During the past year, Oregon State University hired one of the world’s leading authorities on amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig’s disease), created a new leadership center for students in the Memorial Union, and planted a beautiful new garden on campus.

Those three admittedly different achievements have a single unifying thread—generous donors funded them.

“Donors are excited to contribute to the university’s ambitious goals,” said Rebecca Cole, president and CEO of the OSU Foundation. “Our alumni and friends are generously supporting programs all across campus, programs that match their own personal interests as well as our vision to be a top-tier university.”

“OSU is a dynamic institution right now,” Cole added, “and our donors are helping to build that momentum.”

In the fall of 2000, the university announced a gift of $20 million to the OSU Foundation to support the College of Engineering’s push to become one of the top 25 such programs in the nation. The gift came from a donor who wished to remain anonymous, but wanted to boost the university’s high-tech initiative.

Donors also have rallied to support athletics. One year after Al Reser and his family committed up to $12 million to support the athletic department, a small group of donors contributed $13 million to construct the indoor practice facility and to relocate and upgrade the women’s softball stadium.

The OSU Foundation board of governors also stepped up to the plate to support the university’s effort to establish a branch campus in Bend. The foundation will provide $150,000 annually in scholarship funds for the branch campus for the next 20 years—the equivalent of a $3.5 million endowment.

The board made the commitment, Cole said, because members believe in the importance of the mission. The strong growth of the OSU Foundation’s endowment also played a role.

During the last fiscal year, the foundation received more than $43 million in gifts and pledges, helping its assets grow to a robust $395 million in the year 2000. The foundation also boasts a total endowment of $296.3 million. A decade earlier, in 1990, the endowment was $38.6 million.
Each year, thousands of donors make gifts large and small to the OSU Foundation to benefit the university. Here is a brief look at how three gifts are helping Oregon State.

The Ava Helen Pauling Chair
In 1998, the Linus Pauling Institute at OSU received word that a small-town lawyer named L. Orlo Williams of Springvale, Maine, had left $1.2 million in his estate to the center—apparently in thanks for responding to his inquiry for information some 15 years earlier. That gift, along with thousands of other smaller but equally important gifts, helped establish the Ava Helen Pauling Chair, which OSU filled in January, 2001, with the hiring of Joseph Beckman. An expert in biochemistry, molecular genetics and neurobiology, Beckman will build a major research program at OSU focusing on the role of oxidative stress, antioxidants and dietary factors in neurodegenerative diseases, including Lou Gehrig’s disease.

The Joyce Goudy Powell Leadership Center
Twenty years ago, a bright student named Joyce Goudy graduated from OSU Magna Cum Laude with a degree in home economics and business. After her early death in 1999, her parents, Alan and Jane Goudy of Portland, made a donation in her honor to create a center in the Memorial Union that is designed to help students develop their leadership skills through creative learning. In addition, the gift will fund a series of leadership seminars and research opportunities designed to benefit people of all ages and backgrounds.

The Dibble Garden
It has been about 70 years since Eloise Dibble (’32) and her late husband Earl L. Dibble (’31) graduated from Oregon State, but their memories of campus have always remained fond and strong. They wanted to do something to encourage future graduates to cherish the campus as they have. So, in 1998, the couple donated $100,000 to The Valley Library Campaign to create a garden just east of the Library and south of the Valley Gymnastics Center. It is a fitting gift. The Dibbles have been lifelong gardeners and their own gardens have been featured in national publications. Now complete, the new Dibble Garden features beautifully crafted ceramic art tiles, casual seating, paved walkways, and an array of trees, shrubs and flowers.