

# Foundation Board News

July 23, 2025

I hope this message finds you well and enjoying the summer season. We are excited to welcome three new members, Gordon Hester, Brian Paige and Travis Simpson to the Foundation Board!

President McMahan recently announced a new leadership structure within University Advancement. In July, she appointed Eric Limburg and me to co-lead the division for the time being. Eric's portfolio includes marketing, communications and alumni relations. You will find a short biography for Eric in this newsletter. My role encompasses fundraising and advancement services, and I am acting as the executive director of the EWU Foundation.

After a 30-year curatorial and administrative museum career, the Great Recession taught me that strong museums needed strong fundraising programs. Because universities are the sector of the American fundraising demonstrating the most consistent practices and success, I was excited to come to Eastern in 2013 as stewardship coordinator seeking a way to learn about fundraising. Although I expected to take a short sabbatical from museums, I fell in love with EWU and stayed.

I have since served as director of philanthropy for two colleges,

EWU Libraries and as director of gift planning. I have been in the AVP role directing the campaign since 2021. I became an Eagle4Life in 2019, earning a Master of Science in Communication (MSC) degree and I teach a fundraising course for EWU's communication studies department.

University Advancement is an exceptional team collaborating to move the needle in meaningful ways for the university. We are driving momentum for our *Build Our Future* campaign goals. The new fundraising year began on July 1. During fiscal year 2025, we raised \$10,943,357. The current campaign total is \$76,927,472 (toward the goal of \$100,000,000). This first-ever comprehensive campaign for Eastern had an initial target of \$65 million for the 10-year campaign. We surpassed that goal in year seven. The campaign ends on June 30, 2027.

Thank you for your participation, support and dedication to Eastern Washington University. Together, we are making a difference.



**Laura Thayer**

Interim Executive Director, EWU Foundation & Associate Vice President for Philanthropy and Campaign Engagement



*Pass Through the Pillars  
June 2025*

## Events and Dates

**EWU Night at  
Tri-Cities Dust Devils**  
July 29

**EWU Night at  
Spokane Velocity**  
August 2

**EWU Day at  
Silverwood**  
August 8

**Red Turf Takeover  
One Spokane Stadium**  
August 14

**EWU Football  
@ Incarnate Word**  
August 30

**Campus Closed:  
Labor Day**  
September 1



**Laura Thayer**  
AVP for Philanthropy &  
Campaign Engagement



**Courtney Gray**  
Senior Director of  
Gift Planning

## Fundraising Focus

August is **Make-a-Will Month**, which highlights the importance of planning for the future. The EWU Office of Gift Planning is sending two emails this month to inspire alumni, donors and friends to plan their will with these resources:

<https://ewulegacy.org> (Estate planning guide)  
Compile the necessary information in one place to share with an estate planning attorney.

<http://freewill.com/ewu> (Online will-making)  
Created by estate planning attorneys, this online tool addresses common estate planning needs and concerns to help you complete your will in less than an hour. It also prompts visitors to consider including a gift to EWU Foundation.

We encourage YOU to take action this month too, by making—or updating—your will. Please [contact us](#) if you'd like to discuss a gift to EWU Foundation as part of your plans.



## Spotlight: Eric Limburg

As Associate Vice President for University Relations, Eric leads EWU's integrated marketing, communications, and alumni relations efforts. Since joining EWU in April of 2024, he has helped usher in a new era of viability and pride for the university, most notably through the successful launch of EWU's brand position as The Region's Polytechnic.

With over 20 years of leadership experience in higher education—including roles at Washington State University in system marketing and athletics—Eric specializes in connecting with audiences through strong visuals and strategic messaging.

Beyond the office, Eric is a proud husband and father who enjoys spending time with his wife, five kids and daughter-in-law. He also enjoys exploring the outdoors, attending EWU athletic events and dabbling in baking. He's a lifelong graphic design nerd and a firm believer that creativity, paired with purpose, can achieve anything.

## EWU Hires Linn Parish as Director of Communications



*Linn Parish*

On August 1, 2025, Linn Parish will join University Relations as our new director of communications and media relations! Linn brings nearly 30 years of media experience, most recently as the editor for the *Spokane Journal of Business*. Previously, he spent time as a reporter in the area, as a managing editor for Vivo Media, and owning his own publication management service.

In his new role, Linn will serve as the university's chief communication and public information officer, as well as its primary media relations contact. His responsibilities will include overseeing community and media relations, managing crisis communications, and developing content across multiple platforms.

Linn grew up in Montana, but has spent over half his life in the Inland Northwest. With his wife (Sarah) and four kids in the area, Linn is passionate about building the future of our region and excited to join the team at EWU. Outside of work, he's also a self-described "sports geek" with an extensive trading card collection, which includes EWU's own Cooper Kupp, Rodney Stuckey and Tyler Harvey.

Welcome, Linn!