



Belmont Abbey COLLEGE

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Belmont Abbey College unveils \$100 million campaign and development plan

BELMONT (Feb. 18, 2023) — Belmont Abbey College today unveiled a historic \$100 million capital campaign to fund physical and academic improvements at the Catholic liberal arts college, announcing that generous donors have already committed \$72 million toward the ambitious development plan.

The “Made True” capital campaign calls for a new monastery, performing arts center, academic enhancements, growth of the college’s endowment to reduce reliance on federal aid, and innovative stewardship programs to help students graduate debt free.

“This is one of the biggest events in the college’s history,” said Benedictine Abbot Placid Solari, who serves as chancellor and oversees the community of Benedictine monks on campus whose predecessors started the college nearly 150 years ago.

“We are humbled and grateful for the extraordinary support we have received through the silent phase of the campaign,” he said, “and we now invite alumni, students and families, and people across the region to help us close the funding gap and ensure that this type of education is available for future generations.”

College leaders presented their plans to supporters and civic leaders on Feb. 18 at an evening gala at Founders Hall in uptown Charlotte. Located 20 miles west of Charlotte, Belmont Abbey College has 1,500 students and has seen steady growth in enrollment and support over the past decade.

In 2019, Belmont Abbey struck a deal with CaroMont Health to build a hospital on the campus along Interstate 85. That building project is nearing completion, and a number of additional building projects are underway even as the “Made True” campaign reaches its final phase. The college is constructing two new residence halls, a sports complex, and making improvements to the science and nursing centers to accommodate growth and enhance the student experience. The new buildings are designed to blend in with the historic architecture and intimate setting of the Abbey campus, which still centers around the original Benedictine monastery built in 1888, home to the current generation of monks who serve.

Belmont Abbey College offers nearly 50 undergraduate, graduate, professional and pre-professional fields of study, and has a 95 percent acceptance rate into medical schools. About half the students are Catholic, the other half of different faiths.

“Belmont Abbey College appeals to students and families who want an excellent education on a vibrant campus that is grounded in faith and reason,” said Dr. William Thierfelder. “We have made it easier to access over the last decade by lowering tuition and providing creative student aid programs and partnerships with organizations who need talent and want to hire our graduates.”

The silent phase of the “Made True” campaign began three years ago and is expected to meet or exceed its goal in 2026, the college’s 150th anniversary. The campaign is a three-pronged effort to further secure, strengthen and free the college to live out authentic Church teaching and make Catholic higher education more accessible at the only Catholic institution of higher learning between Northern Virginia and Florida.

The \$100 million campaign includes:

- \$15 million to help build a new monastery and performing arts center, as well as launch career and family programs aimed at building religious freedom. The funding will act as seed money to prompt partnerships, naming opportunities, and contributions beyond the campaign to bring the two high-profile buildings to fruition.
- \$30 million to fund new academic programs in nursing, public policy, and finance, increased advocacy for religious freedom, and enhancements to its successful Belmont House in Washington, D.C.
- \$55 million to boost the college’s endowment and reduce – eventually eliminating – federal aid, as well as provide the financial resources needed to become the employer of choice among its peers. It’s an effort to help secure the college’s ability to teach and live the Catholic faith without government mandates that might conflict with Church teaching. In addition, federal college loan programs have been unreliable and variable in their ability to make education affordable.

The new performing arts center will give The Abbey Players – the oldest performing arts group in North Carolina – an elegant new venue that can host larger audiences and be used by the local community for events and performances.

The new monastery is a gift to the monks who have served the college for well over a century. The existing historic monastery, constructed with bricks handmade by the monks, will be carefully refurbished and put to a new use by the college.

“Everything begins with the monastic community,” Thierfelder said. “They’ve come here seeking God, and they believe by living and praying and working together in community, they’re going to come to a deeper, more profound love of God. It’s a remarkable vocation and commitment they have made. With this campaign, we want to demonstrate our continued commitment as a college and a community to the work they began so long ago.”

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