



**Dear Rhodes Community,**

As we close another extraordinary academic year and prepare to graduate the largest class in the college's history with 541 students earning diplomas, I want to take a moment to reflect on a few of the things we have accomplished together. We have enjoyed watching our students perform at the highest level, and we applaud their accomplishments knowing they would not be possible without our supportive and talented faculty and staff.

- Our students continue to be tremendously successful in receiving highly competitive national fellowships and scholarships, including a [Watson Fellowship](#) for Parth Sinojia '25 and a [Goldwater Scholarship](#) for Ada Collins '27 this spring. Additionally, Rhodes was recognized as a [Top Producer of Fulbright U.S. Students](#) for the fourth year. We were notified yesterday that at least three students have been awarded Fulbright Awards for 2025-26: Kate Buikema '25 (Bulgaria), Maya Khalife-Hamdan '25 (Colombia), and Anna Rush '25 (Spain). Additionally, Monica Nedialkova '25 is an alternate for Bulgaria.
- Our impressive [mock trial team](#) competed at the highest level once again, making nationals for the 37<sup>th</sup> time in its 39-year history, more than any other college or university. Christyn Sanders '25 and Kevin Caltry '25 won All-American awards at nationals. Christyn will compete in the national Gauntlet competition in July, along with Mitchell Leander '27 and Zoe Haug '26. Thank you to program director and professor Anna Eldridge '02 for inspiring and coaching these amazing students!
- Two Rhodes juniors—Sandy Mansour '26 and Kai Virani '26—not only won our second Venture Challenge but also were named finalists in the national [E-Fest](#) competition.

- The College held its annual Awards Convocation last week. In addition to nearly 175 student awardees, our two highest faculty awards, the [Clarence Day Awards for Outstanding Teaching and Outstanding Research/Creative Activity](#) went to Courtney Collins '05 and Caki Wilkinson '03, respectively. We are so proud of their excellent work with our students and in their research and creative endeavors.
- The **Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) program has been recognized as a “Hidden Gem” by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA)**. ACTA's Hidden Gems initiative highlights honors colleges and major, minor, and certificate programs that provide high-quality interdisciplinary education in the liberal arts. Congratulations to our PPE faculty and students!
- [Miriam Clinton recently received the Mellon ACS Leadership Fellow](#) position for the next two years. This summer she will assume her role as Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning, and Emerging Technologies, working on faculty development while helping us navigate the AI environment and emerging technologies. Eric Henager '89, P'26 has served as an ACS Mellon Fellow for nearly the last two years and will be stepping down from his role after the completion of his fellowship. We are grateful to Eric and look forward to Miriam's work in the Office of Academic Affairs.
- A total of 176 Rhodes students will be studying abroad this summer. Nearly 150 will be participating in thirteen different Maymester programs offered by the College this summer—from the U.K. to Thailand—and another 21 students will be participating in international internships. A handful of students will be participating in non-Rhodes affiliated study abroad programs. We are grateful to the staff of the Buckman Center for Global Engagement for facilitating these wonderful study-travel opportunities and the donors who make these experiences possible for our students.
- Rhodes physics students made a special delivery to NASA in Houston this spring! In 2021, Rhodes was named the only liberal arts college in the nation to be part of NASA's CubeSat Launch Initiative. The four-inch, cube-shaped satellite built on campus by our students will be launched on September 15, 2025, from Cape Canaveral and deployed from the International Space Station to test photovoltaic cells based on perovskite technology and see how they perform in the harsh environment of space. This trailblazing research was made possible through the support of Charles Robertson '65, our amazing professors, and the talented students who are already earning jobs from the world's largest satellite companies! Jose Pastrana '20, lead engineer of the CubeSat Program at Rhodes, along with current students Damian Nguyen '25 and Ryan McCrory '25, travelled to Houston. The Rhodes team is led by physics professors Bentley Burnham, Brent Hoffmeister P'25, and Ann Viano P'25, and computer science professor Phil Kirlin. Approximately 20 students from various majors and class years have contributed to the design of the CubeSat over the last several years. We can't wait to watch it launch into space!

- We are grateful to the Rhodes community for their generous support for our students, faculty, and staff. To date, \$16.5 million has been received this fiscal year, which ends on June 30. Multiple initiatives have received support, including gifts of \$4.3 million to fund scholarships, \$1.6 million designated to endowed funds and \$5.3 million in deferred commitments. We are grateful for the wonderful support of our community. Exciting recent gifts include a \$500,000 endowed scholarship gift from Amy and Cary Fowler '71, P'19 and an anonymous gift of \$250,000 to support the work of Career Services. Thanks also to the generous donation of Paul "Scooter" Brothers, a new video scoreboard was installed at Crain Field, improving the gameday experience for our football, men's lacrosse, and men's and women's track and cross country teams. These critically important funds allow us to build upon the college's strengths and help secure our future.
- We also had an outpouring of support of our three Days of Giving this year, with 1,072 supporters giving \$216,451 for Athletic Day of Giving; 1,210 supporters donating \$236,543 to the Annual Fund; and the launch of the inaugural Rhodes Arts Day of Giving, supporting Fine Arts, Music, and student performances—exceeding our goal with 313 donors contributing \$28,955! Dozens of community members supported more than one challenge.
- I was honored to spend time with alumni, students, parents, and friends of the college all over the country, in cities including Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth, Nashville, New York City, Washington, D.C., Austin, San Antonio, and Boston.
- We launched a new degree program in Data Analytics last fall and already have nine majors enrolled.
- We started the academic year with a newly renovated and enhanced Catherine Burrow Refectory and a new smoothie bar in the Lair. We also added iced coffee offerings in the Middle Ground and a new panini press in the deli station in the Refectory to make 'Panera-style' panini sandwiches.
- We launched a new rhodes.edu homepage, new Student Life site, and new web communications portals for transfer students, parents and families, and Tennessee students. Other enhancements to the website are ongoing.
- Our [national rankings](#) continue to be impressive and draw talented students to Rhodes.

I also want to highlight the extraordinary success of our student-athletes this year. Congratulations to these outstanding Lynx:

- Field Hockey, Men's Soccer, Baseball, Men's Swimming, Women's Golf, and Men's Lacrosse won league championships this year.
- The Women's Golf team earned the automatic qualifier to the DIII Women's Golf National Championship, which begins today in Williamsburg, VA. Sarah Posey was named SAA Women's Golf Coach of the Year. Ava Bankston '27 was named SAA Women's Golfer of the Year. Ava and Emily Mu '25 were named First Team All-SAA.

- Men's Lacrosse won the SAA regular season title and the SAA Tournament title. Last week, the team participated in the NCAA Tournament and won its first-round game against Transylvania University, then traveled to Boston to face the overall #1 seed and defending national champions, Tufts. The team battled, eventually losing 15-7. Billy Cameron and Nate Oekerman were named Coaching Staff of the Year. David Hart '25 was named Defensive Player of the Year. Earning First Team All-SAA honors were Drew Litner '25, Drew Downes '25, John Mori '26, David, Nick Bilotti '25, Lucas Pagliarulo '26, and Jake Gobel '25. Drew Downes '25 was named Tournament MVP. Andrew Murphy '26, David, and Jake were named to the SAA All-Tournament Team.
- Baseball captured the SAA Tournament title and earned an automatic berth into the NCAA DIII National Baseball Tournament, which begins Friday in St. Louis. Zac Sohosky '25 and Mick Arney '25 were named First Team All-SAA. Zac was named the Most Valuable Player of the SAA Tournament and was joined by Ben Burkhart '25 and Ben Daniel '27 on the All-Tournament Team.
- Women's Lacrosse advanced to the SAA Tournament finals. Bari Pinkett '25 was named SAA Defensive Player of the Year for the second consecutive year. Joining Bari on the All-SAA First Team were Anna Erskine '25 and Isabella Sklena '25. Bari and Anna were also awarded All-Tournament Team honors and were joined by Molly Heidrick '25.
- Men's Tennis lost in the semi-finals in the SAA Tournament, with Oliver Bonovich '26 earning First Team All-SAA Honors. Women's Tennis also lost in the semifinals and saw Lilly Higgins '28 earn SAA Rookie of the Year honors and Gracie Rask '26 earn First Team All-SAA.
- In Swimming and Diving, John Beuerlein '25, Paxton Smythe '26, and Jack Whitten '26 qualified for the NCAA DIII National Championships. John finished 4th in the nation in 3M diving, earning First Team All-American honors.
- In Track and Field, Hugh Stokes '25 captured SAA titles in the 110M high hurdles and the 400M Intermediate hurdles, establishing Rhodes and SAA records. Hugh has qualified for the NCAA DIII Men's and Women's Outdoor Track and Field Championships next week. Liam Conroy '26 won the SAA Javelin event. Women's Track and Field athlete Evan Duet '25 captured the SAA Javelin title.
- Recently, the athletic department awarded its six legacy awards, given annually to senior student-athletes. Coaches nominate and vote on the winners.
  - Keith Adams '25 (baseball) and Hannah Jane Miller '25 (cross country and track and field) won the Male and Female George Lapides Sportsmanship Awards, given annually to those who demonstrate the highest level of sportsmanship to his and her team.

- Eli Pilcher '25 (men's soccer) and Kym Young '25 (volleyball and track and field) took home the Rebecca Rish Gay / Walter E. Gay Awards honoring the outstanding senior female and male athletes of the year based on their accomplishments over their multi-year career at Rhodes.
- Corbin Kinder '25 (baseball) and Esther Lamb '25 (women's soccer and track and field) won the Seidman Trophy. This award was first presented in 1937 and is the highest athletic and academic award at Rhodes. The Seidman Trophy is presented to a senior male and a senior female student-athlete who exhibit excellence both in the classroom and on the athletic field.

Congratulations to all our students for their exceptional success in the classroom and athletics. We are so proud to have you representing Rhodes!

As we look ahead, I am happy to share some good news. The Admission team partnered with the Rhodes community and brought in 535 first-year student deposits by May 2, a significant increase over the past two years. The percentage of Early Decision deposits is higher than the last two years, and our overall yield on admission offers rose from 10% to 18%. The academic profile of the incoming class is even stronger than last year's class, and we are so excited to welcome these talented students in the fall.

We have so much to celebrate at Rhodes. This is just a small sample of the great work being done every day by our students, faculty, and staff. I am honored to work alongside you each day, and I appreciate all the ways you support Rhodes and lift us up in the minds and hearts of so many. Thank you for being part of this wonderful community!

**Jennifer M. Collins**  
President  
Rhodes College



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