Shirley Wang ’90 is a vocal advocate for bringing a UCLA education within reach of high-achieving students.

“Higher education is the number-one factor in social and economic mobility. When families can realize their higher-education dreams for their children, it benefits our economy and our society,” says the UCLA Foundation board member and Plastpro, Inc., founder and chief executive officer. A recent gift of $1 million from Wang and her husband, Walter, to create new scholarships is aimed squarely at bridging the financial gap into which many middle-income households fall.

Middle-income families work hard, the Wangs point out, and should have a chance for their kids to attend college. “It can’t just be for the rich who can afford it and the poor who can qualify for grants,” says Shirley Wang. Adds Walter Wang, president and chief executive officer of JM Eagle, Inc., “We as a society must address this problem. We depend on a highly educated population, our best and brightest, to found companies, create jobs, expand knowledge and make advances in science and health.”

For people who think access to higher education doesn’t affect them, Shirley Wang has this message: “It affects everybody. Higher education provides all of society with benefits, such as increased tax revenues, advances in science and health care and greater participation in civic life. If you want to make our world — your world — a better place, investing in scholarships is a great place to start.”

To support Scholarships, please contact Jacquelean Gilliam at (310) 983-3062.
Launching a New Century of Achievement

To launch is to set in motion. And the recent kick-off of The Centennial Campaign for UCLA has set in motion all forms of discovery, exploration and innovation across our campus. Thousands of members of the UCLA family have stepped forward to support an array of people and programs that are changing the way we think, work and live.

From new scholarships that bridge the tuition gap for deserving students to investments in pioneering medical research, your generosity is empowering leading thinkers and doers to make our world a better place.

Our campaign launch events in May brought the campus community to its feet in celebration of our past while looking ahead to a stronger future. This inaugural newsletter continues that celebration. Each quarter, we’ll be bringing you highlights of the remarkable things your philanthropy is making possible in our classrooms, labs and communities.

So let’s begin. With your support, UCLA’s second century promises to eclipse even the greatest achievements of our first hundred years. I can think of no better reason to be grateful as we approach the holiday season.

With best wishes,
Gene D. Block, Chancellor

“We need to ride the wave and build an even more robust culture of philanthropy at UCLA. The stories in this newsletter will help us do that. We plan to share them and all the stories yet to come again and again.”

Tony Pritzker and Garen Staglin, Co-Chairs
The Centennial Campaign Executive Committee

Progress Report

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<th>Type of Support</th>
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Just months after the start of The Centennial Campaign for UCLA, the university celebrated a milestone of another sort: the opening of the Edie and Lew Wasserman Building. Named in memory of two of the university’s most generous friends, the new building supports the growing needs of UCLA’s renowned Jules Stein Eye Institute and is the new home of the David Geffen School of Medicine’s neurosurgery department and Institute of Urologic Oncology. Members of the UCLA and local communities and elected officials gathered at the October 28 dedication to tour the state-of-the-art facility, which will maximize patient care, invigorate vision-science research and revolutionize surgical training.

The building is a culmination of the Wassermans’ dream, envisioned more than 50 years ago, of creating a medical complex to propel new cures and treatments for eye diseases and to help preserve eyesight. The Wasserman Building extends the university’s commitment to not only performance, composition and academia, but also in health professions, the entertainment business, and the public and nonprofit sectors.

In October the Evelyn and Mo Ostin Center opened its doors to the UCLA community, ushering in a new era for the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music with its state-of-the-art recording studio, rehearsal rooms and classrooms.

“The Centennial Campaign is off to an amazing start. We need to ride the wave and build an even more robust culture of philanthropy at UCLA. The stories in this newsletter will help us do that. We plan to share them and all the stories yet to come again and again.”

To support Music Education, please contact Sheila Bergman at (310) 825-2059.
Dr. Paola Suarez recalls one of the first Spanish-speaking patients she met when she began her postdoctoral fellowship at the UCLA Cultural Neuropsychology Initiative (CNI). “This person came in with a diagnosis of dementia based on an assessment that had been conducted in English,” she says. “We determined that the symptoms she was exhibiting were actually better explained by a vascular condition. She did not have dementia at all. We were able to refer her to our cardiology team for an organ transplant she would have otherwise been denied.”

It’s a scenario Dr. Suarez is all too familiar with: patients failing to receive proper care because of linguistic and cultural barriers. The CNI, directed by Dr. Xavier E. Cagigas in the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA, is a clinical, training and research program that focuses on the relationship between culture and neurocognition. Countless patients depend on Dr. Suarez and on the program’s unique specialization in providing comprehensive neuropsychological assessments for Spanish-dominant and bilingual patients.

So it was a blow to the program and to Dr. Suarez when a shortage of funding for postdoctoral fellowships threatened to end the work she had started as an intern. Fortunately, relief came quickly, thanks to $50,000 in fellowship support from Valerie and Bob Fish. “The program provides an important service to the Latino population in Los Angeles, but it also has implications for other groups,” says Bob Fish.

“I’m incredibly grateful,” Dr. Suarez says about the funding. “I don’t think the Fish family realizes what they’ve done, not just for me, but also for the patients who are able to get proper diagnosis and treatment.”

To support CNI, please contact Elizabeth Trejo at (310) 267-2206.

Football isn’t the only sport where concussions are a problem. Brain injuries are also a growing concern in ice hockey, basketball, soccer and even cheerleading. To help address this issue, New York Giants co-owner Steve Tisch recently gave $10 million to the Department of Neurosurgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA to support the UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Program. The gift is creating the world’s most sophisticated research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment program for concussions and brain injuries, with special emphasis on concussions among young athletes.

“As the father of children who are athletes, and as an NFL owner, I greatly value the positive role that sports play in people’s lives and am personally concerned about sports concussions,” says Tisch. “UCLA runs one of the best youth concussion programs in the nation, and I’m honored that my gift will allow the program to accelerate and expand its efforts to help kids, parents and coaches understand how to prevent and treat concussions and enjoy the sports that they love.”

“Mr. Tisch’s generous gift will be an enormous game changer, enabling us to create diagnostic tools customized to younger athletes,” says Dr. Christopher Giza, BrainSPORT founder and professor of neurosurgery and pediatric neurology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and at Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA. “Currently, young athletes are assessed with adult tests — but kids aren’t little adults. With the right diagnosis and personalized care, kids can recover completely from concussion.”

To support UCLA Neurosurgery, please contact Leti McNeill Light at (310) 267-9475.