



University of Essex



Impact Report

Autumn 2021

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Publication date: 10 November 2021

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Introduction

Welcome to our Impact Report. This collection of stories highlights a range of recent philanthropic successes and offers us an opportunity to thank you for your support in making these successes possible.

We appreciate every penny that is donated to us and these stories show just how much of a difference they make to students at Essex.



A thanks from John Bercow for Hardship Fund supporters

Our alumni community has never felt stronger despite the turbulence we have all experienced since the pandemic hit. In one of our biggest fundraising appeals to date, close to one thousand graduates have come together, giving back to students in need, raising an incredible £370,000 and providing over one thousand students with emergency grants, easing their financial stress and enabling them to confidently continue with their education and focus on their future.

Over the last year, John Bercow has hosted a series of intimate 'fireside chats' on Zoom, thanking alumni for their philanthropic support to our Hardship Fund appeal and talking about the impact their generosity has had in helping students overcome the worst of the pandemic.

During the talks, John has spoken proudly and passionately about his Essex journey, with alumni also revealing their own motivations for giving back, showcasing the very best of our Essex Spirit. We feel very lucky that John, as an Essex graduate himself, is committed to staying connected with alumni and cares so deeply about our students and their future.

Thank you to all who have donated to our appeal since its launch in April 2020. Although the UK is now on a pathway back to normality, there are still challenges ahead. The last two years have shown us all that we simply don't know what environment we might find ourselves in with just a few days' notice, so we're making sure that emergency financial support will continue to be available for our students whatever the future holds.

Whilst coronavirus has been, and still is, the trigger for so many students' financial difficulties, we know there are many other factors that unexpectedly affect students, and the Hardship Fund continues to support them too.

If you would like to find out more about how your support of our [Hardship Fund](#) will make a difference to students who need it most, please get in touch with our [Philanthropy team](#).

Giving the gift of an Essex education

Coming to Essex is a life-changing opportunity and, for many students, is only possible with the help of a scholarship. We couldn't be more thankful to the alumni and partner organisations who support our scholarships and invest in the next generation of Essex graduates, future leaders and innovators who are eager to make their mark on the world.

Through our valued relationship with the [Aziz Foundation](#), two Masters scholarships have been generously funded for exceptional British Muslims at Essex over the last two years. With the Foundation this year granting Preferred Partner status to Essex, we are pleased to announce that together, we are growing the partnership further to financially support up a further three British Muslim scholars to Essex every year. The Foundation wishes to raise aspirations and standards and facilitate better representation of British Muslim communities in civil society, particularly supporting individuals with career ambitions in Law, Media, Journalism and Policy. We are thankful to the Aziz Foundation for supporting Essex, our student scholars and our shared commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

It goes without saying that global collaboration has always been a priority for Essex, and with 40% of our student population coming from overseas, it's never been more important to widen access to education to those around the world.

Over the last five decades, we have built longstanding partnerships with many Latin American institutions, welcoming thousands of Latin American students to our campuses, with many going on to high level leadership and academic roles in their home countries. The inspiring paths taken by our Latin American graduates drives our commitment to ensuring Essex is accessible to those with potential. We recently secured partnerships with non-profit education foundations including ColFuturo, GuateFuturo, HonduFuturo, Instituto Ling and FUNED, to award partial postgraduate scholarships to Latin American students, making their dreams of an Essex education a reality.

Such strategic partnerships give Essex the opportunity to offer talented and deserving students the opportunity to fulfil their potential and alleviate some of the financial constraints that may have otherwise limited their next steps, whilst supporting our partners' own missions, whether improving the representation of minorities or simply investing in the next generation of decision-takers and change-makers.

To find out about supporting Essex scholarships as an individual, [visit our webpage](#). If you would like to discuss creating your own Foundation or Corporate scholarship partnership, please [get in touch](#)

Alumni donations take the Essex Rebels further than ever

Our own crowdfunding platform, [Click](#), is for students, staff and alumni who have an amazing idea or an exciting project in mind and need funding to help it take off. Generously supported by alumni donations, we offer a percentage of match-funding for student projects to give them that extra helping hand. This means that we match donations received to a project, pound for pound up to an agreed limit – currently 50% of the minimum project target, up to £250.

Over the years, Click has helped hundreds of students fund their dreams with over 300 successful projects and over £400,000 raised. At the end of last year, the Essex Rebels Women's Basketball Team set up a [Click crowdfunding project](#) and successfully raised over £750 to help with travel costs for their upcoming season. With the match-funding we offer to student projects, their total exceeded £1,000, enough to ensure all members of their team could safely travel to their matches, comply with covid-19 restrictions, and do what they love. This simply wouldn't have been possible without alumni donations.



We're proud to be able to support projects like these because we know how much they enhance our students' Essex experience. Sports, societies, and other extra-curricular activities offer opportunities to

learn new skills, meet new people and gain confidence outside of the classroom. And with a new academic year on the horizon, we're looking forward to seeing even more student projects hit the ground running, making up for the missed experiences during the pandemic.

But it's not just financial support that Click offers. Using the crowdfunding platform teaches them extra skills, such as marketing, communications, fundraising and networking –valuable experience they can take forward in whatever path they choose after their degree.

We're so passionate about the wonderful projects we back and the opportunities that Click gives students. unique Essex experience that is only further enhanced thanks to opportunities like Click crowdfunding. We would appreciate any donations to allow us to continue supporting exciting art projects, entrepreneurial innovations, and sporting adventures.

To donate to Click match-funding, please [visit our webpage](#).

Staff giving scheme wins another Gold award



Our multi-award winning Donate Your Pennies scheme recently celebrated its fifth birthday, and it earned yet another award to mark the occasion!

Earlier this year, we were awarded our second Gold award at the Annual Pennies from Heaven Staff Giving Awards which are focused on recognising staff participation in giving schemes. We are proud to share that 36% of Essex staff are now signed up to the scheme and have raised an incredible £20,000 to support our students.

Every year, the funds raised from Donate Your Pennies supports the Colchester Sixth Form Bursary and VI6 Bursary, two schemes aimed at supporting first-year students that come from local schools and colleges, with each student receiving £1,000 at the end of their first term at Essex. When moving from further education to higher education, staying in the local area is important for many students and we're proud to be able to support their transition thanks to our generous staff.

Here's what one of this year's recipients said:

“Thank you so much. Someone was willing to give me an opportunity, a small taste of one at least. It gave me a materialistic drive, a sense of motivation. It stood, and stands, as a reminder of what is on the line, not just in terms of myself, but others that are counting on the opportunity for success they have provided to myself and others. It also serves as encouragement to take opportunities and use them to their full extent. I sincerely hope that it carries on for others in the future. It means more than some people think.”
- Levi Dean, scholarship recipient 2020/21

This unique scheme continues to grow month by month, and we want to sincerely thank all staff donors for their participation which allows us to continue to award these bursaries year after year.

Our next goal is to reach 50% of staff donating their pennies every month, a huge milestone that would help us to raise thousands more each year - you might be surprised how far all the pennies go! Please help us spread the word about the scheme to your colleagues and [contact our Philanthropy team](#) for more information.

Fundraising priorities for post-pandemic student life

When giving back to Essex, we know that it's important for you to be able to choose an area that means the most to you, and our [new website](#) makes it easier than ever to learn about our current fundraising priorities, where donations go and the impact they have.

Undoubtedly, one of the biggest challenges throughout the last year and a half has been uncertainty. We have been united in supporting our student community to overcome the financial struggles thrown at them during the pandemic. But it's time to look ahead. Uncertainty still lingers, but our students are what make Essex special, so we're doing everything we can to support them on the pathway back to normality, bringing them the university experience they deserve.

To do this, we've expanded our fundraising appeal to focus on three key areas:

- [Scholarships](#), to support students from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds
- [Student experience](#), to promote greater sports and society membership and help those with dreams of starting their own business
- [Hardship fund](#), to continue to financially support students through unexpected events

Every Essex student deserves an Essex experience – whether a new student joining us in the autumn, or a student eager to make up for lost time and soak up all that's on offer in and out of the classroom. Your help is vital in helping us deliver the special Essex experience that we hope you remember fondly.

To learn more about our new focus areas, visit our [philanthropy page](#) and, if you find a cause that means something to you, please consider donating.