More from Gustavson student bursary recipients:

“Having access to the bursary allowed me the opportunity to complete summer courses while becoming a temporary healthcare worker and providing home care to one of my closest friends who is quadriplegic. My summer courses and healthcare work both proved to be very rewarding experiences.”

Eddie May, BCom student from Calgary, AB

“I am incredibly thankful for the support that the business alumni community provided me. As a first generation immigrant in Canada, I am thrilled to see how encouraged we are to pursue a post-secondary education. I hope to one day be able to offer financial support to students in need.”

Angieca Large, BCom student from Tsawwassen, BC

“I am very grateful to Gustavson alumni for their support. In such an unstable environment, they gave us great encouragement.”

Ke Xing, BCom student from Nanjing, China

“Thank you very much to all the alumni who donated! It’s a great thing to be able to give back to students, especially during a pandemic. I believe many students will be able to overcome the difficulties that come with uncertainty.”

Yukan Jiang, BCom student from Kunming, China

“I would like to thank the business school alumni greatly for their generosity. To know our UVic community supports us students when we really need it has me last for words.”

Sophia Seemann, BCom student from Soskse, BC

“Thank you to Gustavson for the bursary, for it has been amazing how much a sense of community has helped in these tough times. Thanks to the bursary, the hard work from the Commerce Student Society and the extra work faculty have been putting in, a lot of my stress around COVID-19 was alleviated.”

Lan Phuong Bui, BCom student from Hanoi, Vietnam

“When the pandemic hit, I couldn’t imagine how difficult it would have been for students to have their support networks temporarily taken away from them, let alone the financial hardship from not being able to earn an income. When UVic launched the COVID-19 Student Support Bursary, a donation felt like the least I could do to help.”

April Gagnon, BCom ’07, from London, UK

“The collaboration, teamwork, sharing and support among the cohorts I experienced during my MBA program inspired me to give back to those who truly need it.”

Hui-Siong Ng, MBA ’04, from Surrey, BC

“We professors drilled into our minds the concept of adapting to change. The program that the students are currently taking is uniquely designed to support them and help them weather this challenging time.”

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Gustavson mourns the passing of a beloved leader and friend

by Dr. A.R. (Elango) Elangovan and Dr. Saul Klein

Remembering Ali Dastmalchian

W ith the passing of Dr. Ali Dastmalchian in August 2020, the University of Victoria lost an inspiring, dedicated and beloved former leader. Best known to all as simply “Ali,” he was the much-acclaimed dean of three business schools in Canada over the last 20 years and touched the lives of thousands of students, colleagues and community members across Canada and the world in deeply positive ways. Most of his career was spent at the Gustavson School of Business, where he was one of the founding faculty members in 1990. He served as dean between 2002 and 2012 and transformed the school into a pioneering centre for business education and research, shaping its evolution as a key player on the global scene.

Under Ali’s leadership, we launched PhD and Master of Global Business degree programs, sharpened their focus on sustainability and social responsibility, earned the prestigious AACSB and EQUIS accreditations, significantly expanded our international operations, designed unique double degrees with partner schools and doubled the size of our student body.

He created the school’s board of governors, established a critical link with the local business community, and initiated the widely recognized Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year Award (DEYA). Ali was a key player on the global scene.

Throughout his tenure, Ali remained an active researcher, leading the GLOBE project and inspiring business leaders alike.

While those accomplishments by themselves are enough to mark and celebrate a lifetime of achievement, it was his impact on our school’s culture and us (his colleagues) that was truly remarkable.

Ali had a unique ability to inspire others to dream with him, motivate and empower each person to tap into their undiscovered potential and dare to step out of their comfort zone to achieve that dream. He helped us collaborate with each other even when we had radically different world views, celebrate our togetherness and aspire to the next summit. With patience, active listening, trust, caring and respect, he modelled the way for us to relate to each other at Gustavson, and earned the enthusiastic support and commitment of the business community. Ali fostered the collaborative, positive and innovative culture that still thrives at Gustavson today.

We were truly fortunate to have had Ali as a leader, colleague and friend. He was a personification of warmth and affection with a generosity of spirit that drew people to him. His authenticity and humanity, infused with a sense of adventure, goodwill and humour, made him an anchor and a compass for our own wellbeing and growth.

We were humbled by his seemingly unlimited energy and his capacity for work, and moved by his kindness and thoughtfulness. He had time for every one of us and we were always welcome to turn to him for wise counsel and morale-boosting support any time we needed it. He lifted all of us who walked with him— we became more than we ourselves thought possible.

His impact continues to be seen throughout the school in ways large and small, across our programs and people. We are inexcessibly grateful for the genuine servant leadership, ambitious vision and innovative perspectives that Ali epitomized. We mourn his loss and celebrate his leadership and friendship—at the university, within Gustavson and in the community. We are richer for having known him and poorer for having lost him.