

GCU *ALUMNI*

Winter 2020

The magazine for graduates and friends of Glasgow Caledonian University



Common Good Campaign

Making a difference to students' lives - Pages 10-11

999: What's Your Emergency?

GCU graduate Stevie Hannah gives us an insight into
working on the frontline - Pages 16-17



University for the Common Good

Welcome



Welcome to GCU Alumni, our magazine for graduates and friends of the University. 2020 has been a challenging year and we have all been affected by the pandemic in different ways. For those who

have lost loved ones our heartfelt condolences are with you. We want you, and anyone who is struggling right now, to know that your University is always here for you should you need us.

Throughout the crisis, we have been overwhelmed by the way our alumni and friends have rallied to help the University with hundreds generously donating gifts as well as time and expertise to support our students hit hardest. We truly cannot thank you enough.

A highlight for us this year was our GCU Heroes campaign where we were able to profile some of our alumni who are playing their part by working on the frontline or going above and beyond to support the most vulnerable in our communities. And, we know there are thousands more alumni and friends who are contributing to the efforts in a variety of ways and delivering our mission for the Common Good. The University is so proud of all you are doing and so we wanted to dedicate this magazine to you all - our GCU Heroes. Thank you.

In this edition we feature a number of our GCU Heroes, update you on the University's response to the COVID-19 crisis, including the work of our leading researchers, and we tell you more about how you can donate, participate and volunteer in our new Common Good Campaign.

As we enter 2021, please know that your University is here for you and do reach out to us if we can help you in any way. We look forward to staying connected with you all. Take care and stay safe.

Jillian Watt

**Director, Glasgow Caledonian University
Foundation, Alumni Engagement and Events**
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The Big Picture

We launched a #GCUHeroes campaign to recognise our amazing graduates who are working on the frontline during this pandemic. Over on our Facebook channel we featured a #GCUHero each week from April-June to show our appreciation and to let them know how proud we are of them.

Pictured is nursing graduate Dean McIlear, just one of our many heroes featured on our cover, who graduated in 2018 and is a Staff Nurse working in the Intensive Treatment Unit at the Kings College Hospital in London.

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Chancellor's special message for the Class of 2020

For the class of 2020 graduation day was not quite as they had envisaged, and the University staff shared in their disappointment at not being able to celebrate together in person. While we do hope there will be an opportunity to celebrate together in the future, we were pleased to see the many creative ways that graduates and their families were able to mark the occasion to ensure the pandemic did not detract from their outstanding achievements. We are so proud of each and every one of you.

GCU Chancellor, Dr Annie Lennox OBE, led the many messages of congratulations received for the outstanding Class of 2020.

"Class of 2020, as your Chancellor I want to offer every one of you my heartfelt congratulations on the special day when you become graduates. This is a moment to acknowledge all the hard work and dedication it's taken to accomplish your intended goals, and I hope you can take just a moment to feel satisfied and proud of this fantastic personal accomplishment and memorable milestone in your lives. The commitment, determination and resilience you have shown to complete your degrees at this difficult time is to be commended. I'm so proud of you all as are the University staff who've shared this journey with you.

"As we're all so keenly aware, this is not the way we would've envisioned

your graduation to be. I very much share and appreciate how disappointing it is for us all not to be together today in person. But, these are unprecedented times, and one thing I've realised is that human beings are able to adapt in more ways than we might have previously realised. Technology has offered an opportunity to connect in ways that we'd never have imagined, and although the situation is not ideal, hopefully, there'll be a time in the not too distant future when you'll be able to properly celebrate with your family and friends in a less physically distanced way.

"The global pandemic has changed many things, but it can't change the exceptional achievements of your cohort of graduates. Your education is a precious opportunity, not only for you but for the whole world around you. So, use your skills well. If you are already engaged in environmental activism, in human rights, or in global feminism, we applaud you. If you are thinking about getting on board with any of these issues, we fully encourage you to do so. We want you to succeed and make this world a better place, the best way you can. The world is waiting for you to get on board, go out there and be an influencer, contributor, a changemaker. Become inspired and be inspirational in turn, and most of all, thrive and live your life to the best of your abilities."



“The world is waiting for you to get on board, go out there and be an influencer, contributor, a changemaker.”

GCU's response to the COVID-19 crisis

As the University for the Common Good, we take a look back at how the GCU community rallied to help in the response to the pandemic.



GCU nurses step up to support COVID-19 crisis

More than 500 student nurses from GCU joined NHS Scotland's national emergency response to the coronavirus pandemic. The third-year students undertook paid placement in hospitals across the country under the supportive wing of the University.



3D printers providing protective equipment for health workers

Desperately needed protective equipment was donated to the NHS thanks to a cross-university effort. GCU's portable 3D printers produced plastic headbands which were urgently needed for face shields to protect those on the frontline from infection. In addition, the University donated a range of protective equipment including gloves, aprons and safety glasses to local hospitals.



Student paramedics join NHS COVID-19 emergency

Students on Scotland's only full-time undergraduate degree course in paramedic science have been working with the Scottish Ambulance Service in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. Ninety-five students on the BSc Paramedic Science programme at GCU joined the COVID-19 NHS emergency response.

State-of-the-art GCU equipment delivered to temporary hospital

GCU delivered a host of medical equipment from its state-of-the-art training facility to the NHS Louisa Jordan temporary hospital in Glasgow. The equipment from the University's Interprofessional Simulation Centre, included a hospital bed, intensive care observations trolley, drip stand and pulse and oxygen monitor.



GCU sends COVID-19 testing equipment to help NHS response

The Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences team responded immediately to an urgent Government call for a loan of their ThermoFisher 7500-Fast PCR machine, designed to accurately detect the presence of coronavirus genetic material in patient samples.

GCU's ARC sports centre transformed into new walk-through COVID-19 test centre for Glasgow

GCU's support in providing the site is completely in keeping with our unique mission as the University for the Common Good and is a really important and vital way we can rise to the challenge our nation, city and community face.



Fashion Professor answers face mask appeal

A Professor from GCU's British School of Fashion, is producing cotton face masks in her spare time to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Professor Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas, a former childrenswear designer, is using leftover fabric to create masks for a local hospice and charities in London.

Fashion designer switches from wedding dresses to NHS scrubs

A fashion technician from GCU has switched from designing bespoke wedding dresses to mass-producing scrubs for the NHS to help in the fight against COVID-19. Rinaldo Girasoli, who works part-time at GCU, is using his spare time to cut and sew up to 10 sets a week after he temporarily closed his bridal fashion business.

SHLS Dean joins the COVID-19 frontline

School of Health and Life Sciences Dean Professor Andrea Nelson has returned to the nursing frontline to help out on COVID-19. She is the COVID-19 mobile testing team's 'Girl Friday' and takes Fridays off as annual leave to cover her NHS shift, donating any salary to the GCU Foundation's Common Good Fund.

Reaching out to our alumni and friends

The Foundation and Alumni team delivered a calling campaign to check in on student beneficiaries and some of our alumni and friends to ensure their safety and wellbeing and let them know GCU was here for them too. We launched the Graduate Business Directory to provide a platform for alumni to promote their businesses, services and special offers to fellow graduates and also donated £1000 to foodbanks which worked hard to help vulnerable residents during the pandemic within each of our Caledonian Club partner communities.



Researchers response to COVID-19

COVID-19 has laid bare not only the health and social care challenges that societies face going forward, but also many wider challenges borne of widespread social inequalities and injustices.

As the University for the Common Good, and with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the framework for our research strategy, we share some of the contributions of GCU's research community during the pandemic.

COVID-19 vaccine should be global common good

Nations and drug companies have been urged to put the patents for a COVID-19 vaccine in the public domain for the good of humanity.

The pharmaceutical industry, and its university partners, should make the potential vaccine available to all countries without priority or exclusivity and put the "global common good" ahead of profit, according to leading health economists.

Writing in *The Lancet Healthy Longevity*, health economist Professor Cam Donaldson, Yunus Chair at Glasgow Caledonian University, outlines the dangers of countries acting in their own self-interest in the race to find a vaccine.

In an article, co-written with Nobel Peace Laureate and GCU Emeritus Chancellor Professor Muhammad Yunus, he states: "As the virus knows no geographic boundaries, we have to act to help each other.

"Scientific consensus is that the only way this pandemic will be eradicated is through the vaccination of all people worldwide.

"It is, therefore, important to recognise this in our policy actions to

avoid the tragedy of the commons, in which selfish behaviour leads to adverse communal outcomes. This is true for countries as well as individuals.

"We call for the response to COVID-19 to be global in deeds as well as words and based on principles of equal and universal access to treatments and vaccines.

"The mission, and driver, should not be one of profit but, rather the achievement of the widest and maximum health benefit possible."

Campaigners are urging vaccine research to be placed in the public domain and made available to any production facility that pledges to

operate under strict international regulatory supervision.

Professor Donaldson added: "The funds required to mobilise around COVID-19 vaccines as a global common good are likely to pale into insignificance relative to what will be required to address an ongoing economic recession consequent on non-eradication.

"The collective reward for laboratories and researchers who contribute to the development of COVID-19 vaccines for the Common Good would be the ability to operate in more settled 'markets' and perhaps a Nobel Prize in Medicine, and even in Peace."



Professor Cam Donaldson.



Professor Claudia Escourt.

GCU researchers provide expert advice to Government and Agencies

Professor Claudia Escourt's renowned expertise on preventing transmission of sexually transmitted infections through more effective contact tracing and management, has led to her providing expert opinion to the Scottish Parliament, Public Health England and the HM Government's Chief Scientific Advisor on National Security on contact tracing for COVID-19.

Professor Jacqui Reilly, co-lead of the Centre for Living 'Safeguarding Health

through Infection Prevention' (SHIP) Research Group, is also Nurse Director at NHS National Services Scotland and Executive Lead for Quality Healthcare Associated Infection. Professor Reilly is intensively involved in NHS and Scottish Government planning in response to the pandemic and will bring SHIP group research findings to bear in her thinking and leadership at this time, particularly in relation to handwashing technique and public and professional behaviour change in relation to infection prevention.

Leading researchers play key role in public health response

Professors Sharon Hutchinson and David Goldberg have been at the heart of major research which has provided important epidemiological insights on COVID-19 to aid the public health response.

Two papers were published in prestigious journals. The first published in PLOS (Public Library of Science) Medicine showed that, along with being older and male, severe COVID-19 disease is strongly associated with past medical history across all age groups in Scotland and that residents in care homes were 21 times more likely to develop severe disease than people of the same age and sex not living in care homes in Scotland.

The second, published in the British Medical Journal found that healthcare workers and members of their

household contributed a sixth of COVID-19 cases admitted to hospital among working age adults in Scotland during the first wave.

Researchers discovered that patient-facing healthcare workers and their household members had three-fold and two-fold increased risks of admission to hospital with COVID-19, respectively.

COVID-19 research funding competitions

Glasgow Caledonian University received just over £1m in funding from the Scottish Funding Council as part of a £75m package to boost research across the sector in Scotland. These funds are intended to protect the research talent pool, support project and PhD interruptions and focus research on addressing COVID-19 related issues.

In the competition for 6-month research projects conducted by the Chief Scientist Office in April, GCU was successful with three projects amounting to funding of £136,290. The projects and principal investigators are as follows:

- Professor Michael Roy received £58,245 - Solidarity in a time of crisis: the role of mutual aid to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Dr Alex Pollock received £28,317 - Effective interventions to support the resilience and mental health of frontline health and social care staff during a global health crisis and following de-escalation.
- Dr Jamie Frankis received £49,728 - How has COVID-19 social distancing amplified the mental health vulnerabilities of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBM)?



Professor Jacqui Reilly.

You can follow GCU's research response to COVID-19 by visiting our website at gcu.ac.uk/research/covid-19

Making a difference to students' lives through the Common Good Campaign

The GCU Foundation has an important role to play in helping to level the playing field, ensuring that finance is not a barrier to our students reaching their full potential. The significance of our work has been heightened by the devastating impact COVID-19 is having on young people.

The pandemic's profound and rapid effect on the lives of our students means that those from disadvantaged backgrounds are being hardest hit and many more students are being pushed into hardship. Loss of part-time jobs, the growing digital divide and a sharp rise in the demand for mental health support means that many of our students find themselves overwhelmed by COVID's impact on their futures.

Backed by our Founding Donor, Sir Alex Ferguson CBE, the Foundation has launched the Common Good Campaign to raise vital funds to help ease the added burden our students now bear, as well as mobilising our alumni and friends' community to support in-kind via our MINT (Mentoring, Internships,

Networking and Talks) programme. All funds raised will be directed to where the need is greatest, helping to:

- **Alleviate Financial Hardship** for those who have lost part-time income and have no family support including care experienced students and those from disadvantaged areas.
- **Provide Mental Health and Wellbeing Support** responding to the sharp rise in demand for these services as a result of the pandemic.
- **Support Employability** through match-funded internships providing students with additional help to gain industry experience and guidance to help them get a foot on the career ladder.

Running throughout the academic year, a key focal point of our Campaign will be in April 2021, which is the 50th anniversary of one of our founding institutions, the Glasgow College of Technology. During the month of April we will have a series of events and activities that people can participate in to support the Campaign.



Ways to get involved in the Common Good Campaign

Please help us to support students who have been hit hardest by the pandemic and allow talented young people at GCU to focus on reaching their potential. You can support and get involved in a number of ways:

Donate

In recognition of 2021 being the 50th anniversary of the Glasgow College of Technology, we are appealing for donations of £50 per year or £3.50 per month (+ gift aid). Regular gifts are special as your long term commitment allows us to plan ahead and direct our funding to where the need is greatest.

Participate

Take part in our Glasgow College of Technology 50th Celebrations.

During April 2021 you will have the chance to take part in activities including:

- Online Auction for your chance to own rare items including Sir Alex Ferguson memorabilia.
- An exclusive ticketed online event featuring special VIP guests.
- Secrets to my Success, an online event featuring a range of alumni from the Glasgow College of Technology.

There will also be the chance to sponsor Team GCU on their fundraising challenge. Alternatively, you could embark upon your own challenge during our Campaign to take an active role in raising funds for students in need!

Volunteer

We are appealing for experienced alumni and friends to give back their time and expertise to GCU's MINT (Mentoring, Internships, Networking and Talks) programme, the first of its kind to provide integrated support to new graduates.

There are opportunities to become a mentor, take on an intern or deliver a talk as a leader in your field.

To find out more and support the Campaign visit:
www.gcu.ac.uk/foundation

If you would like to discuss a specific area of support or other ways of giving such as pledging a legacy or GAYE, a tax efficient way to give via salary deduction, the team is always here to help. Contact foundation@gcu.ac.uk and we will be in touch.



"Young people need our support now more than ever. I am proud to be backing GCU's Common Good Campaign that is proactively addressing the big challenges facing students in the wake of the pandemic."

Sir Alex Ferguson, CBE,
Founding Donor

MINT: Mentoring, Internships, Networking and Talks

In the wake of the pandemic, the GCU Foundation and Alumni Team launched an innovative new programme aimed at supporting the Class of 2020 and final year students to help enhance their employability and increase their chances of gaining employment at the earliest possible opportunity.

MINT: Mentoring, Internships, Networking and Talks has received high-profile support from our Founding Donor, Sir Alex Ferguson CBE, who has donated £200,000 to establish the Internship Fund, as well as backing from other notable honorary graduates and alumni of the University including actor Martin Compston, Katie Murray, Group Chief Financial Officer

at NatWest Group, Anne Marie Imafidon MBE, Founder of Stemettes, Brian Duffy, CEO of Watches of Switzerland and British fashion designer Christopher Raeburn.

Following the launch of the Programme in May, we reached out to alumni and friends to ask if they would like to get involved in the Programme and we have been simply overwhelmed

by the response we received. To date over 1,200 graduates and friends of GCU volunteered to be part of the Programme and hundreds are already actively participating, providing valuable expertise, advice and support to our newest graduates and soon-to-be graduates at this time.

Mentoring

Under the mentoring arm of the scheme, new graduates and final year students are paired with an experienced alumni mentor who can offer such support as tips on making their CV stand out, act as a sounding board, and offer advice on building confidence and industry connections. More than 400 of our newest graduates have been assigned an industry mentor to date, with 250 mentor/mentee pairings actively underway.



"I am very proud to be a Governor at GCU, part of the alumni community and delighted to participate in the MINT programme with the opportunity to mentor and support GCU graduate Nicole. It has been a rewarding experience to offer support particularly during these challenging times and difficult job market. I will continue to offer Nicole support until she secures her role in Human Resources Management. Yet another great initiative from GCU. #ProudtobeGCU."

Campbell Fitch, GIPM, Personnel Management and Alumni Mentor

Internships

The internship programme offers new graduates the opportunity to gain paid industry experience within an SME, voluntary organisation or a company where GCU alumni are employed. Unlike many other internship programmes, participating graduates receive the living wage, ensuring they are appropriately rewarded for their hard work. The Internship Fund was established thanks to £200,000 of philanthropic support from Sir Alex Ferguson CBE. To date over 40 new graduates have benefitted from the Fund with more than a quarter leading to permanent roles.



"I have always been a champion of providing opportunities to young people and through this initiative I hope to give new graduates a helping hand to boost their employability as they enter a particularly challenging job market."

Sir Alex Ferguson CBE, Founding Donor

Networking and Talks

Graduates and final year students can also link up with alumni around the world through our series of networking and talks. There are a number of tailored opportunities including our online international alumni receptions, GCU London's online tea and catch up sessions and our New York campus, GCNYC, hosts regular workshops facilitating opportunities to share ideas and insights.

'Captains of Industry' is our main online talk series where leaders in their field share their career journeys and provide insights into the impact of COVID-19 on their sector. Held fortnightly throughout the academic year, they offer graduates and students the chance to hear from industry experts first-hand and get tips and advice as they embark on their own career journeys.

To date, over 600 graduates and students have heard from inspirational speakers including, British fashion designer and GCU honorary professor, Christopher Raeburn, who took students on a virtual tour of his studio to witness his unique sustainable creations made from reusing and recycling materials such as parachutes to create beautiful clothing and accessories. Entrepreneur and GCU honorary graduate, Dr Brian Williamson, gave an insightful, honest and humorous account of developing and running successful businesses throughout his 40-year career, while Mark Hogarth, Creative Director of Harris Tweed Hebrides, discussed the impact the pandemic has had on the three-time Scottish Fashion Award winning heritage brand, and how they have successfully adapted to suit the ever-changing market.



Professor Christopher Raeburn.

The MINT Programme is part of our Common Good Campaign and a way for alumni and friends to give back in-kind. To volunteer or find out more on how you can take part visit www.gcu.ac.uk/foundation

Our 2020 GCU Heroes

In what has been a particularly unique year, we have never been more proud to recognise our graduate community. Here, Principal Professor Pamela Gillies CBE FRSE shares a special message for our graduates.

"On behalf of us all at the University I would like to express my admiration and gratitude to all our alumni working in frontline healthcare and other essential services during the pandemic. I know that many of you will be facing the greatest challenges of your career and making significant sacrifices to ensure we can get through this.

"Never has the world been more grateful for healthcare workers, carers, essential retail staff, police, transport operators, postal workers, community volunteers and so many more who have kept us all going. Very often they have been referred to as the 'unsung heroes' however, this year has brought to light just how critical these roles are to our society and of the contribution they make for the Common Good.

"At this time of year, we recognise our GCU Alumni of the Year. Traditionally, this is a select few who have excelled in their field or made a positive contribution to society worthy of special recognition. However, this



Professor Pamela Gillies CBE FRSE.

year, choosing a small number of recipients was simply an impossible task. We were inundated with nominations and were blown away by the stories of so many incredible individuals. Many have made huge personal sacrifices in order to work, such as isolating from their children and family members to keep them safe whilst others have tirelessly volunteered their time to help their community.

"It is therefore only right that our 2020 Alumni of the Year Awards honour all of our incredible alumni who are contributing in a variety of, but equally vital ways, using their skills and good character to support the pandemic efforts. We are proud of each and every one of you and cannot thank you enough for continuing to make a difference, for the Common Good."

Earlier this year, we featured a number of our inspiring alumni, as part of our #GCUHeroes campaign. Here we share just a few of the stories you provided as part of that campaign, as well as a message below from MSc Public Health with Social Action graduate and 2016 GCU London Alumni of the Year recipient, Dr Obinna Anuruegbe. Many more stories are available on our website at www.gcu.ac.uk/alumni/profile/gcuheroes. We would like to thank all of our alumni who took the time to share their stories which will go on to form part of our University's COVID-19 archive.



Dr Obinna Anuruegbe

*MSc Public Health with Social Action GCU London 2013
GCU London Alumni of the Year 2016*

"To my fellow frontline staff and key workers, your service to humanity will never be forgotten. Keep doing what you do. Do not feel underappreciated as you step out to duty each day. Remember you are everyone's knight or dame. We can beat this; we will beat the beast. #TogetherWeWill #ForTheCommonWeal."



Claire Gillespie

Adult Nursing graduate and currently working within the Acute Medical Ward at Glasgow Royal Infirmary

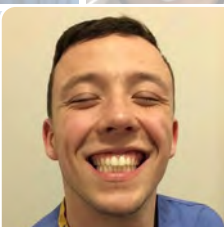
"I love being a nurse but didn't expect this to be my experience as a new nurse. Earlier on in the pandemic I made the decision to place my two young daughters into isolation with my vulnerable mother who is my usual childcare to keep them all safe from this virus due to my job. I missed them and I visited outside the window every day. This meant I could work hard for our NHS to try to fight this virus and protect my family at the same time. Sometimes we need to sacrifice to serve the greater good."



Dean McIlear

Nursing graduate and currently a Staff Nurse working in intensive care at Kings College Hospital in London

"I get to work in two ITUs, one dedicated to the treatment of COVID-19 cases and the general unit kept for traumas, cardiac arrests, sepsis and such. Times are tough at the moment and our workloads are increasing every day. Where normally the ratio between critically ill patients and staff nurses stood at 1:1, the ratio is beginning to change as more cases of critically ill patients present to the hospital with COVID-19. My colleagues are what is driving me to carry on, the camaraderie that exists is remarkable."



Vicki Shields

Social Sciences graduate and Residential Childcare Officer

"I look after vulnerable young people who usually have a background of trauma, attachment disorders and in some cases autism. Keeping these young people locked down is difficult for them. In some cases, they cannot spend time with their families, they are living on top of each other and we cannot hug or comfort them. However, I am in awe of the way they are dealing with this crisis. They show resilience and patience. In this nature of work there are often little opportunities to chat or bond with the young people but our relationships have strengthened."



Scott Atkinson

Paramedic Practice graduate and currently a Paramedic with Scottish Ambulance Service in Edinburgh

"I have always wanted to work in my current role and while there is some added stress with the pandemic this is ultimately what we trained to do. We are required more than ever at present and it is important that staff remain dedicated and professional to ensure we deal with COVID patients and still provide care to our non-COVID patients. To work in this role, you need to remain flexible and see the bigger picture. The whole country is having to pull together and make huge adjustments which will be felt for decades."



999: What's Your Emergency?

We recently caught up with BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice graduate Stevie Hannah, Team Leader of the Special Operations Response Team within the Scottish Ambulance Service.

Stevie gives us an insight into working on the frontline and being first on the scene at some of Scotland's major incidents.

What inspired you to go into your line of work?

In my mid-twenties I watched one of the first fly on the wall programmes called 'Paramedics', which I was glued to every week. Seeing the staff attend to incidents and treating members of the public made me realise it was a path I wanted to take.

Can you tell us the roles you have had in the Ambulance Service leading to the one you are in now?

I began my career in 1993 as an Ambulance Care Assistant at Coatbridge Station, transporting patients to the local day hospital, before progressing to Ambulance Technician at Law Station in South Lanarkshire. After gaining my paramedic certification in 1998, I was selected for duty within the Scottish Ambulance Airwing Department HEMS (Helicopter Emergency Medical Service) based at the SECC in Glasgow and was promoted to Team Leader in 2005. In 2008 I decided to take up the challenge within Special Operations which is my current position.

Can you tell us a bit more about your current position?

As Special Operations Team Leader I am responsible for a team of seven. We attend significant incidents throughout Scotland and can also be called further afield to different parts of the UK to support our colleagues. On a daily basis we attend incidents such as firearms, serious road traffic collisions, fires, chemical or hazardous incidents, working at height, water incidents and difficult access and retrieval. We would also be the first port of call for any major incident in Scotland.



Stevie Hannah.

What moment has really stood out in your career and what did you learn from it?

Attending the George Square bin lorry crash was a harrowing day for all concerned. What members of the public don't realise is that it was our second major incident of the day having attended severe flooding in Kilmarnock that morning where people had been trapped in a local superstore as the water rose six feet up the shelves. My team and I were on site until approximately 10pm that night, exhausted and frustrated at the day's events. I learned that day how fragile life can be and how random decisions can alter your life forever.

Can you tell us a bit more about some of the major incidents you have been involved in?

My team and I have attended most of the major incidents over the past few years including, the Clutha Helicopter crash (very difficult as I personally knew the crew), the George Square bin lorry crash and the Cameron House Hotel fire. Each of the incidents are very different in nature, mass casualties at two of them but at Cameron House we had over 100 residents displaced from their rooms, some requiring treatment and medication which had unfortunately been lost in the fire along with the tragic loss of life.

Your job is physically and emotionally demanding; how do you remain resilient when you face such distressing situations and incidents?

As a team we discuss and dissect every incident we attend when we finally get back to base. Sometimes, depending on the incident, I will have a hot debrief on site when things are fresh in our minds. We find talking through incidents to each other and discussing events helps us emotionally. As a Paramedic you will see horrific sights in two years that most members of the public will not experience in a lifetime, something to consider the next time an ambulance passes you with its warning signs on.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking about becoming a paramedic?

Please don't hesitate as it's the best occupation in the world. Where else can you say that no two days will be the same? You could be attending a road traffic collision then next delivering a baby in someone's home. It's the most rewarding of occupations which can be

difficult at times but the Scottish Ambulance Service provides excellent support for staff members as do your colleagues. You enter into the public's homes when they are at their most vulnerable and you can make a significant impact on their lives.

How has COVID impacted your role?

Where do I begin? My department has been transporting COVID positive and suspected patients since February which was beginning to overwhelm us. Staff members have gone above and beyond what's expected of them in order to meet the demand from patients with this terrible virus.

As a frontline worker, has the pandemic affected your personal life?

I am terrified of taking this virus home to my wife and children. We follow good hygiene practice on base and before leaving for home but it's always a concern. Personally it has not been a great year for me as I sadly lost my mother in

June. Although her death was not from coronavirus I suspect the lockdown restrictions had a detrimental effect on her health.

Do you have a few words of advice or support for fellow students and alumni on the frontline?

Just remember you are not alone. If you need advice from experienced Paramedics, don't hesitate to ask. When you attend incidents, be confident, be polite and don't take incidents home with you. If you need support please get it, either from the department or your colleagues and remember everyone has experienced stressful times before. The job you're doing is exceptional in the current climate and can sometimes feel overwhelmed but you're getting a frontline perspective of a period in time that will be remembered throughout history.

“You enter into the public's homes when they are at their most vulnerable and you can make a significant impact on their lives.”



Safe return to campus

The health, safety and wellbeing of our students and staff is our highest priority and as we continue to follow all the latest Scottish Government guidance we wanted to give you an update on how things have changed on campus.

Keeping our campus safe

The Estates team has been working hard implementing a number of safety measures to make campus life as safe, but also as normal, as possible. Some of these new safety measures include hand sanitisers at all entrances to buildings, operating a one-way system in corridors and staircases where this is possible, entrances and exit routes are clearly signposted and the numbers allowed in any building or room will be limited to avoid congestion.

Our specialist spaces - such as laboratories, simulation suites, skills classes and workshops - have been equipped with the appropriate safety measures and their layout amended to enable safe on-campus working.

Dedicated webpages, videos and resources have been created and widely promoted to ensure both students and staff have access to everything they need to know about staying safe and being on campus.

Learning and Teaching

This academic year our teaching will be delivered largely online with limited face-to-face, socially distanced teaching in small groups on campus.

Our virtual learning environment GCU Learn is a fantastic learning resource and is playing an important part of our students' learning experience this year. The Sir Alex Ferguson Library, Students' Association and Student Services are fully accessible online, however students can also book safe study spaces within the Library for those who don't have access to such spaces at home.

Our dedicated academic and professional support staff have been working hard to make our online learning experience an extremely positive one and to ensure our students have access to all the support they need regardless of their mode of study.

As Scottish Government guidelines allow, and it is safe to do so, on campus teaching will progressively increase.

Health and Wellbeing - Here to Help

We know this is a very concerning time for everyone so with that in mind GCU launched a 'Here to Help' initiative to raise awareness of the kinds of support available to both students and staff.

Through the GCU Wellbeing team, a range of resources are available to access online. These include information and guidance, apps, and podcasts on issues such as stress management and mindfulness.

Supporting our students in halls of residence

A number of our students have remained in halls of residence, and to ensure our students in Caledonian Court continue to be supported, we have developed, enhanced and adapted a range of different resources for them. These include the creation of a dedicated online community, direct access to the Student Wellbeing team and tailored care packages delivered by student ambassadors to those who need to self-isolate.

We have also setup a free asymptomatic COVID-19 test centre on our Glasgow campus to enable our students to return home safely for the festive break.





GCU in other news

GCU plan to set up Common Good Lab in Milton

The first Common Good Lab in Europe is to be set up by GCU in one of the most disadvantaged areas of the UK. The innovation is to be established in Milton, in the north of Glasgow.

It builds on the legacy of the university settlement movement which was active in late Victorian society and saw social reformer Arnold Toynbee establish university hubs in some of the most deprived areas of the country, including Glasgow.



Academics and students were sent to the settlements to help deprived urban neighbourhoods with issues like poverty, education and ill health.

Now GCU is taking the idea further and developing it for the 21st century by creating an innovative Common Good Lab in the new £800,000 community centre that is to be built in Milton.

The Lab will be a concrete manifestation of the University's mission to work for the Common Good and help local communities.

Staff and students have been involved in outreach work in Milton and other parts of Scotland for years but the Lab will give an opportunity to engage with the community in a more sustainable and meaningful way.

The Common Good Lab will provide the chance for students from various fields such as community nursing, podiatry, occupational therapy, law and

social work to have first-hand experience of the problems that affect people living in deprived areas and will also give researchers greater opportunities to expand "place-based" projects.

GCU's Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Pamela Gillies CBE, FRSE said: "We are delighted to establish the Common Good Lab, as it is one very practical example of the way we deliver our mission as a University for the Common Good.

"We always strive to make a positive difference to all the communities we serve locally and throughout the world, and aim to contribute to society in a manner that embraces, yet goes beyond, the traditional role of a university. Our civic commitment is really brought to life in this innovative initiative."

GCU shines in world impact rankings

Glasgow Caledonian University's dedication to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals has seen us named number one in Scotland for both promoting gender equality and economic growth – and second and third in the UK respectively – in the latest Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings.

We are ranked 43rd in the world overall out of 766 universities, a positive improvement on last year's ranking of 44th from 480 universities. The rankings also place GCU second in Scotland and eighth in the UK.



The eyes have it

Glasgow Caledonian University's excellence in vision science has been recognised with a top ranking in the latest Complete University Guide, which rated GCU first in the UK for Optometry, Ophthalmology and Orthoptics.

A number of other GCU subjects were ranked in the top quartile in the UK in the Complete University Guide 2021, with strong performances by Physiotherapy; Hospitality, Leisure, Recreation and Tourism; Law; and Communication and Media Studies.

GCU climbs 21 places in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide

GCU has climbed 21 places in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2021, moving from 96th to 75th out of 131 universities in the UK.

The rise is due to improvements in the University's National Student Survey (NSS) scores on teaching quality and student experience, as well as degree completion and graduate prospects.



Yunus Centre at GCU celebrates 10-year anniversary

Nobel Peace Prize Winner Professor Muhammad Yunus hailed the "amazing" success of the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health (YCSBH) as it celebrates its 10th anniversary.

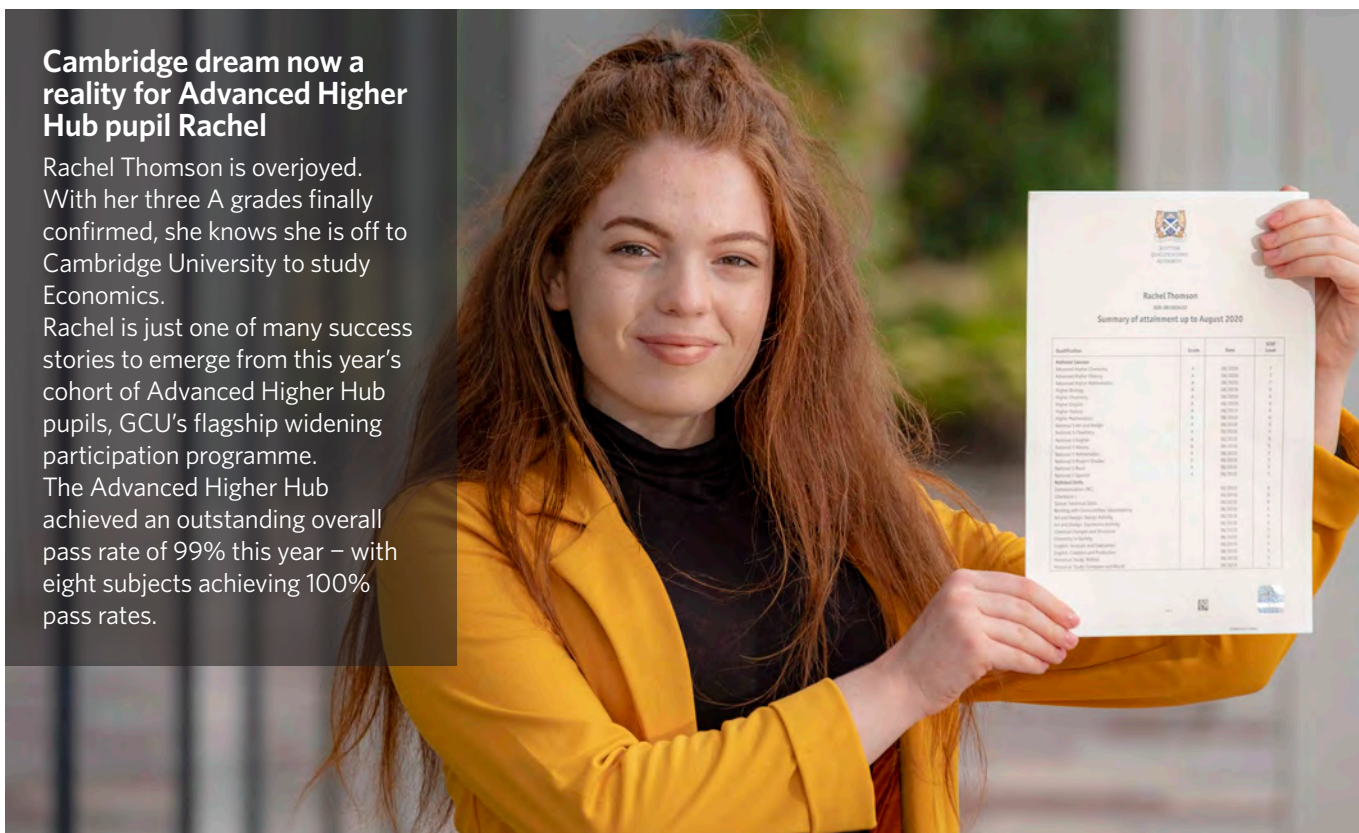
Officially launched in July 2010, the YCSBH is now recognised as a world-class research centre in social innovation, health economics, the social economy, and public health.

Over the last decade, it has progressed from a staff of three to a team of 35, attracting more than £7 million in research funding.

Cambridge dream now a reality for Advanced Higher Hub pupil Rachel

Rachel Thomson is overjoyed. With her three A grades finally confirmed, she knows she is off to Cambridge University to study Economics.

Rachel is just one of many success stories to emerge from this year's cohort of Advanced Higher Hub pupils, GCU's flagship widening participation programme. The Advanced Higher Hub achieved an outstanding overall pass rate of 99% this year – with eight subjects achieving 100% pass rates.





To inspire the dream of a better life through authenticity and timeless style

GCU honorary graduate, Dr Brian Duffy is a much-travelled, French-speaking, risk-taking successful business leader, who has worked for some major brands around the world.

He came from a working-class background with his parents Mary and Joseph in Castlemilk, Glasgow, and now fills the role of Chief Executive Officer of The Watches of Switzerland Group based in London.

"They never saw the funny side of that, but in every speech, I ever made, I introduced myself as the only son of Mary and Joseph," he jokingly shared.

Together, they 'toured' the three corners of the housing schemes when he was a young boy.

"They were great communities with a lot of humour, a lot of warmth and a lot of character.

"Looking back at it, there were definitely social problems. In my era it was less to do with the drugs and so on which I know there are social problems with now, but more to do with gangs. I became a not-bad football player pretty fast, and I often say I learned to run fast running away from gangs of the housing schemes," he said.

Brian was among the last groups of pupils to complete chartered accountancy upon leaving school.

He enrolled on a KPMG apprenticeship which brought him many clients, such as Polaroid.

Headhunted at the young age of 28, he became a finance director of a lingerie company, Playtex.

Three years later he moved to Paris, France with his wife and three children, as Chief Executive Officer of the European office at Playtex.

"I learnt to speak French. I'd often say it was the only way people would understand me. My Glasgow accent back then was even stronger than it is today, and people who thought they

If you get the chance to live abroad, learn the language.

were bilingual in English, thought otherwise when they met me.

"I'd always say to anyone, If you get the chance to live abroad, learn the language. It adds so much to your appreciation of where you are, and it is a great skill to have more than one language."

America was his next destination to become the worldwide Chief Financial Officer of Playtex, and he experienced a leveraged buy-out fuelled by debt, where he invested in the company.

"I had to borrow to do so, but it turned out to be a good step because three years on we were acquired by Sara Lee Corporation, a big American conglomerate and as a result, we all did very well, we owned all the shares in the management team, and for me personally, for my family, it was the last time I had to borrow. It was life-changing."

Ralph Lauren was the next large

company he worked for, and he recalls having to prove himself as President of their European office.

"Ralph kept me under pressure the whole time in my first few years because he commented, from the beginning, that I didn't come from a luxury background. So, he was always questioning my knowledge and authority and so on, until we did Tretyakovsky Passage in Moscow, Russia."

It was the most successful, luxury store ever for Ralph Lauren, according to Brian, as they received tremendous media attention.

"The Russians liked the story of 'one of their own' becoming an American icon. "Ralph was walking on water," he added.

Taking part in our Captains of Industry talks, Brian shared how his business continues to meet the needs of their customers as well as look after their staff through these challenging times.

"It was important for us to adapt and ensure customer needs were still being met. Demand was at the same level so we had to find ways to stay digitally connected with our customers. As a result of fantastic creativity and imaginative work by my team, business continued to grow.

"It was also important for us to support our staff during the pandemic and we committed very early on that we would be paying 100% of their salaries as well as giving reassurance around job security."

Busy times at GCU

We organise a series of events at our campuses in Glasgow, London and New York, as well as facilitating reunions and networking events around the world. Our transition to virtual events in March offered an important way for us to stay connected with alumni and friends. Here are some of the highlights over the past year.



Tom Walkinshaw, Amy Irons and Mark Stevenson.

Inspirational alumni honoured

GCU celebrated the successes of three graduates at an Alumnus of the Year awards ceremony which took place on campus in February. For 2019, the University recognised BBC Scotland presenter Amy Irons, television screenwriter Mark Stevenson and Tom Walkinshaw, founder of micro satellite company Alba Orbital.

Jillian Watt, Director of GCU Foundation, Alumni Engagement and Events, said: "Our Alumnus of the Year awards are special because they recognise the success and achievements of our graduates and the contribution they make to GCU. As well as being extremely worthy recipients with incredibly successful careers, our winners have been extremely generous to the University in sharing their time and expertise with our students."

Graduates and friends of GCU support Oscar Marzaroli campaign

GCU hosted a special viewing of the Oscar Marzaroli Collection in March to help promote a campaign to preserve the iconic photographer's entire archive.

Guests at Street Level Photoworks in Glasgow had the chance to hear University Archivist Carole McCallum share plans to ensure the important collection of work is available to future generations.

Oscar's family donated more than 50,000 negatives capturing a time of great social change in Scotland, principally the 1950s, 60s and 70s, to GCU last year.

A fundraising campaign has been launched to ensure that the entire collection can be preserved, cared for and accessed by the public for free.

Find out more about The Marzaroli Fund by visiting - www.gcu.ac.uk/foundation/themarzarolicollection



Carole McCallum.

Award-winning mental health campaigner Jonny Benjamin shares his inspirational story

Award-winning mental health campaigner, writer, filmmaker and public speaker, Jonny Benjamin MBE, shared his inspirational story with GCU staff, students and graduates at a virtual event in May.

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, Jonny discussed his journey with mental illness, from the first experience of seeing a psychologist at the age of five, through to a breakdown and hospitalisation at 20 and a suicide attempt which saw Jonny saved by a stranger. Six years later, after a long recovery period, Jonny launched a campaign to find that stranger. The campaign went viral and the pair were reunited but, in the following years he has endured several relapses. Jonny believes his frank and honest story of hope, recovery and learning to manage his mental health shows that we can all overcome adversity.

GCNYC launch Resilience and Reconstruction event series

The Center for Social Impact and Innovation at Glasgow Caledonian New York College (GCNYC) has launched a new international Virtual Speaker series, Resilience and Reconstruction: exploring the impact of COVID-19 on the Common Good.

The series included GCU's Yunus Chair and Pro Vice Chancellor Research, Professor Cam Donaldson who reflected on his personal journey as a health economist through the pandemic, explored COVID-19's impact on health economics and discussed how health economics can contribute to recovery.

Professor Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas from GCU's British School of

Fashion also took part, exploring marketing and sustainable innovation in the wake of the pandemic.

Natascha discussed how disrupted supply chains, financial instability and travel restrictions have derailed the fashion industry's projected growth and, while lockdown has had a positive effect on the environment, industry watchers fear its previous commitments to responsible business and sustainability could be lost. She also looked at innovation as a core attribute of luxury fashion brands and examined examples of marketing strategy and sustainable innovation in the luxury fashion sector as it works to build back better.



Glasgow Caledonian New York College.

Centre for Climate Justice event series looks ahead to COP 26



Dr Mary Robinson.

GCU honorary graduate and former Irish President, Dr Mary Robinson, and Kumi Naidoo, former Secretary General of Amnesty International, took part in a GCU conversation in September where they reflected on the coronavirus pandemic, climate change and the ensuing inequalities. Led by Professor Tahseen Jafry, Director of the Centre for Climate Justice, the panel discussed the impact that the pandemic has had on the climate crisis, and what this means for society.

In November, we were joined again by Dr Mary Robinson and other globally influential figures as they put their heads together in a bid to identify how the lives of the poorest and vulnerable, who are disproportionately affected by climate change, can be made better.

The high profile guests looked specifically at how climate finance can be strengthened to ensure fair and equitable distribution for all and formed key recommendations that will shape the agenda at COP 26, taking place in Glasgow next year.

The GCU event was part of the UK Government's contribution to the Race to Zero global campaign, designed to mobilise renewed levels of leadership from businesses, cities, regions and nations to spur a zero-carbon recovery and encourage more national governments to set net-zero targets.

Upcoming Events

For further details on upcoming events, follow our Facebook and Twitter pages. New events are added regularly.

 www.facebook.com/gcualumni

 www.twitter.com/gcu_alumni

To ensure you are kept informed of local events, please update us with your current email address (most event invitations are via email) by registering your contact details at www.gcu.ac.uk/alumni/update.

Breaking the mould in the banking industry

GCU Alumna Katie Murray became the first female Chief Financial Officer at the NatWest Group – making it a first in Europe.

Katie joined the NatWest Group (formerly RBS) as Director of Finance in November 2015 and was appointed as Deputy Chief Financial Officer in March 2017. She was then appointed as Group Chief Financial Officer in January 2019 and in doing so becoming one of the first females to achieve such a position within the banking industry.

"It terrifies me when people say I've been nearly 30 years in finance and accountancy. In my mind, I'm still 22, and I've only just recently graduated from Glasgow Tech," the CFO said humorously.

Talking at GCU's Captain of Industry talks, Katie Murray shared a lesson she learnt of fitting in before achieving the CFO role.

To fit in, she had her hair blow-dried three times a week for four months.

"I said to my boss, if I do not get this job then I am sending you the bill for these hair appointments. They kept saying; well you don't look the part, and I kept saying well there are no banking CFO's in Europe that are female, of course, I don't look the part. There is no part for me to look like."

The lesson she pointed to was "people expected you to be a certain person, and it gives them great comfort when you walk in, and in the first few seconds, they realise that you are that person.

"Very quickly they get great comfort because they realise I am authentic and I'm someone they can approach and have the conversation with. I think that was a real kind of balancing point for me."

Graduating with a BA in Accountancy from GCU, previously known as Glasgow College of Technology, she recollects a fond memory at GCU:

"This is a really daft one but there used to be a wee sweetie shop down in the building, and I remember I used to

They kept saying, 'well, you don't look the part.'

go buy two refreshers before one of my lectures on a Wednesday.

"I also met my husband, so he probably deserves some of the credit as well."

She grew up as the daughter of accountants in Milngavie, Glasgow and worked in their family firm with her uncle.

"I think working alongside them, even though I was given far more menial tasks than anything to do with accounting, gave me the skills of working hard and being authentic in what I'm doing. And make sure you have fun."

Travelling the world was at the forefront of Katie's mind.

After she completed a three-year chartered accountancy qualification at Alexander Sloan to emulate her parents, she decided on a gap year.

"My friends were heading here and there, going to London and doing all these things, and they were all saying, 'Katie, you can't, what about your career?'

"My mum said, 'Don't be ridiculous, you're 22 years old - go away and decompress a little bit and then come back, and your career will still be there waiting for you.' And that was very sound advice."

Awaiting her return was a role in London at KPMG.

It brought her fantastic opportunities and the worst experience in her professional career, which she calls her best lesson.

Katie was carrying out a project in Spain with a translator for an insurance company to tell them they were going to be insolvent under a different method of analysis.

The CFO at the time said it was a brilliant meeting because it got their issues out on the table, she said, but: "I flew back from Barcelona, and my husband was waiting for me, and I burst into tears saying that I had the worst experience of my professional career, I've been shouted at by all these directors who I was trying to deliver a service to, but looking back it was one of the best lessons. Get your problems out on the table, and then we can address the problems."

In 2011, she became the CFO of Old Mutual in Johannesburg South Africa.

"I worked there for five years. It was a great time, professionally and personally. My husband and I went as two, and we came back as three with two dogs. It was a great time as a family as well."



Celebrating success

Our students continue to be our finest ambassadors, achieving success and industry recognition at national and international level. Here are just some examples from 2020.

PhD student launches successful sexual health initiative for Arabic speaking women

A PhD student at GCU has created an online initiative which focuses on teaching Arabic women about sexual health knowledge.

PhD student Fatma Ibrahim, whose research focuses on the financial lives of refugee women in the UK, decided to create the initiative to tackle the stigma around sexual health in Arabic-speaking countries.

She said: "Sex Talk Arabia" is an online resource including educational and scientific content, and also includes a platform that allows women to discuss and ask questions surrounding sexual health.

Fatma created this online resource to provide support for women that would otherwise not exist. She said: "Sex Talk Arabia is an online initiative that aims at tackling issues of sexual health



among Arabic-speaking women. It promotes normalising sex education and sexual health, by creating online, scientific, educational and accessible content on sexual health, for women.

"In Arabic-speaking countries, a culture of silence still exists around the topic of sex and sexual health.

"This culture, combined with many harmful traditional practices towards women's bodies such as female genital mutilation (FGM), early and forced

marriages and honour crimes create great challenges for women's and girl's health, violate their human rights and, in many cases, cost them their lives.

"I grew up in Egypt, and as a member of multiple women's rights activist groups in the Arab world, I noticed and experienced, the increase of sexual health issues among women in our society and the silence around these issues."

GCU students thread pathway to success through Harris Tweed project

GCU is to launch a range of merchandise incorporating the world-famous Harris Tweed fabric following a successful student design project.

Students on GCU's MSc International Fashion Marketing (IFM) were asked to create corporate gifts reflecting the University and the luxury fashion brand's shared interest in environmental sustainability.

Five students - Paul Beaton, Yu-Ying Hsu, Ellen McFadden, Katie Scott, and Caitlin Simpson - were then invited to present their work to a panel including Mark Hogarth, Creative Director at Harris Tweed.

The best designs including hats, passport holders, cushions, a tote bag, and luggage tags are now set to go into production.

Harris Tweed, handwoven in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, is the only fabric in the world to be protected by an Act of Parliament.



It's hoped some of the merchandise, made of recycled off-cuts, will be showcased in the build up to next year's COP26 summit in Glasgow.

Louise McBride, Programme Leader of the MSc IFM, said: "As part of the brief, students had to develop a narrative that emphasised the shared values of both brands.

"We are really grateful to Harris Tweed and Mark Hogarth for their help with the project. We're at the point where we're looking to get production samples made and it will be great to see how things progress from here."



GCU masters student gives key note speech at an international summit

A GCU masters student has been given the opportunity to speak at an international summit which focuses on supporting women in business.

MSc Social Innovation student Ntsiki Mkhize, who is an experienced key note speaker, took part in the SME Women Global Virtual Entrepreneurial and Investing Summit. The virtual event welcomed experts in investment and training, including Ntsiki who is the founder of MentHer: a global mentorship network which supports female entrepreneurs.

Ntsiki gave her talk on "The power of Mentorship" which discussed the purpose of mentorship, how to identify and engage a mentor and achieve personal and business growth.

Occupational Therapy student promotes the launch of her dementia support group on BBC Radio

A GCU student is attracting media attention after appearing on BBC Radio Scotland to discuss the launch of her new online community group that supports those affected by dementia.

Third year Occupational Therapy student Karis Knight was inspired to create a new platform to bring together people who live with or are caring for someone with dementia.

Karis and her dad decided to create the Facebook page One Stop Dementia during lockdown as she was inspired by work she was doing at home for her exams.

Karis reached out to the BBC herself to ask if they would be interested in helping spread the word about her unique new platform.

When Karis got in touch with a news presenter about talking on the show, she was surprised to discover the woman had faced issues with dementia in the family home herself and was therefore very keen to have her speak about this new project.



Scotland's first black superhero

An alien planet ravaged by robot invaders. A city on earth plagued by crime. Their hope - a hero from beyond the stars. Meet DJ ET, Scotland's first ever black superhero!

Created by Etienne Kubwabo, DJ ET features in *Beats of War*, a comic book set in Glasgow, looking at the barriers faced by people who immigrate to a new country.

Etienne's family had already relocated to Glasgow from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Having been forced to be apart for some time, he eventually joined them, aged 19. "When I came to Glasgow, I never knew what to expect, but I can say that it was too cold when I landed but the city was beautiful and had vibrant energy to it that I still enjoy today."

He was keen to further his studies, and GCU was a natural choice. "Some

of my friends had been to GCU and they had told me how the facilities in Media and Communication were fantastic, so I

"I decided to create a comic to highlight the two worlds together."

decided to apply while I was at Clydebank College. I really loved the amount of support the lecturers and GCU gave me. Being at GCU gave me a

bigger understanding of my course, not just on a practical level but also on an academic level."

After graduation, Etienne took the brave step of deciding to become an independent film director. His first film, *19 Willock Place* took him a year to complete, but was a huge learning curve, and one he embraced. He also filmed music videos throughout his time at GCU and beyond, and his natural talent was recognised when he was given the opportunity to direct a documentary, *Scotland's Memoir*, for the Scottish Government, documenting the journeys of young creative talent in Scotland.

His time in Glasgow has not been without its challenges, and sadly racism was something Etienne experienced throughout his 10 years living in the city. He did, however, meet lifelong friends and people who really influenced him. Combined, these people and experiences inspired him to create a comic book, set in his beloved Glasgow, and, significantly, starring Scotland's first ever black superhero. "I decided to infuse those two worlds together through my story. I could have been violent and got in trouble but I decided to create a comic to highlight the two worlds together, what I feel could change, the love and feel of the city, including its history and much more."

And so, *Beats of War* was born. Inspired by his hero, American comic book writer Stan Lee, and the pioneering film *Black Panther*, the story stars DJ ET, a superhero who comes to Earth to find a way to save his home planet from robot invaders and in the process



Beats of War displayed as part of the *Black Lives Matter Mural Trail*.



DJ ET depicted in Beats of War.

discovers music. The comic book looks at the barriers faced by people who immigrate to a new country.

Etienne included some of Glasgow's most iconic landmarks, such as the River Clyde and Finnieston Crane in the story. "Glasgow is my home now, so I felt that it was important for me to set the story here, and also use back home as the fictional world where ET comes from. When you see Batman, you think of Gotham city, so I wanted the character's story to take place in a city I know so well, and specifically highlight exterior photography of Glasgow. It's a beautiful city."

Ever-positive, Etienne sees challenges as opportunities, the 2020 pandemic being no exception; "The

COVID situation has been a bit of a challenge because my work involves working around people, but it has actually given me time to focus and write more scripts and develop more ideas for my stories with no distractions."

Beats of War has already attracted huge media attention in the UK, featuring on television, radio and news, and significantly for Etienne, as part of the Black Lives Matter Mural Trail, with an impressive large scale artwork installed at Platform Arts Centre in

Glasgow's East End. Led by Creative Producer Wezi Mhura, the trail features powerful and significant artwork by artists from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, all of whom live and work in Scotland.

So what's next? "My future plan is to direct big films in Hollywood and release more issues of the comic book series, which I will later develop into animation and big films. I have currently finished a film script that I intend to make next year and I am super excited about it."

To watch a preview, visit youtu.be/AuwnsUEf-r4 and to order a copy, visit mileawayfilms.com/etian-universe/

Santander Universities goes the extra mile to help those in need

We have been overwhelmed by the warmth and generosity of Santander Universities who have gone above and beyond to support students in need.

New agreement marking £1.4m of support

GCU signed a new three-year partnership with Santander Universities to enable positive change in the lives of students, staff and graduates. The new agreement takes Santander Universities' total support for GCU to more than £1.4m since 2009, with more than 1000 people supported through scholarships, seed funding, awards and funded internships.

Social Sciences graduate Noah (pictured) is just one of Santander's many grateful beneficiaries. He received support to set up a community-based organisation, employing and training local people in Uganda to make clothes. Following the pandemic outbreak, an additional Santander Universities grant allowed him to switch to making reusable face masks. By distributing these free of charge to market vendors and motorbike couriers in Kampala, Noah has made a huge impact on the health of his community as well as keeping his own team in employment.

Noah said: "On behalf of myself, my team and over 5000 market vendors, I express gratitude for the support given towards the production and distribution of masks to market vendors around Kampala as a way to protect against catching and spreading COVID-19. The impact created is overwhelming."



Additional funds provide vital mental health training

A £25,000 funding boost from Santander has enabled GCU to work with SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) to train staff to support student health and wellbeing. This vital training is helping to equip key staff with the skills to support and signpost students who are struggling with the 'new normal' of learning online and social distancing, as well as those with anxiety and health concerns.

Fully funded internships for students with autism

GCU is proud to be part of the Employ Autism Education Network supported by Santander and Ambitious about Autism. Thanks to this support, students with autism will now have the opportunity to access fully funded internships and tailored careers guidance. Local companies will be able to benefit from the diverse set of skills autistic students have to offer as well as receiving training and support.

How your donations have supported our students this year



2020 was no ordinary year. During these challenging times we have been overwhelmed by the warmth, generosity and openness of our donors to work with us to quickly get funding to our students who needed it most. In March over £300,000 was raised and redirected to provide technology grants, hardship grants, internships and to enhance our wellbeing services.

We would like to send our warmest thanks to all of our donors for their continued support during these difficult times. Here we share stories of just some of the beneficiaries whose lives have been made that little bit easier thanks to your generosity.

Toni

BSc (Hons) Nursing Studies

"At the beginning of lockdown I struggled. I had no idea how I was going to continue my studies. I was using my iPhone to connect to online classes but this was continuously cutting out. The laptop I received enabled me to access online classes and submit essays both of which were a first time pass. Without your donations this would not have been achievable and I would have had no other option but to drop out of my course."

Alanna

BSc Forensic Investigation

"I never thought that I would ever have the opportunity to study at university and always thought that this is something that happened to other people. I am the first person in my family to go to university and this has been a fresh start in life for me. If it were not for this scholarship the past year would have been very different and much more difficult for me."



Connor

BSc Construction Management

"As benefits are the only income coming into our home, I was scared about how I would afford university life and I knew I needed extra support to help achieve my long term goals. This scholarship has had a massive impact on my education and life as a whole. It's just made things that little bit easier and given me a lot of encouragement."



Cerys

BA Fashion Design with Business

"This support has boosted my confidence and given me a way to get back on my feet at this difficult time. I feared that unlike my peers I would be unable to get the full university experience due to my financial situation but I no longer feel like I will have to miss out."

Further study at GCU

We catch up with GCU graduate Sonia Kaur who tells us more about why she decided to go on to further study. After graduating with a BA (Hons) in International Retail Marketing, Sonia achieved an MSc in Luxury Brand Marketing from our GCU London campus.

Why did you decide to continue further study at GCU and what support did you receive?

"I enjoyed every minute of my undergraduate programme and was overwhelmed by the support that I received at GCU. My teachers were instrumental in helping me achieve both my academic and career goals. The extracurricular activities were also a plus, especially societies – I particularly enjoyed the Fashion Society which was great for meeting like-minded people from other courses.

"GCU awarded me so much more than a degree and gave me countless opportunities to enjoy new experiences which I would not have been able to do otherwise. One of my best experiences was during my Erasmus exchange when I studied abroad in France."

How did further study help your career?

"Following the completion of my undergraduate degree I worked at Giorgio Armani and it was there I realised that I had a strong interest in the niche luxury sector. I was instantly intrigued by this sector due to its uniqueness in comparison to the overall fashion world. Every day that passed I knew that I wanted to learn more about what and how the luxury industry operated. I had never planned to return to higher education. However, after a discussion with my undergraduate lecturer Catherine Canning, who I remain in

touch with, I discovered that the British School of Fashion at GCU London specialised in luxury programmes.

"The Director of the British School of Fashion Tim Jackson and my course leader Dr Dina Khalifa were incredible in helping students make the most of their time in London.

"The industry connections our teachers had were amazing in helping students find experience by ensuring we had opportunities to network with key industry players. This exposure to the exclusive industry led to internships and job opportunities for myself and classmates at brands we could only dream of working for such as Agent Provocateur, Cartier and Hugo Boss."

What advice would you give to anyone thinking of doing further study?

"To anyone thinking about further study I would say do your research, make sure it is in a field in which your passion lies and most of all enjoy it!

"I never thought I would return to higher education. However, I have realised that there is a course for everyone - no matter how unique or niche you think your area of interest may be. Postgraduate study is ultimately a great way to excel your career and gain knowledge in a specific field which you aim to become a master of."

Find out more about our Loyalty Scholarships at: gcu.ac.uk/postgraduate

Alumni words of wisdom

We asked our 'Class of 2008' what it was like to graduate during a financial recession and share their words of wisdom to inspire our 'Class of 2020'.

“The knowledge and skills you have learned are valuable, but more than that, you are valuable. Every business needs competent and capable people, and your degree shows that, but we need the personality, drive and desire to move business forward. That’s what you as individuals bring along with the degree. While every business learns to operate in a new world, there is nobody better than new graduates to teach people how we can retain the best of what we had but compliment that with new and fresh ideas that meet our current challenges.”



Katie Moore
BA (Hons)
Risk Management



Shariff Athuman
MSc Operations and
Business Management

“Be patient and learn to persevere, you are going to get rejections in the job market. All you need to know is that it’s not the end of the world. Keep trying, one day you will succeed. In addition, you will need to learn to be flexible with job hunting. If you can’t get the job you want, then do the job nearest to what you want. It is the only way to break in to the market.”



Laura Keane
BA (Hons)
Business Studies

“Be prepared and think what you want to do as a career and what you enjoy. Set up meetings with recruiters, attend open days and generally think where you would be best suited to work and what sector. The Business Studies degree had a whole host of subjects and this allows you to pick your sector. I specialise in procurement, whilst my friends on the same course have chosen HR, accountancy and learning and development.”

University for the Common Good



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