

THE DANIELS DECADE

By Matt Schnepf

When Mitch Daniels answered the call to become Purdue University's 12th president in 2012, he embraced the institution's history with optimism for its untapped potential. "I will come to this assignment filled with appreciation for the Purdue we know and excitement for the still greater Purdue that can be," he said. "Helping this great institution achieve even higher levels of research and intellectual excellence by recruiting the finest minds and students anywhere in the world—and delivering to those students an exceptional, affordable education—is the highest calling to which anyone who loves this state as I do could aspire."

Here, we take a look back at the levels of excellence Purdue has reached during Daniels's presidency.

STUDENTS

Purdue has increased access to higher education and set a new standard through teaching methods and campus experiences proven to prepare students for successful careers and fulfilling lives.

"The history of this university is one of people who came from modest circumstances, accepted the responsibility to work hard, and went on, through good luck and bad, to achieve great things and to be great citizens."

—Mitch Daniels

Affordable, Accessible Education

Upon arriving at Purdue in January 2013 following two terms as Indiana's governor, Daniels made affordability and accessibility an administrative priority. Under his leadership, the university froze tuition 11 consecutive years, saving students and their families over \$1 billion.

The cost to attend Purdue today is less than it was a decade ago, and a majority of students now graduate debt free.

New university initiatives—including Purdue Global, Purdue Polytechnic High Schools, and Degree in 3—have increased access to a Purdue education for students of diverse backgrounds. Private gifts for scholarships, fellowships, and programming have also made an impact.

In 2012–13, Purdue raised \$32 million for student support. In 2021–22, it raised \$150 million.

Enrollment and Faculty Growth

Discussing student enrollment in 2015, Daniels said, "We shouldn't seek to be known by how many we turn down but by how many we turn out." Guided by this vision, Purdue has experienced record enrollments over the past eight academic years.

An all-time high 50,884 students began fall classes in 2022, including a record 37,949 undergraduates.

To accommodate these gains, Purdue has expanded its faculty annually, welcoming a record 213 new faculty in the fall of 2022. Faculty retention has also increased during Daniels's presidency. The four-year retention rate for new professors hired in 2012 was 79.1%; for those joining Purdue in 2017, the four-year retention rate was 95.3%.

CAMPUS EVOLUTION

In the last decade, Purdue has focused investments on teaching, research, and collaborative spaces; prioritized strategic renovations; enhanced open space connectivity and campus circulation; and strengthened the campus identity and gateways.

“The biggest risk of all is that we stop taking risks at all.”

—Mitch Daniels

New Facilities and Enhancements

As enrollment continued to grow, the West Lafayette campus underwent several high-profile building projects with 11 new or expanded facilities during Daniels's presidency.

Recent construction includes the Gateway Complex: Dudley and Lambertus Halls; Chaney-Hale Hall of Science; the Agricultural and Biological Engineering Building; the David and Bonnie Brunner Purdue Veterinary Medical Hospital Complex; and Hagle Hall, a new home for Purdue Bands & Orchestras.

Daniels championed the growth of the Discovery Park District at Purdue, a \$1 billion mixed-use development embedded into the fabric of campus. The district's growth helped West Lafayette receive the No. 1 ranking in SmartAsset's list of the best places for career opportunities.

Read more about Discovery Park in this issue's [“Live. Work. Play.”](#) story.

Beyond facilities, a \$1 million renovation of Third Street created a safer pedestrian-friendly corridor between the campus's student residences and north academic areas.

Students, faculty, and staff can now use Third Street's bicycle paths and walkways, which are adorned with colorful surface designs representing iconic campus symbols.

A DECADE OF HIGH-IMPACT INITIATIVES

Key initiatives introduced over the past 10 years raised the university's profile. Several reinforced Daniels's focus on affordability and accessibility.

“While you cannot control the world around you, you can control how you live within those circumstances. That is what defines who you are and what builds resilience and character.”

—Mitch Daniels

Purdue Global

In 2018, the university unveiled its online public university geared toward working adults: Purdue Global. Made possible through the acquisition of Kaplan University, the enterprise tailors education to the needs of adults who have work or life experience beyond the classroom.

With 175 programs of study, Purdue Global gives students flexibility to complete classes on their schedules. Of the 32,500 students currently enrolled, 58% are over the age of 30.

A New Era for IUPUI

Purdue and Indiana University took initial steps in 2022 to transform IUPUI—a joint venture in Indianapolis between the two entities—into separate academic organizations with their own governance. This [new arrangement](#) will expand research activity and enhance funding opportunities for research partnerships, including the creation of a joint biosciences engineering institute.

Purdue Polytechnic High Schools

Daniels announced plans for a network of tuition-free [Purdue Polytechnic High Schools](#) (PPHS) in 2016. This joint venture between the university and Indianapolis Public Schools serves low-income students and students of color, preparing them for future success through STEM-focused project-based learning. The schools also provide a pipeline of qualified undergraduates to Purdue.

The initial PPHS location opened in 2017 and celebrated its first graduating class in 2021. Two Indianapolis locations and a third site in South Bend currently serve more than 1,000 students; a fourth location is in development.

Purdue Moves and Next Moves

The university advanced the ambitious Purdue Moves agenda in 2013. Designed to place Purdue among the world's top research and teaching institutions, the strategic plan complemented Daniels's commitment to "deliver higher education at the highest proven value."

Purdue Moves included five pillars: Affordability and Accessibility; World-Changing Research; STEM Leadership; Transformative Education; and Online Education.

Launched in 2021, Purdue's Next Moves initiatives are helping to strengthen the university's competitive advantage through five new pillars: Plant Sciences 2.0; National Security and Technology; Purdue Applied Research Institute (PARI); Transformative Education 2.0; and Equity Task Force.

Degree in 3

As part of Purdue Moves: Transformative Education, Degree in 3 allows students to complete an undergraduate degree in three years. Those pursuing this option can then enter the workforce or graduate school a year earlier than they would through a traditional plan of study. Degree in 3 also provides a potential tuition savings of \$19,000 or more.

Purdue offers three-year degrees for more than 50 majors across its 11 colleges, including all majors within the College of Liberal Arts.

“If the Purdue of 10 or 20 years from now still enjoys its current vitality, momentum, and reputation, it will be because, in traditional Boilermaker fashion, it has continued the commitment to innovation and change.”

—Mitch Daniels

Record Fundraising

Building on the success of [Ever True: The Campaign for Purdue University](#)—a historic undertaking that concluded in 2019, bringing in more than \$2.5 billion in philanthropic support over seven years—the [Purdue for Life Foundation](#) is setting new fundraising records across the board, including \$542.1 million raised in the most recent fiscal year.

Purdue for Life, created in 2020 by uniting the Purdue Alumni Association and the University Development Office, helps people who love Purdue stay connected, get involved, and give back. One organization now drives and coordinates all alumni-related activities.

The first Purdue Day of Giving, a 24-hour online event, took place in 2014 and raised \$7.5 million from 6,500 donations. The most recent Purdue Day of Giving in 2022 set new records for total dollars raised (\$68.2 million) and total number of gifts (26,726).

150th Anniversary

Purdue celebrated 150 years of giant leaps during a yearlong sesquicentennial celebration launched during Homecoming in 2018.

The anniversary’s Ideas Festival connected world-renowned speakers and Purdue experts in conversations about critical problems and opportunities facing the world. More than 45,000 people attended over 60 related events with an additional 475,000 watching online. Guest speakers included Gene Kranz, Apollo 11 flight director; Condoleezza Rice, former U.S. secretary of state; and Beth Ford, president and CEO of Land O’Lakes.

Festivities concluded during Homecoming in 2019 with an astronaut reunion attended by 13 alumni who have traveled to outer space.

Protect Purdue

In 2020, Purdue became one of the first universities to commit to reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic. The university's leadership felt it was important to have as many students safely on campus as possible to deliver the full Purdue educational experience. The Protect Purdue Plan outlined protocols to ensure the campus community's health and safety, including testing, vaccinations, and contact tracing.

"With over 88% of both students and the overall campus community vaccinated against COVID-19, we were one of the safest places anywhere," Daniels said. By successfully navigating the challenges presented by the highly transmissible virus, Purdue returned to pre-pandemic operations in the fall of 2021.

"We have to give our young people the confidence to experience and cope with crisis because nothing in this world will ever be presented to them perfectly without fault or challenge."

—Mitch Daniels

Business School

In 2022, Purdue announced its next big move: a transformation of the School of Management into a new School of Business that will prepare students to lead in a technology-driven world. Grounded in the hallmarks of a Purdue education, including STEM disciplines and business analytics, the School of Business will be uniquely positioned to bring discoveries to the marketplace, scale up innovations, and effect societal change.

The first phase of enhancements, set for the fall of 2023, include enrollment growth, targeted faculty expansion, and curricular and experiential additions.

Mitch Daniels Boulevard

To honor Daniels's decade of leadership, the city of West Lafayette and Purdue University trustees agreed to rename a portion of State Street as Mitch Daniels Boulevard. The naming was announced publicly on December 2 as the university community began [MitchFest](#)—a series of celebratory and stimulating public events in recognition of Daniels.

Mitch Daniels Boulevard will run from Grant Street west through Purdue's West Lafayette campus, culminating at U.S. 231. Signage will be installed in the spring 2023 semester.

"Ten's a nice round number. I always say better a year too soon than a day too late."

—Mitch Daniels

Daniels's tenure leading Purdue comes to a close on December 31, 2022. During the President's Council Annual Dinner in September, he expressed gratitude for the past decade as well as optimism for the university's next chapter under President-elect Mung Chiang.

Addressing those in attendance, Daniels said, "Thank you for 10 unforgettable years. And trust me on this, the next 10 will be better still. Boiler Up."

"Each time I am around Purdue alumni, I am struck by the same inspiring reaction. Their stories of great accomplishments, great careers, and great lives led almost never began with privileged origins. Overwhelmingly, Boilermakers have come from the small towns, the inner cities, the farms—places where any head start they got more likely stemmed from the values they absorbed than from any great material advantage. It must always be so. My successors in this job must experience the same joy I derive from meeting such alums. That's what tuition freezes, Purdue inner-city high schools, and rigorous, cutting-edge pedagogy are all about."

—Mitch Daniels

Continue the impact! Help support some of President Daniels's innovative initiatives.

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