



University of Essex



Impact Report

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Contents

INTRODUCTION: Thank you for supporting Essex	1
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GRADUATE’S DONATION SUPPORTS PIONEERING RESEARCH	2
BARRISTER DREAMS ARE ONE STEP CLOSER FOR EAYAN	3
BARRY SCOOPS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD	4
ESCALA DONATIONS ENSURE ITS LEGACY	5
STAFF DONATIONS BROKE RECORD IN 2023	6
STUDENT NURSES TAKE THEIR SKILLS OVERSEAS	7
CREATING CROPS FOR TOMORROW	8
UNIFORM PARTNER MAKES PLEDGE TO HARDSHIP FUND	9
HONG KONG STUDENT FUND RAISES OVER 860,000 HKD AT LAUNCH	10
<hr/>	
Final thank you	10

INTRODUCTION: Thank you for supporting Essex

We are so grateful for your support. This report tells you some of the inspiring stories of the difference philanthropy makes at the University of Essex.

Essex is a place where change happens, and it happens thanks to people like you. We're at the end of another academic year, one in which you've helped us raise more than £1.5 million to support our students and the future of the University.

This amount is enough to fund an incredible 192 scholarships, 34 emergency hardship grants and offer match-funding to 22 student projects. Thank you for helping to make this happen – whether you've given a gift, volunteered your time or simply liked a post on social media, you are amazing.

Please forward this Impact Report to your network to spread the word about our work.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lynsey Dawson'.

Lynsey Dawson, Head of Philanthropy

GRADUATE'S DONATION SUPPORTS PIONEERING RESEARCH



The transformative gift made by Dr Jalal Bagherli, an influential business leader and Essex graduate, and his wife Pauline, will support the next generation of pioneering engineering researchers.

After completing his BSc in Electronic Engineering at Essex in 1979, Dr Bagherli built a hugely successful career around the development and manufacture of semiconductors, the technology at the heart of

almost all products we use every day, from cars to smartphones. Last year, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University.

Having worked in partnership with the University, the couple have established the Dr Jalal Bagherli PhD programme which will support five PhD studentships across three key areas in our School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering: Embedded Hardware Systems for Net Zero; Embodied Biological Computing Artificial Intelligence and Responsible AI.

He said: *"There is a big role for universities in the UK to play, building on the work of the brilliant scientists we already have here while bringing forward the next generation through investing in pioneering research. This gift will support advanced research which I know from my work in the industry is absolutely critical."*

Professor Maria Fasli, Acting Vice-Chancellor, said: *"We are incredibly grateful to Jalal and Pauline for their generosity and support. The virtuous cycle between alumni and students is one that we could not be more appreciative of as it serves to inspire a new generation of Essex pioneers, innovators and trailblazers."*

[Hear Jalal talk about his gift on a visit to campus in our video.](#)

BARRISTER DREAMS ARE ONE STEP CLOSER FOR EAYAN

Two years ago, we set a target to raise £1 million for the biggest appeal in our history: the Essex Futures appeal. **And we've done it!** The campaign promises to unlock potential in the next pioneers, innovators and trailblazers and it wouldn't have been possible without your support, thank you.

Eayan Subramaniam (LLB Law, 2022) was one of the first students we featured in the campaign and the recipient of the International Baccalaureate Excellence Scholarship. Originally from Malaysia, Eayan was keen to pursue a legal career in the UK and after graduating, with hopes to support vulnerable and disadvantaged people - particularly those unable to afford access to legal services.

Two years on, Eayan is on his way to doing just that. He was recently called to the Bar and is one step closer to his goal of securing a pupillage and practising as a barrister.



He said: "Right now I'm working in a private school as an Autism Expert Learning Support Staff. It's an entirely different industry than what I studied for, however I want to be a human rights barrister and work with disadvantaged children and families, especially in the LGBTQ+ community. I want to gain some experience with different communities before I start practising as a barrister."

In October 2023, our first official Essex Futures scholars stepped onto our campuses ready to start their journeys and among them are truly inspiring individuals who dream of becoming human rights lawyers, climate experts and social justice activists to name a few. You may have even seen some of the stories that we've shared about them over the year.

Their hopes to make the world a better place are starting at Essex thanks to contributions from people like you. We can't wait to continue updating you on their progress to show you the difference your generosity makes to the individual students, but also our wider society through the impact they make in their careers.

But whilst we've reached our £1 million target, it doesn't mean we're closing the door on it. This is just the beginning. Over 300 scholarships can be funded through the money raised to date. This is an incredible achievement, but financial support is needed more than ever, and we'll do everything we can to break down those barriers as we continue fundraising for Essex Futures.

BARRY SCOOPS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Philanthropy comes in many forms. Every way of 'giving back' has its place in helping our students and our University to succeed.



Barry van Eupen (BA Economics, 1971), named as our 2024 Alumni Volunteer of the Year, has been a big supporter of our volunteering programme for over a decade.

With extensive international business expertise, Barry, upon returning to live in Colchester, felt he had the experience and skills to help students. Over the years he has taken part in careers and professional networking events for

students, supported the Enactus Society which encourages social entrepreneurship and mentored students. He has also been a member of University Court and sat on the board of trustees for the Students' Union.

Barry said: *"I have loved my voluntary work in various roles across the University and Students' Union and it has been immensely rewarding. The passion, calibre and motivation of students is, and continues to be, inspiring as is being a part of the University community. My involvement with the University has now been almost 60 years as I was accepted as a student in 1968. I am firmly of the belief that my contribution is in some sense a small way of repaying the opportunity afforded me at the beginning of my career all those years ago at the University of Essex."*

ESCALA DONATIONS ENSURE ITS LEGACY



Major donations from the founding directors of the Essex Collection of Art from Latin America (ESCALA) will ensure its legacy for current and future students and staff. The Collection, based on our Colchester Campus, is an enduring example of founding Vice-Chancellor, Sir Albert Sloman's core vision for Latin American studies and remains the only public collections of art from Latin America in the UK.

A £12,500 donation from Professor Valerie Fraser will further promote object-based learning and philanthropically sponsored work activity with material from the collection, while shares from the Royal Bank of Scotland donated by Professor Dawn Ades continue to be a significant income stream for the University.

STAFF DONATIONS BROKE RECORD IN 2023



Over one-third of Essex staff now make monthly donations through our Donate Your Pennies scheme. With over £6,000 raised, 2023 was our most successful year to date. And it's all from rounding up the extra pennies in our staff members' monthly pay cheques.

For the last two years, the funds raised through the scheme have gone towards the Essex Futures appeal. You might be surprised to know that a staggering 39% of our undergraduates are from households that earn less than £25,000 a year. The money raised will provide bursaries to support UK undergraduate students from low-income families who start

their degree with us in October.

The support that a bursary can offer a student in the early days of their degree makes a huge difference, helping to relieve some of that financial pressure at a time when there are lots of one-off expenses as students get themselves set up for the start of a new journey at Essex.

Since its inception in 2016, Essex staff have raised almost £40,000 through Donate Your Pennies. Thank you for showing what a difference even the smallest gift can make.

STUDENT NURSES TAKE THEIR SKILLS OVERSEAS

A group of 11 nursing students will put their skills into practice on the other side of the world this summer. And it's all been made possible thanks to Click, Essex's very own crowdfunding platform.

The students are taking part in the Travelteer programme which will see them immerse themselves in a new clinical environment through a nursing placement in Sri Lanka.

Rae Spencer, who is studying Adult Nursing and taking part in the trip in August said:

"The match-funding I received signifies a vote of confidence in my nursing commitment and enhances my skills by exposing me to diverse cultures and healthcare challenges. I'm so grateful for this experience and believe it will help me become a more skilled and empathetic nurse."

The group of students successfully raised £10,000 through Click and were awarded an additional £5,500 through the match-funding scheme which is generously supported by donations from alumni and University friends to our Student Experience Fund.



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International placements are just one example of the projects crowdfunded by students through Click. This academic year we've also supported students with theatre productions, sport tournaments and inclusion initiatives, providing over £12,500 in match-funding. Click is a way of supporting students with extra-curricular opportunities and the valuable skills and experiences that come with them.

[Explore our students' projects.](#)

CREATING CROPS FOR TOMORROW



As food security is increasingly threatened, the Wolfson STEPS facility, a new flagship plant lab worth over £3.5m, will put Essex researchers on the frontline in the fight against climate change by allowing scientists to adapt plants for a hotter drier planet.

The project came to fruition following a long and intensive application process during which the Philanthropy Team collaborated with Professor Tracy Lawson and fellow academics from the School of Life Sciences. The outcome was an impressive £1 million donation from the Wolfson Foundation which enabled the lab and its research to be brought to life on our Colchester Campus.

The unique facility, one of the first of its kind at a UK university, boasts a cutting-edge commercially standard vertical farm, an indoor field that replicates real environments anywhere in the globe, and suites that imitate a warming world where researchers are able to raise CO₂ concentration and temperature levels at will.

The University co-funded the project with an additional £2.5m, alongside a gift-in-kind from major agricultural partner, Innovation Agritech Group, who provided a substantial discount on vital equipment. The impact of the initial donation from the Wolfson Foundation has also allowed researchers to leverage further research grants totalling nearly £2m in funding.

[Read more.](#)

UNIFORM PARTNER MAKES PLEDGE TO HARDSHIP FUND

For over three years, Work in Style has supplied our students on courses such as Nursing, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy, with the NHS-approved uniforms needed for the clinical placements they undertake.

Over the years and as our partnership grew, the organisation learnt more about our philanthropic work, particularly our Hardship Fund which provides financial support to students in emergency situations, and they wanted to get involved.



This was the beginning of what we call a social value agreement, where business partners who provide a service to the University - from builders through to uniform suppliers - agree to donate a percentage of our annual spend to an area of their choice. For Work in Style, it was all about the Hardship Fund, and they have pledged to donate 1% of our yearly uniform spend to the appeal.

They said: "We want to ensure every student can have access to education and fulfil their full potential. We are proud to be able to provide emergency cash to students who require a helping hand."

The nature of the Hardship Fund, which supports students in difficult and unexpected circumstances, means many are uncomfortable about publicly sharing their story, but below you can read just one example of the impact donations to the fund can have.

Hardship Fund Case Study:

A student was financially dependent on their partner and was a victim of domestic abuse. After reporting the abuse to the police, their partner was no longer financially supporting them. The Hardship Fund was able to provide financial support through a £1,100 bursary which helped towards accommodation, utilities, and community costs whilst they found employment that enabled them to support themselves.

HONG KONG STUDENT FUND RAISES OVER 860,000 HKD AT LAUNCH



In January, Professor Anthony Forster announced the opening of a new scholarship fund which will support students from Hong Kong who want to study at the University of Essex. We were thrilled to see so much interest from members of our alumni community in the region, who are not only providing financial gifts but also offering support in growing our Essex community in Hong Kong through partnership and innovation.

Since the opening of the fund, more than 860,000HKD, equivalent to over £86,000, has already been raised. The amount raised so far will fund six scholarships and our first scholars are expected to start their studies in the autumn, we'll introduce you to do them in our next report.

[Support the Hong Kong Student Fund.](#)

Final thank you

We hope that you have felt inspired reading the latest edition of our Philanthropy Impact Report. It is the support and generosity of our community of donors that helps makes what we do possible.

Thank you. To continue your support for Essex, [make a donation here](#).