

Western's

Parent Connection 2019



An unexpected path

When Nicole Baranowski, BA'19, started at Western in kinesiology and sport management, she planned to become a physiotherapist. Little did she know her path would transform her into a budding entrepreneur.

During a course on entrepreneurship and kinesiology, her class was tasked with identifying a problem they faced. "The only thing I could think of was how my long hair wouldn't stay out of the way when I exercised," she said.

Her problem struck a chord with her classmates, so she developed a business plan, pitched it to her professor and a visiting panel and soon had prototypes for HairStrong, a customizable hair band. Unlike conventional hair ties that rely on elastic tension, HairStrong's no-slide design clips and tightens to lock hair into a ponytail or bun.

Baranowski registered the business and was subsequently accepted into the summer program at Propel, Western's Entrepreneurship accelerator, which has been instrumental to growing her business. "They've really guided me along. If I had questions, I would go in and talk to the business analyst who would

walk me through next steps because I didn't know anything about business," she laughed.

Prior to pursuing her entrepreneurial dreams, she also received donor-funded financial awards, which enabled her to branch out further and consider even more challenges.

Although she had never rowed before, she signed up for the novice program and subsequently joined Western's varsity rowing team. "The awards helped me focus intently on both rowing and school. I still took a part-time job and a work-study position, but I didn't have to work as much," she said.

Baranowski plans to begin a Master's program in management at the Ivey Business School in January 2020 and continue growing her business. She already has a Mustangs team order for purple HairStrong bands.

"Coming into university, I relied on OSAP loans. My parents don't have a lot of money, I don't have a lot of money, so everything I've received from the University and its donors has helped decrease the stress involved with studying, with school, with everything," she said.

Why do I support Western?

"I support Western because my daughter is a student at the University (first year Med-Sci). Her experience at Western has been a very positive one and as a parent I appreciate the fact that she was able to get involved and was made to feel welcome through the different events and activities that the University provides."

David Tunikaitis, Parent of a Western student

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Meet Western's new president



It's a great honour to lead a storied institution that ranks among the world's top 200 research-intensive universities.

And it's evident to me that your son or daughter has made a great decision in choosing Western.

We aim to provide students the best learning experience possible. From award-winning teachers and world-class researchers, to an expanding array of community-based and international learning opportunities, Western offers something for everyone. We challenge students to challenge themselves, to share their energy and knowledge, and to make sense of the world in new and interesting ways.

But we can always do more – especially with your help.

Last year more than 900 parents donated to The Parents' Fund, enabling us to support more students with bursaries, scholarships and academic awards than ever before. You can read about the impact of those gifts in this newsletter.

Thanks for considering how your gift could change a student's life. I wish your daughter or son great success in their studies and future endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Shepard'.

Dr. Alan Shepard
President & Vice-Chancellor
Western University

Western Engineering Student Endowment Laboratory Fund

Engineers work across diverse areas of industry, many that depend heavily on technology. Anyone who owns any electronic device knows technology is constantly changing, morphing and improving – challenging everyone to keep up with the latest offerings.

Western Engineering prides itself on preparing graduates to join the industry of their choice, keep pace with developments and assume leadership roles. To hit the ground running, they must be familiar with the latest technological developments.

The Western Engineering Student Endowment Laboratory (WESEL) fund was initiated by the Undergraduate Engineering Society (UES) in 2012 to respond to the increasing need to renew and update Western Engineering's undergraduate laboratory facilities.

Each year, more than 80 per cent of engineering students voluntarily contribute \$50 of their student fee to WESEL, and Western Engineering alumni have contributed almost \$70,000 to date.

Since its inception, the fund has grown from \$35,000 to over \$610,000 in capital and disbursed



Matthew Tutty, front row centre, with his fellow 2019-2020 Undergraduate Engineering Society members.

over \$114,000 for upgrades. The Faculty's goal is to grow the fund to \$1 million and beyond.

The fund committee – made up of students, faculty, staff and an alumnus – reviews applications and decides on the equipment to be purchased with the allocation for expenditure. Often, departments whose labs receive upgrades will match the grant money allocated, doubling the impact of the fund.

With a voice on the fund committee, students see first-hand how their contributions are used to benefit students today and shape the future of Western Engineering.

"Western Engineering students are proud to donate to the WESEL fund as we see the direct impact it has on our learning," said Matthew Tutty, BSc, HBA candidate, and incoming 2019-2020 UES President. "I appreciate the recent improvements to the chemical engineering laboratories, which allowed me to transfer the theory and knowledge gained from lectures into practice. This hands-on experience augmented my understanding and helped me in summer work placements," he said.

The WESEL fund ensures Western Engineering laboratories keep pace with technological advances, enabling students to become familiar with the tools of industry and giving them the opportunity to create, explore and potentially develop novel solutions to real-world problems.

Western strengths

Teaching



Aleksandra Zecevic

Professor, School of Health Studies
International Brightspace Innovation Award in Teaching and Learning, 2015

Western's global and community-engaged learning initiatives teach students to exercise social, political and environmental responsibility at home and abroad. Our faculty members have been recognized with the highest number of 3M National Teaching Fellowships in Ontario, and our Centre for Teaching and Learning is recognized internationally for its evidence-based faculty development approach and intercultural teaching programs.

When Health Studies professor Aleksandra Zecevic walks into her classroom, she has one thing in mind – serve the needs of her students. In her classroom, she doesn't stand and teach, rather she challenges the students to learn the content and teach each other.

"Teaching is a business of changing people's lives. In my Aging Body course, students work in teams to create a Mobile Aging Simulation Lab to evoke empathy and explore effects of aging on health and function. Students first teach each other and then engage community members. My international course on Aging Globally involves students in cross-Atlantic interdisciplinary collaboration to explore health systems in Canada, Sweden and Norway."

Racing towards a career

Donor support enables deserving students like Donato Rosati to experience game-changing opportunities while pursuing a world-class education at Western. Rosati completed an internship with Racing Point F1 (formerly Sahara Force India Formula One) in Silverstone, UK as part of Western Law's Internship Program. "The generosity of Western's donors and alumni means everything to me because this experience would not have been possible without them," said Rosati. "My internship was instrumental in opening doors to future career opportunities that I probably would have never even dreamed of a short while ago."

Donato Rosati
Western Law student
Intern at Racing Point F1, Silverstone, UK



Research



Greg Kopp

Professor, Faculty of Engineering
Lead researcher, Northern Tornadoes Project

Western ranks as one of Canada's top research-intensive universities. From fundamental to applied discovery, Western has a long history of leadership in research that produces tangible, global impacts on health, culture, environment and economies.

Greg Kopp, professor of Engineering, is helping pave the way for Western to become Canada's leading authority on tornado tracking, research and analysis. If a tornado touches down in Canada, he won't be far behind. As the lead researcher for the Northern Tornadoes Project, Kopp aspires to identify every Canadian tornado in 2019. Using the latest radar and satellite technology and high-resolution aerial surveys, he is learning from each event in the most comprehensive analysis ever undertaken in Canada.

"I'm excited and looking forward to continuing to advance our research collaborations to drive the national and international impact of this important work," said Kopp. "Better understanding of tornado occurrence and intensity will allow engineers to better design structures for the risk and meteorologists to provide effective warnings."



Living her dream

Olivia Lemenchick, BScN'19, received the Charles and Louise Hanes Continuing Award in the final three years of her nursing degree. She credits the donor support with helping her achieve her goal of becoming a compassionate nurse.

Sitting by her grandmother's bedside in the hospital, Olivia Lemenchick, BScN'19, knew she'd picked the right career.

"I saw how amazing the nurses were, and I knew I wanted to be that kind of nurse. That comforting, supportive nurse that comes in, checks on the patient and family and helps support them through their health-care journey."

Her grandmother was in the final stages of cancer at the time, and Lemenchick had just finished her first year in Western's nursing program.

Today, she's a recent graduate, and full-time Registered Nurse at London Health Sciences Centre's adult cancer care program. Witnessing the compassionate care her grandmother received in her final days solidified Lemenchick's resolve to become a nurse.

But it was donor support that helped make her dream a reality.

Starting in the second year of her degree, Lemenchick received the Charles and Louise Hanes Continuing Award, which is given to undergraduate students based on academic achievement and demonstrated financial need. It continues each year, provided recipients meet certain academic requirements and continue to have financial need.

Over the course of her final three years of school, Lemenchick received more than \$16,000.

"It made a huge difference. I was funding my own schooling, and I wanted to do well, but money is a huge stress. Knowing I had that kind of pressure off my back was an enormous relief."

She continued working part time during her studies but reduced the number of hours. She used the newfound time to volunteer at the hospital as a liaison between doctors in the

Intensive Care Unit and patient family members in the waiting room.

"Family members would be in a distraught state. The unknown is scary, so keeping them updated and being with them so they're not alone in the waiting room was important to me."

In addition to volunteering, Lemenchick also became a member of the Faculty of Health Sciences Students' Council and was invited to join Sigma Theta Tau – an international honours society of nursing – because of her success in school.

Donor support, said Lemenchick, was a key part of it all.

"It was so important, and it made me a better nurse," she said. "I'd encourage anyone to donate to Western – you might be the reason someone is able to live out their dreams."

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