

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 **6 grant awards in the fall semester** and another **6 in the spring semester totaling over \$31,000**.

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

This program could not exist without the support of alumnae 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 [ConnectUMass](#).

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

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

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CLOSING COMMENTS



FALL AWARDEE RECAPS



AWIS ALUMNI CAREER PANEL

Awarded fall 2025 for project occurring 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**


C. COLEMAN
K. KIDMAN

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 for project occurring 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 for project occurring 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 for project occurring 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 for project occurring 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 at 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 for project occurring 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.



SPRING AWARDEE RECAPS



HAMPDEN GALLERY WOMEN IN PRACTICE: ALUMNI

Awarded spring 2026 for project occurring between July 1 - December 31, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Hampden Gallery's mission is to present contemporary art exhibitions and provide accessible, interdisciplinary creative experiences that connect artists, students, alumni, and the community. Through exhibitions, workshops, and public programs, the gallery introduces students to professional artistic practice while fostering curiosity, creativity, and community engagement.

Hampden Gallery continues to expand its role as an accessible creative hub for students across disciplines. This project builds on the gallery's established model of hands-on engagement by introducing a focused workshop series that centers women artists, alumni leadership, and student well-being through creative practice. By inviting both a nationally recognized woman artist and a UMass alumna working professionally in the region, the program strengthens alumni connections while providing students with mentorship and exposure to professional artistic practice.

The workshops also provide alumnae artists with teaching and mentorship experience while sharing their professional knowledge with current students. The series also introduces practical skill-building components, such as exhibition preparation, that are rarely accessible outside formal studio courses.

Because the workshops take place within an active exhibition space, students also learn about contemporary art through the gallery's exhibitions, connecting the experience of making art with the professional presentation of artwork. This initiative represents a continued expansion of Hampden Gallery's educational programming by increasing opportunities for students to engage directly with practicing women artists and alumnae mentors through hands-on learning experiences.

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

SCHOLAR MOMS NETWORK

Awarded spring 2026 for project occurring between July 1 - December 31, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

The mission of Scholar Moms Network is to advance UMass Amherst student mothers' educational, professional, and leadership opportunities and their well-being by building a support community for student mothers.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), nationally, about 74% students parenting while earning their degrees are women. According to UMass Amherst Student Parent Programs, in public four-year baccalaureate programs, that number is closer to 9%. In graduate schools, that figure jumps to about 28%. If UMass fits national trends, which we have no reason to believe we do not, that means that we have about 4,700 student-parents at UMass this year.

A single mother who earns a bachelor's degree in Massachusetts would be expected to earn \$641,441 more over their lifetime than a single mother whose highest level of education is a high school degree. IWPR estimates that the United States would see a 430% return for every dollar spent on childcare for single scholar mothers. This can positively impact the well-being of the general community. In addition to this, spouses and other family members are also part of the community and have a vested interest in a scholar mom's success to improve their financial situation and provide greater opportunities for their family's long-term growth.

The project is a focused series of four integrated events designed to support student mothers' well-being, community, and leadership. It includes a large community reception for up to 60 participants and three smaller workshops (professional development, relaxation and wellness, and community-building, each with a 20-participant capacity) that move student mothers from isolation to connection, from chronic stress to moments of restoration, and from navigating campus systems alone to engaging as confident leaders and advocates.

The activation is significant because it centers student mothers as a priority population at the UMass Amherst campus, connects them to campus resources such as Student Parent Programs, promotes stress and trauma management through restorative practices, and builds their capacity to advocate for themselves and their families within the UMass system.

The project will also help build a more inclusive campus environment for student mothers, providing spaces for them to connect with peers and build a supportive network that promotes their sense of belonging and connectedness to the UMass Amherst campus.

SMART WOMEN SECURITIES' BEYOND YOUR DEGREE CONFERENCE

Awarded spring 2026 for project occurring between July 1 - December 31, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Smart Woman Securities's (SWS) mission is to educate undergraduate women on finance and investments. Through educational seminars, mentoring initiatives, and exposure to successful professionals and businesses, SWS provides the guidance and resources upon which women can build greater knowledge of the financial industry.

The Beyond Your Degree Conference is SWS's annual flagship event, a professional development conference designed to help students explore career paths in finance, build networking skills, and understand how valuable a UMass degree is beyond the classroom.

A central component of the conference is our alumni panels. Students have the opportunity to choose between multiple panels based on their desired field (investment banking, equity, fixed income, real estate, sales and trading) and hear from UMass alumni who have real experience in these fields. Students can gain insight into their day-to-day responsibilities, recruiting processes, and long-term career trajectories. Alumni also speak to their personal experience in transitioning from college to full-time roles and how they identified their interest in these fields during their time at UMass.

Students gain first-hand insight from successful UMass alumni, helping them make more informed and confident decisions about their futures.

A professor panel, where UMass finance faculty will share their own career progressions, explains skills students should focus on developing and how to best take advantage of their time at UMass. This panel will help students understand how to best leverage their UMass education to prepare for industry careers and achieve long-term professional goals.

Lastly, a networking lunch gives students the opportunity to engage directly with the panelists and build meaningful professional connections in a supportive setting. This will be many students' first time experiencing networking, making the conference a valuable stepping stone in their careers.

Overall, our conference provides students with a unique opportunity to gain industry insights from alumni and professors and develop their professional networking skills in a supportive environment.

WOMEN IN MEDICINE

Awarded spring 2026 for project occurring between July 1 - December 31, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

The mission of Women In Medicine (WIM) is to break barriers, foster mentorship, and create a network of strong, compassionate leaders who drive change in the medical field. Whether someone is just starting their journey or already making strides, our club provides a safe space for collaboration, growth, and advocacy for gender equality in health care.

WIM has been providing mentorship and networking opportunities by hosting multiple events, such as medical school application workshops, Build a Better Pre-Med sessions, vital nights, and suture nights. Since its establishment in spring 2025, WIM has experienced significant growth over the past year. In addition to hosting events, WIM puts extra effort into providing resources for general body members by offering discounts on MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) study resources, sharing volunteering opportunities, and introducing different health care specialties each week through Instagram posts. As a result, we have attracted over 700 Instagram followers and had more than 45 attendees at our events.

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. This emphasizes the continued need for mentorship, access, and professional development opportunities. WIM hopes to continue supporting women pursuing careers in health care in fall 2026 by hosting bigger events, such as career panels, semi-formal networking nights, and conference trips. The biggest event we are planning is the Conference of Women in Medicine, where undergraduate students will have the chance to learn more about the medical school application process. To provide helpful resources and real insight, we plan to invite medical school admissions officers and current medical students to speak about what makes a strong applicant and share their own experiences.

By providing mentorship opportunities and creating spaces for members to connect with both peers and health care professionals, we hope to help build confidence and clarity as they pursue health care careers. Ultimately, this project aims to better prepare our members and help them become more competitive applicants as they work toward their career goals, including medical school, physician's assistant school, dental school, or other health care professional.

WOMEN IN PHYSICS

Awarded spring 2026 for project occurring between July 1 - December 31, 2026

PROJECT RECAP

Women in Physics aims to make the physics department more inclusive for women and gender minorities. The field of physics is characterized by low representation of women and by persistent prejudice toward women and gender minorities. As a result, many students experience feelings of isolation and inadequacy, which can ultimately discourage them from pursuing physics even when they are interested in the field. These challenges contribute to difficulties in retaining women in physics. While at the beginning of the undergraduate program we see strong participation, representation declines significantly at successive stages of the academic pipeline from graduate school to postdoctoral training and ultimately academic and research careers.

The Women in Physics group hosts professional development and community-building events for women and gender minorities in the physics department at UMass. Our organization gives the members of this community the opportunity to network, improve professional development skills, and build confidence while navigating a male-dominated field.

As women in physics who have personally experienced challenges, we aim to help change the prevailing mindset and challenge the idea that the ability to do science, especially physics, depends on gender. We want to make it clear to women and gender minorities in physics that they are not alone, that they have the same opportunities as men, and that we are here to support the community. A key component of our effort is to create informal, community building spaces where participants can interact with role models at different career stages.

To accomplish these goals, we plan to organize three events in which alumni, faculty members, staff, PhD students, and senior undergraduates will share their experiences and demonstrate that women belong in this department and in this career path. Through these events, we will discuss experiences within the department, explore the range of career paths available to women in physics, and reflect on how these conversations and initiatives can help extend a more inclusive mindset from academia to society more broadly.

The main goal of this project is to challenge and reduce the sense of inadequacy that many women experience because of long-standing biases and stereotypes in scientific environments such as physics. By creating a stronger sense of community for women and other underrepresented groups in the physics department, we hope participants will feel that they belong and that there is a place for them in this field.

This project will also create opportunities for connection and mentorship by bringing together students, faculty, alumni, and staff. Through these interactions, we hope to encourage retention in physics by creating supportive spaces where women and gender minorities can share experiences and see role models at different stages of their careers.

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!

PAST GRANT RECIPIENTS

- 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](#).

