



## President's Letter on Philanthropy at the University of Toronto

Recently we have seen some sweeping criticism of the role of philanthropy in Canadian society. Given the positive impacts of philanthropy on our institution, it was perhaps inevitable that the University of Toronto and some of its most prominent supporters would be singled out. Critical thinking and reasoned debate, after all, are at the core of what universities do and why we exist. What troubles me, however, are three aspects of this recent phenomenon.

First, some contributors to this debate have engaged in repeated personal attacks on one of our most generous donors and best-known alumni.

Second, much of the specific and general criticism has been advanced based on inference and innuendo. Unfortunately, the echo chamber created by the modern nexus of the world-wide web and mass media allows even baseless commentary to be repeated and amplified.

Third and finally, it is sadly evident that, howsoever idealistic their aims may be, these commentators have little understanding of fund-raising or the transformational advances enabled by philanthropy at countless non-profit institutions across Canada.

All three points bear elaboration.

First, personal attacks such as those we have seen on Peter Munk are a deplorable affront to the values of rational and respectful discourse that are supposed to characterize a university. To note but one of his many recent honours and awards, Peter Munk was highlighted by the *Globe and Mail* in late 2010 as a Canadian nation-builder. I would observe also that in 2008 Dr Munk was promoted to Companion of the Order of Canada, this country's highest honour. Reasonable people may disagree with any given appointment or promotion within the Order. However, no one familiar with

the diligence undertaken by the nation's Chancellery of Honours could remotely square that promotion with some of the rhetoric directed at Dr Munk.

Dr Munk's loyalty to Canada and this University was forged by hard personal experiences. Sent to Canada by his family as Hungary fell under the control of Nazi forces, Peter Munk arrived here with next to nothing. Education at the University of Toronto became his springboard to a new life in a new country. It is therefore little wonder that Dr Munk is a firm believer in the vital importance of higher education, and has sustained a life-long passion for the study of international relations.

This leads me to Dr Munk's philanthropy and my second concern – the misinformation about his gift to the Munk School.

As a professor of medicine, I was active in cardiovascular research over the course of almost two decades. I later served on the board of the University Health Network, in the years when Dr Munk made two gifts exceeding \$40 million to support the cardiovascular program at that hospital. There was not a single instance where Peter Munk interfered with the educational, research or clinical priorities of the institution.

I was also personally involved in the discussions surrounding his two latest gifts to the Munk Centre and latterly the Munk School, together totalling some \$40 million. Dr Munk had only two goals. He wanted his alma mater to host a world-beating school that would attract the best and brightest from across Canada and around the world. And he wanted the School to address critical issues in modern global affairs.

The donor agreement underlying Dr Munk's latest benefaction to name our School of Global Affairs has been posted on a website and aggressive claims made regarding the implications of this document. None of those claims are borne out by a dispassionate examination of the document itself. The Provost has posted a detailed analysis and rebuttal of these claims (<http://uoft.me/provoststatement>). I unreservedly endorse Professor Misak's assessment, and I shall pause here only to revisit two patently false claims.

The first false claim is that the very creation of the School involved a skewing of our academic priorities. In fact, international relations and global affairs have been academic priorities of the Faculty of Arts and

Science and the University at large for some 20 years. The Governing Council first approved the naming of the Munk Centre for International Relations in 1996, and approved the establishment of the School in the spring of 2008. This is unsurprising. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what major university does not have global affairs front and centre?

The second false claim concerns the School's independence. It arises, bizarrely, from concerns that the completion of Dr Munk's latest benefaction depends on an arm's-length review by a blue-ribbon academic panel appointed by the Provost.

Many donations to the University arrive in instalments, and donors sometimes decide for their own reasons not to meet their downstream commitments. Why, then, would one be concerned that part of this gift is contingent upon the School's fulfilment of its self-determined academic plans for growth and excellence? We make plans, I hope, with the intent of fulfilling them. Indeed, the kind of review envisaged in the Munk School agreement is built squarely on academic excellence, is fundamentally respectful of academic freedom, and is consistent with our practice of external review of academic units on a five-year cycle.

To repeat: The claims made in the case of the Munk School about real and potential threats to academic priority-setting and academic freedom are false. Further, while vigilance is appropriate, and every agreement can be criticized for apparent sins of omission or commission, U of T experience to date offers no support for generalized innuendo about campus philanthropy.

It is therefore disappointing that, in some quarters, there is so little appreciation of the positive and longstanding role of philanthropy in universities and other non-profit institutions across Canada. *Pace* various critics, giving to universities by alumni and friends does not 'let government off the hook for under-funding' nor is it 'a legitimization project for the ultra-rich in an era of globalized capitalism'. The traditions of philanthropy at the University of Toronto go back well over a century, and I would estimate that more than 130,000 different donors have contributed to the University in the last 15 years alone.

Without philanthropy, we would not have rebuilt University College after the Valentine's Day fire of 1890, erected Convocation Hall in 1907, or opened Hart House in 1919. And without it, we would not today have

nearly 200 endowed chairs on the three campuses and a similar number in our partner hospitals, or \$600 million endowed for financial aid that enables us to attract and support outstanding students regardless of economic background.

As exemplars of the impact of philanthropy on the student experience, consider Russell and Katherine Morrison. The Morrison Pavilion doubled space for students at the Gerstein Science Information Centre. Morrison Hall was the first on-campus student residence built at University College in almost 50 years. More recently, the Morrises have supported the Robarts Library, enabling the addition of 2,700 new study spaces for students.

While philanthropy has been most visible on the St. George campus, the east and west campuses are now gaining ground. For example, Carlo Fidani and Terrence Donnelly are together helping us realize the dream of building a new medical academy in Mississauga. Through recent gifts of \$10 million and \$12 million respectively, Mr Fidani and Dr Donnelly are supporting the construction of the Terrence Donnelly Health Sciences Complex, a chair in family and community medicine, and a set of generous bursaries for medical students.

Such generosity isn't limited to disciplines such as science and engineering, or to professions such as medicine and management. Consider the Honourable Henry N.R. and Maruja Jackman who gave an unprecedented \$30 million to the humanities at U of T. The Jackman humanities benefaction has had an enormous impact on space, programming, and support for our faculty and students. Or consider Sheldon Inwentash and Lynne Factor, whose gift of \$15 million led to the naming of the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. Their benefaction created 50 annual student scholarships and five new endowed chairs. Ultimately that gift will have a broad influence on how society supports and cares for its most vulnerable members.

I could go on delineating the impact of hundreds of gifts of all sizes that support a wide spectrum of projects, programs, and people at the University of Toronto. While very large donations draw more positive – and negative – attention, I can happily attest that the inspiring generosity of spirit that motivates our donors bears no relationship to the dollar value of their gifts. Every gift makes a difference. And we are indeed fortunate that so many

friends of the institution give back consistently in accordance with their capacity to do so.

So far from undercutting institutional independence and academic freedom, philanthropy through the decades has overwhelmingly supported both those core values of the University. In more practical terms, philanthropy at the University of Toronto has lifted the student experience, created jobs and improved the working lives for our dedicated staff, and augmented the opportunities for our faculty to exercise their independence of thought and their innate creativity.

What a pity, then, that some members of our community would misconstrue and implicitly demean the generosity of some 113,000 donors who contributed \$1 billion to our last comprehensive campaign for the University of Toronto, and thousands more who have contributed over \$750 million since that campaign successfully concluded.

In contrast to those sentiments, I want first, to reassure our supporters of our collective appreciation, and second, to remind them that we will indeed be back in touch asking that they again help us raise the bar for Canada's finest university. For one, I remain proud to solicit support for a great institution and for the outstanding faculty, staff, and students who will benefit from philanthropy at the University of Toronto in the years to come.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Naylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D".

David Naylor