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Philanthropy is a worthy focus for this issue of acunique

we believe in the empowering nature of education

Australian Catholic University (ACU National) was founded to promote culture and the development of the human person, and our Mission clearly sets out our fundamental concern for justice and equity.

We believe in the empowering nature of education and that educational opportunities should be open to all.

Throughout the world, education is the pathway to knowledge that has many benefits. Education, and particularly tertiary education, nurtures the skills which change lives for the better, not just the lives of those who are educated, but also the individuals and communities those graduates serve in their own lifetime.

At ACU National in particular, with its strengths in education, health and human services, and its focus on ethics in business, arts and sciences, the benefits of education are multiplied again and again.

Those who already give to our University know that giving and receiving, education and discovery, culture and philanthropy are all tightly intertwined.

The gifts one generation gives to another in the field of education are particularly valuable. Such gifts preserve and expand all human knowledge and all its expressions. All these activities are embodied in our University and the lives it touches, now and in the future.

Our University has a long and revered history of philanthropic support. Since its establishment in 1991, ACU National has benefitted from welcome contributions, many from benefactors and donors of the University's predecessor colleges. Equally valued new support has come to our Foundation from those who share our vision as a Australian, Catholic, national university, open to all, emulating the great Catholic universities of the world.

All these supporters understand and value our Mission, and their donations have made much of our Mission-related work possible, internationally in East Timor, on the Thai-Burmese border, and nationally through highly innovative collaborative activities administered by or associated with our newly established Institute for Advancing Community Engagement.

This issue of acunique is an opportunity for us to showcase the difference the generosity of others is making in the lives of our students and in the outreach of our activities. We respect the privacy of those who prefer to give anonymously, and we are also grateful to those who have kindly agreed to let their generosity act as an example, by speaking out about how it feels to give.

Philanthropy is a timely focus. Our University, like all Australian universities, continues to compete for funding in a climate of ever-shrinking government expenditure and ever-rising costs.

Our students pay more for their education than students ever paid at any time in Australia's history, and if we want to remain committed to social justice, the University needs support so it can continue to educate as many students as possible, to help them carry our Mission into the wider world, serving the common good.

Although Australians have shown themselves to be generous, for example making extraordinary donations in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the culture of giving is far more advanced in other countries like the US, where universities benefit more obviously from extensive corporate and individual revenue streams.

At ACU National we are committed to making specific contributions to our local, national and international communities. Yet we know we cannot take on these responsibilities alone.

We welcome your support.

Professor Peter W Sheehan AO
Vice-Chancellor
ACU National’s Foundation Chair in Educational Leadership, created in 1995, has a proud and distinctive history which owes much to the generosity of those sponsors who funded the position in the earliest days of ACU National, Australia’s only national university.

The Chair in Educational Leadership was the University’s first Chair and Professor Patrick Duignan, an award-winning educator and researcher with international experience, was appointed to the position. Professor Duignan has led the way for other departments and schools by creating what became the model of a national school for the University.

“At the time, we had isolated programs in Sydney, Brisbane and Ballarat,” Professor Duignan said. “We first established an internal network of people with an interest and expertise in educational leadership. Together we created the Master’s of Educational Leadership, the first of its kind in Australia.”

As Chair, Professor Duignan has continued to receive numerous accolades, including the 2002 Australian Council for Educational Leader (ACEL) Nganakarrara Award, for excellence in educational administration earning lasting respect and gratitude, for “those who move about, all seeing, all knowing, are knowledgeable and well regarded”.

He also received an ACEL Gold Medal in 2004 for his outstanding national and international contributions to the study and practice of educational administration; the inaugural Microsoft New Zealand Travelling Scholarship in 2005; and the ACEL Distinguished Travelling Scholar Award for 2004/2005 for building greater leadership capability and organisational leadership capacity in educational systems and government and non-government schools in Australia. His latest book, Educational Leadership: Key Challenges and Ethical Tensions (2006) was published by Cambridge University Press. Another book, sponsored by the Commonwealth Government, of positive stories about how school principals have made a real difference for the students in their care, is being edited by Professor Duignan and Dr David Gurr from the University of Melbourne, with copies to be placed in every school in Australia later this year.
Influence continues to grow

The Chair in Educational Leadership was established through the support of generous donors including the Catholic Education Offices of Lismore, Maitland, Parramatta, Sydney and Wollongong; the Christian Brothers; the Marist Brothers; the Sisters of the Good Samaritan; the Sisters of St Joseph; the Friends of St Mary's (Cathedral) and a number of individual donors. Other donors such as Richard and Jeanne Pratt, John and Barbara Ralph and Sir Donald and Lady Trescowthick have generously helped strengthen resources throughout the University.

The Chair’s focus on mission, vision, values, ethics and morality in leadership was extended to the Catholic Educational Leadership Flagship, created at the University in 2000.

When this became the research-strong Flagship for Creative and Authentic Leadership in 2004, the impact of the Chair was extended beyond education to health, welfare and service organisations.

Through close partnerships with dioceses and other organisations in Australia and internationally, and through conferences and other activities, the Chair and the Flagship have touched the lives of a host of leaders, flowing out through them to diverse communities.

The Flagship works closely with the School of Educational Leadership in the Master’s and Doctoral programs. Some 500 students are currently enrolled in the Master’s of Educational Leadership program, the first such degree to be offered in Australia, according to the Foundation Chair, Professor Patrick Duignan, also the Director of the Flagship. A further 40 students are conducting research in the Doctoral Program.

“A lot of people out there say we have changed the landscape of Catholic education, in the sense that the vast majority of people who are in positions to influence future directions, particularly leaders of Catholic systems and schools in Australia, have come through our programs. We have made a difference.”

As Professor Tony D’Arbon, Deputy Director of the Flagship said, “People who undertake our programs go on to translate the social justice aspect of our University’s approach into their own contexts.”

There is little doubt that the original donors’ contributions to the establishment and ongoing financial support of the Chair in Educational Leadership at ACU National has had widespread positive and lasting influence on the development of leadership in Catholic educational systems and schools as well as in a variety of other human service organisations in Australia and internationally.

Educational leadership highlights

• Engaging with diocesan systems across the country and other partner organisations as diverse as the Police, NSW Department of Education and Training, Anglicare, St Vincent de Paul Society, Mission Australia, the Benevolent Society of NSW, Rural Fire Brigade, the European Union, Lutheran Education Australia and Mater Health Services Brisbane, to name but a few

• Creating a web-based International Consortium of Innovative Schools, featuring highly adaptive schools with a commitment to real-life authentic learning, highly responsive to individual learners’ needs, partnerships with parents and recognising teaching excellence

• Working with remote Northern Territory Aboriginal schools and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, through one of its ARC Linkage projects, Linking Worlds, Improving Educational Leadership in Remote Aboriginal Communities for 2005 to 2009

• Providing review services to Catholic education systems in Melbourne, Brisbane, Parramatta and Wagga Wagga, and working on research projects in a large number of dioceses

• Receiving a $423,500 grant from the Australian Government through AusAID’s Australian Leadership Awards Fellowships program for Mastering the new basics in educational leadership: A professional development program in capacity strengthening for educational leaders. Eleven Fellows from Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and East Timor will attend the program at the Strathfield Campus from July 2007

• Hosting the fourth international conference on Directions in Catholic Educational Leadership in the 21st Century: The vision, challenges and reality, at the Sofitel Wentworth Hotel in Sydney from 29 July to 1 August. Details are at www.acu.edu.au/conferences
Among Australia’s most generous couples, Mr Allan Myers QC and his wife Maria have supported a number of ACU National initiatives, including The Allan Myers Chair of Law.

The new Chair will be based at ACU National’s Institute of Legal Studies which has a strong focus on issues of ethical practice and social justice.

Giving widely to causes as diverse as public art, medical research and music, the Meyers consider education of paramount importance.

Education has been the key to Mr Meyers’ own successful career. Born in Hamilton in western Victoria, Allan was the eldest of six children. He completed his primary schooling at the Dunkeld State School and his secondary education at the then recently opened Monivae College, before attending Melbourne University and Oxford University.

Opportunities for education were limited in his parents’ and grandparents’ generations. So when the religious order The Missionaries of The Sacred Heart came to Hamilton in 1954 and opened a secondary school for Catholic boys, his parents were eager for their children to benefit from the fine education offered by the dedicated staff. Now coeducational, the school’s mission and vision still embrace “excellence in education” and encourage all to “reach their unique potential”.

Allan and his brother Michael, who until last year served on the University’s Victorian Chapter with Maria, are among numerous distinguished Monivae alumni.

Those early days made their lives what they are,” Maria said. “They have had the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives because of their early home experiences and their education.”

Allan pursued a shining legal career, practising, arbitrating and lecturing in commercial law, while managing rural interests including farms and hotels on the side.

As his financial means have increased, so have his philanthropic interests. Like ACU National Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Sheehan AO, Mr Myers is a Knight of the Order of Malta “devoted to the exercise of Christian virtue and charity”. Allan was awarded a Centenary Medal for service to philanthropy and to business in 2003.

“Allan believes in education,” Maria said. “And he has always been generous. He grew up modelling himself on his father.
Maria, a social worker who has degrees in arts, social work and law, also gives generously and believes in education. “For me, education is the way to enrich and add meaning to life,” Maria said. “It is the means to live life fully.”

Maria supports a number of Indigenous students as well as contributing to a scholarship for an international student, currently held by Neelofar Rehman who is pursuing a doctorate in Clinical Psychology at ACU National’s Melbourne Campus (see box).

“Whether the support required is emotional, practical or financial, if one can do it, one should. If you find the slightest resistance in yourself to an impulse to give, it is to be overridden. It is never right not to give. The only way to live is giving.”
Former Brisbane Lord Mayor Sallyanne Atkinson AO has a soft spot for the Mater Hospital, which she can see from her apartment window.

Run by the Sisters of Mercy and serving rural Queensland as well as Brisbane, the century-old hospital and its related health services have played a key role in the growth and development of north-eastern Australia.

More personally, Sallyanne said four of her own five babies were born at the hospital, along with eight of her twelve grandchildren.

She also has a soft spot for ACU National. A former Chair of the University’s Queensland Foundation, Sallyanne was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University in 2004 for her extraordinary contribution to Australia’s international reputation as a location for sporting events, and her contribution to government and the community.

She has now thrown her support behind joint efforts by the University and Mater Health Services Brisbane to raise funds to establish a Chair of Midwifery.

When one of her granddaughters was born at the Mater with severe heart problems early last year, she required intense specialist medical expertise and care. Sallyanne realised that while the attention of specialists was rightly focused on sick babies who desperately needed their expertise, healthy mothers delivering healthy babies could be well served by highly trained and dedicated midwives.

“Midwifery needs to be honoured and celebrated and given the academic standing it deserves,” Sallyanne said.

The shared Catholic values of Mater Health Services Brisbane and ACU National made them “logical” partners in creating and sustaining the new Chair, she said.

“Midwifery is enormously important because it involves producing healthy children, and it richly deserves our support.”

Midwifery has gained status internationally as a specialised field of practice and research, a distinctive career option, and a way of addressing the need for continuing evidence-based innovation based on sound academic research.

The establishment of this Chair is expected to position Queensland at the leading edge of midwifery research and development.
ACU National Chair of Philosophy
Professor Raimond Gaita is an internationally distinguished philosopher whose books have been translated into many languages.

He is also a public intellectual known for his focus on ethics and on the relations between ethics and politics. His time with ACU National, supported by the Archdiocese of Melbourne, has been “a very fruitful period”.

Professor Gaita and his colleagues in the University’s School of Philosophy continue to turn the spotlight onto “human value”, exploring torture, war, dignity, enlightenment, honesty in politics, genocide and racism, through public lectures, including the Simone Weil national lecture series.

He makes headlines regularly, be it for his books, including the popular Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception and more recent acclaimed book and film, Romulus, My Father, or for his appearances at events such as the Sydney Writers’ Festival and as a commentator on moral philosophy on television and radio.

Philosophy is vital to universities, he believes. “In any institution that wants seriously to call itself a university there should be a strong and flourishing department of philosophy, and in a Catholic university, philosophy and theology go hand in hand, each nourishing the other,” Professor Gaita said.

“Since its beginnings, philosophy has concerned itself with the question, ‘how should one live?’ The Catholic tradition has long concerned itself with the same question and has provided distinctly Catholic answers to it. At its deepest, however, the philosophy of morality aims primarily at understanding this strange phenomenon we call morality and its connections with other kinds of value.”

For Professor Gaita, philosophy, history, literature and the social sciences should inform each other, and he laments what he has seen as the shrinking of humanities departments in universities in recent decades.

“They are rightly called the humanities because in their different ways they are fundamental to an understanding of our humanity. “M any students now seem desperately concerned with money and status.”

Many of them want to study law and medicine, not because they care for justice or believe they have a vocation for healing, but for the money and therefore the status they bring, he believes.

“Socrates said that ‘the unexamined life is unworthy of a human being’. I think he was right this far: a life lived without a concern to be lucid about its meaning is a diminished life and one that dishonours our humanity. I do think it’s a terrible thing to go through life without any understanding of what it is to be human. When I think of how privileged I was to have a really good university education in which values were deeply embedded in university life and education, and what an inspiration that was to me and many others, it makes me almost weep bitter tears to think to what degree my generation, so privileged, has betrayed future generations, even our own children.

“From many fine young people at university I keep hearing that their experience has been, for the most part, bereft of inspiration. Very few tell stories of how inspiring their university years have been. But I think in Australia people are realising that money doesn’t necessarily make you happy.”

He cautions against what he calls “popular philosophy” which he feels can trivialise a discipline with an otherwise noble history. “It is good to be excited by ideas, but what matters most is to care for the truth. But to really care for it one must be intellectually serious. I know that may sound puritanical. It is important to read the great philosophers, because in them you see what it really is to care for the truth. You see that philosophy is not merely a distinctive set of problems, but also a distinctive orientation to truth and truthfulness. I would call it a spiritual orientation.”

Professor Gaita works part of the year as Professor of Moral Philosophy at King’s College London. He spends part of each year in Australia with ACU National.

“I love my teaching, in philosophy in particular, and I have enormous confidence in young people.”
“Education is absolutely indispensable for everything we do,” he said. “In a fundamental sense, education is important because it is the basis of a just society. Education gives us the ability to choose, to distinguish between right and wrong. In the end, it’s a moral undertaking.

“In the tradition of all the great faiths, and in all civilisations worthy of the name, the moral underpinnings of each society require knowledge, and knowledge requires education. Education allows us to make choices, not just as a democracy, in elections, but all the time.

“From an economic point of view, education is an investment in the future, because an illiterate society will never grow wealthy.”

Having raised three children and educated them at nine schools, Sam and his wife value choice in education. “It’s not just one size fits all.”

Sam distinguishes between education and technical training, which, however sophisticated, he sees as vocational.

“Education is preparation for life. It is about morality, justice and liberty. Education is fundamental and profound. Modern society is unthinkable without education.”
On Indigenous education

The Pratt Foundation supports many innovative approaches to improving educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians, including, at ACU National, the Indigenous Reflection Space at the Brisbane Campus and an Indigenous postgraduate bursary.

In 1965, as a young journalist reporting for The Bulletin on the Freedom Ride which exposed discrimination against Indigenous people in NSW country towns, Sam got to know the late Charles Perkins, who went on to become Australia’s first Indigenous head of a government department, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, in 1981.

“I have a very vivid recollection of Charlie being the first Aboriginal person to graduate from an Australian university, 110 years after our first universities were established. That’s a pretty appalling statistic.

“The good thing is that since then thousands of young Indigenous students have graduated from virtually every Australian university, taking their place in the wider society in the decision making and more elite circles, participating in political and public life as leaders and directors.

“It has been a great revolution, but there is a vast amount more that needs to happen in Indigenous education.”

On why governments should encourage donors

In a climate of shrinking government expenditure in the tertiary sector, Australia’s 38 universities are under increasing pressure to raise their own funds.

Sam felt the Federal Government’s recently announced $5 billion Higher Education Endowment Fund (HEEF) was a step in the right direction, particularly if donors could earmark funds for their choice of university. However, other measures were needed. Some corporations would expect to see their own branding.

To encourage businesses to give more to universities, the government should investigate giving preferred supplier status to companies showing social responsibility, for example, as well as offering rebates, incentives and bonds.

“Tax rebates for the film industry at one stage were 130 per cent. The government must give incentives to encourage more corporations and individuals to support universities.”
RSL LifeCare ACU National Professor of Ageing Dr Tracey McDonald is in a unique position to raise the profile of the care, treatment and safety of ageing ex-servicemen and women and their families, as well as aged care in the wider community.

RSL LifeCare, which fully funds the position, decided to create the Chair of Ageing in 2005 to deepen its relationship with the University, recognised as a leader in the aged care industry.

“The partnership is quite a nice marriage,” said RSL LifeCare Director Susanne Macri AM, adding that Dr McDonald was known to “push the boundaries” in the field of ageing.

RSL LifeCare is focused on providing the best possible care for veteran residents, as well as preventing health breakdown and maintaining social networks that promote health.

“Society owes veterans an awful lot, not just the veterans from WWI and WWII and Vietnam Veterans. We also have soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor coming through. “Their circumstances are unique. You only have to speak with some of our residents to realise they are extremely special, and they do have special needs. RSL LifeCare wants to be doing great things for the village, for village residents and for the industry.”

Susanne, who was awarded an honorary doctorate from ACU National earlier this year for her services to aged care, described the field as “the Cinderella of health”, but added that medical and allied health care professionals were starting to recognise it as an integral part of health.

“As a leader in the field, we are glad to contribute to new knowledge and the raising of awareness. As RSL LifeCare ACU National Chair of Ageing, Dr McDonald fulfils this role brilliantly.”
As well as speaking on ageing at international conferences and with policy makers, Dr McDonald’s unique position involves generating and overseeing research into aged care at the RSL ANZAC Village, also known as the War Vets Village, in Narrabeen on Sydney’s northern beaches.

Current research projects involve staff, visitors and “the whole village”. They include:
- The effects of introducing residents to email and the internet
- Relationships between post traumatic stress disorder and dementia
- Investigating how taking part in organised activities affects sleep and physical safety
- The uptake of contemporary aged care practices among registered nursing staff.

After several decades specialising in aged care and social policy, Dr McDonald has noticed two tendencies in relation to ageing.

“Some people adapt to the realities of ageing and maximise their options within those constraints,” Dr McDonald said. “Others cling to a desire to be something else, that even with massive effort will probably never be realised, and some can become very despondent.”

Dr McDonald believes that most Australians will age more gracefully than ever before, thanks to improved inoculation, better education and diets, fewer accidents and trauma, and the prevalence of peace and prosperity.

Even so, many appear to resist the idea of ageing. “There are ‘anti-ageing’ products and drugs, but if we believe too desperately that with the right drugs we can reverse ageing, it can be really depressing. Such desperation could actually be distracting you from the reality and the joy of your current life.”

“I’m not saying don’t pursue a healthy lifestyle, but people move through stages in their life, and each stage has its own benefits and wonders and rewards.

“We each need to be in the moment of where we are, not pining for something in the past.

“Realistic judgement is one of the best things we can develop as we age. With wisdom comes a realistic sense of who you are, where you are and what you can do.”
When Mark McCall’s wife Elizabeth Ann McCall, 41, was tragically killed in a collision with a bus on 27 April last year, Mark wanted to find a way to ensure her passion for social justice continued to find expression.

Establishing the Elizabeth Ann McCall Scholarship for first-year education students at ACU National’s Brisbane Campus, to encourage and reward involvement in social justice issues, has allowed Mark and his sons Sam, 13, and Tom, 11, a moment of joy.

Both Mark and Elizabeth were education graduates of McAuley College, a predecessor college of ACU National’s Brisbane Campus. Elizabeth graduated in 1984, and Mark in 1986.

They shared a belief in the power of education to change the world for the better. Aware of their own good fortune in “an unfair and unequal world”, both wanted to raise awareness of injustices, and enlighten and empower their students.

“Elizabeth was outwardly very gentle and quiet, but she had fire and passion, and she always wanted to know the truth,” said Mark, a teacher at St Martin’s Primary School in Carina, Brisbane. “She was very well read, and always active in campaigning for justice, fairness and equity.”

Elizabeth taught at St Peter’s Primary School in Rochedale, Brisbane, where she was active in bringing social justice issues to the attention of her colleagues and made sure the children’s uniforms were manufactured under award wage conditions. She was also a busy member of her St Peter’s Rochedale Parish social justice group, and actively represented her colleagues within the Queensland Independent Education Union (QIEU).

The Union has established an award in her honour, and donations in Elizabeth’s name were given to Caritas at her funeral, but Mark wanted to do more.

Seeking his own way “to do something positive for her memory”, Mark worked with ACU National Manager of Fundraising and Development Bea Brickhill to create the Elizabeth Ann McCall Scholarship “not just to remember Elizabeth, but to carry on her good work”.

He recognised that a scholarship had the power to influence young people who were going into the field of education.

“I wanted to touch the future, to create a better world. Educating for social justice is the responsibility of teachers. It’s not something we should shy away from.” The scholarship is open to students who have already demonstrated an interest in social justice. “The scholarship will be an encouragement for them to keep that going.”

“Elizabeth had a great concern for the world. We saw our jobs as teachers as an ideal opportunity to tell the truth about things we should all know and to use our influence in a truthful and appropriate way.

“Being a teacher was a really strong vocation for both of us, and we had ACU National in common in our own education.”

Mark described finalising the $2,500 scholarship as the first thing he has enjoyed doing since Elizabeth died.

“Setting this up really made me feel that I was doing something positive in Elizabeth’s memory. She would have wanted to be remembered for social justice, for being truthful and fair, and for doing what’s right.”
When education student Meenu Fernando (pictured second from left) won a travelling scholarship to gain work experience at a school on the outskirts of Darwin, her eyes were opened to a rich Indigenous culture she would love to see shared with all primary school students in Australia.

Meenu returned to the Melbourne Campus of ACU National fired with ideas to promote social justice, use Smartboard technology in imaginative new ways, and immerse herself in the Indigenous way of life on completing her Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) degree at the end of this year.

“I want to live on the land with the Aboriginal Elders for a year and get the knowledge of these people and their ancestors to not only use in the classroom but also integrate it into wider society,” said Meenu, whose fascination with Indigenous ways was fuelled by her own experiences arriving in Australia at the age of seven, an immigrant from Sri Lanka.

“One initially feels disparate, isolated and helpless,” she confided. “This feeling of inadequacy was something that I dealt with and fought to overcome. Initially it was hard, as nobody else around me was in a similar situation, but through education and schooling, I learnt that the first people of this land are also experiencing a similar sense of isolation from the people around them.”

Meenu said she was shocked and then embarrassed to realise that Indigenous Australians so often felt like outsiders in their own land.

“I feel as a teacher and an immigrant I have a unique opportunity to help bridge the gap between these two cultures in working towards reconciliation.”

Meenu is excited by the possibilities of Smartboard technology. “A child in Melbourne can talk to a fellow student in Darwin,” she said. “I want to try to make a connection, with the information technology being used widely by teachers and kids.”

She dreams of benefits for “Western” school pupils, Indigenous children, and those in third world countries alike.

“You can get a mix of people with diverse backgrounds, and everyone is learning from each other.”

Such communication would enhance respect and appreciation of the similarities and differences in their young lives, and make learning about geography, mathematics and history more real, memorable, meaningful and relevant, she believes.

Meenu also feels the experience would help children in the city better appreciate their material advantages, accept responsibility for improving social justice, and help them respect the life skills that children in other cultures must master.

The travel grant, awarded by the Sarah Frawley Memorial Trust, honours the memory of Sarah Frawley, a teacher education student at the ACU National Melbourne Campus who died suddenly in 2001 aged 19.

Sarah was an adventurous young woman who had a keen interest in travelling. She had the opportunity to travel to Bathurst Island and other Indigenous communities with her uncle not long before she passed away and was inspired by culture and schools she saw in these communities.

It is in honour of her life and sense of adventure that her family presents this travel scholarship every two years to a third-year education student.
**rural riches**

**Sharing inspiration**

A new $50,000 scholarships fund will help rural and regional students from Queensland attend ACU National’s Brisbane Campus. The Gleeson Family Scholarship, established by well-known Townsville broadcaster and community identity Jack Gleeson AM and awarded annually, will provide deserving undergraduate scholars with $4,000 for up to four years. Mr Gleeson’s daughter, Catherine McComiskie, said her family was glad to support the scholarship.

“Ability to succeed in tertiary education and the professions is not limited to the children of ‘well to do’ families or to those living in urban areas,” she said.

“Extraordinary service” and opportunities for others

A new $50,000 scholarships fund will help rural and regional students from Queensland attend ACU National’s Brisbane Campus. The Gleeson Family Scholarship, established by well-known Townsville broadcaster and community identity Jack Gleeson AM and awarded annually, will provide deserving undergraduate scholars with $4,000 for up to four years. Mr Gleeson’s daughter, Catherine McComiskie, said her family was glad to support the scholarship.

“Ability to succeed in tertiary education and the professions is not limited to the children of ‘well to do’ families or to those living in urban areas,” she said.

“Creation of real wealth for the nation is achieved by primary production, mining, grazing and so on. The rest of the population simply turn the money over. As a family we highly value further education and vocational training as a means to open doors for opportunities for personal growth and a secure and challenging future.”

Mr Gleeson valued his own educational opportunities at Sisters of Mercy primary schools and Christian Brothers colleges and through his business management studies and technical training at the Marconi School of Wireless and the Australian Radio
George Alexander AM, no stranger to hard work, the rural life, and the value of education, takes a genuine interest in the progress of scholars. Now in his 90s, Mr Alexander established The George Alexander Foundation in 1972. The Foundation has established many scholarship programs across Australia to help talented young people make the most of their abilities, including the new George Alexander Foundation Scholarships for first-year students at the University’s Ballarat Campus from rural or regional areas of Victoria.

George was just 16 when he came to rural Victoria from England in 1926, sponsored by the Big Brother Movement, first working at a dairy farm near Koroit, then at a wheat farm in the Wimmera district during a crippling drought.

He travelled to Melbourne in 1930 as the Great Depression unfolded, hungry and desperate for work. His deft intelligence helped him secure work as a mechanic back in Koroit, and then in Geelong, where he built on his skills by studying at evening classes at the Gordon Institute of Technology.

By the late 1930s he was working full time in an engineering factory and teaching automotive engineering, machine shop theory and practice, mathematics and science in the evenings. He continued to learn about foremanship and management, which he also started to teach.

“By the end of the war George had obtained great experience in practical engineering as well as valuable academic qualifications,” according to a book on his life, The little brother, by Peter Yule.

By 1947, George was living in Melbourne. He designed and patented brass hose fittings for newly invented plastic garden hoses, and set up Neta Industries Pty Ltd to manufacture them. His business prospered, and when he sold it in 1972 and moved to Queensland with his wife, Ethel, to explore property development, he began to make donations to educational institutions, setting up the George Alexander Foundation Scholarship Scheme in 2001.

“George believes that philanthropy is something that needs to be encouraged and he hopes that his example will show others that it can be enjoyed while you are still around to see it happen,” Peter wrote, later quoting George’s idea of “planting seeds and hoping that they grow into pretty big trees”.

George hopes that the scholars’ community leadership in years to come is the most lasting of his legacies.

For more information on supporting prizes, scholarships and bursaries at ACU National, please visit: www.acu.edu.au/scholarships

College in Sydney, where foundations were laid for his successful career in mass media communication.

Mr Gleeson was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1985 for his service to the radio and television broadcasting industry. In 1997, he was invested as a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, and in 2003 promoted to a Knight Commander of that Order.

In awarding Mr Gleeson the University’s highest honour, an honorary doctorate in 2005, ACU National Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Sheehan AO described Mr Gleeson’s life as “one of extraordinary service to the community, family, church and society”.

Preference will be given to scholarship applicants from rural and regional Queensland, particularly from the Townsville Catholic Diocese, and those who are socially or economically disadvantaged.

For more information on supporting prizes, scholarships and bursaries at ACU National, please visit: www.acu.edu.au/scholarships

From ACU National George Alexander Foundation Scholarship winners

“The George Alexander Foundation Scholarship has taken a great deal of pressure off me and my family financially. It has given me a wider range of opportunities such as being able to live close to university. I am extremely grateful for this scholarship.”

Ballarat Campus first-year nursing student Amy McCann, 18, of Geelong

“The scholarship has provided me with an invaluable opportunity. I moved five hours from my home to commence my tertiary education; the scholarship has eased the burden of finding additional means of income and allows me to concentrate my time and efforts on my studies.”

Ballarat Campus first-year primary teaching student Lauren Marie da Graca Costa, 19, of Mildura

“This scholarship will help finance my university life and get me through. It will help with trips home to Mildura, which have been hard to afford. It’s also great to be recognised.”

Ballarat Campus first-year nursing and arts student Christie Hoy of Mildura
PRIZES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

empower students

Catholic Education Office of Canberra and Goulburn scholarship winners, Canberra Campus Bachelor of Education students Natasha Leggett from St Francis Xavier College, Florey (left), Naomi Jacob from St Clare’s College, Griffith, and Nichola Brandon from MacKillop Catholic College, Tuggeranong, with Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn Archbishop Mark Coleridge.

Bob and Margaret Frater Scholarship winner and ACU National Master of Education (ICT) graduate David Austin (right) with the Fraters. David, Principal of St Michael’s Primary School at Kaleen in the ACT, was awarded a scholarship to attend the International Conference on Information Communication Technology in Education (ICICTE) in Rhodes, Greece in 2006. He presented a report to the ACT Catholic Primary Principals’ Association on his return, thanking ACU National and the Catholic Education Office of Canberra and Goulburn for their support.

Dan Stewart Community Service Prize winner Strathfield Campus fourth-year teaching and arts student Roxanne Leopardi (left) with Brother Dan Stewart CFC OAM. The award is sponsored by ACU National 1994 education graduate Mr Jeff Egan, a director of Flagship Communications. Roxanne, the spiritual and cultural convenor and acting secretary of the student association at Strathfield in 2006, received the prize at the University Foundation NSW Prizes and Awards Ceremony last year.

Archdiocese of Sydney Executive Director of Schools Brother Kelvin Canavan AM FMS (left) with James Carroll Scholarship (CEO Sydney) 2006 recipients Michael Yuen, Crystal Woolcock, Michael Rasmussen, Leanne Matthews, Melody Gardiner and Alarna Eagleton.
Ballarat Diocesan Schools Board Bishop’s Scholarship for Excellence in Religious Education was awarded to second-year education student Jayde Lawson of Warrnambool. “It really makes my life easier,” Jayde said.

Royal College of Nursing Australia High Achiever Prize winner Chahaija Hunter (left) with North Sydney Campus School of Nursing (NSW) Lecturer Elaine Rutherford and nursing graduate Heather Jensen, who in 2006 received the St Vincent’s Hospital Prize for consistently demonstrating above average knowledge and understanding during her course.

Rotary Club of Ballarat South representatives Mr Michael Coutts and Ms Yoko Murphy (left) with Rotary Club of Ballarat South Dr John Griffiths Nursing Scholarship winners Raelene White, Jennifer Godfrey, Kathleen Zibell and Alina Popping at the Ballarat Campus. Other students received the Ballarat Diocesan Schools Board Bishop’s Scholarships for religious education and education, the Diocese of Sandhurst Dr Henry Backhaus Scholarship and the ACU National George Alexander Foundation Scholarship (see story page 17).

Maria Gorete Joaquim Scholarship winners Angelina De Jesus Freitas (left) and Angela Getrudis Ole (right) with ACU National Education lecturer and Deputy Director (Academic) of the new Catholic Teachers College in East Timor Margie Beck at the inaugural graduation ceremony in Baucau in 2006. Maria Gorete Joaquim Scholarships were established through the ACU National Foundation in 2004 by an anonymous donor to honour a young female leader of East Timor’s independence. The scholarship fund has grown with support from the Marist Brothers and donations from ACU National staff and students.

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Partnerships invest in the future

With a national team of fundraising managers, ACU National is committed to supporting those who support the University and its Mission, embracing the common good.

Support from donors and sponsors empowers a wide range of students, enables specialised research and teaching to be undertaken, and widens the impact of unique ACU National programs as the University continues to engage with diverse communities.

This acunique has touched on the legacy and international breadth of educational leadership programs initiated by the Chair in Educational Leadership and the exciting potential to lift the profile of ethics and social justice which will be enabled through The Allan Myers Chair of Law.

It has looked at insights into humanity offered by the Chair of Philosophy as well as new views of ageing provided by the RSL LifeCare Chair of Ageing.

“These are initiatives the University cannot, or should not, fund by itself,” said the University’s National Manager of Fundraising and Development Bea Brickhill. Partnerships such as that with RSL LifeCare or Mater Health not only enable the University to fulfil its own Mission, but also enable partner organisations to move forward in a way that would otherwise have been impossible.

“Our donors, sponsors and other partners are investing in the future of our University and our students,” Bea said. “Whether by including the University in a will, or supporting our scholarship and bursary programs, or funding a prize or award, or donating an art work, there are so many ways in which the community can support us.

“To attend a Prizes and Awards Ceremony and see a donor who has ‘climbed the ladder’, thanks to support received earlier in their life, reach out a hand to assist someone else up a rung is a very fulfilling experience. I know that the students who receive these prizes and scholarships will go on to give back what they have received when they are able to do so. In this way, even a small gift now will keep on giving.”

For ACU National’s State Manager Fundraising and Development (Queensland) Jane Thompson, giving is more about people than about money.

“Gifts make a difference, but it’s people who make the gift,” Jane said.

She sees added value in donations to educational institutions, because they help to build awareness of a culture of giving among students and graduates.

State Manager Fundraising and Development (Victoria) Linda Carpenter said all universities were facing diminishing funding, with increasing client expectations.

“The Mission of the University is about productively engaging and contributing to the wider community,” Linda said.

“Our graduates want to make a positive difference to the particular communities they come from or wish to serve.

“We are very happy to meet individual donors, including graduates, and also to explore corporate partnerships to help secure a sustainable future for ACU National.”

For more information on opportunities to support ACU National and its many projects, please contact Bea Brickhill on (02) 6209 1194; Jane Thompson on (07) 3623 7146; or Linda Carpenter on (03) 9953 3874; or email foundation@acu.edu.au; or feel free to visit our website at www.acu.edu.au/foundation.

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