

UCD Champions - Changing Futures

# IMPACT REPORT

20222023



#### Welcome



On behalf of UCD Foundation, I would like to extend to you a very warm welcome to the *UCD Champions* impact report for 2022-2023. This report showcases the amazing results that can be achieved when you, UCD alumni and friends, come together to effect meaningful change.

I am delighted to share updates from current scholarship recipients. Spanning a wide range of disciplines from STEM to Social Sciences and Law, our scholarship recipients are striving to complete their degrees and reach their potential. Shane, Alanna, Katie and Mark are four immensely talented young people from diverse backgrounds across the country who have worked extremely hard to earn their places in UCD. Their success in their studies and beyond demonstrates how with your support and belief in them, young people can achieve anything - regardless of the disadvantage they may face

I am thrilled to also share the words of scholarship graduates as we celebrate 10 years since the launch of the *UCD Champions* programme. Tamara is working in financial services while Lydia is now a teacher in a DEIS school, inspiring young students that attending university is a goal which they can achieve too. I hope their stories will highlight the long term and far-reaching impact of your generosity.

It has been a truly remarkable year. Thanks to you and your fellow supporters 157 new scholarships were awarded in 2022. It is truly a testament to the incredible generosity of our alumni and friends that you and over 4,000 other alumni have helped to raise over €2.65 million in cash and future pledges. This includes raising €380,907 in support of mental health, extending the supports available to students who need them.

It feels like we are living in a time of great historical change and global challenges. Many people are concerned about the future, about climate, healthcare, energy and sustainability. Faced with a changing world, it is easy to feel powerless and isolated. But there is strength in numbers and no reason for isolation when you are part of a 300,000-strong global alumni community. The reality is that the solutions to most of the great problems of our time are likely to be found on a university campus. As Ireland's leading research institution, UCD is playing its part. But the people that will now be tasked with guiding the course of humanity are the next generation – today's students.

By giving them an opportunity to reach their potential and by being an active member of our global alumni community, you are already doing something incredibly important to help protect the future, for everybody. I want to extend my wholehearted thanks to you for your ongoing support of the University and its students. You are transforming lives and enhancing UCD's global reputation as an institution of academic excellence, committed to education for all. Moreover, you are doing something meaningful to protect the future for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for being a UCD Champion.

Mark McDonnell

Director of Alumni Development (acting)
Executive Director, UCD Foundation (acting)

# Your Impact in Numbers

We are truly grateful for your outstanding support throughout the past year. Your incredible efforts have made an immense difference, as evidenced by the figures below. Thanks to your exceptional generosity and the generosity of your fellow alumni, UCD Foundation was able to award 157 scholarships to students in need this year. Your unwavering dedication is a powerful source of inspiration for the next generation of students, encouraging them to strive for excellence and surpass their own expectations.

# €2,653,324

Your incredible generosity, along with that of your fellow UCD alumni and friends, resulted in a total of €2,653,324 raised to support students. Of this amount, €2,158,418 was donated in cash, and €494,906 was pledged for future support

# €300,000

Additionally, €300,000 was allocated to support the student experience at UCD through specific donor requests. Thanks to this funding, a range of initiatives were funded last year, including:

- UCD SportsDevelopment
- UCD Boat Club
- UCD Choral Scholars
- Research
- Thomas Preston PhDAward in Physics

- The Library and Academic Writing Centre
- UCD Foundation's
  College Support Funds,
  which allow individual
  Colleges to allocate funds
  directly where needed.

# €380,907

€380,907 was spent on mental health services to ensure our students have the support they need, including funding for student advisors to help meet demand.

# 157 Scholarships Awarded

- 151 Cothrom na Féinne (UCD Champions) Scholarships
- 40 of these were funded by major donors
- 5 Ad Astra Scholarships
- 1 additional undergraduate scholarship
- 50 Sanctuary Scholarships, funded centrally by UCD

# 4,000

Thanks to the support of YOU and over 4,000 UCD Champions, UCD students received the valuable support they needed during the last academic year.

# Cothrom na Féinne Scholarships

A university education has the power to change the life of a person, a community and the future of the planet. UCD Champions Cothrom na Féinne Scholarships aim to level the playing field and ensure that every student is given the opportunity to achieve a university education, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

Shane, Alanna, and Katie are three students with incredible potential who, thanks to your support, have been able to take up their place in UCD and work hard to fulfil their dreams. Each student is very grateful for your support and I hope that hearing each of their stories will show you just how much of an impact this scholarship has made on students' lives.

Thank you so much for being a UCD Champion.



**Shane Black, Law, Stage 4,** UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

"I hope I will be able to do the same and support someone from a background like mine..."

#### Shane Black,

Law, Stage 4

Cothrom na Féinne Scholar

My time at UCD has been hugely enjoyable, and I have had some of the most incredible experiences while studying here. I can honestly say that I still have to pinch myself with how blessed I have been.

Before I knew I would receive this scholarship, graduating with my degree felt like a dream that I would never achieve. Financial worries caused me many sleepless nights; I had all the drive and determination to work hard and achieve results but I still did not know how to get there without help. Even with this scholarship, I had to work two 12 hour shifts each weekend to support myself. I struggled financially, but this scholarship, plus the knowledge that donors like you have given their hard-earned money to help give me this opportunity, helped massively to motivate me to keep working even harder.

This scholarship is all about levelling the playing field and that is exactly what it has done for me. Every cent I have been given has been used to either help me enrich my education or advance further in the legal field. **Not a penny has been wasted.** I feel that I have done right

by the donors who have supported me and I hope they are proud of what I have done and will continue to do. I have had the opportunity to mentor kids from disadvantaged communities and raise awareness about the possibilities of further education, through scholarships. I can relate to the concerns they may have and have tried to alleviate them in every way possible.

This scholarship has given me all the tools I needed to build a better future, and that is exactly what I did. It is impossible to summarise what a profound impact this scholarship can have on someone who came from nothing and has shaped a career path for themselves. This effect goes further than words can ever express. Thank you so much for your support. UCD is built upon curious, intelligent, generous, and hardworking people and those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are no less hardworking and curious. I am living proof of the profound impact your support can have on a person's life.



"Getting to study at UCD has been the opportunity of a lifetime. I can honestly say that studying here has shaped me into a much more confident and well-rounded person and I could not have done this without this scholarship. It has given me the breathing room I needed to focus completely on my studies, instead of spending long hours working and budgeting. Before I knew I would receive this scholarship I was working 40-50 hours a week, on top of a full-time degree programme, just to be able to afford my rent and fees. These financial worries could easily have led me to leaving my degree. Thanks to this support, I have been able to make the most of my time at UCD and have been able to make lasting memories and friendships.

People from my area do not typically attend college, and I am only the second person in my extended family to go to a traditional university. Aside from the financial undertaking, I struggled a lot with imposter syndrome. I often felt like I did not deserve my space in the programme and that I did not fit into a university like UCD. Even with the support of this scholarship, I still struggled to juggle work with my studies. The scholarship money helped me afford the day-to-day living expenses that come with going to college. I put the money towards essentials like fees, rent, groceries, and bills.

Your support has greatly impacted where I am now. I do not believe I would have made it this far into my degree without it. Your support has given me the tools I needed to become a happy and well-rounded student and I am so grateful."

## Alanna Kavanagh,

Midwifery, Stage 2 *Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

"I am thoroughly enjoying my time in UCD this semester, as I get to go on clinical placement, putting into practice in the maternity wards what I have learned in theory at UCD. There have been so many surreal and incredible moments and I really feel like I am making a difference in the lives of mothers and babies. My confidence in my skills is growing each day and it has really reaffirmed my love for Midwifery and how grateful I am to be pursuing my dream career.

I know none of this would have been possible without this scholarship. I am the first woman in my family to attend university and I am determined to honour that privilege. Before I received the first instalment, I remember looking at my bank account and wondering how I could afford my studies. However, as a recipient of this scholarship, I no longer have any doubts about what I can achieve. Instead, I can focus on becoming the best midwife, mother, and role model I can be.

Leaving those soul-destroying insecurities behind has allowed me to fully embrace my time at UCD. I am no longer preoccupied with worries of how I will feed my children while paying my fees. There is no question which I would have prioritised but thankfully, I have

never had to make that choice since receiving this scholarship. I can continue my studies and thrive while knowing that I am doing everything I can to build the best life for myself and for my children. It is also an honour to give back to the community by supporting women and their families through maternity care.

I have faced a considerable amount of pressure both emotionally and financially as a single mother, and although I have always been organised and strict with budgeting, I have never been able to feel comfortable financially. Due to the current cost-of-living crisis, I have faced even more strain, so I am more grateful than ever for this scholarship. While it can be difficult, the funding this scholarship has provided is easing so much of the anxiety I am facing. I am so proud of how far I have come and so excited by the opportunities that lie ahead of me. I have worked hard to get to where I am and I will use my determination to graduate, no matter what challenges I face."



# Ad Astra Scholarships (Elite Athlete)

Mark Milner, Neuroscience, Stage 4 Ad Astra Sports Scholar

Through Ad Astra Scholarships, UCD recognises students with incredible talent in three areas: Academia, Performing Arts, and Sport. The Ad Astra Academy provides these talented students with the support they need to reach their full potential in their chosen field. This would not be possible without the generous support of our Ad Astra donors.

Mark Milner, Stage 4 Neuroscience student and Ad Astra Elite Athlete, discusses the effect that this scholarship has had on his life.

"Receiving the Ad Astra scholarship has made a huge difference in my college life — both academically and non-academically. There are so many benefits that come with being an Ad Astra scholar that have made studying a tough degree like Neuroscience that bit easier. This scholarship has allowed me to balance both my training and my studies. This scholarship has given me the opportunity to progress as an athlete and reach my full potential and I could not be more grateful. In 2022, I was the third fastest man in Ireland, and the fastest under 23.

This scholarship has changed not only my life, but the life of my family. I have two brothers who are also attending college, and being able to relieve a bit of the financial burden on my parents with this scholarship has been amazing.

I owe so much to the supporters of this scholarship. You have given me, and young, talented, ambitious people like me, a platform to make full use of our talents. 'What could have been' is a phrase used far too often. This scholarship gives so many students the chance to explore their talents and see how far they can go and how successful they can be. Without generous people like you, scholarships like this would not exist. It is through your altruism that the next generation of sportsmen, academics, and performers are able to flourish in their chosen field."



#### Additional supports available for students

Equality in access to education does not stop when a student enters university. It is crucial to ensure that students have the support they need available to them so that they can reach their full potential. Your generosity not only ensures that students are able to afford the cost of attending university, but also that they have the support they need to thrive. UCD Access and Lifelong Learning (ALL) offer a wide range of support for our scholarship recipients.

#### **Disability Support**

All students with a disability or significant ongoing illness have the opportunity to receive support such as reasonable accommodation and academic assistance, including awareness support for lecturers and/or exam support such as extra time for exams.

#### **Assistive Technology**

Assistive Technology (AT) for students with disabilities. This includes a wide range of tools that benefit students' learning; for example, software that helps with spelling and grammar, tools to help with organisation and apps for recording.

#### Careers Support

Dedicated career support is available through CV clinics, assistance with applications for graduate programmes and alumni mentoring.

#### **Digital Support**

UCD ALL facilitates the Digital Ambassador programme to help students gain the skills they need with technology to succeed.

#### **Access Leaders**

Access Leaders are students whose first-hand understanding of UCD's diverse entry pathways and of the journey students have taken to be here means they are uniquely placed to help incoming students adjust to their new environment. Their presence, voice, and own experiences help reassure newer students that their goals are achievable.

# Each year, fellow alumni make a difference to current students in so many ways

One volunteer, Breda, has been involved in supporting incoming international students as a UCD Alumni Buddy for over six years. She reflects on the impact of her role:

"It's been fantastic, I've had students from Kazakhstan, the United States, India, and Germany - all of them fabulous, and I've had the opportunity to meet some of their parents which has been amazing. It's a great way to interact with young people; to give back. We meet in my house sometimes to share Irish meals. Indian meals... whatever! We chat about study, opportunities for jobs, the practical things for life in Ireland. I was supported by a buddy] when I was a student in the United States, so now I am reciprocating what I got. It's a wonderful opportunity and it keeps me young!"

> Breda Naughton UCD Alumni Buddy



Bhavya Nair, Breda Naughton & Bhavya's parents at the Sugarloaf, Co. Wicklow.

Volunteering can be enriching and rewarding. To learn how you can get involved, join the UCD Alumni Network at www.ucdalumninetwork.com, email Ria & Niamh at alumnivolunteer@ucd.ie, or give the team a call on +353 1716 1064





Fern, a UCD Social Science graduate, talks through her experience with the UCD student counselling service.

"Throughout my degree, I made great use of UCD's Mental Health services - the counselling services in particular - and I can honestly say that the resources I had access to changed my life. I found the staff really helpful and it was so easy to set up an appointment with a counsellor. I have had aspects of both in-person and online learning throughout my degree and the frequent changes and uncertainty of the last few years were made so much easier by the support UCD gave me.

The mental health support available in UCD can be lifechanging for students in need. Throughout a student's time in university, many challenges may arise and they can be incredibly difficult to overcome without external support. I have been so happy with the support I received. I'm not sure remaining in college would have been a viable option for me had I not received adequate assistance from UCD. Without their help, I would not be where I am today, in regards to the quality of my study or grades, and even my overall wellbeing. Counselling is not something I was in a position to afford so the access I had to UCD's service was life-changing for me. Mental health issues or general university stress are so common among students and it is so important that high-quality support is easily accessible for all those who need it."

#### Your Class Gifts

We have been delighted to welcome so many classes back to Belfield for their class reunions over the last decade. Reunions have provided a wonderful opportunity for classmates to reconnect with each other and reflect on their time spent in UCD as students.

To mark the occasion of your reunions, many of you together with your classmates came together to collectively give back to your schools and support the next generation of students following in your footsteps.

This collective generosity has had a tremendous impact on the lives of students working to make the most of the opportunities UCD provides. You have helped to ensure that regardless of their background, deserving students with incredible potential are supported and able to study the degree of their dreams.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all those who have taken part in their class gift challenges.



80

BComm and Law scholarships awarded over the last 10 years

BComm classes of

58, 59, 60, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 01, 02, 03, 04, 08, 09, 13, 14, 17, 18

BCL, BBLS, BBL classes of

58, 68, 78, 79, 84, 85, 88, 89, 91, 97, 98, 99, 08, 09

#### Plans for the Future

Last year, we were able to achieve great results thanks to the support of our alumni and friends, but there is still more to be done. We want to take this chance to outline some of our key priorities for the coming year and how your continued support will be instrumental in ensuring the future of your university and our students.

01

#### Increased support for students

Last year, UCD alumni and friends funded 157 scholarships to support students. This is a result to be truly proud of and will have a profound impact. There is still more we need to do - demand for scholarships remains high, with students across the country in serious financial hardship. Our main priority is to ensure that the demand for scholarships is met. Only with your continued support can we make this happen.

02

#### Increased mental health supports

€380,907 was raised for mental health services last year. These services provide a vital lifeline for the students who need them. Supporting mental health services is a priority among both our alumni and students and, going forward we aim to increase the funding available to mental health services. Through the ongoing support of our alumni, our students will be able to thrive in UCD.

03

#### Increased support for students renting

The rental crisis has disproportionately affected people already financially disadvantaged. Additional support is needed for those students who are required to rent in Dublin. UCD Champions Scholarships provide an additional bursary for students living in rented accommodation. Although small, this additional support is essential and we aim to continue to ensure the necessary level of support is provided to students renting.

## 10 Years of UCD Champions

We are delighted to look back at 10 years of supporting students through UCD Champions. Since 2013, more than a thousand students facing disadvantage have received a scholarship and the life-changing benefit of a university education.

This is an incredible achievement and has only been possible through the continuous generosity of UCD alumni like you. At this milestone, we want to thank you for your ongoing support. It is only with the help of alumni like you that the next generation of students will be able to reach their full potential regardless of their financial circumstances.

Over the last decade, you and your fellow alumni have changed the lives of so many students who have earned their degree and gone on to pursue their dream careers. Tamara and Lydia are two UCD Champions scholarship awardees who featured in past impact reports like this one. They have since graduated and established themselves in their respective fields. Here, they reflect on their experiences as UCD Champions scholars and the long-term impact their scholarship has had.

1,033 scholarships awarded since 2013

# Lydia Sinnott,

Arts graduate and Cothrom na Féinne Scholar



"Being able to attend UCD was an opportunity that I would not have had the chance to experience had it not been for this scholarship. I was the first in my family to attend university and, while I was over the moon to receive my place in UCD, I had no idea how I would afford my fees and living costs.

When I found out I was awarded this scholarship, the relief and happiness I felt cannot be put into words. Knowing that I was being supported through college by the kindness and generosity of strangers is a feeling that not very many people can relate to. It was such a motivating force throughout my time at UCD. I went through a lot of struggles, and the idea of dropping out definitely crossed my mind. However, the thought I might disappoint someone who has helped fund my scholarship motivated me to keep working and studying hard."

Without this scholarship, I would not have been able to graduate and achieve my Masters. I would not be a teacher, getting to do something I love every single day. I currently work as a teacher in a Deis school, and a lot of my students are not in a position to go to college due to their socioeconomic status. The other teachers and I organised a College Awareness week and I went around to each class to talk to them about the scholarships and grants that are available to them if they choose to attend college. I hope to pass on the motivation and knowledge that I was lucky enough to receive during my time at UCD.

The real world impact your support has on students' lives is incredible. What the UCD Champions are doing is absolutely fantastic and I am sure that everyone who has received a scholarship, like me, will be eternally grateful.

To read more about Lydia's story, scan the QR code, or visit: www.ucdfoundation.ie/lydia-sinnott/



## Tamara Whelan,

BComm graduate and Cothrom na Féinne Scholar



**Tamara** The Business 1983 Class Gift Scholar in Memory of John O'Grady Walsh

"I didn't want to worry my parents about the costs I face in university.

My Dad was injured a number of years ago and cannot work so there is only one income coming in. The scholarship has been a huge relief. The people who gave to this scholarship are amazing. The fact they can support someone they have never even met is wonderful. I feel like there are endless opportunities for me in the future. This scholarship has changed my life completely and for that I am eternally thankful."

You might remember Tamara, BComm graduate and Cothrom na Féinne Scholar, from one of our first Impact Reports. "I thoroughly enjoyed my time studying at UCD. It was an incredible learning experience, and I know that I would not be where I am today without it. While I always achieved good grades and never lacked ambition, I was never sure if I would be able to fund further education. Had I not received this scholarship, I quite simply would not have been able to attend university.

I was the first person in my family to achieve a university degree. Both my parents left education at the age of 14. Receiving this scholarship, and knowing that a stranger believed in me enough to invest their hard-earned money in my education, were huge factors in driving me forward.

It instilled a huge sense of self-belief in me, and provided me the determination I needed to succeed where members of my family were never given the chance to. This scholarship removed so much financial stress from my life and allowed me to focus more on my own health, my wellbeing, and most of all, my studies.

My degree has enabled me to achieve so much in such a short time, and I cannot wait to see what the next stages of my career have to offer. Scholarships like this one offer people the chance to break negative cycles that might be holding them back, and flourish in an environment like UCD. It gives people the opportunity to explore their potential and grow in ways they never thought possible. I believe that everyone has the potential to succeed, regardless of socioeconomic status, when given the opportunity. Scholarships like this provide people with this opportunity, and I cannot thank the donors enough."

#### **Meet our Student Callers**

You may remember speaking to one of our student callers before. Our student caller team work to connect with our alumni and learn about their time in UCD and help to support UCD Champions scholarships.

# Amy works as a student caller and describes why she enjoys the role:

"I'm definitely a people person so I love that I get to spend my time talking to alumni about their experiences here at UCD. I've found their advice and insights so helpful to me as a student and it's really rewarding to give alumni a chance to reconnect with UCD and to reminisce about their time here. Having a great conversation with someone is often one of the highlights of my day!

Working as a student caller has really made me more aware of the issues and struggles that some of my peers face. I have gained a far better understanding of these situations. Because of this, I'm really motivated to share this understanding and empathy with graduates who feel the same and might be in a position to support students. From what I've seen, the impact of these scholarships really can't be overstated, and I hope to continue being a part of the fantastic work that UCD Foundation does!"



# Your Legacy — Leave a mark

#### Did you know that with a planned gift, a living legacy or a gift in memory, you can ensure that the University continues to grow and flourish for generations to come?

By leaving a special gift, you can play a part in shaping UCD's future, and ensure that what matters most to you is protected, and your values are imparted to the next generation of students.

Thanks to the generous contributions of our alumni and friends, the lives of a new generation of students have been transformed, and the University has seen continuous development in research, innovation, and community engagement.

Including a gift to UCD in your will or establishing a memorial gift in honour of a loved one, colleague or friend is a very easy thing to do.

Every legacy gift is precious to us, no matter how small you think it may be, and can make a long-lasting difference to our students and our University.

If you would like to know more, please get in touch using the form below and we will contact you. You can use the Freepost envelope provided to return the form to me.

Alternatively, you can contact me in complete confidence on +353 1716 1406 or email: evan.shinkwin@ucdfoundation.ie

**Evan Shinkwin** 

Annual Giving Manager, UCD Foundation

Please send me information about Leaving a Lega	acy to UCD
Name	
Address	Please tick if you have
Phone	already included UCD in your will.
Fmail	in you. Will

#### Help even more students - with one simple form!

Your donation means the world to us and to UCD students, this is why we want to ensure that every cent you donate will work as effectively as possible to support our deserving students and the meaningful work of the University.

You can increase your donation by 45% without it costing you a single cent more! If you have given €250 or more in a calendar year, we can claim an additional 45% of the value of your gift from Revenue. This has no effect on your tax status.

Together, we can achieve even more through tax-efficient giving

+44.93%

To take part in the scheme, which is available to PAYE and self-assessed supporters, you simply complete one form – the CHY3 tax form – which takes just a few minutes to do. Then return it to us and we do the rest. Your form will cover a period of up to 5 years and can be backdated to cover gifts you made over the last 4 years.

To receive a CHY3 form or a Gift Aid Declaration form, please contact us on (+353) 1716 1406 or email info@ucdfoundation.ie.

Don't forget to post your form back to us in the Freepost envelope.

UK taxpayer? Your gift can be worth 25% extra +25% in UK

#### with no additional cost for you

If you are a UK taxpayer, we can claim an extra 25p on every £1 you donate from HMRC. A Gift Aid declaration form covers you for life and there is no minimum amount you need to donate; the only requirement is that you are a UK taxpayer supporting "Friends of UCD".

16

Last year, Tax Cert returns from Revenue provided enough funding to support 16 full scholarships.

#### **Affinity Cards**



We'd like to say a huge thank you to all our fantastic credit cardholders. They truly are UCD Champions.

When you become a UCD Affinity credit cardholder, Bank of Ireland donates €50 to the University in support of students. They will also donate a percentage of the annual spend on your card to UCD Champions Access Scholarships, UCD Sports Development Fund & UCD Alumni Fund. As you use the card, donations also continue to support the University and its students, and it will not cost you a single cent!

You can change lives too with a Bank of Ireland UCD Affinity credit card. What better way to show your support for UCD?

Talk to Bank of Ireland about supporting UCD with a Bank of Ireland UCD Affinity credit card - call 0818 200 412 or scan the QR code to apply online.

# "I am tomorrow or some future day what I establish today"

James Joyce BA 1902



Room 102, Tierney Building, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland Áras Uí Thiarnaigh, Belfield, Baile Átha Cliath 4, Éire

Telephone: +353 1716 1406 Email: info@ucdfoundation.ie Web: ucdfoundation.ie University College Dublin Foundation Registered in Dublin, Ireland. No. 266667 Directors: M. Curtin, L. English, O. Feely, G. Fitzpatrick, T. O'Connor CHY 12448