



FOUNDATION

UCD Champions - Changing Futures

IMPACT REPORT

2023
2024



Welcome



On behalf of UCD Foundation, I am delighted to present your *UCD Champions* Impact Report for 2023-2024. This is your report, and it is a testament to the incredible generosity of you, your fellow UCD alumni and friends of the University. This report showcases the life-changing results that can be achieved when the UCD community comes together to make a lasting difference to our University and its students.

It is my pleasure to share an update with you from our dedicated *Cothrom na Féinne* scholars. Sinéad, Caitlin and Ryan are all highly driven and talented individuals who are thriving in UCD and working tirelessly to reach their incredible potential. Caitlin and Sinéad are coming to the end of their degrees in Business and Law, and Science, respectively, while Ryan is working towards becoming a qualified doctor in 2025. Each of them has worked remarkably hard to earn their place in UCD and their success is a testament to how, with your support, a student can achieve their dream.

The breadth of alumni support in the past year is something to celebrate. The UCD community has come together to support not only access scholarships, but also a wide range of important initiatives, including UCD Ad Astra scholarships, mental health supports, improving the student experience and volunteering their time to mentor both students and graduates. Many of our alumni also support specific areas that matter most to them through in memoriam and legacy gifts — extending their life-changing generosity even further.

2023 has been a remarkable year, with 150 new *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarships being awarded. Over 3,800 alumni and friends, including you, helped to raise over €2.8m. This amazing result exemplifies our shared belief in the power of education to transform lives.

By giving young people an opportunity, you are empowering them to achieve their dreams and to become leaders in their field. The UCD students of today are the researchers, leaders and teachers of the future. With your support and belief in them, they can reach their full potential and literally change the world. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to you for your continuing support of UCD and its students. You are not only transforming lives today, but ensuring UCD's future as an institution of academic excellence committed to ensuring education for all.

Thank you for being a UCD Champion.



Jordan Campbell

Chief Executive Officer - UCD Foundation

Your impact in numbers

We are truly grateful for your generous support throughout the past year. Your incredible kindness has made an immense difference, as evidenced by the figures below. Thanks to your exceptional support, and that of your fellow alumni, UCD Foundation was able to award 150 new scholarships to students in need. This brings the number of scholarship students currently being supported by UCD Champions like you to 486. 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, while also becoming a beacon of hope for their communities.

€2.8 million

Thanks to your incredible generosity, along with that of your fellow UCD alumni and friends, €2.8 million was raised by UCD Champions to support our current cohort of students.

€411,000

A total of €411,000 was allocated towards mental health services aimed at ensuring our students receive the necessary support, which includes funding designated for two student advisors.

€189,000 Student experience

As part of the €2.8m raised by UCD Champions, €189,000 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 Ad Astra Academy
- ▲ UCD Choral Scholars
- ▲ The Library and Academic Writing Centre

150 Scholarships

- ▲ 150 new *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarships awarded
- ▲ 486 *Cothrom na Féinne* scholars currently being supported
- ▲ In addition to this 18 new UCD Sanctuary Scholarships funded centrally by UCD. Bringing the total number of UCD Sanctuary Scholarships to 50.

3,827 supporters

Thanks to YOUR support and the dedication of 3,827 other UCD Champions, UCD students in need of support received the vital assistance they required during 2022/2023.

Cothrom na Féinne Scholarships

A university education not only changes the life of a student, it can also enable them to transform their family, their community and society as a whole.

Cothrom na Féinne scholarships supported by UCD Champions aim to empower students to pursue their educational ambition at UCD. Every student deserves an equal opportunity to thrive throughout their university education regardless of their socioeconomic background.

Sinéad, Caitlin and Ryan are three students who overcame significant adversity to earn their place in UCD and are now working tirelessly to achieve their dreams.

Each of our student scholars are enormously grateful for your support and belief in them. We hope that reading the stories they have shared highlights the impact a scholarship makes.

Thank you so much for being a *UCD Champion*.



“All I can say to the donors who have supported me is thank you a million times.”

Sinéad Akeke

Science, Stage 4, UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

"I'm now in my final year studying here at UCD and, as my time here comes to an end, I'm already nostalgic about my experience! I will always remember the amazing community of UCD students and faculty who have made my experience so incredible. It is definitely not something I could have done by myself, and I've so much gratitude for all the assistance I received. While my course is extremely challenging, I am very grateful for the opportunity to work hard and learn here.

Before I knew I would receive this scholarship, I was worried about being able to afford the multitude of expenses that come with student living, like transport and materials. Beginning college during the pandemic was definitely a worry. I worried I would not make any friends, or that I wouldn't have the correct equipment to fully immerse myself in online education. I had a lot of concerns regarding whether or not I would be able to get through the year at all.

When I found out I would receive this scholarship in 2020, I remember being overjoyed. The first thing I used the scholarship money for was a laptop, which was a godsend for studying online. It allowed me to buy everything I would need to start college, and I've been able to do so every year since. During the pandemic, it was extremely difficult to find work, so knowing I'd receive this extra support lifted the heavy financial burden off my shoulders. I was also able to shorten my hours in my part-time job, which has allowed me to dedicate more time to my studies. This scholarship truly is a gift, and I'm so grateful.

I honestly do not know if I would have been able to complete my first year of college without the support this scholarship has given me, and now I am applying for graduate jobs and considering applying to masters programmes. All I can say to the donors who have supported me is thank you a million times. What you are doing is not just providing someone with financial assistance, you are providing someone with the peace of mind and sense of stability that will allow them to enjoy the college experience they have worked so hard to achieve."

Caitlin Canavan O'Driscoll

Business and Law, Stage 3, UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

"I am a third-year Business and Law student and am absolutely loving my time here at UCD. The beginning was a bit overwhelming - I am from a tiny village in West Cork, so the adjustment to life in Dublin was a bit of a culture shock.

Moving to Dublin from West Cork was extremely challenging. I have been financially independent from my parents since I was eighteen, so when I moved up here, I had maybe €2,000 in my bank account and the house I was living in was extremely dilapidated, with mould and dirt everywhere, but it was all I could afford. I used to come to college smelling of mould, which was very embarrassing and took a toll on my mental health.

When I found out I would receive a scholarship, I felt relieved almost immediately. Before the first instalment arrived in my account, my savings were gone. I was eating poorly as I could not afford fresh fruit and vegetables, and my living situation was very uncomfortable to say the least. With the first instalment, I went out to buy apples and raspberries. While this might seem small, having the freedom to spend that €2 on my favourite fruit felt monumental to me.

I was able to move out of that house in second year, and am now somewhere much nicer, with a lovely landlord who charges me well below market rate for rent. I put the money towards textbooks, which are a necessity when studying Law. I also used the money to buy myself a nice matching suit in Penney's for the interview for my internship last year. It was crazy how much having something nice and put-together to wear helped my confidence going into the interview.

Before I received this scholarship, I was living well below the poverty line and there are thousands of students who are just like me, who deserve the same support that I am lucky enough to be receiving. By supporting these scholarships, you are putting these students on an equal playing field with their peers who might live at home, or who have their parents supporting them. I am so grateful to the alumni who are supporting me and I really hope that this support can be available to others just like me."



“Before I received this scholarship, I was living well below the poverty line and there are thousands of students who are just like me, who deserve the same support that I am lucky enough to be receiving”

UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar
as part of Sutherland Opportunity,
supported by Mason Hayes & Curran.



“Frankly, I’m not sure if I would even still be in third-level education if I didn’t have a scholarship.”

Ryan Moran

Medicine, Stage 5, UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

"Prior to coming to UCD, I was worried that I wouldn't get the points in my Leaving Cert and HPAT exam for Medicine. I couldn't afford grinds or private education. I was not able to afford HPAT revision courses like other people and it weighed heavily on me that it was up to me to get the points I needed. Thankfully, I discovered the HEAR scheme in 6th year of secondary school and it meant that I qualified for reduced points for my chosen courses.

The main barrier facing me when I first arrived at UCD was financing. At 18, I was already hyper-aware of my family's low-income status but when I arrived at college, that awareness was heightened. Coming from a low-income, single-parent household, I was worried that my financial circumstances would limit me both academically and socially. I knew that for a lot of students in my class, money was never going to be an issue. Before I came to UCD I didn't even have a laptop, but thanks to my scholarship, I no longer have to worry about these things.

My time in UCD has been incredible. I've loved every second of it. I've made some amazing friends, really got involved with societies and am now on my clinical placement. My scholarship has been truly life-changing. It has taken the financial burden off my shoulders significantly. Given the current cost of living crisis, the scholarship has meant that I can cover my rent and any additional bills each month. Frankly, I'm not sure if I could've sustained a life in Dublin or even still be in third-level education if I didn't have a scholarship. My scholarship has given me the opportunity to flourish in college and has meant that I am now able to solely focus on my academics.

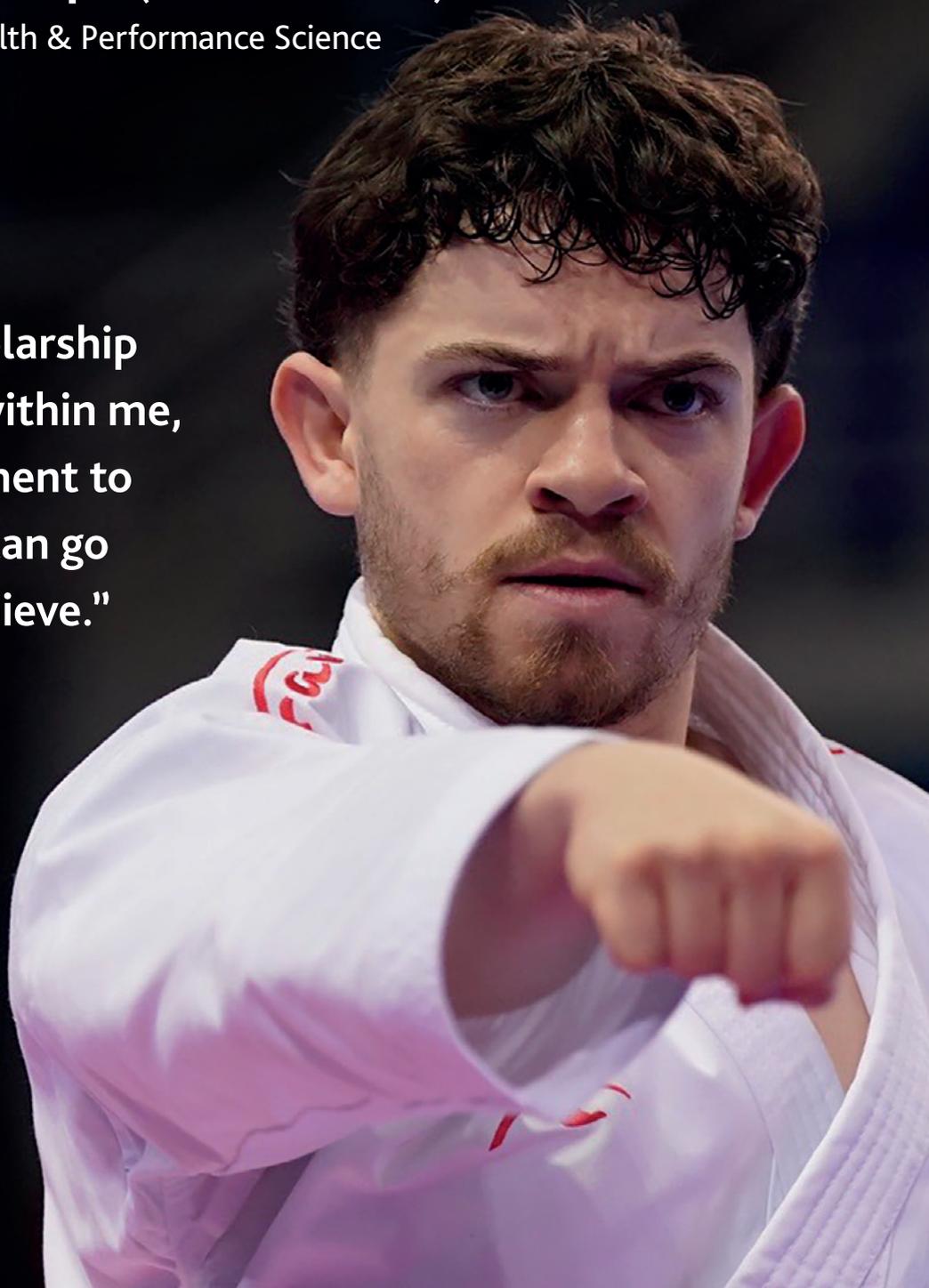
I understand that not all alumni are in a position to support a scholarship such as this one; however, to those who are, I would highly implore you to do so. This scholarship has truly changed my life and because of it, I will be a doctor in 2025, and one day, I too will be able to support these scholarships so that kids like me never feel that they can't achieve their dreams because of financial burdens."

Ad Astra Scholarships (Elite Athlete)

David Gannon, Stage 2, Health & Performance Science

Ad Astra Sports Scholar

“Receiving this scholarship has ignited a fire within me, fueling my excitement to see just how far I can go and what I can achieve.”



Ad Astra scholarships recognise students with incredible talent in three areas: Academia, Performing Arts, and Sport.

The UCD Ad Astra Academy provides a range of support to its scholars, enabling them to excel and perform at the highest level in their chosen field. This would not be possible without the generosity of our donors to the Ad Astra Academy.

David Gannon, Stage 2 Health & Performance Science student and Ad Astra Elite Athlete discussed the impact his scholarship has had on his time in UCD.

“The scholarship has made a profound impact on my academic development, providing me with invaluable resources and opportunities. This year in terms of sport has been the most challenging, yet most rewarding. The support has allowed me to access better training facilities, quality coaching, and necessary resources that were previously beyond my means. I have been able to train more effectively, efficiently, and have improved my overall performance.

The most influential aspect my scholarship has given me is access to the high performance gym and my strength and conditioning coaches. They have transformed my athletic progress and this is evident in my results. This year I also began working with UCD's Sports Psychologist Dr James Matthews. We identified gaps in my psychological game and we are continuously working on achieving the best version of me. I am very excited to see what I can achieve with them continuously pushing me.

The scholarship has provided significant assistance to me and my family. It has relieved constant worry and a substantial amount of

financial pressure, allowing me to compete at the highest level in the world in crucial international karate competitions. These competitions require considerable financial investment, including travel expenses, training camps, coaching fees, and various other costs. Without the bursary, it would have been challenging for me to balance my academic pursuits with my athletic aspirations. It enables me to focus on improving my skills, enhancing my performance, and proudly representing my country on the global stage.

I cannot even begin to express how much receiving this scholarship has meant to me. It is like a dream come true, and I feel incredibly lucky to have been given this opportunity. Receiving this scholarship has ignited a fire within me, fueling my excitement to see just how far I can go and what I can achieve. It has given me the confidence to push my limits and explore my true potential. **To the donors who have supported me - thank you for believing in me and giving me this life-changing opportunity.** Your generosity has made a profound impact on my life, and I am forever grateful.”

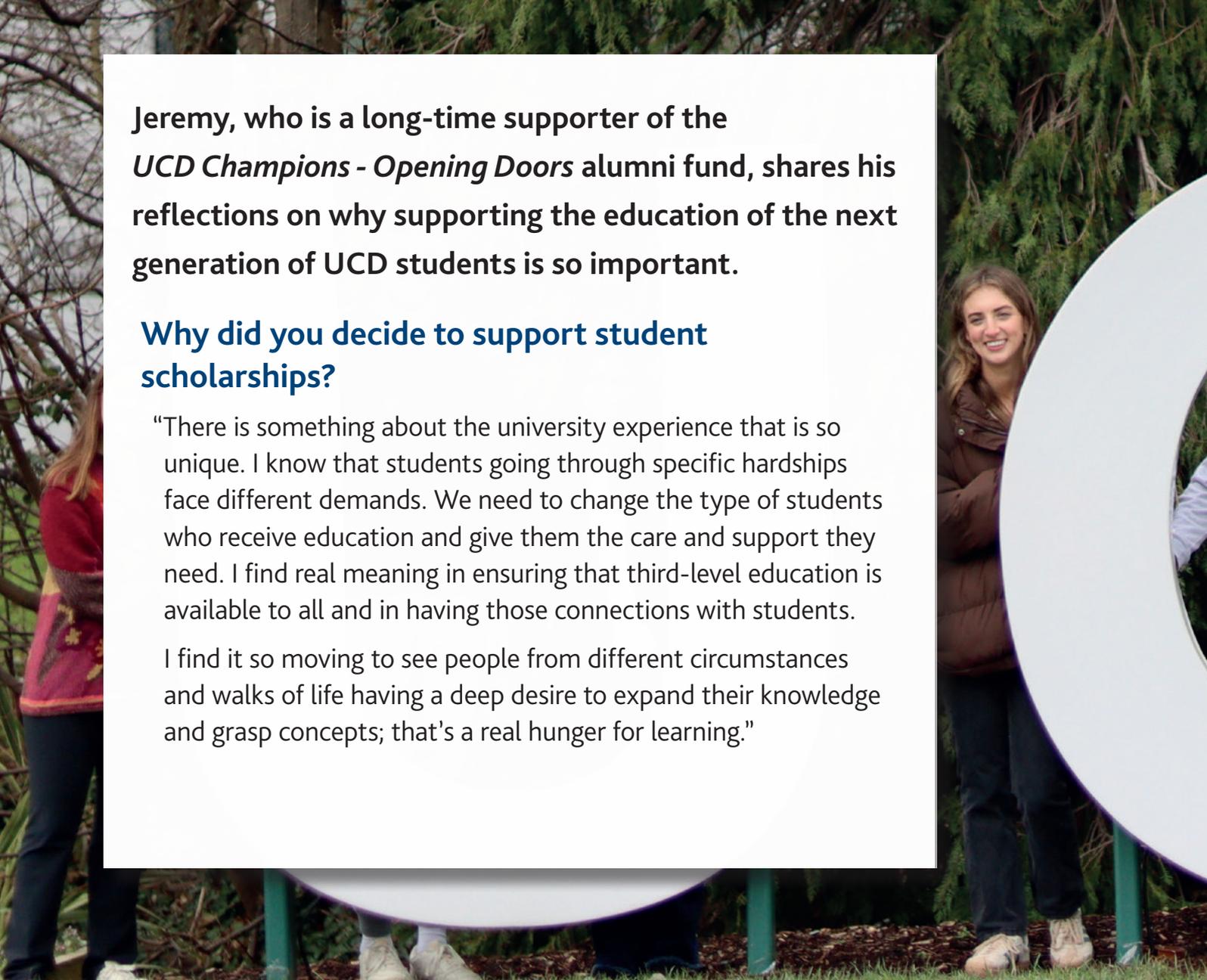
What does it mean to

Jeremy, who is a long-time supporter of the *UCD Champions - Opening Doors* alumni fund, shares his reflections on why supporting the education of the next generation of UCD students is so important.

Why did you decide to support student scholarships?

“There is something about the university experience that is so unique. I know that students going through specific hardships face different demands. We need to change the type of students who receive education and give them the care and support they need. I find real meaning in ensuring that third-level education is available to all and in having those connections with students.

I find it so moving to see people from different circumstances and walks of life having a deep desire to expand their knowledge and grasp concepts; that’s a real hunger for learning.”



be a UCD Champion?

What would you say to someone who is considering supporting student scholarships?

“By supporting a student, you are giving them the keys to unlock their potential. You are allowing them to experience the joy of doing analysis, reading, thinking, discussing, etc. All of those wonderful activities at university. I know people in my own life who availed of a scholarship and went on to do amazing things, but none of it was predetermined; they needed support and encouragement to achieve their full potential.

In this generation, I can see this hunger and a wonderful sense of achievement once they overcome obstacles. It reinforces what I felt when coming to university and hearing about adventures in learning. Supporting the cause will give you a sense of deep fulfilment. It gives us a glimpse into the truly human element of our existence: helping others.”



In Memoriam Giving

Making a gift in memory of a loved one, friend or colleague is a uniquely personal way to honour them and the things that matter most to them. With an 'in memoriam' gift it is possible to establish a scholarship in their name, dedicate funding to a particular area of research or School, or support an area close to their heart. In this way, you can create a lasting legacy in their name. Recent 'in memoriam' gifts have supported areas such as mental health services and student scholarships. These gifts were supported by both individual families and through collective class gifts.

If you would like to learn more about in 'memoriam' giving at UCD, or to establish your own in memoriam gift for a loved one, friend or colleague, please get in touch with us in complete confidence at tel: +353 1 716 1406 or email: evan.shinkwin@ucdfoundation.ie



Cothrom na Féinne Scholarship in memory of Dr Gertrude Ronan Martin

Qualifying from UCD in 1978 and after several years in hospital jobs, became a GP and set up her own practice in Dublin, which became the focus of her passion to look after each patient with warmth and a level of dedication that her patients still remember with gratitude.

Gertie was a lifelong supporter of UCD Foundation and UCD students. Gertie was very conscious that she may never have got the chance to study medicine were it not for the fact that she won a scholarship from Tipperary County Council.

Her family felt it an honour to promote her desire to help other students by supporting a scholarship for medical students in UCD in her memory. This scholarship supports deserving students from the UCD School of Medicine who due to financial hardship would otherwise be unable to attend UCD.

Mental Health

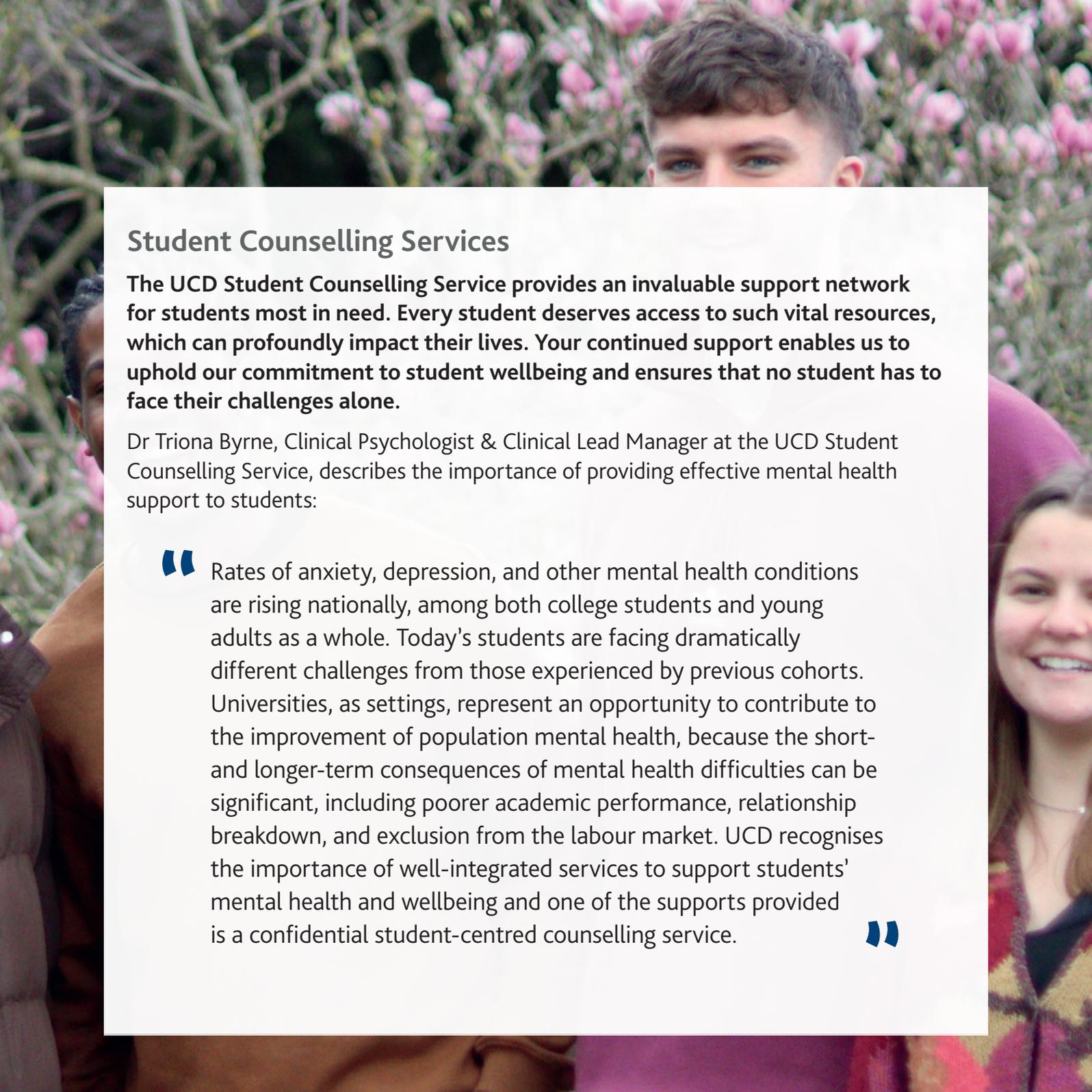
As students embark on their journey through university, they require various supports to help maintain their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Despite the excitement and opportunity of being in university, many students grapple with various challenges, often feeling isolated and unsure where to seek help.

A strong network of counselling services and on-campus support is vital. Your generous support has played a pivotal role in expanding and enhancing these essential services, making them more accessible to our student community, for which we are so grateful.



45%

of students said counselling was a major factor in completing their university degree.

A background image showing a group of young people, likely students, standing in a field of pink flowers. The image is partially obscured by a white text box in the center.

Student Counselling Services

The UCD Student Counselling Service provides an invaluable support network for students most in need. Every student deserves access to such vital resources, which can profoundly impact their lives. Your continued support enables us to uphold our commitment to student wellbeing and ensures that no student has to face their challenges alone.

Dr Triona Byrne, Clinical Psychologist & Clinical Lead Manager at the UCD Student Counselling Service, describes the importance of providing effective mental health support to students:

“ Rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions are rising nationally, among both college students and young adults as a whole. Today’s students are facing dramatically different challenges from those experienced by previous cohorts. Universities, as settings, represent an opportunity to contribute to the improvement of population mental health, because the short- and longer-term consequences of mental health difficulties can be significant, including poorer academic performance, relationship breakdown, and exclusion from the labour market. UCD recognises the importance of well-integrated services to support students’ mental health and wellbeing and one of the supports provided is a confidential student-centred counselling service. ”

Plans for the Future —

Over the past 50 years, UCD Belfield has developed into a modern campus and a vibrant centre for student life, research, learning and innovation. The learning facilities which make up UCD are vital to ensuring that all students have access to the resources they need to thrive and engage with their studies.



UCD James Joyce Library

UCD James Joyce Library has played a unique and important role at the very heart of the University since 1972. One of the first buildings on the Belfield campus, the library has been in its current configuration since 1987, when UCD had a student population of 10,684 and the library's primary resources were print collections. Today UCD has over 30,000 students – with further growth in numbers projected over the coming years. Almost every student who has attended UCD will have memories of studying in the library.

Huge advances in information technologies have transformed how the current generation of students and academics access and use the library. In the digital information age, library users can access books, journals and other resources at any time of day and from any location. Nonetheless, the physical library space continues to play a vital role at the heart of university life.

To support the changing needs of the UCD community, planned refurbishments will transform how the library is used and experienced by our students, faculty and community. This reimagining will ensure that it offers the appropriate spaces, resources and technologies, as well as inclusive facilities to support students with diverse learning needs. As a resource the library helps ensure equal opportunity for all students, allowing them to fully engage in their studies on an equal footing with their peers.



Your Legacy — Leave your mark

“I am tomorrow or some future day
what I establish today”

James Joyce, BA 1902

Did you know that with a planned gift or a living legacy, you can ensure that UCD continues to grow and flourish for generations to come? By leaving a planned gift to UCD in your will, you can make a lasting difference to the future of the University, ensuring your legacy is secured.

A legacy donation can reflect your personal interests or areas of university life that you particularly wish to support. You may wish to establish a scholarship, support a particular school or college or fund an area of research close to your heart. Legacy gifts, big and small, are very important to the University and make a long-lasting difference to our students and the whole UCD community.

Thanks to the generous contributions of our alumni and friends, the lives of a new generation of students have been transformed. 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 1 716 1406** or email: legacy@ucdfoundation.ie



Sheena McLoughlin
Associate Director, UCD Foundation

Please send me information about Leaving a Legacy to UCD

Name

Address

Phone

Email



Please tick if
you have already
included UCD
in your will.

Donor Testimonial: Lorna Keegan Pettifor

Lorna, who has pledged to leave a legacy gift in her will to UCD, talks about the reasons behind this decision.

“My husband, Kelvin, and I made a decision in the last couple of years to leave a legacy donation in our will to UCD, and specifically to support students in UCD School of Veterinary Medicine. We are both retired from farming and are passionate about animal welfare and the preservation of rare breeds, farm animals and threatened species. Looking back, I am proud of what I have done in my life. My husband and I live on our smallholding in beautiful County Tipperary, where I work as an animal portrait artist and care for our Anglo-Nubian goats, Leghorn hens and seven cats.

I would have loved to study to become a veterinarian but financial support was an obstacle for me. I left school at 16 to work and did not have the opportunity to go to university. As my legacy, I would like to give others the opportunity that I did not have.

Our legacy gift will provide financial support to veterinary students who experience financial hardship during their time at university. I understand the difficulty of balancing study with working, as I worked nights while taking classes to become a beauty therapist and electrolysisist, later a lecturer in that subject and running my clinic in advanced electrical epilation. Providing students with financial support so that they can concentrate on their studies is very important to me.”

“We sincerely hope that our testimonial will aid people from all walks of life to consider giving a legacy gift to deserving students. After all, young people are the future everywhere.”





Louis & Gerard at Kalpit & Abhilsha's wedding in New Delhi

Volunteers are often the glue that holds *a community together*

Volunteering can open up a world of possibilities. Gerard reflects on his experience as a UCD Alumni Buddy.

“Back in autumn 2021, I suggested to my new student buddy Abhilasha that we take a walk along the Dodder River in Clonskeagh for our first meet-up. By the end of our walk, we were well on the way to becoming good friends

Shortly afterwards, Abhilasha introduced me to her soon-to-be fiancé Kalpit, who was visiting from Holland, and was keen to try Irish – as opposed to Dutch – Guinness, and we spent a memorable evening in O'Donoghues enjoying the music and the banter.

So when Abhilasha announced their engagement in early 2023, and invited me and my son Louis to their wedding in New Delhi earlier this year, we didn't need to be asked twice for what turned out to be a real trip of a lifetime.”

Gerard Tannam
UCD Alumni Buddy

To learn how you can get involved, email Ria & Niamh at alumnivolunteer@ucd.ie, give us a call on +353 1 716 1064 or join the UCD Alumni Network at www.ucdalumninetwork.com

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.

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 does not affect your tax status. **If everyone who gave over €250 or more did this, we could raise an extra €594,000 towards helping our students.**

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

To take part in the scheme, which is available to PAYE and self-assessed supporters, you simply complete one form – the Enduring Certificate (Formerly CHY3 Form) 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.

+44.93%
in ROI

To receive an Enduring Certificate tax form (or Gift Aid form for UK based donors) please contact us on (+353) 1 716 1406 or email info@ucdfoundation.ie.

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

Help turn 13 into 75

Last year, the funding from supporters who returned tax certificates provided enough funding for 13 full scholarships. However, the impact could have been far greater. **If every UCD Champion returned their tax form**, we would have potentially been able to **support an additional 75 scholarship students.**

Affinity Cards



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!

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.





Your support can change a student's life and ensure that equal access to education is available to all, regardless of background or personal circumstances.

Donate today by scanning the QR code, or online by visiting ucdfoundation.ie/donate



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Sustainability remains a core pillar of UCD's values. This report is printed on FSC certified paper, coming from sustainably managed forests. This report contains recycled materials and is also fully recyclable.