The impact of student financial awards often reaches far beyond the students they were meant to help. Just ask Steve Lonergan. A graduate student in UVic’s Department of Computer Science, Steve commits much of his time to science education programs for young and/or able -- with outreach programs like Aboriginal STEM (science, technology, engineering and math for Aboriginal students), Science Venture, SPARCS (solving problems with algorithms, robots and computer science), the science computer course “Let’s Talk Science” and other programs. In recognition of his enthusiasm and expertise in making computers accessible to all, Steve received both the Engineering Students’ Society Stream “B” Award for Community Involvement and the Alex Cowie Travel Award.

Through the generosity of donors, Steve was able to pursue his enthusiasm for science education and attend conferences specializing in teaching computer science to students of all ages. It was at these conferences he started to learn how to apply his research to teaching.

As a graduate student, Steve doubles as researcher and teacher, committing his time to educational work with children and running a computer science after school club. Steve is an active member in Science Venture, a highly successful and innovative program that brings science education programming to students K-12 throughout Vancouver Island.

Steve sees a direct link between student awards and the important educational outreach he does: “I want to thank donors for their wonderful support – it creates so many opportunities. Thanks to the Alex Cowie Travel Award, my science education work with children K-12 throughout Vancouver Island.

The success of this program leads to an increase in student interest and engagement in science. When students see the real-world applications of computer science, they are more likely to consider it as a viable career option. The impact of Steve’s work is not limited to the students he works with. It extends to future generations of students who will benefit from the increased interest and participation in science education.

Steve’s work also has a broader impact on the community. The success of the Science Venture program has led to partnerships with local businesses and organizations, creating a network of support for science education. This network has helped to further expand the program and reach even more students.

The University of Victoria awards over 3.9 million dollars in Entrance, Transfer and In-Course Bursaries. Bursaries are non-repayable awards based on financial need and reasonable academic standing. These awards are for students who are receiving the maximum student loans available for their period of study and are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada. New Awards April 1, 2010 – March 31, 2011

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Philanthropic giving: supporting bright futures

Attending university is a dream-come-true for Renée Dagenais. Thinking she would rely on loans to pay for her education, she was overjoyed when she received the Black Press Business Scholarship. With the help of this financial award, Renée was able to devote time solely to her coursework; her resulting grades were so good that she was awarded the Black Press scholarship in her second year.

“Sometimes the difference between an A and a B can determine whether or not students are admitted to their program of choice. Financial aid inspires students and allows them to focus on their academic goals.”

Renée is a bright, enthusiastic student from Campbell River, BC and one of many students in UVic’s Bachelor of Commerce program who benefit from the Black Press Business Scholarships.

David Black, founder of the highly successful Black Press Group of community newspapers, established these scholarships for students entering UVic’s Bachelor of Commerce program at the Peter G. Gustavson School of Business. Every year, 37 business students living in communities where Black Press publishes will each receive a $5000 scholarship from the initiative.

These scholarships enable students from small communities to attend the Gustavson School – a school David Black helped to establish. The Black Press Business Scholarships encourage students to travel to Victoria for their education, and take their UVic experience and training back to enrich the social and economic wellbeing of their home communities and regions.

For Renée, giving back is foremost in her mind. After graduation, she hopes to embark on a career in finance to help others plan and achieve their own goals and aspirations. “Donors have helped me so much, and their generous example is one I want to follow.”

Scholarships drive research and discovery

Christoph Schimmele is fascinated by demography – the statistical study of the size and characteristics of human populations. Christoph is in the final year of his doctoral program at UVic, specializing in population health.

“The thing that excites me about population health is that it involves understanding the social distribution of disease, which is related to gender, culture and political economy. I want to understand how social structure influences our health.”

Thanks to scholarships, Christoph has been able to develop these research interests and focus on learning. For Christoph, receiving the Bob and Kay Lane Scholarship represents more than financial help: “It’s like an enduring gift of knowledge. I want to contribute to demographic knowledge in tribute to the Lane’s kindness and generosity.”

Christoph is just the type of student Dr. Bob Lane was thinking of when he and Kay established the scholarship in 2006. During his career as a physician, Dr. Lane developed an interest in preventative medicine and his involvement in public health led him to seek a better understanding of demography. Demography can tell us about how the composition, growth, and transitions of population contribute to different social environments.

“Early demographers didn’t anticipate the Baby Boom,” says Lane. “This brings up questions like why the Baby Boom occurred in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Britain, but not much in France, Europe and Asia.”

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