



PART-TIME MATTERS

“ The OU is not part-time learning, it's **double-time learning**... people have put education above many priorities in what are often already stressed and complicated lives ”

Chancellor Baroness Martha Lane-Fox

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Welcome and thank you for all your support



Welcome to the latest edition of Open Door. For many, autumn marks the beginning of a new educational journey – at this time I think particularly of our Open University students as they embark on their next module or

perhaps take the first steps towards, what is often, a much longed for degree. I'm already looking forward to one day welcoming today's students to the University's alumni community when they graduate!

Some of those same students will be supported by the incredible generosity of donors like you – whether through Scholarships and Bursaries, additional support for disabled students or funded

places for vital field studies; in the words of our fundraising campaign you are helping to "Open up the future" for them.

I want to thank you for the part you play in supporting our students and enabling that wonderful learning journey to start for them.

Without you, many could not consider even taking the first steps. You help to make our students' dreams a reality – helping them to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential. Thank you!

Karen Hart

Deputy Director of Development:
Alumni Engagement

OPEN UP THE FUTURE



In 2016 The Open University proudly launched its first ever fundraising campaign: **Open up the future.** The University, working in partnership with alumni, donors, friends and supporters, set itself the ambitious challenge to raise £50 million. The Campaign coincides with the University celebrating its 50th anniversary next year.

Since its inception in 1969, over 2 million learners have enrolled on a course or module with The Open University and it has reached a further 19 million through online platforms such as OpenLearn and FutureLearn. The long-standing partnership with the BBC has provided unprecedented opportunities to share the gift of education, originally through course lectures and more recently through prime-time, landmark programmes such as *Blue Planet II* and *Coast*.

The OU has also played a crucial role in researching our oceans, our planet and space, being involved in missions to Mars and landing on comets. Research has not only been life-changing but life-saving too, with research into detecting cancer through its Animal Computer Interaction programme and using haptic technology in the rehabilitation of stroke survivors.

Open up the future allows us to reflect on fifty years of achievements. Most importantly, it is a significant opportunity to combine the power of education, research and philanthropy to make a real difference to the futures of so many.

The Campaign has focused on four key areas, opening up Minds, Lives, Opportunity and Thinking, and as we pass the halfway point of the Campaign we are incredibly proud and grateful to announce that over £29 million has been raised. This achievement has only been possible due to the generosity of gifts received from friends, supporters, our corporate partners, trusts, foundations, and over 15,000 alumni.

Over the last two and half years the Campaign has achieved so much, including establishing the Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund and the Scholarships and Bursary Fund for those students in need of financial support to access education. Donor support has helped to deliver our teaching programmes in sub-Saharan Africa and India, to deliver truly life-changing opportunities to millions of school children by providing teachers with the training and educational resources they so desperately need to teach effectively.

The Campaign has supported leading cutting edge research that will help to shape the future. Research that encompasses our day to day lives, our careers, our children, our oceans, our planet and much more.

Thank you to all those who have been on this journey with us, together we will **Open up the future** for so many.



Established
1969

Over
2



million learners



If you'd like to know more, or to support our Open up the future campaign, visit giving.open.ac.uk and help us make the impossible possible

NOT PART-TIME LEARNING, BUT DOUBLE-TIME LEARNING



“It is imperative that the UK Government puts right the failure to tackle the alarming fall in the number of students choosing part-time study in its Post-18 review of student finances,” said The Open University’s Acting Vice-Chancellor Mary Kellett, in a recent statement. When the Prime Minister launched a major review of Post-18 education in England earlier this year, the OU was at the forefront, telling the story of our students and what they had experienced.

Although each of our students has a different story to tell, the one thing many have in common is that they studied part-time – and, without this opportunity, gaining an education would not have been possible. And we are taking every opportunity to communicate this – whoever we are talking to, at whatever level – and making sure we are heard!



As part of its fight for part-time [education], The Open University has been calling for the UK Government to introduce a Flexible Learning Incentive to help mature students to return to study.

Mary Kellett, Acting Vice-Chancellor

The independent review panel is expected to publish an interim report by the end of the year, with a final report from Government early 2019, but it is clear that “one size does not fit all” when talking about education. As you know, we all have different ways of working, and success comes in many forms.

With 76% of students studying whilst working, the OU understands that it is not always easy to combine

a job, a family, and other responsibilities along with study. The OU aims to provide the ultimate in flexible learning – being available when and where the student wants it, whether that is listening to a lecture whilst out jogging, late night on a laptop, or on the train whilst commuting.

Many people are aware that The Open University is leading the debate into the value of part-time study. Since the funding changes there has been a decline in part-time student numbers, but the OU is determined to regenerate interest and encourage even more students to believe that the impossible is possible.

Being able to study part-time is crucial for so many people. Beth Purvis wanted a career change after leaving work to start a family. She started her OU degree whilst caring for her children full-time, “I had always had an interest in law but without A-Levels I didn’t think I could pursue a career or study in this area. Then by chance I discovered the OU.”



Studying with the OU meant that I could work full-time and fit my studies in around the rest of my life.

Beth Purvis

Beth began with an Access course and really enjoyed the flexibility that distance learning gave and it wasn't long before she started her Bachelor of Law degree. When Beth's children started school she began volunteering with the Citizens' Advice Bureau before starting work as a paralegal. Beth recently completed her LLB, achieving a 2:1. She has just enrolled on the Legal Practice Course with the intention of applying for training contracts to qualify as a Solicitor; the career she had always wished she'd pursued.

As part of our inclusive mission, the OU is focussed on making studying affordable for part-time students in higher education, to promote real choice, competition and value for money, so they, like Beth, can achieve the careers they always wanted without compromise.



“The OU is not part-time learning, it's double-time learning... people have put education above many priorities in what are often already stressed and complicated lives. You need only look at their faces as they walk across the stage to collect their degrees and you will see the emotion, the relief and the dedication in them.”

*Chancellor Baroness Martha Lane-Fox
in her recent statement to the House of Lords*



Everson Mpofu

When considering how to further his professional skills, Everson knew that attending a conventional university wasn't an option as he had a full-time job and three children. Thanks to the flexibility offered by the OU, he was able to pursue his studies whilst not neglecting the demands of work and family.

As a consultant, he works away from home during the week and when he returns home at weekends he wanted to focus on his young family.

“The degree course I chose was in line with my professional career and was a great blend of theory and practice. Studying with the OU taught me how to live and learn! I had to manage resources in the face of other uncompromising demands on my time, finances and intellect. My colleagues helped me, especially in areas of study that required surveys, opinions and user analysis. My career changed progressively throughout studying, since every new skill I learned was going straight into practice.”

The OU's structure and culture are unique, and its methods are accessible to anyone aiming for success. Throughout all the modules I found a friend in each tutor – they were phenomenal! I'm now considering a Masters and am looking at exploring new horizons.”

Using almost 50 years of expertise and knowledge, we have developed a set of supportive measures that we are recommending to the review panel that we believe will improve the whole Post-18 system. Our recommendations include:

- Provide financial support in the form of maintenance grants to those who need to gain a higher education through part-time study. This will give real study choices to people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Create informed choice for all: Develop an excellent system of personalised information, advice and guidance for all potential students – working adults looking to learn while they earn as well as school leavers
- A flexible system: One that allows for study to fit around busy lives, takes learning credits from one provider to another and introduces a flexible credit-based funding system that allows people to study in smaller bite-sized chunks.
- Progression pathways: Strengthen pathways between Further Education, apprenticeships and Higher Education to better support technical skills.
- Flexibility and apprenticeships: To help employers and students, increase the flexibility of the Apprenticeship Levy.

“ At a time of growing pressures in the labour market, part-time higher education holds the key to closing the skills gap which is hampering productivity. ”

Mary Kellett, Acting Vice-Chancellor

The OU will continue its fight for part-time education, making study affordable for part-time students in higher education. We will always strive to promote real choice and value for money – and most of all to be inclusive. Open to people, places, methods and ideas, we will always promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential.



38%

of UK part-time undergraduates are studying with us

76%

of our students work full or part-time during their studies



Read more **Part-time Matters** stories and share your own alumni.open.ac.uk

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ROYAL VISIT FOR DOGS WHO DETECT CANCER

In June 2018, Dr Clara Mancini, Head of the OU's Animal Computer Interaction Lab, was invited to an audience with the Queen at Buckingham Palace to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Medical Detection Dogs charity. Dr Mancini has been collaborating with the charity since 2013, when she began researching ways to support the work of dogs

who can detect the odour of cancer and other diseases from volatile compounds in body fluids, such as urine, sweat or breath.

One of the key findings in the trials was discovering that dogs are more than 90% reliable at smelling the compounds – with a better detection rate than existing clinical tests.

Clara has designed an interface that allows the dog to communicate not only whether a sample is positive or negative but also how certain they are that the sample contains cancerous cells. This can be very important, particularly in the early detection of cancer.

“Ultimately, this work will contribute towards ongoing efforts to develop ‘artificial noses’ that can do the tests and that can be widely deployed.”

Dr Clara Mancini

Thanks to the incredible support of OU alumni, over £90,000 has been raised which has given Clara a fantastic opportunity to expand her team by recruiting a new research assistant. This will mean even more work can be undertaken on this life-saving project.



To learn more about the OU's Animal Computer Interaction (ACI) Lab visit

www.open.ac.uk/blogs/ACI

THE DISABLED VETERANS' SCHOLARSHIPS FUND

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One in five veterans are discharged from military service due to injury that results in disability. In 2017, the University launched the Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund, the first of its kind in the UK. The aspiration of the Fund is to ensure that, if disability means that veterans can no longer serve, they are empowered to rewrite their own futures through the power of education. The Fund will also provide free wrap-around support and a careers advice service.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of donors over £1.68 million has been raised already.

Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund ambassador, Air Marshal Sir Christopher Coville KCB BA commented "For those who have left their military careers unexpectedly and unplanned, due to injury, this kind of support will prove to be invaluable in helping those individuals transition."

The Fund closed for this year's applications on 1st August 2018 and the first 55 students will be welcomed in October. This would not have been possible without the generosity of the University's alumni, supporters and friends.

Many of you may remember the story of John Spence that we shared with you in 2017. We are delighted to let you know that John was recently named as Wales' Adult Learner of the Year at the *Inspire!* Awards ceremony. John was bullied at school because he couldn't read, and by the time he left aged 16, his confidence was so shattered that he developed a stammer.



Disabled Veterans I am sure will recognise the significant opportunities from an OU degree, enabled by this scheme. ♥♥

Lieutenant General Richard Nugee, Chief of Defence People (CDP) at the Ministry of Defence

John joined the Army, serving in Afghanistan and Iraq as a medic and enjoying a successful military career, despite having never told anyone about his struggles with reading and writing.

After leaving the Army, John began working at sea as an ocean paramedic. In that role he was referred to The Open University by an instructor, where it was discovered he had severe dyslexia, ADHD, and Meares-Irlen syndrome, which leaves the brain struggling to process visual information and affects reading ability.

"The Open University became the family I never had. They helped me at every step - arranging a computer and software for me, and the books I needed. Everyone was rooting for me. I'd never had that in my life."

THE DISABLED VETERANS' SCHOLARSHIPS FUND IS KINDLY SUPPORTED BY:

BAE Systems
Funded by the Chancellor using LIBOR funds
ABF (The Soldiers' Charity)
The William Allen Young Charitable Trust
Constance Travis Charitable Trust
The Simon Gibson Charitable Trust
The Veterans' Foundation

AND OVER 1,100 ALUMNI, FRIENDS AND OU SUPPORTERS, INCLUDING:

Gordon Dickinson	Colin Hume
John Duncan	Dr. Michael James
David Godson	Doreen and Anthony Van West



Look out for details of our Veterans' month in November giving.open.ac.uk

COMING TOGETHER TO REMEMBER OUR LEGACY SUPPORTERS

The Open University's Legacy Garden, originally dedicated in 2013, is the visual testament of thanks to those who have generously remembered the University with a gift in their Will. On Friday 13 July, staff, alumni, family and friends gathered in the Legacy Garden, at the heart of the Milton Keynes campus, to remember and honour the legacy supporters whose gifts were received in 2017.

Before this year's memorial plaques were unveiled, Lucian Hudson (Director of Communications) was able to share a little background on some of the 26 legacy donors that were being remembered. "Each will have had their own reason for generously remembering the University, many had their own learning journey with the OU – some of them were our "pioneer" students joining the University in its early years, helping to revolutionise learning. Each and every one has led the way for generations of students to come."

One of the donors remembered on the day, was Betty Faith Courtin. At the age of 80 Betty started studying with the OU, graduating 7 years later with a degree in Humanities. Betty's daughter, Diana, told us that her mother was a remarkable, intelligent and inspirational woman. Betty graduated in Versailles, France on the same date as her husband had proposed to her 68 years earlier. Betty's graduation was a 'moving and momentous' occasion for her and her family. Betty's legacy was left in recognition of her learning, fulfilment and enjoyment and the rich opportunities that the OU brought to her life.

Geoff Gay was also remembered at the ceremony. Geoff was a dedicated student and tutor at the OU, who had incredible passion for, and commitment to, education. Geoff's extremely thoughtful legacy is being used to support and encourage Maths students and

to widen participation in Higher Education. Geoff's passionate belief was that education should truly be open to everyone, from all social backgrounds and his gift will make an incredible difference, enabling this to happen.



Next year's dedication event will take place on Friday 12 July. If you, and a guest, would like to join us please contact our events team on **01908 858311** or email **oudo-events@open.ac.uk**

The gift of education is a hugely powerful legacy; it transforms lives and opens doors to a brighter future. All of our legacy donors have played a part in keeping the OU true to its mission to be open to people, places, methods and ideas; helping us remain open to all now, and for generations to come. A gift in a Will helps ensure that limited finance, disability or difficult circumstances do not prevent people from learning with us.

If you have already remembered the University in your Will, please accept our heartfelt thanks. Your Will is very personal, but if you would be happy to share your intentions with us we would love to recognise this by inviting you to our special events and keeping you up-to-date on how legacies change lives.



If you would like to know more about how a gift in your Will could support future generations of Open University students, visit **giving.open.ac.uk** or call Emily Portch on **01908 659141**



THE FUTURE OF OUR OCEANS NOW DEPENDS ON US

We are living in absolutely critical times. The damage humans are doing to the planet could soon seriously tip the balance of nature so far into the danger zone that it may be impossible to reverse.

Project Deep Blue is The Open University's vital initiative to help us learn more about the precarious state of our oceans and the alarming effect that humans are having on this very fragile environment, as highlighted in the BBC's recent award-winning series *Blue Planet II*.

Dr Pallavi Anand and Professor Mark Brandon, two of the leading academics who were special advisors throughout the production of *Blue Planet II*, are leading **Project Deep Blue**. Donors, including alumni, will help to support two important initiatives.

Funding for a research PhD student

The funding will cover the cost of a PhD student to work directly with the OU in assessing the impact of climate on marine phytoplankton evolution. Phytoplankton are some of our planet's most critical organisms. They form the base of the marine food chain and play a key role in removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. They generate about half of the Earth's oxygen – as much as all land plants.

A little over three million years ago, during the Pliocene geological period, the average sea surface temperature was a few degrees higher than it is now, the ice sheets were significantly smaller in the Arctic region and atmospheric carbon dioxide levels were similar to today – making this geologic time period an analogue for our future.

Open University specialists are investigating how the warm climate over the Pliocene period impacted the diversity of phytoplankton and how key climate factors influenced their growth and evolution.

The project is carrying out extensive research into exactly what global warming is doing to our polar ice caps. This includes comparative research between the past and the present by studying atmospheric bubbles that have been trapped in the polar ice sheets for the last one million years.

To support Undergraduate Students

The second element of **Project Deep Blue** is to support 300 undergraduate students in Environment, Earth and Ecosystem Sciences by funding their vital field studies in these subjects. This amounts to £142 per student per year, an additional study cost that sometimes proves a barrier to many students.

As you know, the OU is open to all and we do everything we can to ensure that no student is deterred from pursuing their passion simply because of circumstances. After all, these students could go on to become the future saviours of our planet!

Launched in July 2018, the project has already received support from over 1,000 donors and raised over £45,000. Thank you so much to our generous donors, your contributions are vital to allowing this project to succeed.



If you would like to donate,
visit open.ac.uk/donatenow

AN INCREDIBLE CHALLENGE FOR OU GRADUATE ANTOINE COUSOT

Antoine Cousot left school at 17, with no qualifications, to travel the world. He was inspired to study with The Open University by a fellow sailor who was studying with the OU whilst at sea. "I realised it was possible to go back to school and follow the courses with the OU while I was working around the globe sailing, and it sparked something in my mind," says Antoine of the beginning of his Open University journey. "I've done my Bachelors, my Masters and I was ready to jump onto the PhD, but with the Golden Globe race I have to say I can't do both, so I'll do the PhD after!"

Studying Earth Sciences with the OU enhanced Antoine's skills and knowledge as a skipper. Now, he is using what he has learned to single-handedly circumnavigate the globe to raise funds for more students to enjoy the opportunities that he had.

Antoine is undertaking a unique journey which has three exciting elements. He is participating in the Golden Globe Race 2018, whilst undertaking vital research into plastic and pollen distribution in our oceans and raising money for the Antoine Cousot Scholarships Fund.

The Race

In 1969 Sir Robin Knox-Johnston completed the first solo, non-stop circumnavigation of the world. The Golden Globe race marks the 50th Anniversary. On 1 July, 2018 the boats departed Les Sables-d'Olonne, France on a voyage to sail solo, non-stop around the world via the five Great Capes and return to the starting point. Entrants are limited to using similar equipment and yachts that were available to Sir Robin in the original race, which means sailing without modern technology or the benefit of satellite based navigation aids.

The Research

As he battles the elements alone, Antoine will be collecting samples fundamental to two new Open University research projects relating to plastics and pollen.

The use of plastic in our daily life coupled with unmanaged waste has resulted in an estimated 5 million metric tonnes of plastic entering our oceans every year, adversely impacting marine ecosystems. This pollution of plastics is so profound that it will leave a mark on the current geological period: the Anthropocene. This is the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment.



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“The OU has definitely changed my life, there's the education, there's a lot of opportunity open for you. It gives you more confidence and more self-esteem which is rather important. If you believe in you, you can do everything in life, you can even sail around the world without equipment.” Antoine Cousot



Our current knowledge of plastic pollution mainly comes from macro-plastics (particles larger than 5mm) in the coastal region, although some open ocean research has started to be conducted. Once in the ocean, macro-plastics degrade and disintegrate, resulting in smaller particles of plastic: micro-plastics (1-5mm) and nano-plastics (less than 1mm).

Therefore, Antoine's collected samples will be used for the following projects:

- The first project looks at how toxins from plastics impact human health by collecting nano- and micro-plastic samples during the voyage. From there, researchers will be able to evaluate how widespread the distribution is and what types of plastic are polluting our oceans.
- The second project considers the dispersal of pollen grains which is critical for plant reproduction. This research represents a unique dataset that will help unravel the mechanisms and pathways that lead to long-distance pollen transport during reproduction and fossilization.

The Rewards

The third objective of the trip is to gain support for the Antoine Cousot Scholarships Fund. A fund that aims to raise money to give more students the opportunity to transform their futures, through flexible, practical education in Environment, Earth and Ecosystem Sciences.

“ The OU changed my openness to the world we're living in. They came to me with the right tools at the right time, helping me to pursue my dreams. Education is not something you only do between 12 and 18, it's an ongoing process for all your life. ”



To follow Antoine's journey and support the fund, visit giving.open.ac.uk

2019 EVENTS

We'll be in touch with details of events to mark our 50th anniversary. We hope you'll be able to join us.



If you would like to give a gift to help **Open up the future** to all learners, please fill in the donation form enclosed with your magazine, or give online by visiting giving.open.ac.uk

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