Opportunity Fund

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WKU’s Opportunity Fund is a fifty million dollar campaign designed to remove barriers for a student’s access to education.

Amy Bingham sits down with Kacy Caboni to find out more about this student-centered initiative in this week’s View from the Hill.

Kacy Caboni says she first mentioned a five million dollar campaign to her husband, WKU President Tim Caboni over dinner. He said why not make it fifty million and that was the beginning of the Opportunity Fund.

 “To someone else that 350 dollars was small but I didn’t have it and I wasn’t able to come back without it, so it’s a blessing.”

Thanks to the Opportunity Fund, sophomore Jay York didn’t have to give up on college.

Director of Principal Gifts Kacy Caboni says that type of help is what makes the Opportunity Fund so unique.

 “We want to make sure that we have the funding available to provide funding for these students so they’re not choosing between work and school.”

Last year, 238-thousand dollars in small micro-grants were awarded one thousand dollars at a time.

 “This is something both the President and I feel strongly about. We are here for a purpose and that is to really transform the student’s life.”

The Opportunity fund’s three priorities are recruitment, retention and beyond the classroom.

Caboni says the focus is on students she fondly refers to as you and me.

 “The you and me student is that 2.5 to maybe 3.4 student that is coming in and they still are going to excel. They may need a little more help, we may need to wrap our arms around them but they’re going to work hard.”

Brandon Green helps provide that extra support as a mentor with the Intercultural Student Engagement Center – an Opportunity Fund recipient of a donation from the James Graham Brown Foundation.

 “Students come to me all the time, not just about academics, life stuff, back home issues, financial, trauma things, death in the family.”

Whether it’s a barrier, to study abroad, to a paid internship or to just being able to stay in school, WKU hopes to provide the “Opportunity” to do just that.

11:31 “I think we are uniquely poised to have the funding not only to help students but where they can come and truly be part of something special.”

Kacy Caboni says this type of endowed funding is crucial for a student’s long term success especially when you consider WKU has 40% first generation college students, more than 80% from here in Kentucky and 95% on financial aid.

Find out more by logging onto wku.edu slash opportunity fund.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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