



Western

Annual **IMPACT**

2017 REPORT TO ANNUAL DONORS

Along for her ‘exciting ride’

In her first year, Avery Lafortune jumped at the opportunity to take part in Alternative Spring Break in the Dominican Republic.

In her second year, she spent five weeks participating in a community service learning opportunity in Rwanda. In her third year, she spent a semester abroad studying at the University of Sydney in Australia.

And, in her fourth year, she stayed put.

Of course she didn't.

Just this past summer, the recent School for Advanced Studies in Arts & Humanities (SASAH) graduate, joined the Vindolanda Field School for a six-week, immersive, hands-on Roman archeological dig in England.

"It's been an exciting ride," said Lafortune, BA'17. "I have truly enjoyed learning in Western lecture halls and tutorial sessions, but there are things you cannot learn in the classroom. You cannot learn through a textbook how to feel the difference between samian pottery and stone. Slides in a lecture hall cannot convey the true beauty or sheer vastness of the landscape surrounding a fort built hundreds of years ago. To learn these things, we need to experience them."

Lafortune benefited from a Global Opportunities Award to help balance out the costs associated with the trip to Rwanda.

Since the awards program was launched in 2012, more than \$900,000 has been raised from 76 generous donors. In the 2016/17 academic year, 160 students received Global Opportunities Awards in support of their international learning.

While Lafortune might have been able to

find a way to fund the journey on her own, she said the award allowed her the flexibility to seize subsequent international excursions to see first-hand what she studied in class.

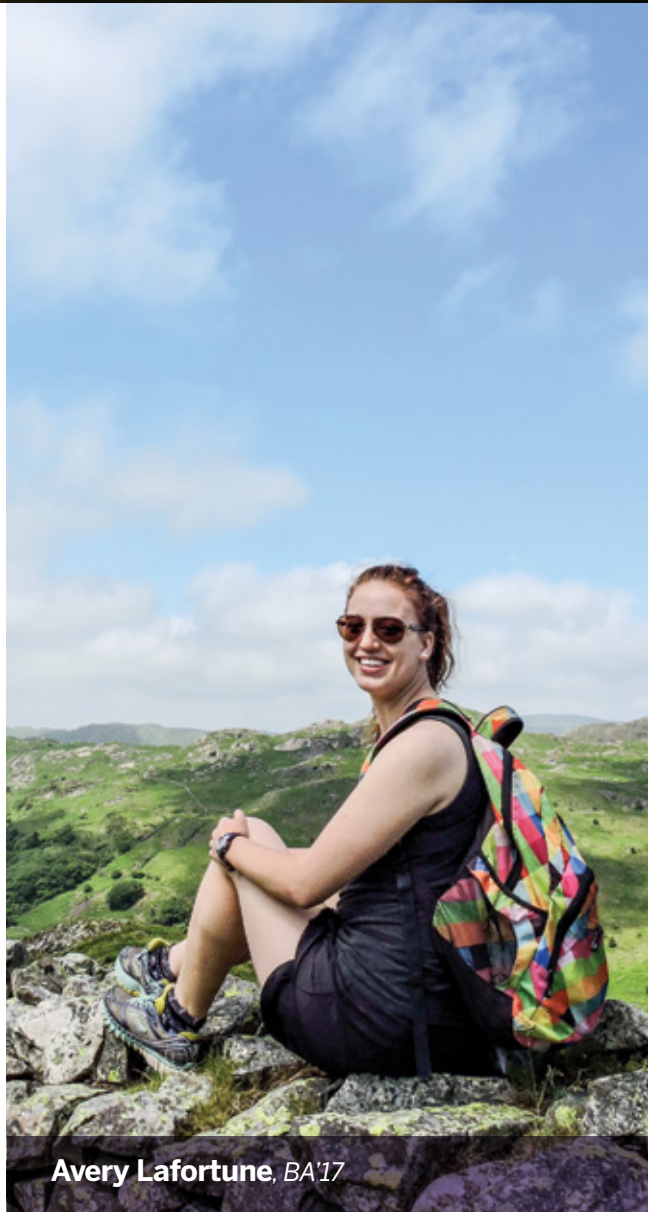
"As students, we are presented with so many amazing opportunities but, at the same time, it can be difficult to navigate university, make the most of our time here and budget responsibly," she said. "Donor support has allowed me to partake in more life-changing Western experiences than I would have thought possible. Awards allow students to take advantage of these opportunities – some of which are once-in-a-lifetime – without going further into debt.

"It is so important that Western's international experiences be available to all students, not just those who can afford them."

Today, Lafortune feels it's crucial to learn about other cultures and ways of life – to see the value in differences. The international opportunities she's had throughout her undergraduate career have afforded her that first-hand perspective; she's thankful for the role donors have played in providing those to her.

"It is wonderful to know there are donors who value these experiences. Because of their generosity, students can explore, learn and experience other parts of the world. I hope it inspires many of the students who have received awards to pay it forward when they are able to do so.

"We must support each other, especially younger generations still finding their footing in the world."



Avery Lafortune, BA'17

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Be Extraordinary.

The Campaign for Western

Considering the sum of your gifts



The best experience means something different to every student.

For some, it's immersing themselves in a new culture and giving back to a community halfway around the world. For others, it's being part of a supportive team and excelling in athletics. For more still, it's engaging in extra-curricular activities and in-depth research alongside top scholars.

In all cases, support from donors, alumni and friends to our Annual & Leadership Giving program enables students to take advantage of these opportunities. In the 2016-17 academic year, you, along with more than 25,700 donors, contributed more than \$10.1 million to let Western students define that best experience for themselves.

In this issue of Annual Impact, you will see how it all adds up.

How about when more than 400 donors came together to provide a free breakfast for students during exam time? That added up for students when half of the donation bought breakfast, and half went to the Wellness Education Centre to support a safe, comfortable campus environment.

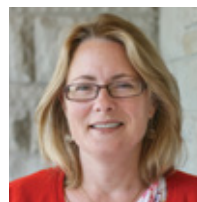
Then there are Cindy Clarke, BA'93, LLB'97, and Chris Osborne, BSc'93, MSc'94. Their gift added up when they established a Western

Law entrance award celebrating diversity and leadership and ensuring that Law students feel like they have a home at Western.

Or what about Avery Lafortune, BA'17? For her, your gifts added up by allowing her to engage in community-service learning across the globe each year of her undergraduate degree. You shaped her global perspective and enhanced her academic experience.

And finally, what about Spencer Lalonde, MD'16? Your gifts helped this second-year Medical resident conducting research with heart transplant patients by easing the sizable financial burden that comes with becoming a cardiologist.

With your continued support, our students will define what the Western Experience means to them and make their time on campus count. It all adds up when you see the big picture.



Sincerely,

Kendra Lealess

Executive Director, Annual & Leadership Giving

The cost of fundraising

Western University is committed to openness and transparency in our fundraising and charitable operations.

Our three-year average cost per dollar is just 12 cents for each dollar raised, well below the Canada Revenue Agency recommended threshold of 35 per cent. No funds received from donors are used for fundraising expenses. All fundraising expenses are supported by the University.

Annual donor recognition

The Leaders' Circles recognize Western's generous donors who make gifts of \$1,000 up to \$24,999 during each fiscal year. Benefits of membership include invitations to Western events, special communications and recognition on our donor board in Alumni Hall and online.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS INCLUDE:

- *Deans' Circle, annual donors of \$1,000 to \$2,499*
- *President's Circle, annual donors of \$2,500 to \$4,999*
- *Governors' Circle, annual donors of \$5,000 to \$9,999*
- *Chancellor's Circle, annual donors of \$10,000 to \$24,999*

Individual donors who cumulatively give \$25,000 or more are recognized in The 1878 Societies. For more information on Western's donor recognition programs, please visit:

giving.westernu.ca/your-impact/recognition



Getting to the heart of it all

After volunteering with liver transplant patients and, later, the heart transplant team at Toronto General Hospital, Spencer Lalonde, MD'16, knew his career path lay in medicine and cardiology.

"Ever since then, I've had an interest in advanced heart failure and transplantation, mainly because of the huge impact you can have on someone's life," said Lalonde, who entered his second year of internal medicine residency at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. "You can have somebody on death's door – unable to get out of bed, unable to move, unable to walk – and they're often only 40 or 50 years old. With a mechanical heart or a transplant, you can see them have a whole new lease on life. Seeing the impact it has on them and their loved ones; that's why I love cardiology and transplantation."

Lalonde was recently named the 2017 Dr. John D. Brown Memorial Resident Award recipient, which recognizes a postgraduate trainee who displays excellence in patient-centred care.

"I just feel honoured to be a part of the program, let alone being a part of people's lives like this. I love doing research and may use some of the funds from the award to go to a conference and present the next project I'm working on – some may also go to my debt."

As a Medical student, Lalonde relied on donor support to help ease the financial burden that comes with becoming a doctor. "A lot of us are \$100,000-\$150,000 in debt just to get out of medical school. Donor support means the difference in being able to travel to a conference or focus on studying, instead of having that financial cloud looming over you.

While there are many years of training still ahead of him, Lalonde is thankful for the supportive environment he's found at Western and thrilled to eventually become a cardiologist.

"My mom is a nurse. Although she never tried to sway me one way or another, when she shared stories and I saw the impact she had on people's lives, I was drawn to the field. I love what I do and I would never trade it for the world."



Taking advantage of everything

Khalid Backtash realized he was meant to be a civil engineer – shortly after graduating from his Medical Science program.

In 2013, Backtash, BMSc'09, BESC'17, became an undergraduate student for the second time. With a Medical Science degree in hand, and now pursuing an Engineering degree, he was determined to take advantage of every opportunity inside and outside the classroom.

"When I was in Medical Science, I prioritized working and having money – so I could get by – over my academics and extra-curricular activities. When I came back, I wanted to take advantage of the student experience that Western offers. When I did, I grew personally and academically. It made my learning experience better; I gained the motivation to keep at it."

Throughout his four years in Engineering, Backtash volunteered with Western's Foot Patrol, Western Serves, the Undergraduate Engineering Society and at a nursing home in the community. He wouldn't have been able to do so, however, without the support of donor-funded scholarships, bursaries and awards.

"I'm fortunate donors made it possible for me to prioritize my schooling and extra-curricular commitments. It was challenging for me, at times, not knowing whether I was going to get a scholarship, which would have meant I wouldn't have been able to pay my tuition," he explained. "Every penny I've received has allowed me to give back by being involved in on-campus activities and by focusing on my academics – and doing even better than I even expected."

Backtash was on the honour list each of the four years of his Engineering degree and graduated this spring with distinction. In addition to the financial support, he is thankful for the acknowledgement that comes with receiving an award.

"It's wonderful to know someone is out there watching out for you, helping you achieve your potential and focus your efforts where it's needed most. I can't thank donors enough. I am looking forward to being in a financial position to start a fund or give back because of what I've received here at Western."



Leaping into university

Up until Grade 11, Paige Doyle lived and breathed Irish dancing. A week after hanging up her dancing shoes, however, she decided she needed a new challenge – and took up track and field.

"After I stopped dancing, I needed to be competing," said Doyle, a student entering her second-year of social science at King's University College and member of the Western Mustangs Track and Field team. "I did track and cross-country when I was in elementary and high school. I just liked that whole atmosphere and was pretty good at it."

Doyle, whose main event is the triple-jump, but who also competes in sprints and 400-metre hurdles, has found being a Mustang has enhanced her Western experience beyond what she even expected.

"The team is awesome. The coaches are amazing and everyone is so supportive. Getting to train six days a week was pretty fun and competing with the team was a great experience, because I've never really had such a supportive group of people around me," she said.

As a student-athlete, Doyle has benefited tremendously from the support of student awards.

"Having that support was really big. I'm one of four kids and it can be hard to get by. My parents pay for my tuition, but I pay for residence, my textbooks and all my living expenses. I have a summer job, but it is a challenge throughout the year. I was very lucky to receive scholarships which helped me out a lot."

She also recognizes the impact of team funding through the Adopt A Mustang program.

"Having people there supporting us through donations is amazing. We were able to go to Alberta to compete and if we didn't have donors supporting us, it would have been so hard to travel and participate.

"I just want to express a huge thank you to everyone who supports us – none of it is possible without you."

Donors feed students' stomachs and minds

During the stress and chaos of final exams, 420 Western students were treated to a free, healthy breakfast thanks to a pop-up initiative led by Western Alumni at the University Community Centre (UCC) in April.

Called It's On Me, the outreach effort invited Western alumni to donate \$10 for a \$5-breakfast voucher for a student and \$5 to support Western's Wellness Education Centre (WEC).

In less than 48 hours, the organic social media push saw alumni contribute 420 breakfast vouchers and \$2,100 for WEC, which is housed in the UCC and provides Western students a safe, comfortable environment to get connected with wellness resources on campus and in the community. On the first day, the #ItsOnMe hashtag was trending on social media platforms.

For Western alumna Melanie Peacock, MBA'90, purchasing It's On Me vouchers was a simple gesture for immediate, tangible impact.

"It was such a tremendous thing. It allows us to give back directly to students – right now. It's not just the breakfast to me; it's the encouragement. It's the thought behind the breakfast. The fact they know, 'Not only am I getting a free breakfast, but someone actually cares about me – someone who's been there, done that and is thinking about me.' It's the meaning behind the gesture that's really impactful," she said.

Melanie-Anne Atkins, WEC Wellness Coordinator, was thrilled to see the overwhelming support and success of the campaign.

"What alumni are saying by supporting this appeal is, 'When I was your age, this was really

difficult and I want to make sure things are better for you,'" said Atkins, BEd'10, MEd'12, PhD'16. "That was what was so special about it; having alumni say they'd love the opportunity to take care of someone. I used to have to convince people about the connection between mental health and academic success, but, the fact that alumni are recognizing it and choosing to support it in such a tangible way is exciting."

According to Atkins, the success of appeals like It's On Me highlight a significant cultural shift.

"People are starting to recognize wellness as a holistic concept. This is what we're doing here. We're saying, 'Hey, students, you're not an island and it's not just about academics. For you to be successful, not just at the institution, but in life, all these pieces need attention, love and care. And we can help you figure that out.'"

In the year-and-a-half since WEC opened its doors, the service has grown significantly, from the number of staff members – up to 17 from six – to the number of clients served. In 2016/17, more than 700 client intake forms were completed, with many more people visiting and dropping in to seek advice and take advantage of health and wellness programs.

As the demand continues to increase, Atkins stressed the importance of donations.

"Donor support is critical," she said. "With more funds, we can expand the way we educate the Western community and beyond about wellness. We can have more targeted resources. I can hire more students to do more outreach. We can get better furniture and more useful equipment. Right



Melanie-Anne Atkins
WEC Wellness Coordinator

now, I cannot supervise one more student. We actually have to say no to students who want to be a part of this because I need more help."

Atkins hopes to ramp up mental-health education by increasing capacity with more student volunteers and staff and, eventually, make WEC a research hub specific to wellness education in the postsecondary environment.

"This is not going away," she said. "We need to build a team where everyone knows what I know and feels empowered to spread that message. Then we need to become an applied research hub to front-load prevention and legitimize the importance of mental-health education."

For more information about WEC and its services, visit wec.uwo.ca.

Supporting diversity in law

When Cindy Clarke, BA'93, LLB'97, reflects on her Western Experience, it's the diversity of students and welcoming environment she most appreciates.

To continue to foster that experience for future Western Law students, Clarke, and her husband Chris Osborne, BSc'93, MSc'94, donated \$8,750 to establish the Clarke-Osborne Family Entrance scholarship, awarded annually until the 2021/22 academic year to a full-time undergraduate student entering their first year of Law.

The scholarship is based on academic achievement, leadership and, in particular, preference will be given to an Indigenous student.

"I wouldn't want anyone to think they won't fit in or won't have a home at Western. Diversity is essential and providing Indigenous Canadians with training and opportunities is critically important,"

said Clarke, a partner and National Group Head, Specialized Litigation, with one of Canada's largest law firms Borden Ladner Gervais LLP."

The award was established in loving memory of Clarke's father, the late Honourable Justice Richard N. Clarke, BA'62, LLB'67, who grew up in Moose Factory Island in northern Ontario and had close ties to the local community.

"We wanted to honour his background, his youth and where he came from. He worked with and remained friends with many members of the community – and did a lot to support them."

While Clarke recognizes the award alone will not "solve the problems of the world," she does hope it alleviates some financial pressure and gives students the opportunity to focus on what brings them joy and satisfaction. Above all, she would like entering Law students to feel recognition and

validation for all of their hard work and effort.

"I hope they receive some inspiration and feel they're being acknowledged. Heading into law school is a tricky time. There's all kinds of talk about how it's competitive and the environment is changing and I just want to give them that boost of confidence," Clarke said.

Clarke and Osborne have also supported Western for years, through monthly donations, in support of the institution that brought them together and set them on their current path.

"Both my husband and I recognize Western has provided us a tremendous foundation. The combination of our experience, the education we received and the many, many important friends we made, and continue to have, from Western all contribute to us living a fulfilled life. We want to value that and plan to continue to support it."

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