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# Commencement Speaker Paul Buchheit ('98) Gives \$50,000 to Launch Coaching Program for Crew Club

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Case Western Reserve University Commencement Speaker Paul Buchheit (CWR '98, GRS '98) has given \$50,000 to provide paid coaching to participants in the university's club rowing program. Buchheit, a member of the team as an undergraduate, earlier committed \$100,000 to support acquisition of a permanent boathouse site in Cleveland known as Rivergate Park.

"The crew club provided experiences and interactions I never would have had within the classroom," Buchheit said. "I am grateful for those times, and hope that this commitment will enable many more students to benefit from rowing in the future."

With support from individuals and organizations ranging from Buchheit and Peter B. Lewis, the Cleveland, Gund and Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundations, Forest City and Arcelor Mittal, the Cleveland Rowing Foundation closed on the downtown parcel in the fall of 2010. That spring the new boathouse opened, and this fall it will host USRowing's Master's Head Race National Championship.

"Paul believes in providing students positive experiences in all aspects of their college careers," President Barbara R. Snyder said. "He also appreciates making investments that yield measurable results. We deeply appreciate his engagement with our crew program."

Since its founding in 1991, the university's rowing program has relied on volunteer coaches to teach students the sport and prepare them to compete. In 2003, graduates of the program came together to create an alumni group dedicated to easing the fundraising burden undergraduates carried to buy adequate equipment for their sport. The Spartan Alumni Rowing Association (SARA) since has acquired a trailer and seven new boats, and more recently shifted its fundraising focus to stipends for coaches. To date the organization has built a \$35,000 endowment; its leaders believe that the benefits Buchheit's cash gift provides—paid coaching starting this year—will accelerate donations to the endowment.

"We view Paul's generous gift as seed money," said Doug Rathburn, SARA's founder and president. "It allows the university to launch a more structured and sustainable model of coaching and for all of us to see the benefits it provides for students. With the example of real experience, we hope to attract significantly more investment."

Last weekend the crew program experienced its greatest number of entries and most successful showing ever at the Aberdeen Dad Vail Regatta, the nation's largest annual college rowing competition. Five shells entered, three made the semi finals, and one finished fifth in the final race.

The university is still finalizing details of the paid positions for the men's and women's programs. More information regarding the opportunity, and how to apply, will be announced this summer.



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