



Imperial College
London

Thank you

**Your support keeps
world-class research, education
and innovation thriving**

**Annual Fundraising Report
2020–21**



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Thank you for giving to Imperial College London

On behalf of the whole Imperial community, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who gave to the College this year.

By providing pivotal funding for our mission of excellence in research, education, and innovation for the benefit of society, you make a difference to so many. We are touched by the generosity of our supporters. Thank you.

As you will see in the pages of this report, philanthropic giving to Imperial has impact far and wide. Thanks to our donors, we are advancing research making a difference to the world, whether by shaping the UK's response to COVID-19 (p8) or offering insight into how to safeguard the future of tropical rainforests (p10). You will also read about how philanthropy is supporting innovation at Imperial through WE Innovate, a women's enterprise programme, and The Greenhouse, an accelerator for start-ups working on technology to mitigate and slow climate change.

Your giving also provides opportunities for future generations, providing scholarships and assistance to lift the financial barriers that can get in the way of even the brightest young person realising their potential. You can meet a few of the many students whose lives were touched by philanthropy on pages 5–7. They include PhD scholar Cassandra, who is working on new products to improve the emotional wellbeing of people with dementia, and medical student Yasmin, who has combined her studies with volunteering as a COVID-19 vaccinator. I am sure that you will find their ambition and achievements inspiring.



This year we began a major new initiative to raise £20 million for scholarships for students from the UK and abroad who are currently underrepresented in our community. We have already committed £10 million towards this target and I am grateful to the many hundreds of you who have already given to scholarships and student support. Together we can ensure that everyone with the talent to study at Imperial has the opportunity to do so, whatever their background or nationality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alice P. Gast". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Professor Alice P. Gast
President**

Creating connections, driving discovery

Philanthropy empowers our people to collaborate, innovate, explore and inspire. From encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting startups, to forging links across disciplines, borders and generations, your impact is felt throughout the College community and beyond.



Major donation for climate change entrepreneurship

New technologies will play a vital role in achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions – but many entrepreneurs face barriers in commercialising climate-change innovations.

Imperial has a proven track record in this area, producing more ‘green’ startups than any other UK university. Now, thanks to a £2.5 million gift from HSBC UK, Imperial has launched The Greenhouse, a cleantech accelerator that provides support and grant funding for 85 startups developing services or technologies with potential for climate change impact. The teams selected to take part receive expert advice on technology and commercial development, with the goal of becoming a self-sustaining business by the end of the programme. Amongst the startups that joined the first cohort is Mana Biosystems (picture above), an insect protein company that is creating animal and fish feed for sub-Saharan Africa, with insects reared on organic waste as its source.

“We are thrilled to be working with HSBC UK on this programme, which quite simply would not be able to proceed without their generosity.”

**Professor Richard Templer,
Director of Innovation,
The Grantham Institute**

↑ Mana Biosystems develops bespoke technologies which enable consistent and uniform output of insect meal in sub-Saharan Africa.



Renewed support for renowned women's enterprise programme

This year marked seven years of WE Innovate, Imperial's entrepreneurship programme for women.

Designed to close the gender gap and encourage innovation that improves society, WE Innovate helps participants develop their entrepreneurial skills through masterclasses, coaching and mentoring, and then compete for a share of £30,000 in funding for their business idea.

WE Innovate was created thanks to a founding donation from Alexis de Raadt St James and the Althea Foundation. In 2021, Alexis made a new pledge to support the programme over the next three years and offered advice to finalists as part of the judging panel.

This year's top prize was awarded to startup SURU Together, which developed an online audio platform for civic organisations to engage communities in participatory decision making. Co-founder Georgie Denis said: "I think it's going to be a fantastic experience to give the platform over to the people who can find real solutions to real problems by using it."

↑ Georgie Denis, co-founder of SURU Together and winner of the 2021 WE Innovate Prize.

New scholarships for women researching climate solutions

A generous donation from minerals company WE Soda and its Executive Director Mrs Ciner is funding two undergraduate scholarships and a PhD scholarship for women in the Department of Chemical Engineering, home of the largest carbon capture and storage research programme in the UK.

These scholarships will empower women to pursue careers in the field of carbon capture and will advance Imperial's research into solutions to the global climate crisis.

Kleio Zervidi, who received the Ciner PhD Scholarship in 2020, is investigating novel hybrid systems for capturing carbon from air. She said: "I am grateful for this opportunity to contribute to one of the world's most pressing challenges of climate change mitigation through my research project on Direct Air Capture."

New opportunity for African student thanks to alumnus-funded scholarship

A gift from Imperial alumnus Dr Damian Cummins (Department of Materials 1974) is funding a scholarship open to Black women residing in Africa who wish to undertake a PhD in Chemical Engineering.

The Damian Cummins Scholarship will form part of our new series of international scholarships which support talented individuals from countries that are underrepresented at the College and who face financial barriers to entry.

Dr Cummins made his first donation to Imperial in 2011 and gave multiple gifts towards student support before pledging a legacy gift in 2017. This year marks a decade of investment into student support at Imperial.

Dr Cummins said: "The launch pad for my very interesting, varied and rewarding career was having a BSc and PhD from Imperial. This experience is one that I have long wanted to repay, and what better way than as a gift to the next generation."

"Without the financial support of this scholarship, I would never be able to accomplish my goals."

**Kleio Zervidi,
Research Postgraduate,
Department of Chemical
Engineering**



↑ Professor Neil Alford, Associate Provost (Academic Planning) breaks ground for the School of Public Health.

Key milestone reached as ground is broken for School of Public Health

In 2018, Imperial launched a campaign to raise £100 million for a new School of Public Health, located in the developing ecosystem for innovation on our White City Campus.

This year saw work begin on the new building, which will unite Imperial’s world-leading public health researchers under one roof, enabling cross-disciplinary collaboration across four key areas: world health, life-long health, community health and policy, and children’s health and wellbeing.

More than 1,000 supporters have contributed to the campaign, including flagship donations from Marit Mohn, Community Jameel and Humphrey Battcock, which have helped raise more than £58 million of our £100 million target.

Philanthropic gifts are helping to create a state-of-the-art research hub, new academic positions and educational opportunities, allowing us to train the next generation of public health leaders and inform health policies and initiatives worldwide.

Virtual event celebrates a community of legacy donors

The Queen’s Tower Society recognises the incredible commitment of those who have pledged a gift in their will to Imperial.

A special event is held annually to celebrate their generosity and share the transformative impact of legacy giving.

This year, despite the pandemic, new and existing legacy pledgers and Imperial students and staff came together for a virtual celebration. Professor Richard Craster, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, hosted the event which featured talks and interviews connecting Queen’s Tower Society members with the people, research and activities that legacy giving supports. Attendees were treated to a musical performance from the Imperial College Symphony Orchestra; heard messages of thanks from Ash Scholarship recipient Elizabeth Porter,



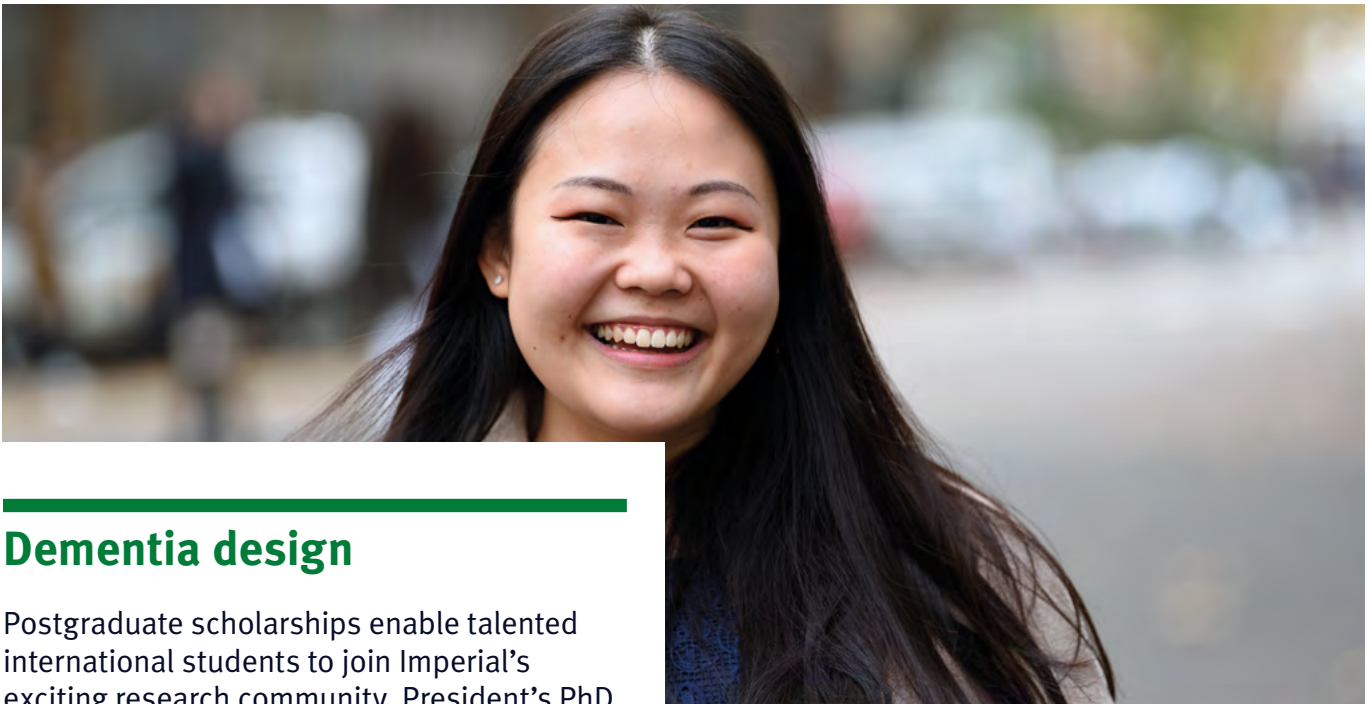
Imperial academics and staff; and received a commemorative biscuit in the post to enjoy while watching.

One guest said: “Thank you and all the contributors for creating such an inclusive and enjoyable event! Quite took me back to 1964–67!”

↑ This year’s Queen’s Tower Society event was a virtual celebration of legacy giving.

Lifting barriers, unlocking potential

Your gifts to scholarships and bursaries help us lift financial barriers and welcome the best and brightest to Imperial. This support gives students the freedom to grasp every opportunity and pursue their passions. Our generous donors gave more than £4 million to students at Imperial this year, helping us work towards a future where everyone who has talent has opportunity.



Dementia design

Postgraduate scholarships enable talented international students to join Imperial's exciting research community. President's PhD scholar **Cassandra Seah Ei Lyn** is working on new approaches to improve quality of life for people with dementia.

"My research was inspired by my grandpa, who suffers from dementia. I wanted to do something that could help him and others living with dementia; it's an ever-growing problem and at present there aren't a lot of interventions available.

My background is in design, and I am using this perspective to develop new interventions through the use of conversational agents to bring mindfulness to dementia patients and their caregivers.

I'd like to emphasise how important this scholarship is for people like myself who would not have been able to afford to study otherwise. It helps us pursue our dreams and give back to society."

The Scholarships Challenge Campaign

In June 2021, President Alice Gast announced a £10 million commitment to scholarships to promote diversity and inclusion at the College. The Scholarships Challenge Campaign seeks to raise a further £10 million through philanthropic donations from alumni and friends. In its first year, the campaign will focus on support for international students, Black students and other groups who are underrepresented at the College.



Pressure off

Your support lifts financial barriers so that students from all backgrounds can get a world-class education and experience enriching opportunities outside of the classroom. First-year medical student **Yasmin Baker** volunteered on the NHS frontline as a COVID-19 vaccinator.

“I was in one of the first groups of medical students to take part in the NHS vaccination programme. It’s been so rewarding to see patients’ smiles after they’ve had their vaccine. I’m grateful for the opportunity I’ve had to make a difference to people’s lives.

I come from a low-income background where financial issues were always a struggle. Not having to worry about financial difficulties is a weight off my shoulders and it has allowed me to open up a lot more, get involved and immerse myself into the myriad of opportunities that Imperial has to offer.”

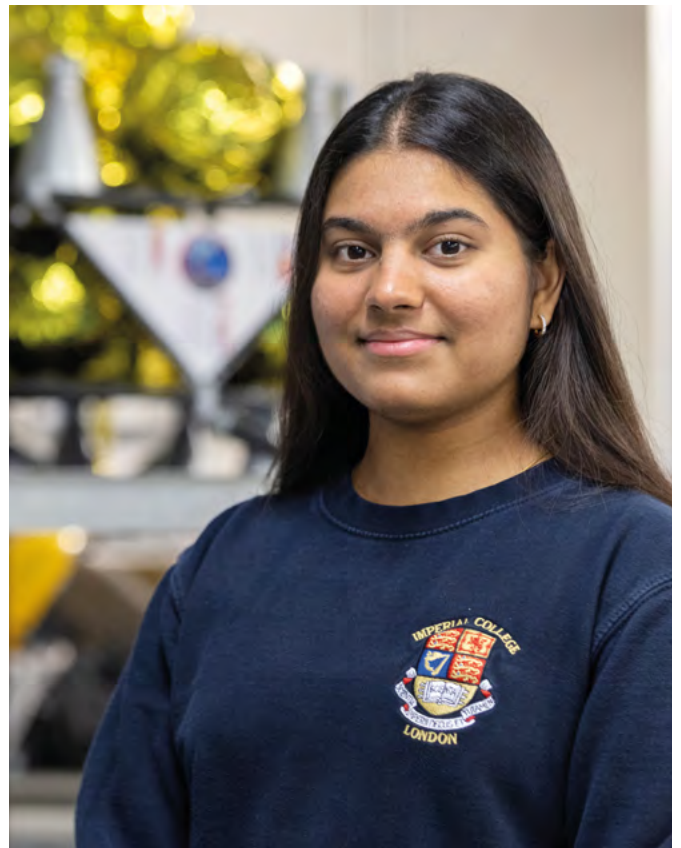
£3.7 million
raised for
new scholarships

Opening doors

When COVID-19 hit, support from Imperial donors meant third-year Aeronautics with Spacecraft Engineering student **Riya Gujarathi** was able to continue her studies in London and participate in an internship with The Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (Skoltech) in Moscow.

“Third year has been demanding but rewarding, even though most of it has been online. Some of the highlights for me include designing an aerospace vehicle from scratch and pitching my £500 billion Mars transit vehicle to a person from industry. I was lucky enough to get an internship related to spacecraft control systems at Skoltech this summer; we are working with robotics, drones and AI, and hope to publish a research paper.

When I applied for support, COVID-19 had hit India hard and my family’s business was financially affected. I was incredibly stressed and had exams coming up, but the support meant that I could focus on my studies.”



Investing in innovators

Donors are supporting a new generation of changemakers. For student **Reiss Jones** and his team, receiving a grant meant they could launch their startup, Synthesea, which is developing sustainable alternatives to fish oil.

“Synthesea began at the Imperial Hackspace Challenge; our team wanted to find a solution to a real-world issue and decided to focus on unsustainable aquaculture. We are building a biological technology platform that converts plant oils into omega-3, with the aim of creating a product that is cheaper and more sustainable than fish oil.

Without financial support from Imperial, Synthesea wouldn't exist. It has helped us to set up our lab and buy the materials necessary to build our proof of concept which, once complete, will mean we are able to take on investment, grants and accelerate our business. Imperial has a unique ecosystem that brings together people who are ambitious and provides them with enterprising opportunities and support.”



£500K
raised for
student support



Tomorrow's leaders

For Medical Biosciences student **Santayian Kantai**, being a Beacon Scholar has made Imperial's world-class education accessible and allowed her to make an impact in her home country of Kenya.

“Through the programme, I'm creating an online guide for a Down's Syndrome society in Nairobi, and I'm working on a project to provide equipment for special needs societies in Kenya. I'm involved with the Imperial community in London as the President of the East African society and am enjoying my studies – particularly a relevant module in immunology.

Being a Beacon Scholar is definitely going to have a long-lasting impact on my career and my future.”

Imperial is one of six UK universities to have partnered with the Beacon Equity Trust to nurture the next generation of leaders. Young people with exceptional academic and leadership potential from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia receive financial support for their studies alongside leadership training and mentoring.



Quick to react, and with us all the way

How philanthropy supported England's largest study into the spread of COVID-19.

It's not often that a research programme becomes a household name. However, in its first year alone, the REACT study reached more than two million households in England and it seemed that not a week went by without a mention of it in the news.

The REal-time Assessment of Community Transmission (REACT) programme began in May 2020, when thousands of volunteers started receiving parcels from Imperial in the post: simple at-home tests that would help our scientists track the prevalence of COVID-19 in the community. Since then, REACT has become the most significant piece of research looking at how COVID-19 is spreading across the country, building a detailed picture of infections both past and present. One of the largest studies of its kind in the world, it continues to help shape public policy and improve understanding of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

At the time REACT was launched, testing was limited and there was very little insight into how England's epidemic was spreading throughout the population. The team knew they had much to discover – and not much time. The Huo Family Foundation recognised this too. Their £1 million gift gave Imperial's team an injection of flexible funding, allowing their work to ramp up quickly and evolve as the pandemic itself has. It helped establish the vital infrastructure needed to securely host the REACT databases, creating a unique resource with no equivalent in the UK or elsewhere, and supported key analyses on the data collected.

In 2020, researchers in Professor Wendy Barclay's Lab shifted their focus from influenza research to study the COVID-19 virus. ↑

Dr Jonathan C. Brown and Ms Maya Moshe are testing serum samples on lateral flow immunoassay kits. →





With the Huo Family Foundation’s support, the REACT team found COVID-19 to be linked with a wider set of symptoms than originally thought, prompting recommendations for new criteria for PCR testing in the community beyond the ‘classic’ list of symptoms (fever, loss of sense of smell and taste, and a new persistent cough). Another analysis paved the way for a major new study into long COVID, a debilitating condition impacting lives and healthcare systems all over the world. Using REACT data, the team was able to study the nature and prevalence of symptoms in people weeks after infection, leading them to

identify two clusters of patients with different initial symptoms, which correlated with disease severity and were predictive of its duration. These and other findings were presented internationally and led to a successful bid to the UK government for a dedicated REACT long COVID study, which began in March 2021. By June, the REACT team had discovered that more than two million adults in England may have experienced long COVID, and had exposed potential factors relating to increased risk, including obesity, smoking and living in deprived areas.

About the REACT studies

REACT (REal-time Assessment of Community Transmission) is a series of studies using home testing to improve our understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic is progressing across England.

This major research programme was commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and is being carried out by Imperial College London in partnership with Ipsos MORI and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

REACT takes two main approaches looking for both current and past infection.

REACT-1: antigen (swab) testing to help understand how many people are currently infected with the coronavirus and identify those most at risk.

REACT-2: antibody (lateral flow) testing to help understand how many people have already had COVID-19 and developed antibodies to the virus.

To learn more and read the latest news, visit:
www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/research-and-impact/groups/react-study



Rainforest rescue

Could a virtual rainforest help scientists understand how well tropical forests withstand the pressures of human activity?

More than a third of the Earth’s original tropical rainforest has been lost in recent decades, with around half of the remaining forest in a degraded state, impacted by logging, agriculture, the expansion of roads or other human activities.

Protecting degraded forest ecosystems from complete collapse is a priority, but there is currently little evidence on how to do this effectively.

A team of Imperial researchers, led by Professor Rob Ewers, is now creating the most complex computer simulation of a rainforest ecosystem ever to be attempted, in the hope of providing new insights to safeguard the future of the world’s rainforests.

“Much research in ecology focuses on unpicking ever more detail about the actions of individual ecosystem components. That is all vital information, but with the virtual rainforest project, we want to focus on the bigger picture with a more holistic, systems approach.”

**Professor Rob Ewers,
Professor of Ecology,
Department of Life Sciences**

The virtual rainforest project, generously supported by the NOMIS Foundation, will model the complex network of living organisms and natural processes that together make up a tropical forest ecosystem. The simulation will offer an extraordinary level of detail, tracking the birth, reproduction and death of each individual plant, animal and microbe within the virtual forest.

While observational studies in real tropical forests have given scientists an increasingly detailed picture of the individual elements that make up forest ecosystems – such as rainfall, temperature, and plant and animal populations – understanding how these interact as a complex whole is much more challenging. Using the simulation, researchers will be able to study how a rainforest behaves as a system.

“The emergent features of a forest – how stable it is as a system, or how resilient it is to external pressure – are not possible to measure through direct observation alone,” says Professor Ewers. “Much research in ecology focuses on unpicking ever more detail about the actions of individual ecosystem components. That is all vital information, but with the virtual rainforest project, we want to focus on the bigger picture with a more holistic, systems approach.”

By transposing an entire ecosystem into a computer model, Professor Ewers and his team can carry out a series of experiments that will offer new insight into the factors that influence forest resilience, stability and sustainability.

One aim is to determine whether the stability of a forest ecosystem is governed by those ecological components that are most heavily interconnected. For example, species that connect different strata of the forest, such as the ground and the canopy, may help stabilise the system in ways that species restricted to just one of those strata are unable to.

The project will also look at what forest management practices are most effective in supporting the recovery of degraded forest, providing evidence to help scientists and policymakers to design strategies that safeguard the future of forests.

Professor Ewers received the NOMIS Distinguished Scientist and Scholar Award in 2021 for his pioneering work on rainforest ecosystems. The NOMIS Foundation supports insight-driven science across all disciplines, focusing on researchers who put forth bold new ideas, exhibit a pioneering spirit, and seek to inspire the world around them.



A vanishing resource

Worldwide, **1.6 billion** people are estimated to depend on forests for food and livelihoods.

Almost half (45%) of remaining rainforest is in a degraded state as a result of human activity.

Tropical forests play a key role in climate regulation, absorbing around **15%** of human carbon emissions from the atmosphere.

← A palm oil plantation at the edge of an area of Malaysian rainforest. Palm oil production is a major driver of deforestation in southeast Asia.

↓ Professor Rob Ewers with members of his research group.





Milestones in myeloma research

A transformative gift from Hugh and Josseline Langmuir is helping find new treatments for a currently incurable blood cancer.

In 2019, we brought you news of a £10 million gift from Hugh and Josseline Langmuir, given in support of Imperial’s pioneering research into multiple myeloma, a blood cancer that develops in plasma cells. This landmark gift established the Hugh and Josseline Langmuir Centre for Myeloma Research and provided Imperial’s world-leading haematology team with funding for facilities, equipment and academic posts to advance their search for new and better treatments for myeloma and other allied blood disorders.

Since the 1990s, incidence rates of myeloma have increased by 32 per cent in the UK and are projected to rise by a further 11 per cent by 2035. Despite significant progress in myeloma research, it has long been underfunded and the condition remains incurable.

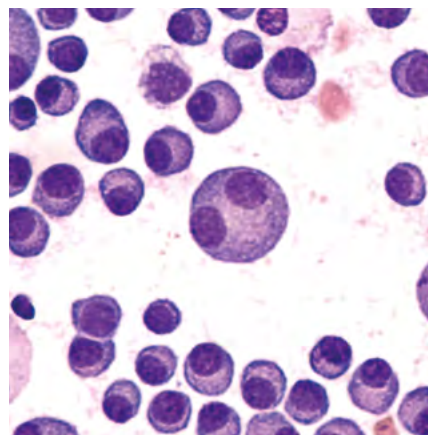
The Langmuirs’ gift provided a vital boost and in two years has already had a great impact. Refurbishment work is underway at the team’s workspace, which will house two dedicated tissue culture rooms, a large open-plan lab, and new state-of-the-art equipment. New PhD posts are increasing research capacity and the creation of an endowed chair has secured the long-term leadership of Professor Anastasios Karadimitris, who is now Langmuir Chair for Haematology and Director of the Centre.

Led by Professor Karadimitris and fellow Principal Investigators Dr Holger Auner and Dr Aris Chaidos, Imperial’s researchers are making great strides towards what they consider their first and ultimate purpose: delivering improved and more effective treatment options to people with myeloma. Among their successes, they are leading the UK trial of a novel drug that

blocks the NF-κB signal pathway, which plays a key role in the development of certain cancers. Other breakthroughs exposed previously undiscovered ‘weak spots’ in chemotherapy-resistant cancer cells, which could be exploited to deliver more effective therapies, while genome mapping of areas called enhancers in myeloma cells will provide opportunities to silence cancer genes that are aberrantly activated and which drive the growth and survival of cancer cells. Finally, recently secured academic and commercial funding will support the development of the novel and highly promising CAR-iNKT cell immunotherapy pioneered at the Centre.

Professor Karadimitris said: “These advances exemplify the Centre’s ability to perform basic and translational research that informs development of new treatments for multiple myeloma. We could not be more grateful to the Langmuirs for supporting this work, which could bring tremendous benefit to patients and their families.”

To find out more about the Hugh and Josseline Langmuir Centre for Myeloma Research, visit www.imperial.ac.uk/myeloma-research-centre



↑ Dr Holger Auner, Professor Anastasios Karadimitris and Dr Aris Chaidos, Principal Investigators at the Hugh and Josseline Langmuir Centre for Myeloma Research.

← Multiple myeloma is a blood cancer that develops in plasma cells.

Thank you



To all our donors, I offer my deepest thanks.

In the midst of another difficult year, you came together to raise an inspiring £28 million for research, education and outreach at Imperial. To those who are new to our donor community, welcome. Thank you for putting your faith in the College. To those who have supported us for some time, your generosity means as much as ever.

Imperial continues to tackle the big challenges facing society, from COVID-19 to the climate crisis, and your support continues to drive this work forward. I hope this report gives you an insight into the many ways philanthropy makes a difference, whether by convening researchers around key problems, providing educational opportunities for students, or strengthening partnerships in our local community.

We know the current challenges will be with us for some time, and that new ones are on the horizon. The work of our School of Public Health and Jameel Institute will continue to be crucial, as will the interdisciplinary groups responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we look to the future, we are building on this spirit of collaboration

through new centres and institutes focused on complex global challenges. Our Institute of Infection, for example, is uniting clinical, medical, engineering, natural science and economic researchers to create one of the most powerful ecosystems for infection research and intervention in the world.

Meanwhile, our Science for Everyone campaign is helping ensure people of all ages have the chance to engage with science, learn important skills and have their voices heard when it comes to the issues that impact us all. Through the Scholarships Challenge we are providing new opportunities for underrepresented groups and international students to realise their potential at Imperial. I look forward to sharing more about our plans with you; in the meantime, please don't hesitate to be in touch if you have any questions.

With thanks and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Murphy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Michael Murphy
Vice-President (Advancement)

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One anonymous donor.

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A total of
£28 million
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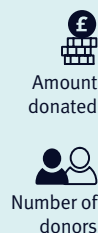
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Through your generosity, we have been able to provide new opportunities for students, accelerate the pace of research and innovation, and build a world-class environment for the Imperial community.

Among the initiatives supported by philanthropy this year are a research programme aimed at protecting threatened rainforest, a new accelerator for climate change innovation, and research to improve end-of-life care. More than £3.7 million has been raised for scholarships and student support.

We are grateful to everyone who gave this year – during these difficult times your support has meant more than ever.

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3,798
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