



MOUNT ROYAL  
UNIVERSITY  
1910  
Foundation



# COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

2020/21

# COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

## 2020/21

2020/2021 was a year that demonstrated the resiliency of Mount Royal University students, staff, faculty and community at large. The Mount Royal University Foundation was able to stop, pivot and adapt to a new way of doing things while still supporting Mount Royal students because donors like you continued your generous support.

MRU staff and faculty redirected their parking fees; individuals supported projects, campaigns and students across campus with donations of all sizes; corporations directed support to emergency relief funds, mentorship and training programs and so much more. You stepped up to invest in MRU students and for that we are truly grateful. Students are our future, and your belief in their potential is what makes the Mount Royal University community special. Thank you.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020/21

MRU Cougars Athletics faced one of its toughest challenges to date – how to survive and keep student-athletes engaged in a year where they could not play their sport or hear the roar of their fans in the stands. Your support made it possible for the Cougars teams to come through this unprecedented year with almost \$161,000 raised to help support programming and operations.



Mount Royal alumna and proud Métis woman, Shannon Pestun created the Gifting Circle Bursary for Indigenous Women in Entrepreneurship in 2020 aimed at supporting Indigenous women students studying business and entrepreneurship at MRU. Shannon knows firsthand that the generosity of others has the power to change lives, and through her initiative almost \$10,000 was raised in 20/21 and contributions continue today.

Ken Lett's love of flying and business led to a \$2.4M gift to MRU's Aviation program — its largest gift to date. The Second World War veteran's generous gift will be used for scholarships and bursaries with a focus on the participation of under-represented groups, including Indigenous Peoples and women. It will also go towards aircraft, maintenance, technology, MRU's flight simulator and other infrastructure.



Your support helped raise almost \$5,000 for the Work Integrated Learning Innovation Fund. This fund provides much-needed support to students who are placed in full-time, unpaid/underpaid work terms. Work placements are a required work-integrated learning component for a number of MRU degrees. Alumni who have participated in such placements, like alumnus Trevor Chambers, right, often reflect on the competitive advantage it gave them when looking for work after graduation.

## 2020/21 NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

# \$5,608,247 RAISED



**85%**

increase amount raised since last year



**1,136**

total gifts to MRU



**42%**

of gifts supported scholarships, bursaries and other student awards



**1,061**

students who received donor-funded awards



The Taylor Family's outstanding legacy of support to MRU continues with Don and Ruth Taylor's transformational \$15M gift to Mount Royal. Along with a \$50M investment from the Alberta Provincial Government, the Taylor's generosity will completely revitalise empty and out-dated spaces in the main building, creating new student learning spaces and a hub for student services.



TransAlta Corporation's support of the Indigenous Family Housing Program is helping continue the outstanding work of the Iniskim Centre. Thanks to their contributions, Indigenous families living in the complex now have access to a tipi in their green space, along with new outdoor furniture for all to come together, enjoy the area and celebrate their culture through traditional teachings and ceremonies.



# YOUR IMPACT AT MRU



**Whittnie is currently enrolled in her third year of Public Relations at MRU**



See your impact on students and check out our video playlist

[mru.ca/Foundation](https://mru.ca/Foundation)

2020 has been an unforgiving year for many, but your gift has made a profound impact on my studies. Until early 2020, I worked full-time as a flight attendant while also attending classes full-time. My schedule was relentless: end classes on Thursday evening, rush to the airport, study on my layovers, arrive back in Calgary Sunday at midnight and attend 8:30 a.m. classes on Monday mornings. It was a difficult lifestyle, but ensured that my tuition would be attainable.

On June 26, 2020 I was laid-off due to the pandemic. I panicked. All I could think of was fall tuition that was quickly approaching. Just a month later, I received an email stating that I had been chosen as the recipient of donor-funded student awards, and I am not ashamed to say that I cried when I read those words.

Finally, my perseverance was recognized and I knew that what I was pursuing would bring me success – not only through my hard work but through the generous gifts of someone in our community who wanted to support MRU students.

I received a 4.0 GPA for all 10 courses I attended between Fall 2019 through Spring 2020. My goal is always to achieve top grades in all courses so that I may go on to post-graduate studies. Prior to enrolling in public relations here at MRU, I had already graduated from the broadcasting program in 2013. Broadcasting just wasn't for me, but I know that communications is a strength of mine so I decided to discover what public relations could do for my career.

Since completing my first year in 2019, I have been given the opportunity to volunteer with the Canadian Cancer Society's CIBC Run for the Cure as the communications lead and social media coordinator. In the summer of 2020, I also worked with a team to create the social media strategy for Pennsylvania State University's PennState Eats – a mobile ordering platform for their campus. These experiences have given me further confidence that public relations was a sound career choice.

Thank you for giving students like me the opportunity to continue their education no matter the challenges they face in life. Your generosity gives us students something to strive for and empowers us to continue on our path.

Sincerely,

**WHITTNIE GAQUI**