphere received the Distinguished Recent Graduate Award.*



*Linda Conti received the Alumni Ambassador Award.*

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# HONORS

## TU HONORED FOR MILITARY FRIENDLINESS

In 2019 Thomas University was named to two lists for its efforts to assist students who are veterans, currently in the military or a military spouse.

For several years G.I. Jobs® has named TU to its Military Friendly Schools® List, ranking at number 8 in the category of private schools. According to the Military Friendly® website, 111 schools from across the U.S. are included in the category, but TU was the only school in Georgia in the category.

In June 2019 TU became one of only nine Georgia schools named to the Military Spouse Friendly® Schools list, which is created using data from federal agencies and proprietary survey information from participating organizations to create a comprehensive guide for military spouses looking to further their education. In 2019 a total of 196 schools made the list.



## TU'S COUNSELING PROGRAM RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE BEST IN U.S.

Thomas University's Master of Science Degree in Clinical Mental Health and Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling received several recognitions in 2018 and 2019.

In July 2018, Best Counseling Degrees named the program to its top 36 list of online Counseling degrees. The list was compiled from all the U.S. Counseling degree programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP). In March 2019, TopCounselingSchools.org named TU's program to its list of "25 Best Masters in Counseling Online Programs 2019." In August 2019, TheBestSchools.org named TU's program to its list of the 16 best online Master's in Substance Abuse Counseling degree programs.



# ATHLETICS



## ATHLETIC HIGHLIGHTS

★ The 2018 Men's Soccer Team won the Sun Conference Regular Season Championship and went on to be a Sun Conference Tournament Runner-Up.

★ The Men's Swimming Team qualified for the 2019 NAIA National Championship, where Dorian Taylor placed fifth in the 200-yard freestyle, and Kevin Bohr placed seventh in the 200-yard breaststroke. Both earned All-America honors.

★ The Men's Swimming Team placed third in the 2019 Sun Coast Swimming Conference Championship.

★ The Women's Swimming Team qualified for the 2019 NAIA National Championship. Kiana Ocasio-Molina finished fifth in the 400-yard individual medley. Maggie Davis finished sixth in the 200-yard butterfly. Jamie Haught finished sixth in the 1650 freestyle. All three earned All-America honors.

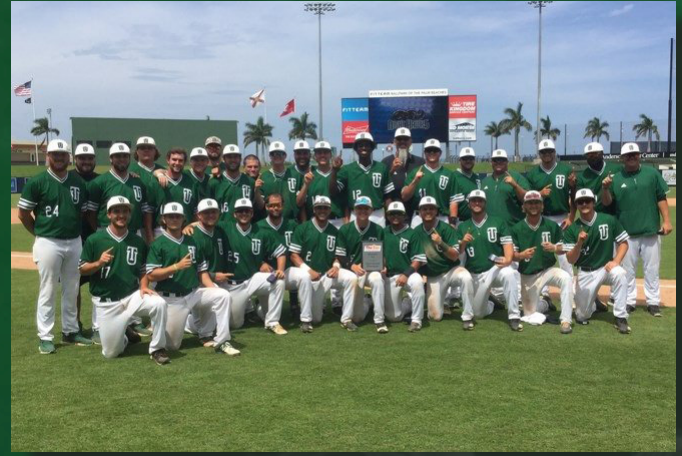
★ The Women's Swimming Team finished fifth in the 2019 Sun Coast Swimming Conference Championship.

★ Twenty-one Night Hawks were named to All-Sun Conference teams.

★ Seven TU athletes were named Sun Conference Players of the Week.



The Men's Golf Team competed at the NAIA National Championship placing 14th as a team. Joe Bale tied for eighth as an individual.



The 2019 Baseball Team won the Sun Conference Tournament and competed in the NAIA National Championship opening round.

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Thomas University had six teams listed as NAIA Scholar Teams in 2018-19. For a team to be considered for the NAIA Scholar-Team award, it must have a minimum 3.0-grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) as defined by the institution. The team grade point average includes all eligible varsity student-athletes.

Leading the way for Thomas University was Women's Swimming with a 3.56 GPA followed by Men's Golf (3.41), Men's Soccer (3.38), Women's Golf (3.23), Women's Soccer (3.23) and Softball (3.07).

Other academic highlights include:

- Nineteen students received NAIA Scholar-Athlete recognition.
- Ten students were named to the Sun Conference All-Academic Team.



**19**

**Nineteen students received NAIA Scholar-Athlete recognition.**



**10**

**Ten students were named to the Sun Conference All-Academic Team.**

# STUDENT LIFE



*Welcome Back Cookout*

## CAB KEEPS STUDENTS INVOLVED IN CAMPUS LIFE

Whether it's a quick breakfast break while finishing final exams or an evening of bowling fun, Thomas University's Campus Activities Board (CAB) plans events that help students enjoy each other's company and have fun outside of the classroom.

"The Campus Activities Board at Thomas University is a student-led organization with the goal of identifying and planning engaging programs on campus," said Courtney Sinclair, Coordinator of Student Activities. "This energetic group of volunteers works hard to make sure all students have opportunities for fun and enjoyment while attending TU."

For the students who participate, CAB can provide experience in skills that will benefit them long after graduation.

"CAB officers and members obtain first-hand experience in planning, marketing and executing activities at Thomas University while meeting the needs/interests of all students," Sinclair said. "Leadership skills are fostered through their experiences as well as other professional skills, such as time management, organization, communication and teamwork."



*Trunk-or-Treat*



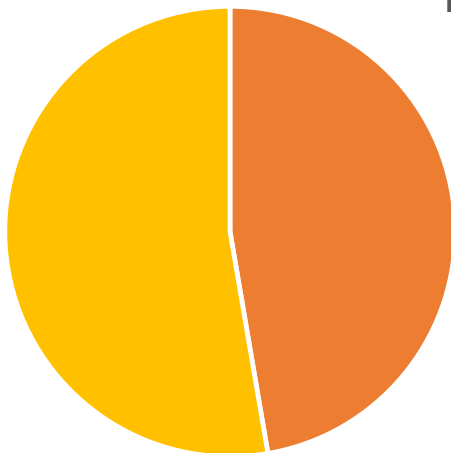
*Thanksgiving Dinner*

# 2019 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The composition of Thomas University's Endowment Fund net assets as of May 31, 2018 and May 31, 2019 were as follows:

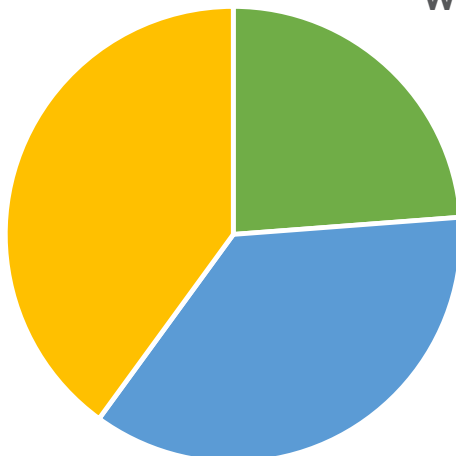
ENDOWMENTS	YEAR ENDING MAY 31, 2019	YEAR ENDING MAY 31, 2018
Operations	\$696,860	\$711,182
Scholarship	\$2,796,845	\$2,820,065
Academic Programs	\$2,141,919	\$2,164,576
Academic Support	\$12,878	\$13,106
Student Services	\$13,074	\$13,299
	<b>\$5,661,576</b>	<b>\$5,722,228</b>

## HOW GIFTS ARE USED



Without Donor Restrictions	\$2,678,289
With Donor Restrictions	\$2,983,287
	<b>\$5,661,576</b>

## WHERE GIFTS COME FROM



Individuals:	\$193,765.96
Foundations/Funds:	\$294,939.00
Corporations:	\$325,515.34

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As a small, private non-profit university, Thomas University prides itself on small classes and plenty of one-on-one interaction between faculty and students. Thomasville is very lucky to have such a university right here in South Georgia. However, it takes all of us working together to ensure TU's success.

Thomas University is more than just an institution of higher education; it's a place of opportunity for all those willing to work toward a better future for themselves, for their families, and for their community. Many of our students are either the first in their families to go to college or are working adults ready to advance their careers or switch to different career fields. With your support, their hard work will pay off.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank you for your financial commitment to Thomas University's future. You are making a difference. Whether you provide scholarship dollars to help needy students along their educational journey or you give to the annual fund to help with general operational or academic needs, your donation is an investment in Thomas University and in the South Georgia region.

Thank you for believing in Thomas University, in our students and in the possibilities the future holds for this fine institution.

Sincerely,



Fortson Rumble,  
Chairman



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The information below is intended to provide general guidance. Please discuss with your tax advisor the best way(s) for you to contribute to Thomas University.

### CASH DONATIONS

Outright gifts of cash (which include donations made via check, credit card and payroll deduction) are often the simplest for you to make. The key is to make sure you keep record of the gift as required by the IRS. Thomas University will provide a gift receipt via mail, when a mailing address is provided. Please consult with your tax advisor, as needed.

### STOCK DONATIONS

Publicly traded stock and other securities which you have held for more than one year may potentially have accumulated long-term capital gains, and could make one of the best charitable gifts. Why? Because you may be able to deduct the current fair market value and avoid the capital gains tax that you may be required to pay if you were to sell the property outright.

However, you may not want to donate stock that is worth less than your basis. Instead, you could sell the stock outright so that you might be able to deduct the loss and then donate the cash proceeds to Thomas University. Please consult with your tax advisor, as needed.

### GIFTS IN KIND

As demonstrated above, gifts of cash or stocks are relatively simple and may provide tax savings benefits, but many taxpayers make other types of donations, such as vehicles, collectibles, or services as in-kind contributions. Please consult with your tax advisor, as needed.

### PLANNED GIFTS

Many other contribution vehicles are available, such as Wills, Charitable Remainder Trusts, Charitable Lead Trusts, Charitable Gift Annuities, etc. Please consult with your tax advisor, as needed.



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