



SECURING THE FUTURE

THE FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE FOR THE BASIC PROGRAM



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

GRAHAM SCHOOL

Letter from the Committee Chair

Greetings! Like you, I'm a lifelong learner in the Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults. As such, we enjoy the benefits of an adult education program founded generations ago by the University of Chicago, guided by UChicago-trained instructors whose intellect and dedication are second to none, and surrounded by students who share our passion for studying great books. Over time, taking one course after another, many of us have formed deep relationships with fellow students and instructors, effectively creating an ever-expanding community of Basic Program supporters.

I'm writing to you as Chair of the Basic Program Fund Development Committee. We are a collection of devoted Basic Program students who were asked by Dean Seth Green to develop a plan to address the program's financial strength and academic vitality over the long term. Specifically, he asked, how do we ensure continued funding and support for the program's outstanding instructors? How do we address the program's annual operating deficit? And how do we enhance the program's ongoing commitment to student experience and community?

The committee has held focus groups with more than 100 Basic Program students, spoken at length with program administrators and instructors, and debated the issues among ourselves, while searching for the optimal response to this intersection of programmatic need and opportunity. In consultation with Dean Green, and with the guidance of the University of Chicago's advancement and finance staff, we respectfully outline the following plan.

We intend to raise \$5.25 million in endowment funds by the 80th anniversary of the Basic Program. As described more fully in this report, the endowment income will be used to fund four endowed instructor positions, support instructors' professional and course development activities, broaden access to the program by expanding scholarships, and revitalize immersive and in-person educational offerings. These investments will bolster the Basic Program's financial position and meet the academic needs of its students and instructors for years to come.

The Basic Program is ours to champion. This fundraising initiative offers us the opportunity to exercise our agency and support the program that means so much to so many of us. The committee is grateful for your consideration.

Kevin A. Russell, CER'16 (Basic Program)
Chair, Basic Program Fund Development Committee

BASIC PROGRAM FUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kevin A. Russell, CER'16 (Basic Program), Chair
Katherine Abbott, MBA'77, CER'22 (Basic Program)
Barbara Andrews, AM'98, CER'91 (Basic Program)
Elizabeth (Becky) Chandler, AM'72, Basic Program Student
Julie Conway, CER'21 (Basic Program)
Mary Letitia Coyne, AM'82, JD'91, CER'22 (Basic Program)
Bill Higgins, Basic Program Year 2 Student
Brae Korin, AM'77, CER'21 (Basic Program)
Mary Lou Lager, Basic Program Year 2 Student

Roberta Lee, CER'22 (Basic Program)
Don Phillips, AM'86, CER'17 (Basic Program)
Hope Reisman Sheffield, CER'08 (Basic Program)
Jeffrey T. Sheffield, AB'76, Basic Program Student
Jim Sulzer, CER'09 (Basic Program)
Virginia Tobiason, CER'02 (Basic Program)
Barbara Weisenburger, CER'20 (Basic Program)
Seth Green, Dean, *ex officio*
Andriana Scaramella, Chief of Staff, *ex officio*



Securing the Future

GOALS OF THE FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE

To preserve the Basic Program's distinctive model of teaching and learning, we seek to raise \$5.25 million in endowment funds by December 31, 2026—the 80th anniversary of the program's founding.

This endowment funding will:

- Endow four instructor positions, including health benefits
- Financially support the professional and course development activities of instructors
- Expand access to the Basic Program by increasing the number of scholarships provided to learners who otherwise might not be able to participate in our vibrant community
- Increase in-person classes and create educational opportunities beyond the classroom that connect students and instructors in new settings

Together, we will ensure that this program, which has enriched the lives of four generations of learners, will thrive and engage an even broader community for years to come.

Priority #1: Supporting Instructors

INSTRUCTORS: THE VITALITY OF THE BASIC PROGRAM

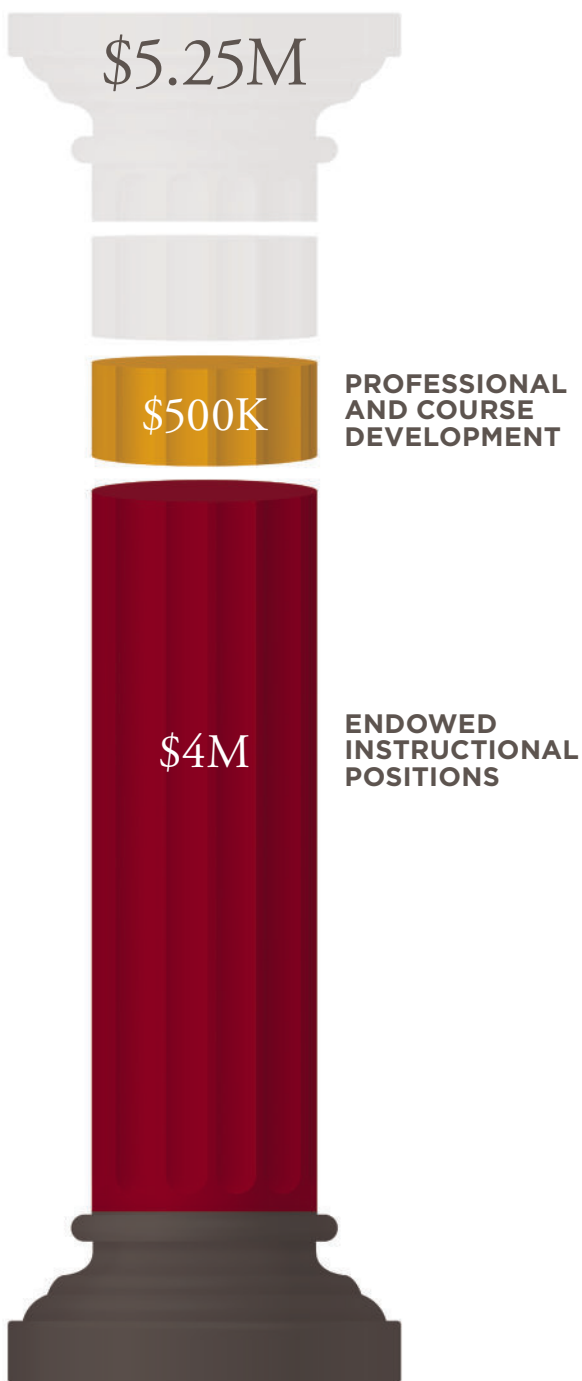
Our extraordinary instructional staff, trained at the University of Chicago and steeped in the Socratic method, devote a portion of their careers to adjunct positions in the Basic Program. The instructors—many of whom teach for decades—bring a level of experience, passion, and expertise unmatched in any comparable adult education program.

To preserve this model of teaching and learning, and retain and attract the highest quality instructors, it is imperative that we support them. To that end, we aim to:

- Raise \$4 million to create four fully endowed instructor positions with health benefits that provide a viable career opportunity as well as a measure of stability that is all too rare for untenured university instructors. These instructor positions will result in a distinctly supportive academic environment.

Under appropriate circumstances, the instructor positions may be named, giving them an even greater stature within the University and the larger academic community. Additionally, the cost of the positions will be endowed and substantially reduce the program’s annual deficit.

- Devote \$500,000 to a fund that through its earnings will support professional and course development. The Basic Program relies on instructors who are experts in teaching, learning, and facilitation. Providing instructors with funding to attend relevant programs, engage in peer-to-peer exchanges, and otherwise pursue their professional interests will support their continued growth and enhance their knowledge, skills, and employment satisfaction. The Basic Program and its students will reap the benefits of this investment through innovative and thought-provoking courses and enthusiastic and engaged instructors.



“Our wonderful instructors are the backbone of the Basic Program. They are gifted and generous teachers who are committed to our student community of lifelong learners. They share with us their time, knowledge, and love of learning. Along with other students and supporters of the Basic Program, I am working toward ensuring that they will have security as our teachers. If we, as lifelong learners, value what the Basic Program offers us, then we must support our instructors—we owe them our support.”

Brae Korin, AM’77,
CER’21 (Basic Program)

“With humanities courses being purged from many undergraduate programs, it is imperative that we find alternative ways to deliver these life-enhancing studies. Lifelong learning is more important and rewarding than ever and nobody does it better than the fine team at Graham. They merit our enthusiastic support.”



Don Phillips, AM’86,
CER’17 (Basic Program)

“It is a very pleasant and creative task to plan and program a new course, but it competes for time with preparing to teach current courses. Support for course development would enable instructors to prioritize this pleasant labor among the more urgent weekly tasks of teaching.”



Kendall Sharp, AB’91, PhD’06
Cyril O. Houle Chair of the
Basic Program

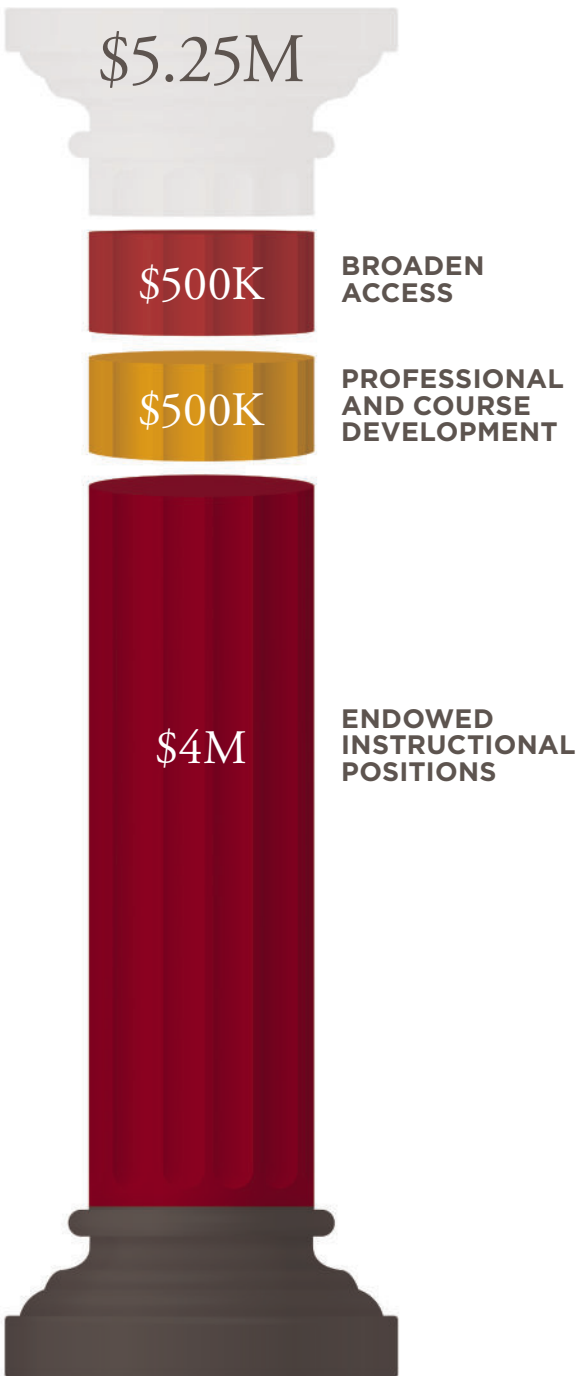
Priority #2: Expanding Access

ENGAGING A BROADER COMMUNITY THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS

The depth and complexity of classroom discussions in the Basic Program are enhanced by the active participation of students from diverse backgrounds. We seek to enhance this effect by raising \$500,000 in endowment support to broaden access to Basic Program courses.

Currently, the program provides scholarships for 12 to 18 students annually who have completed the Illinois Humanities Odyssey Project, a college credit-bearing humanities program for income-eligible adults. The program has also provided scholarships to attend open-to-all Basic Program courses to K-12 educators.

Through the endowment, we plan to offer an additional 12 scholarships every year. The scholarships will cover tuition, books, and technology support for the four-year program.



“I’m committed to lifelong learning and expect to be engaged with the Basic Program for many years to come. The program has tangibly improved my life, and I give to Graham so that anyone can have access to the education I received, regardless of their background.”



Donna Ioppolo, CER'93 (Basic Program)

Scholarship Spotlight

ODYSSEY PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

Veteran Basic Program Instructors Amy Thomas Elder and Charles Elder were early teachers with the Odyssey Project, an Illinois Humanities-led initiative to provide local, income-eligible adults access to college credit-bearing humanities courses. Noting the similarities between the programs, the pair pushed to establish Odyssey Project Scholarships at the Graham School.

Through the program, dozens of Odyssey Project alumni have received scholarships to enroll in the Basic Program. The involvement of Odyssey students has enlivened and enriched the classroom experience and expanded the diversity of thought, perspectives, and backgrounds present in Basic Program courses, while simultaneously unlocking dynamic opportunities for personal and professional growth.

“The Odyssey Project Scholarship provided me a bird’s eye view into the rigors of academia in a way no other program could, which led to personal growth, new knowledge, and the ability to forever say I am a University of Chicago graduate.”

Nicole Bond, CER'21 (Basic Program)

“Odyssey Project students bring a diversity of experience and perspective into the classroom that would otherwise be lacking, which stimulates rich discussion and a more profound experience.”



Amy Thomas Elder, AM'93
Basic Program Instructor

Priority #3: Strengthening the Student Experience

EXTENDING THE CLASSROOM THROUGH IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

This \$250,000 endowment fund will support gatherings that supplement the classroom experience, spark intellectual dialogue, and enhance relationships among fellow lifelong learners. We see using these resources for three types of student experiences.

First, we plan to increase the number of in-person courses offered at the Gleacher Center.

Second, we aim to increase experiences that supplement classroom sessions for both in-person and online students. For Chicago-area students, we plan to provide opportunities to enjoy more casual interactions with classmates. For online students, we aim to offer discussion sessions, coffee chats, and online cocktail hours to foster connections across cohorts.

Third, we plan to support travel experiences that enhance the bonds created in the classroom. Expansion of travel study such as Spring Break in Greece offers Basic Program students an opportunity to experience the texts come alive as they explore archaeological sites and historical locations.



“From the things I learned to the friends I made and the extraordinary instructors who impacted me in countless ways, I know that the Basic Program is truly special. I give to Graham to continue and expand upon that experience for myself and others.”

Janis Mendelsohn,
CER’11 (Basic Program)

The Basic Program at a Glance

1946
Year program established

54
Texts in the curriculum

27
Current instructors

2,400
Alumni worldwide*

*“Let knowledge grow from more to more;
and so be human life enriched.”*

—UChicago motto

*This number is an approximation based on available information; some of the early years of the program are not fully captured in recorded materials.



Financials

TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Alongside the three specific priorities outlined in Securing the Future lies the essential goal of ensuring the financial health of the Basic Program.

Beginning in 2016, the contributions of generous Basic Program students began the effort to support our instructors. During this time, we received transformative gifts, one of which funded the establishment of the Cyril O. Houle Chair to serve as the leader of the Basic Program's instructors and to maintain the integrity of the program's model of teaching and learning. And two others partially endowed four instructor positions, offering individuals a viable career opportunity and—for the first time in the program's history—health benefits.

While early endowment gifts have strengthened the Basic Program, the program still operates at a significant annual deficit (see next page). This reflects an intentional and long-standing design choice: the Basic Program seeks to invite adults from all walks of life to experience a transformative liberal arts education. Aligned with that principle, we have kept the program's tuition at an accessible level. Indeed, the Basic Program's current tuition is a small fraction of other multi-year certificate programs at the University of Chicago.

Though the University has continuously supported the program, the future of any academic program operating at a significant deficit cannot be assured. The time has come for our community to raise additional endowment funds to support our instructors, enhance the program, and ensure this intellectual community is sustained for future generations.

This fundraising initiative will more than double the Basic Program's endowment and help us to reduce the program's operating deficit to less than half of its current size. Combined with ongoing annual fund efforts, this initiative will enable us to move the Basic Program to a self-sufficient level by the 2026-27 academic year.



*The FUTURE of
The Basic Program
DEPENDS on you*



Financial Snapshot of the Basic Program

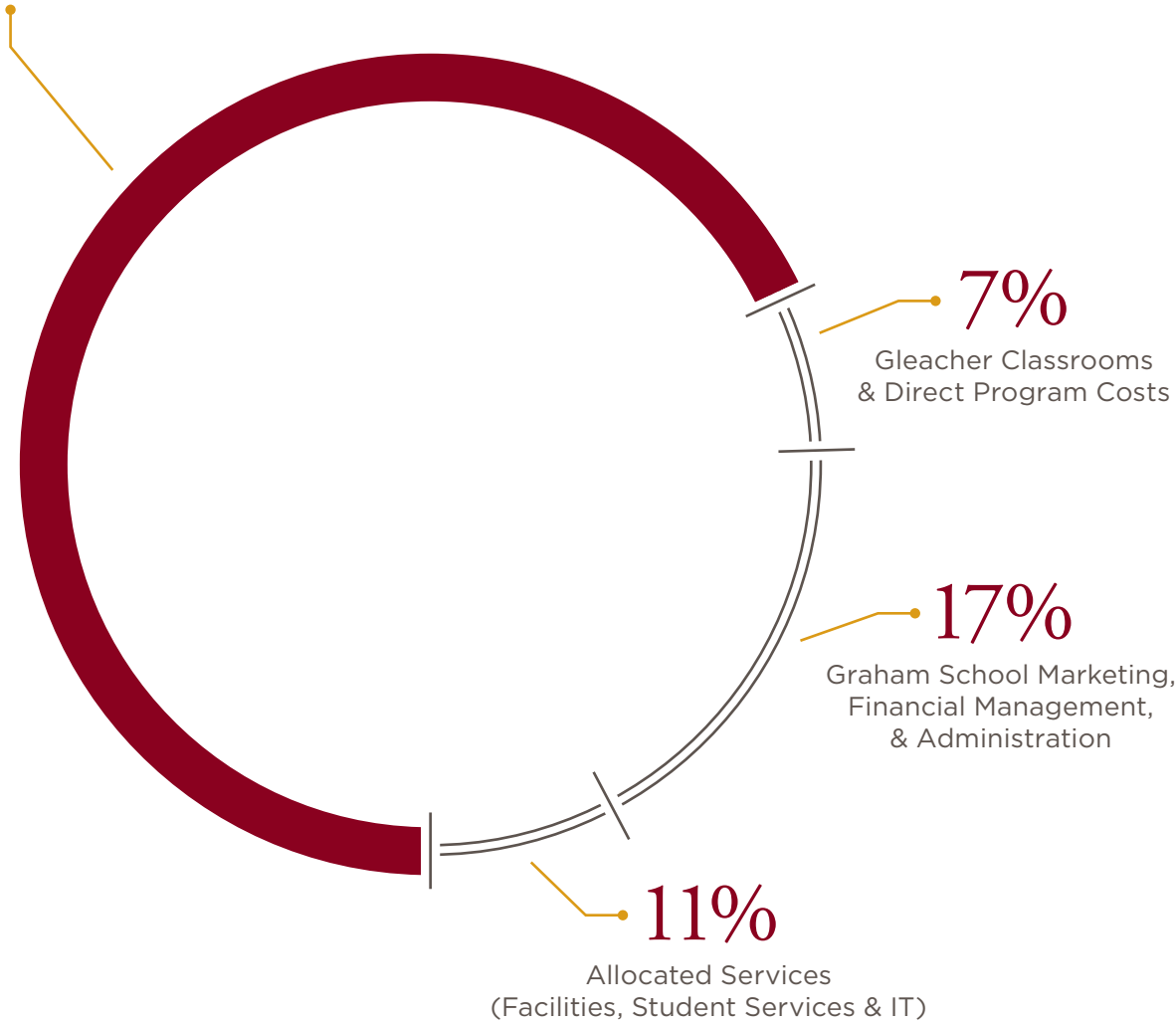
BASIC PROGRAM EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Expense Budget

65%

Instructors & Program Staff

The Basic Program has a lean operating structure, with approximately two-thirds of expenditures invested in the people—*instructors and direct program staff*—who carry out this extraordinary program.



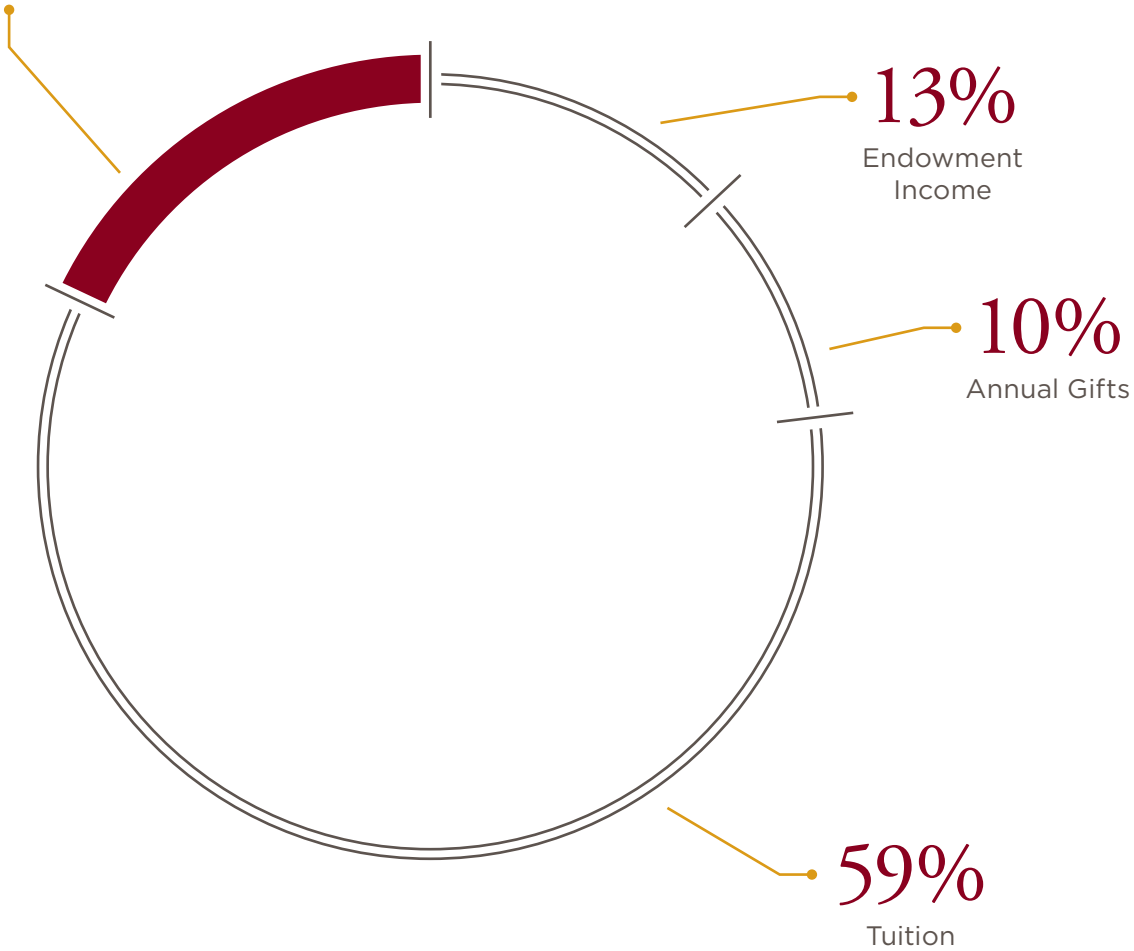
BASIC PROGRAM REVENUE BREAKDOWN

As a Percentage of Total Operating Expense

18%

Operating Deficit

To strengthen and sustain the Basic Program while keeping tuition affordable for our student community, it is essential to grow the endowment income and thus significantly reduce the annual operating deficit.



Basic Program History

1930

President Robert Maynard Hutchins and Mortimer Adler begin teaching the Great Books curriculum to freshmen at UChicago.

1946

The first class of The Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults begins in Autumn Quarter.

1958

Works of the Mind lectures begin.

2015

First Online Basic Program course offered: Shakespeare's Henriad.

2018

The Basic Program receives three transformative gifts. One creates the Cyril O. Houle Chair of the Basic Program and two provide viable career opportunities for instructors.

1943

Hutchins and Alder teach The Fat Man's Great Books Course to UChicago trustees and Chicago businessmen.

1950

The Basic Program holds its first graduation of 20 students.

1981

Establishment of Basic Program instructors as an ongoing group and their nomination of a Basic Program staff director.

2017

First cohort of online core courses.

2020

Basic Program instructors help train all Graham School instructors for pandemic transition to online courses.



"The purpose of the university is nothing less than to procure a moral, intellectual, and spiritual revolution throughout the world."

Robert Maynard Hutchins, University of Chicago president 1929–51

LONG-STANDING AND CURRENT INSTRUCTORS

(name, year joined Graham, total tenure, *denotes current Basic Program instructor)

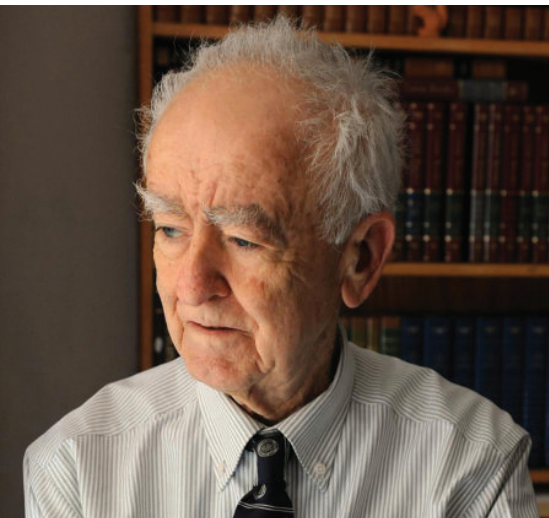
The Basic Program has benefited from extraordinary instructors for nearly eight decades. Below, we recognize current and long-standing instructors who have made immense contributions to the program.

Michaelangelo Allocca, 2000, 15 years
*Joseph Alulis, 1982, 41 years
George Anastaplo, 1957, 56 years
*Paul Cato, 2022, 1 year
*Noah Chafets, 2020, 3 years
Raymond Ciacci, 1981, 32 years
*Keith Cleveland, 1968, 55 years
*Joshua Daniel, 2015, 8 years
*Zoë Eisenman, 1992, 31 years
*Amy Thomas Elder, 1999, 24 years
Charles Elder, 2000, 23 years
*Eva Fernandez, 1999, 24 years
*Stephen Hall, 1992, 31 years
*Richard Hoskins, 2017, 6 years
*Michael Jones, 2023, 1 year
*Elliot Krick, 1965, 58 years
*Sunwoo Lee, 2023, 1 year
Marissa Love, 1998, 20 years
John Melsheimer, 1990, 13 years
*Katia Mitova, 1998, 25 years
*Clare Pearson, 2000, 23 years
Joel Rich, 1960, 48 years
Adam Rose, 1993, 30 years
*Cynthia Rutz, 1991, 32 years
*Kendall Sharp, 2019, 4 years
*David Shiner, 2018, 5 years
*Rebekah Spearman, 2021, 2 years
Claudia Traudt, 1981, 42 years
*Austin Walker, 2018, 5 years
*Stephen Walker, 2016, 7 years
Eric Warshaw, 1994, 24 years
*Konrad Weeda, 2022, 1 year

THE 'HEART AND SOUL' OF THE BASIC PROGRAM

George Anastaplo, AB'48, JD'51, PhD'64, epitomizes the passion and dedication of the Basic Program's instructors. Known as the "heart and soul" of the program, he taught for nearly six decades—from 1957 to 2013. He received the inaugural Graham School Excellence in Teaching Award in 2005 and the school's Distinguished Service Award in 2012.

Anastaplo, who passed away two months after retiring, had a dedicated group of students who signed up for every course he taught. "He was proud of teaching all the way till the end," said Miriam Redleaf, his daughter. "He never considered missing a class."



Ways to Give

**YOUR GIVING CAN TAKE MANY FORMS.
WE INVITE YOU TO:**

1

Make a pledge that can be paid
on a schedule you specify.

2

Make a gift in honor of
an instructor.

3

Give online through a one-time
or recurring gift with our
secure online form.

4

Execute a gift via phone,
stock transfer, wire transfer,
or donor-advised fund.

5

Make an estate commitment
or life-income arrangement
to benefit the Basic Program.

6

Mail your gift
(specifying the Basic Program) to:
The University of Chicago
Gift Administration and Business Data
5235 S. Harper Court, 4th Floor
Chicago, IL 60615

Andriana Scaramella will be delighted to support you
in giving in these and other ways. You can contact her
at ascaramella@uchicago.edu or 773.702.1725.

Why I Give

"The Basic Program gave me the chance to take a cohesive liberal arts program with motivated fellow students and outstanding instructors. The rigorous reading and dialogue put my brain to work, and the content helped me grapple with the problem of what it means to be human. It made my life better. I give to express my appreciation to instructors and classmates, and to help preserve and grow the program now and into the future."



Hope Reisman Sheffield,
CER'08 (Basic Program)

"The humanities are so overlooked in today's world, but not at the Basic Program, which urges us to question and think critically about the world around us. That's why I support the Basic Program and its mission to bring people together in deep humanities study."



Virginia Tobiason,
CER'02 (Basic Program)





Closing Reflections from Dean Green

“Every day, I am inspired by the instructors and program staff who devote their minds and hearts to facilitating the Basic Program’s distinctive intellectual community. The Basic Program is one of the great treasures of the University of Chicago, and I am in awe of how the program has harnessed the power of humanistic inquiry to transform the lives of thousands of individuals.”

Thank you to the extraordinary committee members, including Chair Kevin Russell, for leading this pivotal effort to secure the Basic Program’s future. And thank you to every member of our community for considering a gift to help us support the program’s outstanding instructors, to ensure the program’s broad access, and to strengthen the student experience for generations to come.”



Seth Green
Dean, Graham School



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