



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

Thank you
2020/21

DONOR NEWS

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST



READ ON TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR IMPACT!

Thank you for your gift to Queen's

Your generosity, especially in the past year, has changed lives and made an impact regionally, nationally and globally.

T

his edition of Donor News is testament to your support: we hope you enjoy reading about how your gift has been put to use across Queen's, and are inspired by the extraordinary people – from students, to patients and academics – you have enabled.

Of course, it has been a challenging year. We, along with most charitable organisations, had assumed that we would see a fall in donations to the Queen's University of Belfast Foundation. But the opposite has been the case. You, our donors, actually increased the amount you gave, and the impact of your gifts has been immediate.

Perhaps most importantly, so many of you have trusted us to use your gifts wisely, whether through unrestricted gifts or in response to the pandemic. Just one example is corporate donor Santander who, as Covid-19 hit, gave us permission to use their gift – originally intended to fund student mobility – for whatever the University and local community needed the most. This gave us the freedom to respond where the need was greatest, from care packages for student nurses working on the frontline to iPads for local schoolchildren who were unable to access technology for online learning.

As a donor community, you also recognised the importance of the University's work beyond the pandemic, continuing to put your trust in us and funding vital long-term projects that will make a sustained difference, such as scholarships, tackling systemic educational disadvantage and medical research.

We're immensely privileged to have your consistent support and commitment. So, thank you. And, take pride: whether increasing student access or funding groundbreaking research, your gift is helping to change the world for the better.

To help Queen's shape a better future for all, visit dar0.qub.ac.uk/GiveToday



From student access to groundbreaking research, your gift is changing the world

PROFESSOR IAN GREER,
PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

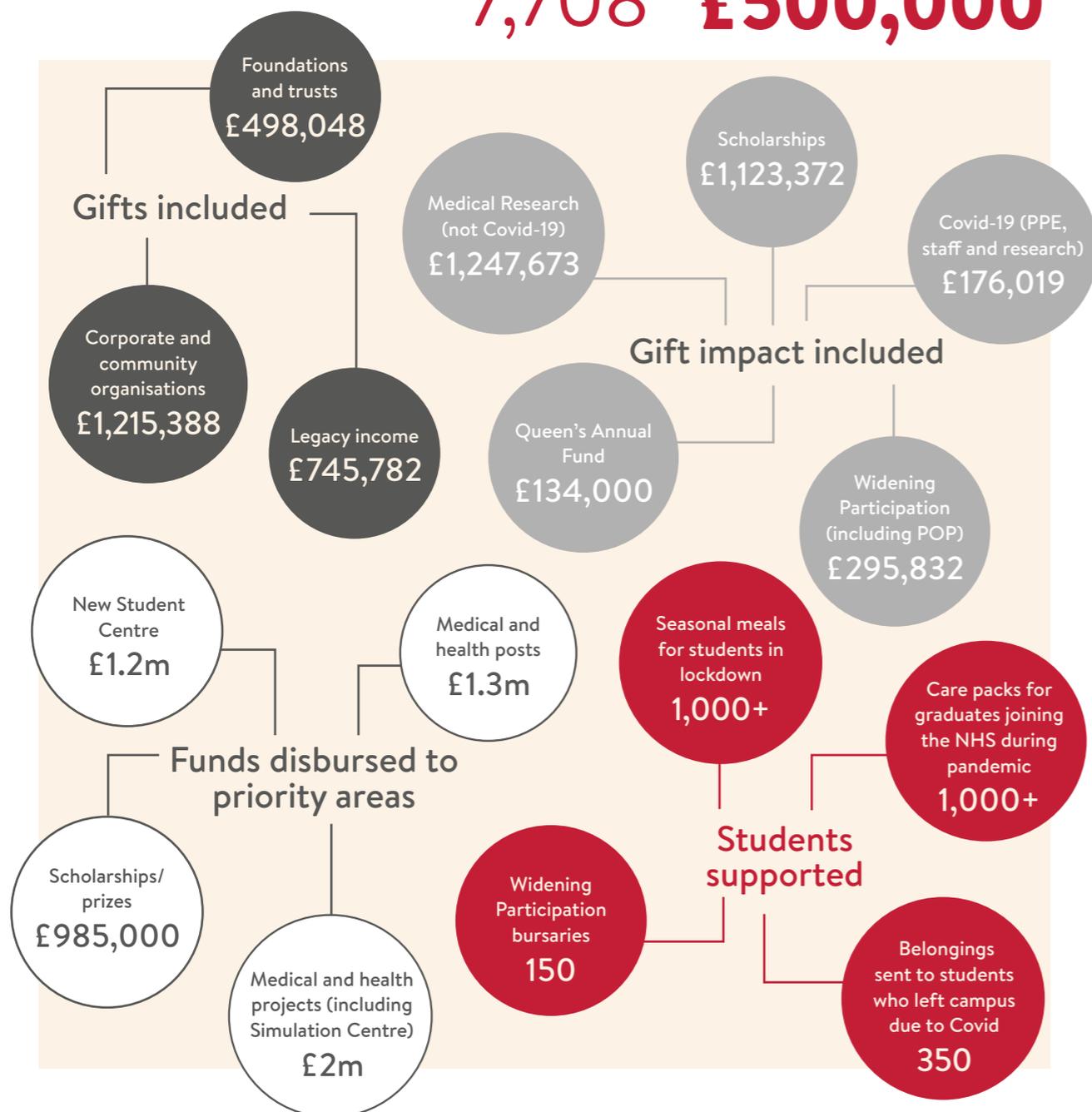
A year of support

Thank you for your generous support in 2019/20, enabling Queen's to make an impact – locally, nationally and globally – to shape a better future.

Total income
(for 2019/20)
£4.3m

Number of donors
1,811

Gifts received
7,708 Largest pledge
£500,000



About the Queen's Foundation

As the charitable arm of Queen's, the Foundation exists to support the vision and mission of the University with philanthropic funding. So, whatever you give to, and however you give, you are part of supporting its work.

As a donor to the Foundation, we're your route to find out what's happening at the University and how your own personal philanthropy can make a difference – and to enable you to give to projects you know will have a real impact.

We are always welcome recipients of charitable or philanthropic giving, and we're grateful that donors like you appreciate that giving in this way can bring about significant systemic change. Giving to a university can have an incredible multiplier effect because university research tackles fundamental issues. You can see your money making a difference. For example, discovering how to raise the aspirations of 11-year-olds from deprived backgrounds will mean that in five years' time, their GCSE attainment goes up. And then they may access university education, which will boost their employment prospects.

Gifts to the Foundation enable the University to do many fantastic things which core Government funding or research funding doesn't cover – groundbreaking, blue-sky research, for example, or ensuring students have the best possible experience. Whatever the size of your gift, the Foundation is happy to work with you to make sure your donation goes to the right place – and has the maximum impact. For example, if you'd like to donate to cancer research, we can discuss relevant work at Queen's and make it easy for you to give to a particular project. Or if you loved your time at Queen's and want to enable a disadvantaged student to have that experience too, we can work with you to discover what that might look like, and how we can help you do that in a way that's meaningful to you.

Of course, the projects covered in this edition of Donor News are just a small sample of the work you have helped to fund. For example, the Seamus Heaney Centre for Creative Writing was initially founded on a philanthropic gift – it has now grown into a home for Heaney's extraordinary legacy and an internationally renowned Centre able to draw world-class academic talent to Belfast. It's a perfect example of how philanthropy and careful stewardship can build on an initial gift to create something unique and extraordinary.

We are excited about the future and the Foundation's potential to do good. The University has a global outlook: we welcome students and academic talent from all



We want to enable philanthropy that will reach out beyond the University's gates

NATHALIE TROTT, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

over the world. But we're also privileged to be a vital and meaningful part of our local community. We want to enable philanthropy that will reach out beyond the University gates, widening participation and creating opportunities for Northern Ireland's young people.

I'm so grateful to each and every one of you. But of course, my thanks are a poor substitute for the gratitude of those who have directly benefited from your generosity – the PhD student who can continue potentially life-saving research, or the undergraduate who received care and support when the pandemic forced them to isolate alone, away from friends and family. I hope that in the near future, they will once again be able to express their thanks to you face to face – and you will be able to see the powerful impact that your gifts have made possible.

To find out more, go to darq.qub.ac.uk/Queens or contact Helen Carrick, Head of Major Gifts, at h.carrick@qub.ac.uk

Impact: Social change

We need to change the way we teach STEM now, so that students can seize tomorrow's opportunities – your support is enabling us to deliver new school teaching materials today.



Dr Dani Soban
(Education, 2012),
Senior Lecturer in
Aerospace Engineering.

Phil Hanna's vision of the world in 2030 includes a stark warning for today's teachers – if we don't change the way we teach STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) now, our pupils won't be ready to take full advantage of the new opportunities.

"The world will be very different in 10 years, and there'll be a greater focus on digital, sustainable development and multi-disciplinary jobs," says Professor Hanna (Communication Technology, 1995; Computer Science, 1999; Education, 2002), Dean of Education in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences. "To respond to that need, we urgently need to think differently about how STEM subjects are taught and enthuse students with the wide range of opportunities open to them."

Hanna (pictured) isn't just making the argument. With the generous support of the Caterpillar Foundation, he and his team are creating the materials teachers and students can use now. "The project is called Reimagining STEM, because we wanted to get away from the traditional way of doing these things." It funds masterclasses and web-based resources to support innovative ways for STEM teachers to deliver the national curriculum, and it's also focused on attracting more STEM students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"The funds have allowed us to run focus groups, masterclasses and awaydays for teachers. And we'll work with more than 60 teachers to help build up a profile of the needs of disadvantaged students from the Greater Belfast area."

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

While Hanna is using the support from the Caterpillar Foundation to change perceptions at a grassroots level, Dr Dani Soban, Senior Lecturer in Aerospace Engineering, is applying funds from engineering company AESSEAL to support women already working in STEM subjects.

Dr Soban points to the "leaky pipeline" for female academics, with women simply dropping out or not moving as fast up the promotional ladder as their male colleagues. "The funds we received from AESSEAL allowed us to set up an overcoming barriers programme. We asked women to tell us what their barriers were, rather than prescribing them in advance."

Once they have been identified, the focus is on making an immediate intervention. "A Chinese postgrad told us that she would love to improve her poor English, which she felt was holding back her PhD work. The AESSEAL funds allowed her to take a month off work to improve her language skills and edit her thesis in English. Another postgrad researcher asked for help with childcare so that she could continue her research work over the holidays – we were able to pay for six weeks of summer schemes for her children."



The project is called Reimagining STEM, because we wanted to get away from the traditional way of doing things

PHIL HANNA

The funds have also been used to establish a leadership development programme open to female academic staff and postdocs, with the aim of encouraging confidence skills and networking. And, pre-pandemic, a female academic colleague was able to attend a high-profile conference in China as a keynote speaker as a result of the conference support fund. "Just by her being there, on the platform, it helps to normalise the idea that women belong in STEM."



SUPPORTING WOMEN

Lisa Bradley, Senior Lecturer in Finance, is on a similar path to create more role models for women in the world of money. "There is a historic and, sadly, ongoing imbalance of women at the top in the financial services sector. The earlier we can address the issue of female confidence – which results in women traditionally underselling themselves – the better."

That's why Bradley was especially thrilled by the latest support from FinTrU, the Belfast-based financial services company, who already sponsor The Trading Room at Queen's. Last December, FinTrU launched their Women in Finance Scholarship, for one female student from Queen's University Belfast and one from Ulster University.

"The Women in Finance scholarship is for those just starting out, and the inaugural award at Queen's went to one of our first year BSc Finance students," says Bradley. "She now has the security of knowing she has financial support for her second and fourth year of study, as well as one-on-one mentorship and an assured third-year placement with FinTrU. It is so important to provide support early on in the individual's career."

"Seeing one of their own getting FinTrU's backing helps other female students recognise that they are part of a valued community – an asset to financial firms. And it makes them more likely to believe from the outset that they can succeed themselves, aiming for the very top."

To find out more, go to darq.qub.ac.uk/Queens or contact Aoife McNabb at a.mcnabb@qub.ac.uk, +44 (0)28 9097 5289.

Impact: Widening access

How do you ensure students of all backgrounds access university? By intervening early, with targeted support and bursaries that make dreams come true.



The encouragement I received gave me confidence, and knowing I would receive a bursary put my mind at ease

HANNAH LYTTLE (Law, 2021)

Hannah Lyttle says the Pathway Opportunity Programme (POP) changed her life – the perfect example of Queen’s donors’ support directly benefiting students. “I’ve never seen a programme like it,” says Hannah. “My own experience has been unreal.” Now in her final year reading Law, Hannah joined the programme, which is committed to ensuring that those most able but least likely to participate in higher education have an equal opportunity to do so, in 2017. The following year, she received scholarships from Lloyds Bank and global law firm Linklaters. To top that, last year she won the JMK Solicitors Prize, awarded for attaining the highest mark in her Tort Law module, as well as meeting the widening access criteria. But she is adamant none of these awards would have come her way if it had not been for a brief moment at her school assembly.

“The Head simply mentioned POP and said, if you are interested, stay behind. So I did, and then I looked it up online. I had no idea what degree I wanted to do and was attracted by the Law option. At the time, I wanted to travel and study outside Northern Ireland. But I signed up to POP, went on the residential camp at Queen’s and I immediately decided to stay in Belfast. I was captivated by the teaching – for the first time I wasn’t sitting there bored!”

Hannah worked hard to get her place despite difficult personal circumstances at home. “I had to write a reasonably long essay and then I got a reduced grade offer from 3 As to 2 As and a B. The encouragement I received was vital in giving me confidence, and the knowledge that I would receive a bursary put my mind at ease. I was able



I focused on the support and mentoring available and the possibility of a reduced offer

NIAMH O'BRIEN
(Biological Sciences, 2021)

Students accepted on to POP receive either a reduced conditional offer or a guaranteed interview, as well as financial support when they arrive at Queen’s. Niamh does not remember money even being mentioned during the talk at her school. “My focus at the time was on the support and

to buy myself a decent laptop in my first year as well as pay for student accommodation. And I heard about the other scholarships through the Pathway office.”

As part of her Lloyds scholarship, Hannah has spent 100 hours volunteering, much of it for the charity, Self Help Africa, with 20 hours for Mental Health UK during her placement in the bank’s Gresham Street offices in London. After successfully completing POP and getting into Queen’s, Hannah then received the Linklaters Scholarship, taking her back to London for a legal foundation course and an insight day, and leaving her with a taste for commercial law. “After my finals I’ll certainly be looking at a legal career. I never forget that I would not be here without Pathway.”

FROM DESPAIR TO JOY

Niamh O’Brien is also keen to spread the word about POP, after her own life-changing experience. “I was in the Lower Sixth and had just failed my AS levels. I’d wanted to go to Queen’s for so long but thought I’d blown my chance. I was in the depths of despair.”

Just after receiving her results, Niamh attended a talk at her school given by Clare Ryan, then Outreach Officer at Queen’s, who was responsible for launching the POP scheme. “She explained there was a free summer school and online courses, and that POP was a new programme there to work with you for two years, to encourage you to come to Queen’s. My friend and I were laughing and then I said, ‘Why not, I’ll give it a go’. She decided not to. She was raging when I got a place to study Biological Sciences.”

mentoring available and the possibility of a two-grade reduction offer, which was a weight off my shoulders. So, on top of that, when I arrived it was wonderful to receive a Kilwaughter Minerals bursary. It was a huge help with my accommodation costs and has also allowed me to go on study tours.”

In the past two summer holidays, Niamh has worked with the Widening Participation Programme as a student guide to help new POP students. “I arrived in a taxi on my first day at Queen’s, so scared because I didn’t know anyone; I was the only person from my school. So, I understand how the new students are feeling and like to take some under my wing.”

Niamh does remember having one big advantage when she started. “Because of the POP campus tours, I knew my way around and was already familiar with the laboratories. I also knew that if I didn’t understand anything, I could get help. My new student friends got quite jealous – months later I would walk into a lecture and find I knew the academic because they had been part of Pathway.”

Now she encourages others to widen their horizons. “My careers teacher had me on his radar as I had failed – now he uses me as his poster person and really pushes the programme. I had zero confidence when I first heard about the scheme, but yet became one of the first 12 POP students [now there are more than 200]. I couldn’t be more grateful.”

To give young people like Hannah and Niamh a similar opportunity, you can give online at darq.qub.ac.uk/givetoday or contact Viv Harris at v.harris@qub.ac.uk

A unique community

All ages. From all over the world. With passions ranging from local sport to international research. Queen's donors may come from every walk of life – but together, your gifts are changing the world.

So what does it mean to you to support the Queen's Foundation?

We asked you to tell us.

REGULAR GIVING DONOR

Name: Eoin McMullan (Accounting, 2013), Chair of the Standing Committee of Convocation
What I give to: Annual Fund

Why I give: All those aspects of University life which make it so rich benefit from donor support. By giving, I'm helping others to have those same experiences.

Building relationships, how to make difficult decisions, teamwork, managing a budget, leadership – all essential life skills and ones I was lucky enough to learn through extra-curricular activities, supported via the Queen's Annual Fund. They helped me progress in my career and get to where I am today.

Academics are vital – but university gives you so much more. I passionately believe that Queen's doesn't just educate people: it creates well-rounded young adults. And that's why I give to the Annual Fund now – so I can give back, pay my dues and help today's students have the support and opportunities that I had.

I've never given to one specific project – I like the idea that it all comes together

and that my donation is part of something much bigger. Before the pandemic, I loved attending the annual awards – handing out cheques and seeing the incredible range of successful projects is amazing.

I'm also really aware that not all impact is visible. It's easy to see the benefit when a group can buy a shiny new piece of equipment or go on an incredible trip. But projects such as Mind Your Mood, a student-led initiative to provide support for those with mental health issues, are just as valuable – and the Annual Fund ensures that these kinds of projects also get the support they deserve.

Giving to the Fund is easy. I started before I graduated – through my involvement with the Students' Union, I knew that the money had to come from somewhere! So much goes on behind the scenes. I distinctly remember asking: 'Is it insignificant to give £10 a month?' And they told me that no matter what I gave, it had an impact. I know that's true – these days, as chair of Convocation and the youngest member of Senate, I meet a lot of graduates. I hear a lot about all the Annual Fund-backed projects, clubs and societies which made a difference to their student days, and all the different ways they are giving back. That's very inspiring.

If you are considering giving, think back to your student days and the experiences you had. Think about the friendships you made, the clubs and societies you were involved in, the trips you went on, services you accessed to support you. All those aspects of University life which make it so rich benefit so much from our support. By giving, you are helping others to have those same experiences.



To find out more about supporting the Queen's Annual Fund, visit daro.qub.ac.uk/annualfund or contact Stephen O'Reilly at stephen.oreilly@qub.ac.uk

REGULAR GIVING DONOR

Name: Margaret Fegan (Education, 1995)

What I give to: Annual Fund

Why I give: My time at Queen's was so rewarding, I want others to have the same great experience I had.

When it comes to giving, it's easy to think that only large donations matter. But thankfully for me, that's not the case. There are so many projects – and so many students – being supported by the Queen's Foundation, and it's a great opportunity for people like me to do our bit.



I donate partly because I loved being at Queen's. I always wanted to be a teacher and did my training at St Mary's College – I have wonderful memories of walking through the campus of an evening, hearing the music coming out of the School of Music! Now, I have three daughters and my eldest graduated from Queen's as a nurse this year.

But it's not just that we have close ties. My husband and I are both from working-class backgrounds, so we know the value of education. I went on to become a teacher, so I know it's the way forward and that it's vital university is as accessible to as many people as possible. We also know how challenging going to university can be, particularly the financing. We were lucky – when we were studying, we didn't pay fees and we had grants. I think it's more difficult for students today. Many of them have to work as well as study. That puts a lot of pressure on them, and I appreciate the work that Queen's is doing to support them, such as reaching out to students who might be finding it difficult.

So, when I had a call a few years ago from a lovely student at Queen's to ask me to consider donating, it was an easy decision. And I was really impressed when she told me about all the fantastic projects supporting students which small, regular donations to the Foundation make possible, and how much Queen's relies on those donations. I decided to donate a small amount quarterly and I've been doing it ever since.

Every year, I get a phone call telling me how my money has been used and I really appreciate that. It just shows how a small, regular donation over a long period of time can have a big impact when lots of people do it. And put all those small donations together and you can make a big difference – particularly somewhere like Queen's, which really cares about its students and will use that money to support them in the most appropriate way. It's a wonderful thing to do. It makes you feel good to know that you are helping others.

To safeguard student callers, a restricted Annual Fund telephone campaign took place in the past academic year without them, but we hope to have them speaking to graduates and supporters again this autumn.



CORPORATE DONOR

Name: Johnny Hanna (Law, 1995), KPMG

What we give to: Widening participation and access

Why we give: To nurture talent and motivate excellent students.

At the heart of KPMG is an unwavering focus on excellence. It's that focus that drove the decision to establish the KPMG Queen's Management School scholarships.

Another of our values is integrity, and we know that providing financial assistance to help level the playing field for students in Northern Ireland is the right thing to do. And so the scholarships are aimed at high performing and ambitious students in their first year, with a particular focus on those coming through non-traditional routes, such as the Pathway Opportunity Programme.

Scholarships such as these are vital. They help to nurture the very best talent and ensure excellence is able to thrive regardless of financial means. Alongside funding – and arguably as important – students gain invaluable experience working with KPMG over two summer internships and are assigned a KPMG mentor to help guide them through their course.

We hope the scholarships will motivate students to aspire to the highest possible standards. They confirm our deep commitment to successful students – providing the drive to help them reach their full potential. We hope being awarded a scholarship might lead to a long and successful career with KPMG, enabling us to identify our leaders of tomorrow.

Partnerships such as these provide an essential and symbiotic relationship between business and academia. Universities need the support and cooperation of the corporate world to allow them to focus on shaping the workforce of tomorrow. Business needs the support of universities to ensure a pipeline of the very best talent is in place to allow them to excel.

If you or your organisation is considering giving, then I would urge you to get involved. Scholarships such as these help to channel the best people to your organisation and also mark your business out as an employer of choice. KPMG has reaped the benefits of our programme, especially through our recent recipients. As we have found, not only is it the right thing to do – it also makes sound business sense.

If your organisation is interested in supporting students, please contact Sorcha Mac Laimhin at s.maclaimhin@qub.ac.uk or +44 (0) 28 9097 5189.

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER

Name: Julie Loughery

What I give to: Cancer research

Why I give: My cancer treatment was literally life-changing, and I wanted to give something back.

Receiving a cancer diagnosis in 2018 was an enormous shock – thankfully, I was lucky enough to make a full recovery. The whole experience was life-changing – I came out of it extremely thankful and with a real desire to help others. A friend of mine had also recently had breast cancer and raised more than £30,000 with a barbecue on her farm. What a great idea, I thought, I'll do the same thing on our sheep farm in Limavady.

I wanted to make sure that any money we raised would be used in the best possible way. I'd had wonderful treatment at Altnagelvin Area Hospital's breast cancer unit – I remember not even dreading having to go in for treatment because the staff were so good and kind. I trusted my surgeon so I asked him for advice. He said, instantly, that the Patrick G Johnston Centre for Cancer Research at Queen's was making groundbreaking progress in breast cancer. Every penny of the money would be used for research and to help future generations.

So, the barbecue was on, but when I say a barbecue, it turned out to be a rather large affair – the community were so supportive and generous. Plus, my mother-in-law and her friends made thousands of traybakes!

It was a wonderful night. Around 700 people from all around bought tickets and everyone had such a good time. At one in the morning, people were still sitting, having a drink and a chat – and there was nothing left of those traybakes but crumbs. It was wonderful to bring so many people together. I only wish I could remember more of it – I was running around making sure everything was going smoothly!

We raised £60,200 in total, and Graham and I were invited up to the research centre for a tour and to hear about how the money will make a difference. It will pay for a student to study for her PhD for three years and we're very much looking forward to meeting her.

I got a lot of enjoyment out of organising the event and seeing the generosity of our farming community first-hand. Watching people work together was just overwhelming. But aside from the social aspect, Graham and I are also very proud that we have achieved something which will hopefully change how breast cancer is treated for the better. What we did will have a real impact on future generations.

To discover how easy it can be to really make a difference, visit daro.qub.ac.uk/Fundraising-Guide or contact Stephen O'Reilly at stephen.oreilly@qub.ac.uk





LEGACY DONOR

Name: Jonathan Hill (History and Politics, 2000; Computer Based Learning, 2003)

What I give to: Annual Fund and the student experience

Why I give: The legacy gift allows me to give to specific projects that are important to me personally.

While I was studying for my Master's, one of my fellow students died suddenly and unexpectedly. Cormac McAnallen was a well-known and much-loved Gaelic football player and was posthumously named Student of the Year. He was just 24.

It was a stark reminder that none of us can know what is around the corner. At the time, I had been thinking about how best I could support Queen's and was donating a small amount to the Annual Fund every year, which I still do. But following Cormac's death, I decided to leave a legacy gift to Queen's.

Working with the legacies team has enabled me to make a gift that reaches areas that are personal to me. At Queen's, I was lucky enough to travel to the US and work in Congress, so part of my gift will go towards a travel scholarship. Another part will go towards the Queen's Gaelic football club. I'm a fan of the sport and have made many friends through it. And the third part will go to the Seamus Heaney Centre. While the University's work in areas such as

cancer research is incredibly important and deserving, I feel that it's also important to give to more unusual areas, and to the arts and humanities as well as the sciences. My first degree was in History and Politics, and my Master's is a science, so I've experienced both sides.

Legacy gifts are vital because they can make a huge difference. I know from my own experience that they don't have to be a vast amount. A smaller sum of money put into the right scheme can have a massive impact.

They aren't set in stone, either. It may well be that you decide to leave a legacy for a certain purpose while you are in your 20s, but then the world changes and your priorities for giving change with them. It's a simple matter to go back to Queen's and say that you have decided that you would rather leave your gift to another area.

Leaving a legacy to the University is one of those things that lots of people intend to do but never quite get round to. I wanted to make sure that I did it. After all, why wait? It's never too early to make a decision that could help future generations.

For more on how best to support an area of research or education at Queen's that means something special to you, please contact Susan Wilson at susan.wilson@qub.ac.uk



I know from my own experience that legacy gifts don't have to be a vast amount. A smaller sum in the right scheme can have a huge impact

JONATHAN HILL



SCHOLARSHIP DONOR

Name: Gina Copty (Theology, 2018) and Chris McDowell (Manufacturing Engineering, 1992)

What we give to: Student support

Why we give: Somebody believed in me – now it's my chance to transform someone else's life.

Gina Copty's "financially constrained" childhood in Palestine was the driving force behind her desire to give back – and she describes herself as "a walking example of how philanthropy works".

Now, the scholarship she funded with her husband, Chris, will enable a student from Palestine to gain a Postgraduate qualification in either the School of Law, the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences or the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences at the University. The first student will take up their study, it's hoped, in September 2021.

Education, the couple say, has played a huge part in both their lives. So, they knew that they wanted to share this gift with others. "Education has an impact on the life of the person who benefits directly, but it also enriches society as a whole," says Gina. "We were also inspired by our Christian values and backgrounds. And, of course, we had both benefited from studying at Queen's."

It was important for the couple to see a direct impact from their giving. "We want to know that individuals are directly benefiting from any way that we can help," says Chris. "We like to see how the money is being used and to feel connected to the positive outcomes."

Born in Palestine to a loving and generous family, Gina won a scholarship to Gordon College, Massachusetts, before going on to obtain an MBA in South Africa. That was where she met Chris, a Queen's Engineering alumnus. She later took a Graduate Diploma in Theology at Union Theological College. Now based in Belfast with their four children, they make sure that giving is very much a family affair – so much so that the children even named their charitable fund. "We involved them from the very beginning," says Gina. "They named it the Olive Tree Fund, as olive trees are very important in our Palestinian culture. We want our kids to be generous. We want them to think of others, to open their eyes to the world and what's happening around them and not just live in a bubble."

And to ensure that their gift had maximum impact, they sought the advice of the Charities Aid Foundation to establish a charitable trust. "They really helped us to think through what we wanted to do, and gave us time and space," says Chris. "And they enabled us to channel our philanthropy in the knowledge that all the compliance and due diligence had been taken care of."

Giving can seem complicated, the couple say, and they agree that talking about it can be something of a taboo. But, they say, it's worth it in ways which are hard to imagine. "Somebody believed in me," says Gina. "Somebody who didn't know me, and wasn't connected to my family, invested in me. As a result of that, I am able to do the same. Giving is like a ripple caused by just one little drop. It just keeps going outwards, on and on."

To find out how you could create genuine impact, please contact Helen Carrick at h.carrick@qub.ac.uk or +44 (0) 7580 970 600.

Impact: Medicine

Responding well to emergencies takes practice – and thanks to the generosity of Queen’s donors, all healthcare students now have the opportunity to rehearse in a safe environment.

R

esponding well to medical emergencies takes practice. And for that, says Professor Karen Morrison, Dean of Education in the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, you need a safe space in which to learn, make mistakes and develop confidence and the necessary skills. Now, thanks to your generous support, Queen’s students have exactly that, with a state-of-the-art simulation centre – housed in a refurbished wing of the Medical Biology Centre – that enables healthcare students to further enhance their preparedness for working as healthcare professionals.

The KN Cheung SK Chin InterSim Centre – named in honour of the parents of one of the main supporters of the Centre – has been made possible by more than £2m of donations, including significant gifts from Garfield Weston Foundation and Ulster Garden Villages Ltd. So, what’s inside?

SAFE SPACES

The Centre has a range of simulation spaces to recreate many of the clinical environments that graduates will work in, ranging from a medical ward, resuscitation suite and simulated pharmacy to an obstetric delivery suite, dental surgery – and even a simulated domestic environment that can be adapted to be a patient’s room at home.

One-way mirrors allow students and teaching staff to observe simulations, with cameras filming the action to improve feedback. “Students love the technology,” says Professor Morrison, “but the real value comes from being able to look back at your decisions, observe your actions and reactions that you made under pressure and be guided on how to improve your response.”

Students can train with interactive adult and child manikins – costing up to £65,000 each – and learn how and when to intervene. There’s even an immersive 3D room that projects images, sounds and smells to recreate emergency situations – in one instance an accident with farming machinery. In the longer term, Queen’s hopes the Centre will offer continuous professional development and postgraduate training for a wide range of healthcare professionals across Northern Ireland.

“Our plan for the Centre is to pioneer interdisciplinary learning with as much emphasis on behavioural as well as clinical procedural skills,” says Professor Morrison. “In today’s healthcare you must work with a whole team.” The result will see better training for students and professionals and, ultimately, better care for people in Northern Ireland.

Pure research has also benefited from the generosity of donors. Within the medical school, a specialist team led by Professor Ken Mills, Chair of Experimental Haematology (pictured, right), is searching existing drugs to see if these can be repurposed for effective treatment of acute



We’re looking for a biological fingerprint of someone before they develop the active disease

DR DAVID WRIGHT



leukaemia (blood cancer) in older people, who might not tolerate toxic treatments such as chemotherapy.

“We’re looking at novel and repurposed drugs, those that are already used to treat other diseases such as diabetes, cardiac disease and Alzheimer’s Disease – even anti-worming drugs,” says Professor Mills. “Some may also be anti-leukaemia or anti-cancer. We’ve developed a technique where we can look at pools of drugs in one go, a method that saves time and money.”

REVOLUTIONISING TRIALS

Supported by grants from Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI (LLNI), as well as from other donors since he arrived in 2007, Professor Mills and his team are collaborating with colleagues in Manchester, Glasgow, London and Nottingham to boost the scope of their research. “Essentially we aim to have the right treatment at the right time for the right patient – and improve outcomes. Having a local charity such as LLNI is important. It keeps funds for blood cancer research within Northern Ireland.”

Of course, not all diseases have cures, but if you can detect them early, the better they can be managed. Artificial intelligence (AI) can lend a hand, by helping to sleuth out tell-tale signs and patterns of a disease before it becomes obvious, and this is what Lecturer in Ophthalmic Data Science Dr David Wright is attempting by examining detailed anonymous medical information of some 3,300 volunteers from Northern Ireland.

He and his team are searching for signs of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) – a common eye disease

that often develops in older people, and is the leading cause of blindness in people over 50.

“This data has enormous potential but the breadth and detail makes it challenging to analyse using traditional methods,” says Dr Wright. Machine learning lends extra muscle to wade through the data, which is analysed by a diverse team comprising epidemiologists, data scientists and ophthalmic specialists.

“What we are trying to do is to detect the disease a little earlier,” says Dr Wright. “We’re looking for a biological fingerprint of someone before they develop the active disease, trying to pull information out of the ‘noise’ to find any new signals that are more subtle.

If you can get treatment earlier, you can save your sight for longer.”

Funded by the Belfast Association for the Blind, the project places Queen’s among leading research worldwide. “There’s so much potential to use electronic medical records to improve treatment for ageing eye disease,” he says. Projects are also under way at Queen’s to examine the progression of glaucoma and further research is taking place into AMD. “Queen’s is renowned for ophthalmology,” says Wright. “We punch above our weight, and we’re able to work with some of the best researchers around the world.”

To help us revolutionise patient care and give new hope to people wherever they may be, visit daro.qub.ac.uk/Queens or contact Teresa Sloan at t.sloan@qub.ac.uk or +44 (0) 7391 730 629.

Impact: The Arts

Through a digital archive, outreach and support programmes, your generosity is bringing the genius of Brian Friel and Seamus Heaney to new audiences – and inspiring our next generation of writers.



Brian Friel photographed in 2009 in the campus theatre named after him. Right, Professor Glenn Patterson (English, 2009).

H

e became one of Northern Ireland's most famous playwrights, but the young Brian Friel suffered self-doubt and worries over making ends meet, according to handwritten notes scribbled by Friel himself.

"There's a touching moment in one of Friel's diary entries when he records his real fears about following up on the success of his first play, Philadelphia, Here I Come!" says Dr Paul Murphy (English, 1991), Senior Lecturer in the School of Arts, English and Languages. "Friel is feeling the full weight of his decision to quit teaching in 1960 for a writing career, and it reveals him as a husband, father, carer and real person – aside from his status as a literary icon and canonical playwright. It will inspire any budding writer who has experienced their own doubts."

Close to 3,000 archived documents written by Friel and currently held in Dublin's National Library of Ireland will soon be available to new generations as a digital archive, thanks to donations from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Steel Charitable Trust. And Dr Murphy is busy reading through diary entries, early drafts of plays, reviews and personal letters, and overseeing their digitisation as part of a new project, Friel Reimagined. "The palpable affection that theatre professionals, film stars, friends and fellow playwrights had for Friel comes across strongly in the letters he received," says Dr Murphy.

FRIEL REIMAGINED

Over the course of two years, Queen's aims to use this material to introduce Friel's work to fresh audiences, with projects planned for groups including young offenders, female prisoners and young people from challenging backgrounds. There will also be exhibitions and masterclasses across Northern Ireland.

"The underlying ambition of Friel Reimagined is to inspire a new generation of writers," says Dr Murphy, "especially those from disadvantaged communities who may not think they have the capability to be a writer, but who, after engaging with the material, may take that tentative first step."



We want to create a Centre bursting with writers and which can form a link between the University and the city

PROFESSOR GLENN PATTERSON (English, 2009)

The project will focus on five of Friel's most famous works including *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), *The Freedom of the City* (1973) and *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964). "Friel was, like Terence Rattigan, an artisan playwright who chose every word with exquisite care as he crafted dialogue that was designed to engage and hold the audience's attention."

Friel and Seamus Heaney – Queen's most celebrated literary alumnus – became friends after the publication in 1966 of the poet's first volume, *Death of a Naturalist*, while Heaney was at the University. Heaney would go on to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995, and the University has founded a centre in his name, thanks to the support of Atlantic Philanthropies and others, dedicated to writing in all its forms. It has become a focal point of literary Belfast and home to poetry and creative writing in Ireland.

LANDMARK NEW CENTRE

Encouraging new writers is central to the purpose of the Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's, which will seek to reach and welcome wider communities when it moves from its existing location and opens the doors of a new building – the grand and elegant former Open University building. "It's a beautiful landmark site," says Centre Director Professor Glenn Patterson. "We want to look out at the city on our doorstep as well as inwards to the Queen's community. The building is a link between the University and the city."

In a normal year, the Centre is at the heart of a buzzing line-up of live events, readings and literary festivals, and for the first time, there are plans to appoint an International Visiting Chair of Creative Writing,

"to add to what is already a strong line-up of renowned teaching staff who are also writers in their own right," says Patterson.

"The post will go to a writer of international standing – poet, playwright or novelist. It's a two-year position, which gives the writer time to develop a relationship with the Centre, the city and the literary scene on the island of Ireland. Our ambition is to raise funds to establish an endowment that will fund this position in perpetuity. "We want to create a Centre bursting with writers.

"You can't overestimate the value of just being in a place where there are so many writers, poets and critics about that you can reasonably expect to bump into," says Patterson. "That's why the design team were so enthused by the new building; the possibilities it creates for those chance – and perhaps life-changing – encounters."

For more on supporting the Seamus Heaney Centre, please get in touch with Helen Carrick at h.carrick@qub.ac.uk or +44(0) 7580 970 600.

Impact: Enabling rapid response

When alumnus Alexander Leckey left Queen's an unrestricted legacy, no-one could have predicted the impact it would have. But when Covid-19 hit, researchers were able to use funds to back truly groundbreaking work.

As medical units around the world were responding to the challenges of the pandemic, one Queen's team found themselves not only engaging in pioneering research, but being "the only UK team to be doing this type of work," says Professor Ultan Power, a leading Queen's virologist at the University's Wellcome-Wolfson Institute for Experimental Medicine.

Professor Power's efforts were focused on the search for drugs that could check the development of the virus in the early stages of infection. Using sophisticated technology, his team has been able to screen thousands of approved drugs – some of them designed to treat cancer, diabetes, liver disease, multiple sclerosis – to see how they perform, either alone or in combination, in fighting the virus (SARS-CoV-2) which causes Covid-19. "We've gone into this with no biases or preferences for any type of medicines – that's been our strength," he says. "The impact of an effective antiviral (drug) could be enormous."

The research began in March 2020 when Professor Power – an expert in respiratory viruses – teamed up with a cancer specialist colleague adept at investigating the potential of approved drugs to work well together. Their work differs from many competing investigations; the research team has been able to test the efficacy of combinations of drugs, as well as screening single medicines, and they've examined 2,500 individual

medicines and more than 500,000 different combinations to observe their effect upon the progress of the virus in various cells.

"Our strategy was to develop protocols for screening a combination of drugs, and this is unique as far as I'm aware," says Professor Power (pictured, right). "A cocktail of medicines is often more effective than a single drug in fighting viral infections, as in the case of treatments for HIV infection. Our goal was to see if any could block the virus from growing or change the way it interacts with cells."

This has been possible using innovative laboratory instrumentation designed to measure and analyse reactions within a cell, and observe how effective certain drugs are at blocking cell damage caused by the virus. To do this, Professor Power's team used a Celigo Image Cytometer – a powerful imaging system which produced rapid and efficient results. "Without this we'd be staring down a microscope around the clock."

The efforts have been funded in part thanks to Alexander Leckey's generous gift, a legacy that enabled the team to buy the equipment they had initially used on loan. "Funding took huge pressure off us at a critical time," says Professor Power.

To date, results have been exciting. Queen's research has revealed one freely available, over-the-counter medicine that might be effective and could potentially be swiftly approved for use against the virus, as well as several combinations of commonly available drugs which

also appear promising. "Our aim would be to get these drugs into clinical trials as quickly as possible."

The Leckey legacy has also been instrumental in helping another Queen's team research other aspects of the virus, including levels of infections among children and whether these lead to immunity, since children appear to be largely free of the most serious symptoms. Doctors don't yet know for how long children retain antibodies after an infection which prevents them catching the disease again, or how many have had the disease, what symptoms they experience or whether they are infected at the same rate as adults.

Now, the Queen's team, led by clinician Dr Tom Waterfield from the Wellcome-Wolfson Institute for Experimental Medicine, is leading a UK-wide trial to assess levels of antibodies in more than 1,000 children. In work funded in part by the legacy, the team is looking at blood and saliva samples and nasal swabs to see if a child has an active infection, and track inflammation levels and how they respond to the virus. Similar studies are under way in Scotland, England and Wales.

Results of the study could help with future planning – how and when to open schools and manage paediatric clinics in a future outbreak. These child 'Covid warriors' could also provide vital information for Public Health England's national surveillance programme, a series

of investigations to try to understand how Covid-19 is affecting the wider population.



Of course, research like this is only possible thanks to the sort of support that comes with unrestricted legacies, allowing for a swift reaction by trusted leaders when and where it's required. But the need is ongoing, as Professor Power is only too aware. "Unfortunately, as the disease abates in some countries, the money dwindles too."

While chronic diseases are targets for charitable funding, the very nature of most viral infections – which come and go rapidly – means they fall off the public radar. Very few charities fund research into acute viral diseases, "but if we don't wake up to the fact that we need more research into acute respiratory viral diseases, the same crises will emerge year after year. Our memories are too short. We need really good investment in research to allow us to find the solutions for tomorrow."

For more on the wording of your gift and ensuring your gift makes the most impact, please contact Susan Wilson at susan.wilson@qub.ac.uk or +44 (0) 28 9097 3162.



Impact: Student Life

Christmas 2020 will forever be remembered as 'different', but Queen's donors made sure students on campus were given the best experience possible.

Christmas Day can be very lonely away from home, especially if you are then stuck in your room," says Brian Horgan (MBA, 2015), Head of Campus Food and Drink. "We realised that because of pandemic travel restrictions, there would be many more students than usual staying in Belfast over the holidays."

And so Horgan and his team quickly sprang into action and, with generous support from the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, as well as Henderson Wholesale Ltd, the Queen's Graduates' Association and individual staff donations, they were able to provide a meal to remember. "We often prepare high-end banquets, so we used all our skills to offer a top-quality meal, and the team were very happy to adapt to a takeaway model.

"It was a challenge; we started planning three weeks in advance and from 21st to 23rd December, we had volunteer staff coming in to put together the packs. In the end, we catered more than 600 Christmas meals, which students picked up from a number of collection points across campus and reheated in their communal kitchens."

Horgan and his team worked hard to make sure they included some festive cheer as well as good food. "We put in crackers that students could pull virtually with their friends and family. There were chocolate coins and decorated napkins as well, and we ran online classes showing students how to make their own decorations."

The reward for the catering team's efforts, only made possible by donations, was the appreciation they received from students. "As an international student away from my home country in this pandemic situation," wrote Pallavi Parab, "this sweet gesture from Queen's made my Christmas special. Thank you."

The lockdown also impacted students in very immediate ways, with Queen's donors enabling the University to do everything it could to offer practical assistance to its community. One prime example was Medical student Mandeep Gill's work with the elderly residents of Bell Rotary House near the Kings Road. "Loneliness is a huge mental health issue, and we wanted to raise awareness among the student community," Mandeep explains.

As Vice President of the QUB GP Society, she applied to the Queen's Annual Fund for a grant to provide art classes in local residential care homes. The Annual Fund positively impacts thousands of students each year from

a diverse range of projects – from scholarships and career mentoring programmes to sports development and mental health initiatives – and its impact is felt across the University and the wider community.

"It was all about making connections," says Gill, "so in the first session we made Valentine's cards and in the second postcards for people residents were no longer able to see. And then suddenly, after just two sessions, lockdown happened. One moment I was busy making cards with the residents and the next I had a sudden realisation: the loneliness we were working so hard to combat among the older generation was also being felt by our own students in lockdown.

Gill found herself thinking back to the art classes. "I saw our project on tackling loneliness in the community – which wouldn't have happened without support from the Fund – as a prophecy. My experience there gave me the knowledge and confidence to know we needed to do something to encourage students who, like me, were now struggling. Hopefully we can pick up where we left off and really start to make a difference."

To find out more about supporting life-changing opportunities for students, visit darq.qub.ac.uk/students or contact Stephen O'Reilly at stephen.oreilly@qub.ac.uk



Christmas Day can be very lonely away from home, especially if you are then stuck in your room

BRIAN HORGAN, HEAD OF CAMPUS FOOD AND DRINK

A year of impact

Student bursaries. A new drug for Covid-19. Aspirations raised. The world reimaged.

Every gift you made to Queen's this year had a huge impact.

And every gift, from the smallest to the largest, has amplified the work our community is doing to shape a better future – locally, nationally and globally.

Thank you



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