

La Salle eyes largest capital campaign yet after fundraising record

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Image: Shea Wright / La Salle University

La Salle University received several major gifts in fiscal 2026.

SHEA WRIGHT / LA SALLE UNIVERSITY



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Story Highlights

- La Salle University raised a record \$19.7 million in fiscal 2026.
- The Middle States Commission on Higher Education reaffirmed school accreditation.

- First-year enrollment increased 40% following the addition of sports teams.

La Salle University recorded its biggest fundraising year on record in the fiscal year ended May 31 and is weighing a formal capital campaign to take advantage of philanthropic and enrollment momentum.

The Northwest Philadelphia university said it raised about \$19.7 million in fiscal 2026, notching large gifts from alumni donors including an [anonymous \\$5 million gift](#) for the nursing school, a [\\$2 million gift for a new wellness facility](#) and a [\\$1 million donation from the chair of its board of trustees](#). The school's previous fundraising high was over \$17 million in fiscal 2023.

The record comes as the 163-year-old university had its accreditation reaffirmed by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in late May. The private [Catholic university](#) [received a warning about its accreditation](#) status a year ago due to standards relating to planning, resources and institutional improvement as it grappled with operating deficits.

The university must submit a monitoring report next February to show it has "achieved and can sustain ongoing compliance with documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development" that can support its programs and "ensure financial stability."

President Daniel Allen, [tapped to lead the school in 2022](#), said the Middle States Commission affirmation was a validation of "actual progress," noting "difficult decisions" that led the university to more stable footing. Financial statements for fiscal 2025 [note](#) various cost-cutting measures including workforce reductions and elimination of unfunded capital expenses.

"What we heard from Middle States was that 'This is a recognition of the progress that you're making, from an enrollment perspective, from a fundraising perspective, from a budgetary perspective,'" Allen said. "'The things that we were looking for the university to make progress on, you've made progress on.'"

Allen, who came to La Salle from DePaul University where he was the head fundraiser, [centered fundraising as a main priority](#) and is now seeing that come to fruition. The "validation" from the Middle States Commission can help further that, he said.

"It's super important to the conversations that we're having for our donor community to know that the investments that they're making have also been recognized by the accreditation community," Allen said. "It signals a real confidence in the direction that we're going as a university. We're still really clear-eyed about our situation, we have a lot of work left to do."



La Salle University President Daniel Allen.
LA SALLE UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHY

Allen said a formal capital fundraising campaign is being discussed on the heels of the 2026 fundraising record. The university has not set an exact timeline and goal, but he said it would likely be "the largest and/or the most ambitious that we have undertaken."

"We're sort of fine tuning what we think would be realistic and ambitious at the same time for the university," Allen said, adding that officials are having conversations with donors "to ensure that what we want to do from a university perspective to ensure student success is aligned with what the donors are interested in funding with their philanthropy."

Those sorts of conversations helped push the fundraising envelope this year.

Allen noted that there were more discussions with individual donors focused on major gifts supporting specific projects, and less of a focus on fundraising events such as galas or golf tournaments, for example. In addition to big donations, La Salle tacked on more than \$2 million in donations during its annual Day of Giving this spring, the most on record.

Among the capital projects to benefit from the latest funding are a new wellness center that will be converted from the current bookstore and a renovation of the campus library that will devote a floor of the building to academic success. Much of the rest of the funding will go

toward resources for students such as scholarships and financial aid, as well as funding internships and career-focused programs.

The university saw a 40% jump in first-year enrollment to more than 700 students last year, receiving a boost with the addition of four sports teams, including baseball. Allen said that the first-year class entering in the fall is trending to exceed budgeted projections again, though exact numbers are subject to change over the course of the summer.

Allen said he expected the enrollment of non student-athletes would be up year over year even if it is not as large in sheer numbers as last year's class due to the sports additions. He added that the university anticipates school-wide enrollment to be up as well. The school has 3,381 students.

Despite the recent gains, La Salle — like universities across the nation — has been dealing with enrollment declines since the pandemic, which have impacted its finances. La Salle had an operating deficit of \$16.3 million in fiscal 2025 ended May 31, 2025, down from \$17.9 million the year prior. Audited financial statements from 2025 note ongoing planning and actions to reduce operating expenses including voluntary retirement, workforce reductions and eliminating unfunded capital expenses. Audited financial statements have not been released for fiscal year 2026.