



UCC Alumni Fund

2025-26 Impact Report

A Note of Thanks

Dear friends,

The UCC Alumni Fund demonstrates the power and reach of the global University College Cork community. As a donor to the fund, your contributions help the university go beyond the possibilities of government funding to create opportunities that enrich life at UCC and make an immediate and lasting difference for every student.

This year, we introduced a new UCC Alumni Fund grant application scheme so that students and staff can propose projects for consideration that will improve the lives of students. This report highlights some of the initiatives that were granted funding and undertaken in academic year 2025-26 and the impact they are having for our student community.

They showcase what can be achieved when talented, caring students and dedicated staff are empowered through alumni support.

These projects would not be possible without you. On behalf of the university, I send my sincere thanks to every graduate and friend of the university who has contributed. You are passing the torch and helping build the UCC that students deserve.

Sincerely,



Matt Hamilton

Head of Transformational Philanthropy, UCC



Academic Year 2025–26

At a Glance

236

UCC Alumni
Fund donors

€59,912

raised

€43

average gift
amount*

56

project
applications

€41,482

project funding
granted

13

new projects
funded

**Monthly recurring gifts counted individually.*

Thank You

University College Cork and Cork University Foundation are grateful to every donor whose support has helped bring these projects to life.

Together, you have made a tangible difference to the student experience and helped create opportunities that will have a lasting impact.

Thank you for being part of this community and for helping to shape what comes next.



Areas Supported

2025-26

Donations to the UCC Alumni Fund help to enhance every area of the student experience, which includes extracurricular activities, campus life, and the many vital support services which together provide students a well-rounded and fulfilling UCC journey. This year's projects supported...



Every gift, no matter the amount, enables meaningful improvements that benefit students in these areas, and more, today and for years to come.

UCC Students' Union Food Pantry

Cost of Living Health & Wellness Sustainability

According to the UCC Students' Union Cost of Living Report, 27% of students have had to cut back on food spending at some point in their academic journey. At the same time, food waste in Ireland contributes extensively to greenhouse gas emissions. With a grant from the UCC Alumni Fund, students Cian Donal Walsh and Sumaya Mohammed partnered with FoodCloud, an organisation that connects charities and community groups with businesses that have surplus food, to launch a pantry that addresses both urgent issues.

The pantry has quickly become a vital resource on campus and will continue to be in the years ahead, ensuring students can focus on their studies without the added stress of wondering where their next meal will come from and at the same time saving thousands of kg in surplus food from being needlessly discarded.

In recognition of the impact of the project, the pantry was featured in a number of media outlets including RTÉ Radio 1, The Echo, and the Irish Independent, and was awarded the ECO-UNESCO Sustainability Impact Award at the 2026 AIB Student Impact Awards.

“[Students] having the agency to take their items in whatever capacity they want means they’re climate acting — they’re actually being actors for the climate in a positive way. And then when you see how that benefits them as well, it’s like a little circle that goes around it.”

- Cian Donal Walsh, Pantry Co-Leader

3,578
pantry visits

24,590
meals provided

10,328
kg of surplus
food saved

23,961
kg of CO2 saved



Student Wellbeing and Sustainability Collection

The Library Sustainability Health & Wellness

Created in collaboration with the UCC Library Sustainability Team and the UCC Environmental Society, this new permanent collection is accessible to all students, bringing together inspiring, action-focused reads on sustainability and wellbeing to help students live healthier, more sustainable lives.

The books live on a mobile stand on the ground floor of Boole Library, rather than being shelved with the main collection, and so are visible and readily accessible to students. The collection has already seen a strong interest since launching in March 2026, with checkouts rising and many students picking up the books to read in the library common area.

Titles in the collection include *Notes on a Nervous Planet* by Matt Haig; *Clean and Green* by Nancy Birdwhistle; and *Happy Mind, Happy Life* by Dr Rangan Chatterjee. Also in the collection are jigsaw puzzles on 'Wild Ireland,' 'Around the World in 50 Trees,' and other topics, which are very popular with students.

“We hope this collection will spark conversation between students about sustainability and mindfulness.”

- Sarah Moynihan,
UCC Environmental Society

140
new books

143
checkouts since
March 2026

9 jigsaw puzzles



FiRe UP: Financial Readiness for Life

Cost of Living Graduate Attributes Health & Wellness

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 4 out of 10 adults in Ireland do not meet the minimum standard for financial literacy. Thanks to a grant from the UCC Alumni Fund, Cork University Business School professor Olive McCarthy and PhD student AJ Nagle have introduced the FiRe UP: Financial Readiness for Life programme, now permanently available to all UCC students free of charge via easy-to-access online modules.

The modules help students develop practical financial life skills to support them through college and into future employment.

Looking ahead, FiRe UP will now be integrated into UCC's first-year orientation programme, host a workshop at Fresher's Fest, and will be part of the university's new Money Mentor initiative. The programme has also received national government recognition having been invited to speak at the Department of Finance's National Financial Literacy Strategy Stakeholder Forum.



“By participating in this course, [students] are going to be able to understand the difference between needs and wants, learning how to create a budget on a limited income...how to recover from debt, how to take out a loan, all the things you need to be able to have a successful financial life.”

- AJ Nagle, PhD student and project co-lead

5
online modules free for UCC students

91%
of participants rated their financial knowledge as improved after completing the course

44%
of participants found the budgeting module to be the most important

UCC Concert Band

Art & Culture Extracurricular Activities

Founded in 2024, the UCC Concert Band is open to all students, staff, and alumni, offering performance opportunities for music and non-music majors alike. The band has built a community of musicians at UCC and, thanks to the UCC Alumni Fund, has grown to new heights by acquiring their own equipment and scores, holding a recruitment drive, and hiring a conductor.

With a repertoire including jazz standards, Christmas carols, Abba, the Beatles, and even the theme song from Indiana Jones, the band gives students a space to learn and have fun, while providing entertainment at UCC events and beyond.

The highlight of the year for the band was performing the Irish and Scottish national anthems for the countries' U20 Six Nations rugby match in Cork.

“What’s so great about the UCC Concert Band is that it’s all ages, so people who are brand new to playing and people who’ve been playing for years and you’re just all there to have a good time.”

- Maddie McCarthy, Student Timpani Drummer

50

**hours of practice
and performance**

9

live shows

10,000+

**largest audience
size**



New Crash Mats for the Trampoline and Tumbling Club

Clubs & Societies

The UCC Trampoline and Tumbling Club is open to any student, but their crash mats had lost their structure, making training risky, especially for advanced members. With a grant from the UCC Alumni Fund, new mats were purchased to ensure safer landings, enabling athletes to push boundaries confidently and giving reassurance to newcomers.

Providing extra safety helped the club reduce injuries and increase membership. It also earned them the UCC Clubs & Socs Community Champion and Inclusivity award, which focuses on the wellbeing of club members, and the Irish Student Trampoline Open Cup and Highest Tariff awards, both awarded at national competitions for highest degree of difficulty and execution.

“We didn’t come in with much experience, and it was really comforting to know that we could learn new skills, and there was so much protection around the trampoline.”

- Aoife de Baroid, first year Trampoline Club member



71

medals earned across categories and levels

55%

decrease in injuries

~100

new members



Intercultural Communication Competency Training

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Graduate Attributes

UCC's international student population is only growing, and the importance of cultural understanding and communication along with it. Delivered by the Language Centre in association with the College of Business and Law, this pilot programme recruited Class Reps to take part in workshops promoting understanding of and respect for cultural difference and diversity in the classroom.

Building on this successful pilot, the training will now be integrated into training days for the incoming Class Reps, with the intention of eventually rolling out the workshops across the College, and potentially the rest of the University for all incoming students.

“One of the key takeaways that stuck with me, was the importance of identifying and articulating whether I did not hear something or I did not understand what I heard. A lot of the time we just say ‘huh’ or ‘sorry?’ but it is better to say ‘I didn’t hear that, can you repeat it louder?’ or ‘I didn’t understand that, can you explain it to me differently?’”

- Cornelia Hauch Skovmand, College of Business and Law Student Rep

4,000
international
students in UCC

130
countries represented

805
international staff
members



Dress for Success

Cost of Living Career Readiness Clubs & Societies Sustainability

A partnership between the UCC Fashion Society and UCC Career Services, Dress for Success supports students by providing access to professional attire for interviews, placements, and early career opportunities, helping them build confidence and participate fully in employability-related activity, while also promoting clothing reuse and sustainable consumption.

The comprehensive programme also includes styling and confidence workshops, LinkedIn headshot photoshoots, guest speaker sessions, and a free, weekly “Interview Wardrobe” where students can take what they need—and donate what they don’t.

The initiative reduces financial barriers for students while also extending the life of donated clothing and promoting circular economy principles on campus.

“The support provided through the UCC Alumni Fund has contributed to the continued development of Dress for Success as a practical, student-focused initiative that advances both employability and sustainability objectives.”

- Myrhen Creedon, UCC Career Services

18

**“Interview Wardrobe”
open days**

300+

**professional clothing
items redistributed to
students**

7

**professional
workshops, events,
and clothing drives**



UCC Niteline

Mental Health

University can be a stressful and difficult time for students. Thanks to dedicated student volunteers, UCC Niteline provides a confidential and non-judgemental listening service for any student who needs somebody to talk to about whatever issues are affecting them.

With the support of the UCC Alumni Fund, NiteLine have now joined the nationwide NiteLine Ireland network, which has enabled them to expand their hours, provide more robust training, acquire essentials such as additional phones and late-night rides home for student volunteers, and resources to help promote the service to students so they know it is free and available to them until 2:30 a.m., 7 nights a week.

As part of the nationwide Niteline network, UCC now collaborates with university students and administrators across the country to share knowledge, support one another, and promote best practices in peer-to-peer mental health support.

“Our role is to offer a listening ear to students who may be experiencing distress... being present, available and willing to listen can make an enormous difference.”

- Anonymous UCC Niteline Student Volunteer

12
partner
universities in
NiteLine Ireland
network

363
hours spent on
NiteLine contacts
across network in
2025-26

21
topics covered,
including
college stress,
relationships,
addiction,
bereavement,
LGBTQ+, suicidal
thoughts and
more



UCC Alumni on Giving Back

From Cork to every corner of the world, the UCC Alumni Fund brings together graduates and friends from all walks of life to support today's students.

“My qualifications opened doors to a successful business career. I’ve chosen to support the UCC Alumni Fund because helping young students get a strong start in their careers is, in my view, one of the best investments we can make in our future.”

- Aindrias T. Wall BA 1980, DipCompSc 1981



“When I think back to my time at UCC, it’s not just the lectures that I remember. It’s the people who inspired me, the experiences that challenged me, and the sense of belonging that helped me flourish. I give to the UCC Alumni Fund in honour of such experiences. It’s like passing the torch, ushering another person into a chapter that potentially transforms their lives the way UCC has changed mine.”

- Jumoke Afolabi MSc 2023



“I owe much to my Alma Mater. I am proud of this university and what it gave me, both academically and socially. Our support will help keep UCC in the top echelons of academic and research capability. That’s why I am always glad to donate wherever possible.”

- Tony Duffy, BA 1971





Láirionad na Mac Léinn Student Central

Giving Week 2026 – *Save the Date*

From November 9–13, join us for #UCCGivingWeek as our global community comes together to support current and future UCC students.

Every gift, whatever the amount, helps the university go beyond the limits of government funding to kickstart projects that support student services, strengthen clubs and societies, promote wellbeing, build community, and ensure that every student can make the most of their time at UCC. We'd be honoured and grateful to have your support again for #UCCGivingWeek.

Cork University Foundation

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