

The Difference One Scholarship Can Make

The University of Lethbridge Senate kicked off 2017, the U of L's 50th anniversary year, with the goal to raise enough funds to add a new, fully endowed scholarship to the Senate Award.

As part of the campaign, a number of Senate members gathered at the U of L Call Centre to reach out to former members of Senate and raise funds for the award. One of those Senate members was retired chemistry instructor, Robert (Bob) McKay.

"Early in the evening, I was on a call with a U of L alumnus and former Senate member," McKay recalls. "We had a great chat about his time as a student and serving as SU president, and my time as one of the original members of the chemistry department in '67 and my 37 years working with students."

They chatted about how much the University has changed over the years and how much McKay enjoyed seeing students progress into talented and educated individuals. When it was time to ask for a donation, McKay recited the standard lines, but says he couldn't believe the response.

"He asked me what the goal was. When I told him it was \$35,000, he told me he would donate \$37,000 – \$1,000 for every year I taught at the U of L!"

The alumnus on the other end of the call was Dan Laplante (BMgt '88), a retired senator, former Board of Governors member and generous benefactor of the University.

"I was moved by Senator McKay's ongoing commitment to the U of L," Laplante says. "After 37 wonderful years working at the University, he remains engaged as an active volunteer by serving on the Senate. Somehow our

paths have not crossed over the years; I do look forward to meeting with him someday to personally thank him for his continued commitment to our University."

The Senate wrapped up the year raising more than \$63,000 – funds that directly support deserving students.

"Students are at the heart of the University," says U of L Chancellor Janice Varzari (BN '90, MEd '02). "I extend my sincere gratitude to all my colleagues on Senate, past and present, for the significant role they have played in making the U of L what it is today and for making a difference in the lives of many students through their support of the Senate Award. I also thank Dan for his early leadership and his very significant gift to kick start our campaign."

U of L student, Solomon Ip, is one of the recipients of the Senate Award. The award, he says, is especially meaningful, and he shares these words:

"I grew up in a lower-middle class family. We were never in poverty, but until my father found stable, year-round employment when I was nine, things were more difficult than my parents would have hoped for. As a result of these years, my parents were always searching to create a cushion of financial comfort in the event that something went horribly wrong for our family.

Today, receiving a scholarship always carries a feeling of grateful relief.

I can rest easy, knowing that I do not have to agonize over how I will feed, clothe and house myself, a luxury that some of my peers do not have. I can focus completely on my academic work, instead of having academics come second to survival.

Scholarships have meant different things to me over the years. When I was initially introduced to the concept, I was told that it was money that people give you for being a good student. A rather banal answer, but it convinced me to strive for excellence in academics, hoping I would be noticed as a "good student."

However, as I have matured, this perception has changed significantly. After a difficult fall 2017 semester, I came to understand that a scholarship is a representation of one's trust. This is not simply the trust that the money be spent wisely, but it also represents the trust that the donor has in the recipient's ability to make a difference in the world, the trust that the recipient will work against all disappointments and failures and emerge triumphant.

As someone who struggles with self-doubt, this is a huge encouragement. Someone thinks highly enough of little old me that they want to place their trust in me; all I can do is express my gratitude. Thank you so very much for placing your trust in me and encouraging me at a time when I desperately needed it.

I will do my best — you can trust me on that."

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Solomon Ip | Scholarship Recipient



2017 AT A GLANCE:

6,500+ gifts

791 new donors

**464 faculty, staff and
retirees donated towards
Supporting Our Students,
an all-time high**

**Pronghorn Athletics
launched the Pronghorn 50
campaign, which has already
received 80+ gifts from
former student-athletes**

3,600+ gifts to student awards

More than 2,500 donors

To each and every one of you ...

THANK YOU!