



Transformational gift to bring changes to Washburn leadership, learning in the community programs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Topeka – Washburn University announced today that Joe and Janet Aleshire of Overland Park, Kansas, have made a \$2 million contribution to the Leadership Institute.

This generous gift served as a catalyst for innovation as the Leadership Institute makes plans to equip even more students to be transformational change agents in their communities. As a result, the Leadership Institute will combine with the existing Learning in the Community program at Washburn to establish the Aleshire Center for Leadership and Community Engagement.

The gift will be used to support student scholarships, program spaces and expand student programming around leadership and community engaged learning.

“This new Center broadens both the breadth and the depth of leadership development and community-engaged learning at Washburn while continuing to offer pillar programs and transformational experiences available exclusively to Washburn students,” said JuliAnn Mazachek, president, Washburn University. “We are so thankful to the Aleshires for their support and shared vision of this combined program to continue to develop students into leaders.”

The Aleshires, who are not graduates of Washburn, became affiliated with the program while Joe was working for Capitol Federal in Topeka. They regularly visit with the students on leadership lessons and support the Aleshire Venture Grant in partnership with the United Way of Kaw Valley and the LE300: Leadership Skills Development course, a program where students create and distribute requests for proposals and grant funding to community agencies promoting early childhood development.

“One of the responsibilities we have as leaders is to develop others to become leaders,” the Aleshires said. “We think of our gift as an investment by preparing Washburn students to be more effective leaders, now and in the future.”

The combined programs will have faculty and staff who work to recruit a broad array of community leaders within the region to serve as program partners with the goal of establishing

reciprocal relationships, sites for student engagement and opportunities for meaningful work with and for the community.

“This generous commitment will provide ample opportunities for students to develop the leadership skills necessary for navigating complex community challenges and give them space to practice those skills,” said Lauren Edelman, director, Washburn Leadership Institute. “This gift will affect students for generations to come, and we are thankful to the Aleshires for their generosity toward Washburn and its students.”