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GRANT from cover

one of 82 programs selected. Within that total amount of grants awarded, 16% are nursing programs.

"It is focused on really primarily student scholarships," Slater said. "So there is a small bit of the funding that supports some salary for the faculty that are working on the program, but almost all of it really goes directly to students for their aid."

Specifically, these scholarships cover 50% of a student's tuition.

"And the reason we do that is we know that if we can address some of the financial barriers for those students that come from some of these disadvantaged backgrounds, then we can help educate nurses that have less debt and are more likely to go back home to work," Slater said.

The program is also meant to encourage students to go back to those rural and underserved areas after graduation to work in primary care, as many graduates seek work in a hospital following graduation.

"So like those in tribal communities or veterans or some of those other medically underserved areas," Slater said. "So it's kind of twofold: it's to help support those from disadvantaged backgrounds get their nursing degree in the hopes that they return and go work in some of the rural areas in primary care and other medically underserved communities."

The School of Nursing is working directly with their clinical partner, Hartford HealthCare, for their recruitment and retention plan as well as career development plan.

"We will also work with Hartford Healthcare and their talent acquisition team once these students are ready to graduate to help them find positions in these critical areas that the grant is meant to support," Slater said.

The program will also include academic and social supports for the students to help with academic success, their professional identity and feeling a sense of community.

With the grant being awarded to Quinnipiac just a few weeks ago, Slater and his team are still in the earlier stages of planning.

Students interested in the program must fill out an application including an essay about their interest in serving in rural and tribal communities, primary care or medically underserved communities.

"That is reviewed holistically by a team," Slater said.

Students will also be assessed on eligibility determined by their information in their FAFSA.

"From the FAFSA, we can determine if they're first-generation students and also what their family income is," Slater said. "And so there's guidelines if they're at the highest need, if their family is 100% or less of the poverty line, and then it goes up to 200%."

Eight nursing students who began the accelerated nursing program this fall will be awarded this aid as the first cohort, which will begin in January. Each year within the five-year program, there will be two cohorts.

"So that's 80 students that will be able to impact over the course of the five-year grant," Slater said.

While still in the beginning stages, Slater noted they are working on getting several different teams together, focusing on recruitment and retention, academic support, social support, career development and a data team.

"That's like five work groups that we have that will be supporting the students over the course of this grant," Slater said. "So it's a big team effort."

2026 Bobcat Challenge raises over $1.5M for Quinnipiac Athletics

By KELSEY SWEET
Staff Writer

Quinnipiac University's annual Bobcat Challenge raised more than $1.5 million for its athletic programs, surpassing its $1.25 million fundraising goal and bringing in contributions for more than 2,500 alumni, parents and friends.

The challenge, which took place Oct. 21 through Oct. 22, encourages members of the Quinnipiac community to donate to the Division I athletic programs.This year's campaign attracted 2,567 donors, which exceeded its goal of 2,500 supporters.

Director of Athletics Development Kelli McCombs helps support the athletic teams year round, ensuring that all students receive support through funded and non funded events.

"This year's Bobcat Challenge was our most ambitious yet, and the Quinnipiac community responded in a remarkable way," McCombs wrote to The Chronicle. "The incredible generosity of our Bobcat family continues to demonstrate the passion and commitment our supporters have for providing an exceptional student-athlete experience."

The fundraising campaign supports Quinnipiac Division I athletic programs by providing resources for training, travel, equipment and technology. The additional funding can help teams improve athletic and personal development opportunities that are given to them on campus.

"Every gift made during the Bobcat Challenge creates meaningful opportunities for our student-athletes," McCombs wrote.

The challenge also provides opportunities for supporters to contribute directly to individual teams regardless of their size or popularity. Men's ice hockey, men's lacrosse and women's ice hockey led the challenge in fundraising. Acrobatic and tumbling, men's lacrosse and womens's ice hockey led in donor participation.

"One of the greatest strengths of the Bobcat Challenge is that it gives every program a platform to tell its story and engage its supporters," McCombs wrote.

McCombs mentioned that the team's success connects to the alumni and its network, parental support and outreach from coaches and student athletes.

The team connected with supporters through social media and personal communication to encourage donations and participation. Over the span of two days, many teams posted on social media explaining the mission.

The challenge exceeded both of its goals, raising more than $250,000 above its fundraising target and engaging 67 more donors than anticipated.

This result reflected continued support for Quinnipiac athletics, with donations helping programs provide student athletes with opportunities to compete and develop on and off the playing surface.

McCombs said the challenge also helps athletic programs build stronger relationships with alumni, families and fans. Through outreach efforts, teams can share their goals and explain how donations contribute to their programs.

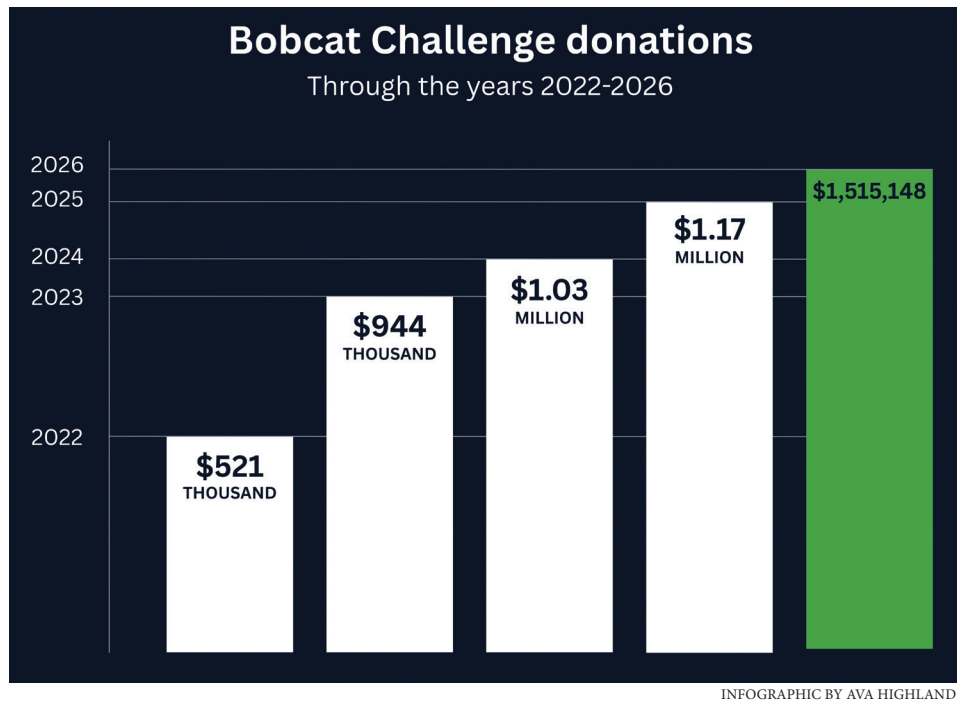
"Throughout the challenge, teams engage their alumni, families and supporters through personal outreach, social media, videos and storytelling," McCombs wrote.

The student athletes play a role in those efforts by sharing their experience, while coaches communicate their programs, goals and priorities. The competition between teams also encourages supporters to participate and rally behind their programs.

"Their enthusiasm and authentic connection to supporters play a major role in driving participation and creating friendly competition among teams," McCombs wrote.

Beyond fundraising, the campaign aims to strengthen Quinnipiac's culture of giving by encouraging participation across the athletic community.

"These goals were designed not only to generate critical support for our student-athletes and programs, but also to strengthen our culture of philanthropy by encouraging participation from across the entire Bobcat community," McCombs wrote.



INFOGRAPHIC BY AVA HIGHLAND