

# **News in brief**

### Aber alumni most generous in Wales

Thank you to everyone who gave to the Annual Fund in 2010-11 and supported scholarships, the hardship fund, digitization and careers initiatives that are making a tangible difference on campus. The Ross CASE survey for 2010-11, which reports on fundraising in the UK Higher Education sector, showed that our alumni had a giving rate five times the Welsh average. Over £180,000 was donated and pledged during 2010-11, which made up an impressive 43% of all Annual Fund gifts in Wales.

# Why I give

I was very fortunate to study at Aberystwyth. It gave me the foundation on which to build my career and a circle of friends that I am still close to 30 years on. I donate for 2 reasons: 1) To help make a difference. 2) To say thank you.

Alun Beynon (1984 Geology)

### Old Students' Association

The OSA Aber branch successfully raised £1,500 this year towards its scholarship scheme. Grants from the fund are awarded for academic achievement to EU non-UK students.

# Grant towards diagnostic cancer research

A team of Aber researchers have been awarded a £60,000 grant aimed at improving the accurate diagnosis of prostate cancer. The grant was from appliance manufacturer Hoover and was awarded by the Prostate Cancer Charity. The research team, headed by Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar (Department

of Computer Science), will use the grant to investigate combining magnetic resonance (MRI) and ultrasound results to give a more detailed map of exactly where prostate tumours are and a better indication of tumour size

### Sailing on

In 2011 the Aber Sailing Club gratefully received a gift from alumna Ann Robertson which allowed them to purchase a ribbed safety tender – a rubber boat. Since the boat was launched it has been used extensively by the club on Cardigan Bay (see photo page 3).

#### Make your mark

If you are thinking about making a significant gift to a special cause at Aber, please contact Development Officer Richard Marriott on 01970 622554

### Open books

Recognising that Aber's library facilities are one of its most distinctive and treasured features, donations totalling £500 have been made this year towards the University's Politics Library. This will help enhance and preserve its collection for current and future generations of students.

### Alumni telephone campaign

In 2011-12 student callers spoke to over 2000 Aber alumni about their lives and careers since graduating. Many expressed an interest in offering their time and expertise to help current students with careers. Nearly 30% of those spoken to also decided to make a gift. Almost £100,000 was donated and pledged

towards the Annual Fund during the calling programme to support students in areas such as financial hardship, scholarships, an entrepreneurship competition and extra-curricular activities. If you took the time to speak to a student, offer careers support or make a gift, thank you very much indeed.



Aber Sailing Club, courtesy of Ruth Grove

# **Guild of Students**

### Annual Fund donations are keeping Aber's sports societies out after dark

Supporting students' extra-curricular activities was an Annual Fund priority this year. Thanks to the generosity of donors, Aber's Guild of Students will be able to buy and maintain a set of 12 portable floodlights for any of its outdoor sports societies to use. This means that evening training can continue during winter months.

Alun Minifey, Activities Officer, praised the project because its benefits will be so visible:

This is really brilliant. The extra winter practise hours the floodlights will give us will help our clubs improve and be nationally competitive. It's great that alumni are willing to support our sports clubs in this way and can recognise how important it is to invest in sports facilities for the long-term success of these clubs. Thanks so much to everyone who is donating.

The Guild will also be able to provide for new kit and cover more travel costs in the coming years thanks to Aber alumna Ann Robertson's gift last year which also purchased a boat for the sailing club.

# Why I give

When I took the call from the University, only then did I realise the contribution Aber played in my own personal success and in donating I hope someone else is able to attend Aber and achieve their own personal goals in life.

George Theocharous (1983 Economics and Business)

# **Donations that open doors**

Sercan Ozcan, Dora Georgieva, Katja Daniels and Janet Richardson are all Aber students who are benefitting from grants, scholarships and awards driven by your generous support for the Annual Fund and other award schemes.

## Getting to know...

As a result of last year's Annual Fund, we were able to support **Sercan** who is the first Glyn Rowlands PhD Scholar in Management and Business. **Dora** is a first year undergraduate Spanish and Marketing student and is recipient of this year's OSA Aber award. **Janet** is studying for an MPhil at the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences and is the holder of the Mair Waldo Scholarship. **Katja** was the recipient of the very first Annual Fund PhD studentship and is now completing her second year at the Department of International Politics.

# How has receiving the scholarship helped you?

Dora: It will help me with living costs and will also give me the opportunity to travel within the UK. Alumni support is a very new idea to me and I think it is incredibly generous.

Janet: The scholarship has reduced my tuition fees by £1500 which has helped me immensely. This means I can use my saved money on living costs. I was also able to go straight through from undergraduate to postgraduate study without taking out a loan or a taking a gap year to work and save.

Sercan: Receiving the scholarship took me a huge step further towards completing my PhD because being in a secure financial position is one of the key factors in having reliable and valid research results. I am planning to travel in the UK, Germany and China to collect the required data - if I did not have the scholarship, it would be very difficult to cover such a large data area and complete the required interviews. Receiving the scholarship was also a great moment in my life which showed me the importance of giving back to the community. Now I know first-hand how effective alumni support can be. I hope that someday, when I am an Aber alumnus, I too can contribute to our university in such a significant way.

Katja: I would not be doing a PhD without this scholarship as it enables me to do work that I love – to read, write, teach and discuss all of the most important questions of contemporary global

politics. This studentship has allowed me to explore a topic that I think is both amazingly interesting and critically important. It is an area of international law and politics that is changing by the week, and I greatly appreciate the chance to investigate what's happening years before it reaches the textbooks.

# What do you like the most about studying at Aber?

Dora: I was pleasantly surprised by the friendly atmosphere which I found here. I didn't expect the lecturers and the staff to be so helpful.

Janet: The helpfulness and skills of my supervisors within the IGES department. The department is also very friendly, which made me to feel right at home. The location of Aberystwyth is also very good – it is a nice change from a city university.

Sercan: I like the fact that Aber is a safe place and a seaside town. It is small but with a huge student population that makes it a great place to be. People in general are very friendly here and University staff have always helped me when needed.

Katja: My wonderful department – the close-knit research community, the packed schedule of research seminars, the heated discussions in reading groups on a range of political topics – and walks around the stunningly beautiful coastal hills to take my mind off politics when needed.



# What kind of activities are you involved with at the University?



Dora: Next year I hope to become a
Student Ambassador.

Janet: I currently help out with the Physical Geography seminar series in IGES as well as demonstrating for a first year module. I am also a member of the West Wales Geological society.

Sercan: I am a part-time lecturer, which is a great experience for me. I participated in the promotion of our university in Turkey to bring more international students here. I often involve myself in the activities of the Students' Union. I also participated in a careers day and I took masters and undergraduate students to Manchester for a careers fair.

Katja: I have worked as a seminar tutor on the Introduction to International Politics, Third World Politics and Political Philosophy courses, and it's always fascinating to see how the topics and theoretical approaches that I have studied for so many years, and in some ways have come to take for granted, are seen through the eyes of first year undergraduates. I also convene the Third World Politics Research Group.

# What are your plans for the future?



Dora: I hope to find a job in a non-profit organisation.

Janet: Next year I am going to undertake a Geology PhD on the long term drainage evolution of South Africa.

Sercan: After I complete my PhD, I would like to pursue a career in academia and become a lecturer. However, I would like to be involved in a business field as well. As such, nanotechnology is a field that I hope to be involved with in both an academic and a corporate way.

Katja: I hope to continue my research in the area of my present studies. Most of the research on this topic is currently conducted within NGOs and research institutes, such as the International Institute for Sustainable Development, but my first option is to stay in academia.

# Annual Fund 2011-12 postgraduate scholarships

Thanks to donations made by so many alumni during 2011-12, a talented PhD student will be able to undertake research in 'Fuzzy Logic', the core of modern intelligent decision-making systems, at the **Department of Computer Science** from September 2012. This is a **fully funded three-year PhD studentship** and we thank everyone who so generously supported it.

Five students registered on the 2012-13 LLM taught Masters course at the **Department of Law and Criminology** will now be benefitting from **Annual Fund scholarships**, raised from the kind donations of alumni this year.

### **Matched Giving: Matched Interests**

The creation of two travel awards to be given to the two most promising beginners in their first year of study in a modern European language are the inspiring results of the donation of 1988 European Languages graduate Enza Burgio. Thanks to her generosity, that of the company she works for (who is matching her regular gift) and Aber's Department of European Languages who are matching this donation, more Aber language students will be able to experience life abroad. The award is intended to fund a language course and/or a period of residence in a country where the language in question is spoken.

#### **Find out more**

Visit www.aber.ac.uk/supporters for information about giving to Aber. Please contact Annual Fund Officer Heulwen Mainwaring on 01970 628797 if you would like to discuss the application of your gift.



# Why I give

I am lucky to work for an organization that promotes and supports education and learning across the world. It also believes in helping charities and encourages employees to donate regularly via an Employee Giving scheme. This means that whatever I donate on a monthly basis direct from my salary, my employer matches. Therefore, it made perfect sense to choose Aber as one of my monthly charities.

I chose Modern European Languages because I graduated in French. Having spoken with the Annual Fund Officer about where I wanted to channel the donation, I expressed a desire for it to go to a travel fund. Many years ago I was fortunate enough to receive a bursary from my Sixth Form College to go to Belgium on a 3 month sabbatical. It was the chance of a lifetime and I now realize that it was due to this opportunity that my language skills developed to a more proficient level. I also lived in France for a year as part of my degree and learnt that there is no substitute for living in the country itself to improve your proficiency.

From these discussions there is now a specific pot of money that will go to the most promising beginner in a modern language. I wish the recipients of this fund the best of luck in the hope that they too will reap the long term benefits.

Enza Burgio (1988 European Languages)





# **Careers**

New initiatives – funded by donations – are helping to bring the career aspirations and business ideas of Aber students to fruition.

'Employability' is the new buzzword on University campuses. As today's students graduate into an increasingly competitive employment market where a good degree does not guarantee success, Aber is working with alumni to explore ways to make our students stand out from the crowd.

Donations made to the 2010-11 Annual Fund campaign enabled Aber's Careers Service to launch the Aber Opportunities Network, an alumni-led service aimed at both current students and recent graduates of the University. The Network mines the extraordinary resource that is the body of Aber alumni to provide employment options, internships, work experience, careers guidance, industry connections, employer links and mentoring.

So extraordinary was the initial response to a request for help from Aber's alumni that we have struggled to keep up with the sheer volume of offers of help. Having former students speak about their careers is also hugely beneficial, as current students and recent graduates can relate to this experience, knowing as they do that those speaking with them have come from the same institution and dealt with the same challenges.

As a result of this initiative, employer visits to the campus have increased by over 600% in 2011/12, and groups of students have in turn visited many more companies to see how they operate and learn what they are looking for in new recruits. From large companies such as Network Rail, Barclays Bank or Freshfields, to individual judges in the circuit courts or young entrepreneurs launching new businesses, and from Swansea to Singapore, Aber's alumni and other supporters are providing a wealth of opportunities and experience to help the current crop of graduates find employment in what we all know is a very difficult market at present.

# Case study: working with alumni

George Ashworth (BSc Economics 1977) is an alumnus who has kindly given his time this year to conduct a lecture and careers workshop with current Aber students. He is also a long-term supporter of the Annual Fund. As the Managing Director of Asset Finance at Aldermore Bank, George's achievements and career experiences made him an ideal person to lead a workshop that gave students business and finance scenarios and asked them to present back their solutions and ideas on the topics. His lecture was entitled 'Successful business in difficult times'.

Management and Business undergraduate Andrew Carr, who attended the day's events, found it motivational and instructive:

The day was both educational and inspirational. It was great to get an understanding of an industry (finance) that, upon reflection, I actually knew very little about. Hearing George's story also gave me the hope that someday I can also achieve what he has done and has inspired me to aim high. As well as this, I gained great experience from the assessment centre style of the day, which I genuinely think will benefit me in my future job search.

These face-to-face sessions also serve to make the industries in question more transparent. This was what impressed undergraduate Bibi Jaffarally the most:

The workshop was an excellent opportunity for us to ask questions and gain insight into a company's day to day activities. Also, having an opportunity to network with someone like Mr Ashworth is a stepping stone for us students. I very much enjoyed the opportunity to hear his story and the helpful tips he had to offer on the graduate job market.

# Why I give

I donate to the Annual Fund because I remember just how hard financially it can be. Times are very different now. At least I was fortunate enough to at least get a partial grant, but that was it. Making ends meet was difficult. I made it, but only just. Therefore, if my donation can help even in a small way, then it is worth it.

**George Ashworth (1977 Economics)** 

# **2011-12 Donors support Aber's young entrepreneurs**

During 2011-12, we asked alumni to support an entrepreneurial Annual Fund project – a competition called **Inventerprize**. Thanks to the amazing response of this year's donors, this competition will be launched in September with a closing date at the end of January 2013.

The aim of **Inventerprize** is to support students with developing original inventions, business start-up ideas and other ambitious plans. Students will be encouraged to submit their proposals to a judging panel, successful business people and entrepreneurs in their own right, who will give them guidance and advice. The winner will also receive patent/ IP protection and financial support for the development of their project to prototype stage.

James Hudson from Aber's Commercialisation and Consultancy Service explains how this entrepreneurial project is an essential part of the University's employability agenda: "We want to help students turn their creativity, research and innovations into real-life results. Who knows, Aber students could invent the next Dyson or Facebook. At a time when it is tough for students to find employment working for others, we must support and encourage them to think of other, entrepreneurial routes to success. Thank you very much to everyone who is donating to this project."

#### Get involved

You can find out more about the Aber Opportunities Network on www.aber. ac.uk/aon. Alumni interested in getting involved are asked to submit their details at www.aber.ac.uk/info/alumni emp e







# **Student Support**

The **Student Hardship Fund** is a flagship Annual Fund project and one which alumni have consistently (and generously) supported since 2009. A gift to the Student Hardship Fund ensures that students, whatever their background or nationality, can complete their studies at Aber, particularly when unexpected financial difficulties arise.

Thank you very much to everyone who gave to the Hardship Fund this year. These are some of the ways in which the Hardship Fund has helped students during 2011-12:

- Funding was awarded to an EU
  undergraduate student. The student's
  family had been hit by fraud, which meant
  that she had been living in her car for
  the part of her second year. Family and
  friends had gathered together to support
  her return for the final year, but this only
  covered fees and rent and the student was
  left with no money to live on.
- Funding was awarded to 3<sup>rd</sup> year PhD international student towards unexpected cost of travelling back to home to attend the funerals of family members following a substantial natural disaster which affected most of the country. The student noted that he would not have been able to graduate without financial support from this fund.
- Funding was awarded to a part-time self-funding postgraduate student. The student suffered severe tendon damage which required surgery and on-going physiotherapy which meant that she was unable to work to finance her studies.
- Funding was awarded to an EU undergraduate student. The student had to be moved to University Accommodation

- when the partner whom she shared a flat became abusive. The student would have had to withdraw had it not been for this financial support.
- Funds were also allocated this year for the purchase of food voucher cards for 25 students. These are only issued as an emergency interim arrangement where students have no money at all to buy food.

**Find out more** about Student Support Services at Aber by visiting www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support



# 2011-12

# Cofrestr Anrhydeddus Rhoddwyr

Carai myfyrwyr a staff Prifysgol Aberystwyth ddiolch i'r alumni, aelodau'r Cyngor, y staff, yr Ymddiriedolaethau a'r cefnogwyr eraill canlynol sydd wedi cefnogi Aber yn ystod y flwyddyn academaidd ddiwethaf.\*

Rydym hefyd yn cydnabod yn gynnes y rhai yr oedd yn well ganddynt aros yn ddienw.

\*Fel ar 01/06/2012

# Donor Roll of Honour

The students and staff of Aberystwyth University wish to express their gratitude to the following alumni, Council members, staff, Trusts and other supporters who have so generously supported Aber during the last academic year.\*

We also warmly acknowledge those who preferred to remain anonymous.

\*As at 01/06/2012

Bathodynnau pin rhoddwyr / Donor pin badges







Ystwyth

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