

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

WOMEN FOR UMASS GRANTS FUND

2025–2026



WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN.

In the 2025-26 academic year, the Women for UMass Grants Fund continued to provide financial resources to support student projects, events, and programs on campus that positively impact women and their communities.

12

Projects/events/
programs supported

\$31,742.50

Total dollars
distributed

12

Individual
school/college/units/
registered student
organizations received
grants

Thank you so much for supporting the **Women for UMass Grants Fund**! The WFUM Grants Committee was proud to award grants to **6 initiatives in the fall semester and another 6 this past spring totaling nearly \$32,000 distributed.**

During the fall, we had 16 applications submitted, while in the Spring we had 13 submitted applications.

This program could not exist without the support of alumni across the country.

By contributing directly to the grants fund, you are helping us fulfill our mission of **women supporting women.**

This document will share more with you about each of the projects you've helped support this year! We hope you enjoy learning about the goals of our awardees.



If you're interested in supporting future projects and learning more about the WFUM Grants Fund, [click here](#) or scan the QR code!



To learn more about Women for UMass and the work of this organization, visit our [website](#) and join our group in [Connect UMass](#).

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The materials on each page are provided by the students about how they either plan to use or have used their WFUM grant.

Click the name of each awardee to learn more about them.

FALL 2025–2026 GRANT AWARDEES

Awarded grants in fall 2025 and completed between January 1–June 30, 2026.

- [Association for Women in Science \(AWIS\) Alumni Career Panel](#)
- [HACKHER413](#)
- [Reflecting Migrations: Birds, Buildings, & Their Tragic Encounters](#)
- [Tech Fusion](#)
- [The Rebirth Project's 10th Anniversary Celebration and Zine Launch](#)
- [Women in Construction Day](#)

CURRENT GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS

Awarded grants in spring 2026 and launching between July 1–December 31, 2026.

- [Hampden Gallery - Women in Practice: Alumni](#)
- [Scholar Moms Network](#)
- [Smart Women Securities Beyond Your Degree Conference](#)
- [Women in Cybersecurity Mentorship Program](#)
- [Women in Medicine](#)
- [Women in Physics](#)

CLOSING COMMENTS



RECENTLY COMPLETED GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS



AWIS ALUMNI CAREER PANEL

Awarded fall 2025 and completed between January 1–June 30, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Overall, the event went really well. There were 65 attendees including AWIS executive board members. The audience was quite diverse as there were UMass staff members, graduate students, as well as general body members. Attendees traveled from Connecticut to attend as well. Dr. Cady Coleman '91 PhD prepared photos and videos for the audience and started off by talking about NASA's Artemis launch and how she was part of it. She then showed attendees pictures and videos of her in space.

There was then a break for dinner where attendees were able to talk to Dr. Coleman one on one as she made her way around the room. The event ended with an open Q+A session where participants asked questions and took pictures with Dr. Coleman.



VIDEO FOOTAGE

[Click here](#) for a brief look into Dr. Coleman's remarks at the event.

Shoot for the Stars
An Evening with NASA Astronaut Cady Coleman

Come spend an evening with distinguished NASA astronaut, Air Force Colonel, and UMass alum Cady Coleman!

The event will include a talk from Dr. Coleman and open Q&A.

Tuesday April 14th | 5-7 PM
Amherst Room
Campus Center

UMassAmherst
Women for UMass

University of Massachusetts
Amherst

*We graciously thank
Women for UMass and the
University for helping to
sponsor this occasion.*

Dinner & Refreshments | Business Casual Attire

awisumass EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT ☆.°☆
★ tuesday april 14th, 5-7 PM
★ amherst room, campus center
★ don't miss this opportunity to listen and network with distinguished UMass Alum and NASA Astronaut Cady Coleman!
★ RSVP using the link in our bio

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

AWIS is so appreciative to have been selected to receive grant funding from @WomenforUMassAmherst (WFUM). This funding will enable us to have guest speaker Dr. Cady Coleman and positively impact UMass Amherst women and their communities.
#WFUM #WomenSupportingWomen #WomenLeaders
#UMassAmherst

HACKHER413

Awarded fall 2025 and completed between January 1–June 30, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

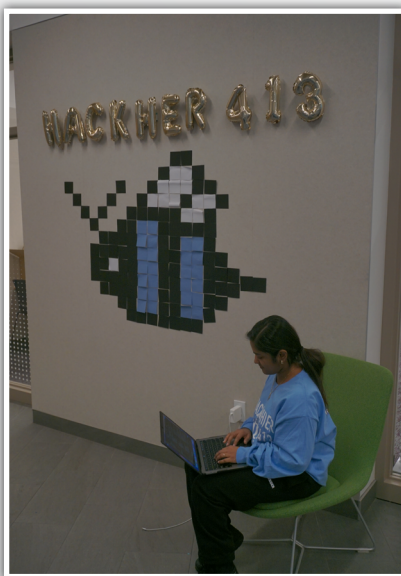
The Hackathon saw record-breaking numbers this year with 80+ projects submitted, representing over 300 participants. Those who contributed were happy with the event and gave positive feedback, especially surrounding the food and workshops provided throughout.

Over the course of 24 hours, participants had the opportunity to learn and develop new technical skills, network with industry representatives and peers, and innovate with excitement! The Hackathon is fully student organized and aims to increase diversity and inclusion in the technology space. During this time, students come together to build software and hardware creations over 8 hours. It is open to all and very beginner friendly.

"This was a really fun hackathon. I enjoyed all the workshops they had as I felt like I learnt a lot which helped with our project. I was really pleased with their logistics as well as the team's commitment to the hackathon, ensuring all participants leave with a good experience."

Annika Murthi '27

Participant and Biomedical Engineering Major



Learn more and see the full photo gallery [here](#).

REFLECTING MIGRATIONS: BIRDS, BUILDINGS, AND THEIR TRAGIC ENCOUNTERS

Awarded fall 2025 and completed between January 1–June 30, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

On March 26, the exhibit *Reflections on Collisions* opened to the public. It was curated by two women at UMass and featured the work of hundreds of students that collected data and contributed to preparing bird specimens. Through informative wall panels, glass and window samples, and prepared bird specimen, it illustrated the threats that windows present to birds on the UMass campus. With the input of two faculty from the Department of Architecture, it also demonstrated the architectural solutions available to help solve the problem. The opening event and the exhibit were a great success, with over 150 people attending on the opening night and hundreds more visitors throughout the month that the show was open. It was positively received in the greater community, with articles published in the *Hampshire Gazette*, *Greenfield Recorder*, and in the *UMass Daily Collegian*. It came alongside the exciting news that our team won over \$174,000 from the Massachusetts Biodiversity Fund to address the problematic windows on our campus.



"This project has changed the way I view campus and exposed me to how much our built environment truly impacts the nature around us. I started college as a Mechanical Engineering major, but being involved in this project is a big part of the reason why I switched into building construction technology. I realized I wanted to bring sustainability into my future career while also still pursuing my passion for design and building."

Alex Vaddi, '28, Member of Bird Safe UMass

TECH FUSION

Awarded fall 2025 and completed between January 1–June 30, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Tech Fusion: Rapid Prototyping Workshop was successfully held on April 8. The workshop introduced participants to design thinking and rapid prototyping through hands-on 3D modeling and printing activities. Attendees were guided through the full innovation process, from idea generation to developing and producing a physical prototype. The program aimed to build practical, industry-relevant skills while fostering collaboration among graduate students. A total of 20 participants engaged in the session. Participants actively developed concepts, iterated on designs, and gained firsthand experience using 3D printing tools and workflows. Overall, the event was highly interactive and successful in achieving its goals of experiential learning, peer collaboration, and applied technical skill-building.

LEARN MORE

A full article about Tech Fusion was published by the Isenberg School of Management on their website. [Click here to read more.](#)



“Tech Fusion was a highly engaging and practical workshop that helped me better understand how ideas can move from concept to prototype. The hands-on 3D printing experience made design thinking feel tangible and applicable. I especially appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with peers while learning real-world skills.”

Anonymous graduate student participant

THE REBIRTH PROJECT'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION & ZINE LAUNCH

Awarded fall 2025 and completed between January 1–June 30, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Overall this two-part project went very well. Part one was a panel with Dr. Linda Chavers, Paris Alston, and Afnan Nehela. These three incredible women of color, with diverse perspectives and backgrounds, all had great things to share. At the panel, there were 32 people in attendance, with roughly 75% being undergraduate students and the remainder being faculty, graduate students, staff, and alumni. Attendees spent time after the panel networking and making connections with both the panelists and each other.

Part two was the zine launch, which also went very well as over three dozen zines were distributed. The contents included writing, art, and poetry from a dozen undergraduate students from across the university, with majors from computer science to communications.



LEARN AND READ MORE

The Rebirth Project has an online presence, as a multimedia platform and community for creatives of all marginalized identities at UMass Amherst and beyond. [See their site here.](#)

"The event gave me a great opportunity to learn about the career paths of journalists, educators, and legislative professionals alike. It felt great to see representation from women of color who could speak to their experiences in the professional world."

Malik Pettiford '26

Creative Director of the Rebirth Project

WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION DAY

Awarded fall 2025 and completed between January 1–June 30, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Women in Construction Day was a campus-wide event designed to celebrate and support women pursuing careers in nontraditional fields such as building and construction technology, architecture, and engineering. These industries have historically been male dominated, and women often face unique challenges in navigating their education and professional growth. This event sought to address these challenges by providing a space for learning, networking, and empowerment.

The event brought together over 100 students and 25 faculty, staff, alumni, and volunteers for a day filled with workshops, mentorship opportunities, and skill-building activities. Participants had access to professional headshots for their LinkedIn profiles, hands-on workshops, and the guidance of a guest speaker who shared insights, experiences, and strategies for success in construction-related fields. By creating opportunities for meaningful interactions between students and professionals, the event helped women build confidence, develop practical skills, and envision themselves thriving in careers where they are underrepresented.

Women in Construction Day was significant not only for the individual development of participants but also for fostering a supportive community on campus. It highlighted the achievements of women in construction fields, provided role models for younger students, and strengthened connections among peers and mentors. By increasing visibility, building networks, and offering practical resources, this event empowered women to navigate their education and careers with confidence and resilience. Ultimately, it hopefully cultivated a sense of belonging and encouraged more women to pursue and persist in construction-related industries, contributing to a more diverse and inclusive professional landscape.



CURRENT GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS



HAMPDEN GALLERY - WOMEN IN PRACTICE: ALUMNI

Awarded spring 2026 and launching between July 1–December 31, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Hampden Gallery will foster interdisciplinary creative experiences that connect and center women artists, students, alumni, and the community through the gallery's established model of hands-on engagement. This initiative will be the continued expansion of Hampden Gallery's educational programming.

Workshops will provide alumnae artists with teaching and mentorship experiences while sharing their professional knowledge with current students.

Hampden Gallery operates under the umbrella of the Fine Arts Center with support from a core of 7–9 student gallery assistants who help guide daily gallery operations and programming.



SCHOLAR MOMS NETWORK

Awarded spring 2026 and launching between July 1–December 31, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

The Scholar Moms Network will support UMass Amherst student mothers by fostering community, well-being, leadership, and professional growth.

Supporting single mothers in earning a bachelor's degree yields a massive return on investment, increasing lifetime earnings by over \$600,000.

The project will consist of four integrated events that include a large community reception, and three targeted, 20-person workshops focusing on professional development, wellness/stress restoration and community building.

The initiative aims to directly counter isolation and chronic stress by helping student mothers navigate campus resources, practice self-advocacy, and build a lasting network of peer support to increase their sense of belonging at UMass.



SMART WOMEN SECURITIES' BEYOND YOUR DEGREE CONFERENCE

Awarded spring 2026 and launching between July 1–December 31, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Smart Women in Securities will educate undergraduate women on finance investments through seminars, mentoring, and professional exposure. Their annual flagship event, the Beyond Your Degree Conference, will help UMass students explore financial careers and build professional skills.

Main takeaways from the conference will help students explore diverse career paths in finance; connect current students with successful UMass alumni and faculty; and, bridge classroom learning with real-world industry preparation.



WOMEN IN CYBERSECURITY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Awarded spring 2026 and launching between July 1–December 31, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Founded in Spring 2025, Women in Medicine aims to foster mentorship, break barriers, and support women pursuing healthcare careers through professional development and networking. This work is especially important because, although women now make up the majority of medical school applicants and matriculants, they remain underrepresented across the broader physician workforce.

The organization provides resources such as clinical skills workshops, MCAT prep discounts, and planned large-scale conferences to help members become competitive applicants and future leaders.

Planned initiatives for the fall 2026 include career panels, networking events, and the Conference of Women in Medicine, featuring medical school admissions officers and students.



WOMEN IN MEDICINE

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PROJECT RECAP

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WOMEN IN PHYSICS

Awarded spring 2026 and launching between July 1–December 31, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Women in Physics will promote an inclusive environment for women and gender minorities in physics, addressing underrepresentation and bias in the field. This initiative fosters community and professional growth through events and mentorship opportunities.

The group will organize events featuring alumni, faculty, and students to share experiences and career paths, reinforcing belonging in physics. It aims to counteract feelings of isolation and inadequacy caused by stereotypes, enhancing retention of women and gender minorities. The project builds supporting networks across academic stages to empower participants and challenge gender-based biases in the sciences.



Thank you for your generous contributions to support this work.

Here are some additional links for you to stay up to date with all things WFUM!

COMPLETED GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS

- Learn more about previous recipients [here](#).

LEARN MORE ABOUT WFUM

- Visit our [website](#).

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

- Interested in getting involved and reviewing grant applications yourself? Fill out our [volunteer interest form](#) and get the process started.

SUPPORT FUTURE PROJECTS

- Want to support future projects? [Click here to contribute to the grants fund](#).

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- Join the [Women for UMass Connect UMass Group](#) to connect with other alumnae and learn about our upcoming events/projects.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Alyssa Leonard [via email here](#).

