Amaris Borges-Munoz is a first-year PhD student in chemistry at UB. Her mentor is UB analytical chemist Luis Colon. Her goal is to follow in Colon’s footsteps—and she has already started down his path. They each earned bachelor’s degrees from the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey. When Amaris completes her graduate studies in analytical chemistry, they will be fellow experts in that field. Then she can complete the journey: She wants to teach at the university level, have her own lab and, like her mentor, help students like herself reach graduate school. When Amaris received a UB donor-supported fellowship dedicated to first-year PhD students in chemistry, she was the first Hispanic and just the third woman to receive the award. You can be sure that Amaris will be more than an analytical chemist doing research in areas like the chemistry of pharmaceutical antiviral drugs analysis in cells—she will be a mentor in fact and by example. When you support UB, you help students like Amaris get ready to influence the future.
Sam Racette is the student you like to find in medical school. He has already explored his capacity for caring and compassion. He spent a year with a Franciscan service program working with people on the margins of society in Wilmington, Del. Now, as a first-year medical student, he’s a vice president for community affairs with the Lighthouse Clinic, the student-run voluntary health provider for Buffalo’s underserved population. The Lighthouse Clinic was one reason Sam came to Buffalo from Saranac Lake, N.Y., to study medicine. Another was the offer of a scholarship. The expense of medical school is daunting, and Sam says having the scholarship makes facing that reality a little less intimidating. He loved gross anatomy; he’s visiting physicians he meets in student interest groups to ask about what they do; and he’s spending the summer doing research at Roswell Park Cancer Institute. He reviews videos of class lectures while he rides his competition bike on rollers in his apartment, training for an upcoming Ironman Triathlon. Determination, compassion, the ability to breeze through anatomy—when you support UB, you’re helping students like Sam.
The investors were a panel of local business leaders and venture capitalists. The money they were investing came from a UB donor-supported fund managed by the university’s Office of Science, Technology Transfer and Economic Outreach (STOR). The 2014 crop of start-ups that secured investments ranging from $5,000 to $8,000 included the following:

**WeStudy** is a mobile application for academics that connects college students with tutors and their peers. Founded by a senior psychology major, the app is available on iOS and Android devices.

**Emviss** (Electromagnetic Vibration Isolation and Stabilization System), founded by a civil engineering doctoral candidate, is a manufacturer of electromagnetic devices that provide vibration isolation for high-powered microscopes, cameras and lasers.

**Stickerlight**, founded by an MBA student, is a sound-activated, luminescent marketing emblem that artists and DJs can attach to their laptops.

**B2Y Education**, founded by an MBA student, bridges the gap between businesses and youth through engaging marketing programs.

**Earth Risk Systems** is software that estimates the risks and damage costs associated with natural disasters. The start-up was founded by a mechanical engineering doctoral candidate.

**E-Bridge** is a college academics-themed mobile application start-up, founded by a sophomore who hasn’t yet declared a major.

The Entrepreneurship Lab is a joint effort of UB’s School of Management, the undergraduate Entrepreneurship Academy and STOR.

Earning an A at the end of a college course is nice. But $8,000 for your business is better. When you support UB, you might be helping to launch the next household name.

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**Why I give**

“My career success is all because of UB—that’s why I make a gift every year.”

— Mary Beth Dunn, DDS ’90, School of Dental Medicine

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**Gifts at Work**

**Looking for the next big thing**

**How do you teach students to be entrepreneurs?** UB’s Entrepreneurship Lab (eLab), a small business boot camp for students, does it by helping them research market potential, write business plans and pitch their business ideas to investors.

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**A $1,000 Gift** can buy an iMac for music students.
Almost 20 years ago, Mark Karwan, then dean of UB’s School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, began to question whether the first-year engineering program was driving out some perfectly good engineering talent for reasons having nothing to do with aptitude or potential.

So, using funds from a gift to the school, Karwan instituted the Student Excellence Initiative. Today, still running in part on donations to engineering’s Student Excellence Fund, the program is giving every one of the 500 entering engineering students every chance to succeed.

The main tools are a program director, Bill Wild, who clearly believes that anyone who could be an engineer should be an engineer; an engineering small groups program that supports students through calculus, chemistry, physics and two introductory courses, “Principles of Engineering” and “Impact of Engineering on Society,” that teach neophytes how to think like engineers; and a corps of some 60 hand-picked “student leaders” who usher the willing through the daunting first year.

“We take very good care of our students,” Wild says.

The two big intro courses are broken into dozens of four-student project teams to complete lab assignments together.

Student leaders advise multiple teams. They’ve been there. In both the small groups and the project teams, leaders don’t answer questions; they ask questions—to get a group to dig deeper or to find a way out of the woods and back onto the path toward a solution.

Master’s degree student Mike Rossi is representative of what Wild calls a system that propagates itself. He worked with a student leader as a freshman, was tapped by Wild to join the corps as a sophomore, was promoted to student leader with grading responsibilities as a junior and then to teaching assistant rank as a senior. Like all student leaders, he was paid for his work from the Student Excellence Fund.

Beyond his groups’ lab assignments, Rossi was always willing to answer questions about what engineering students should expect and to give tips about how to succeed. He was mindful of being a role model who believes that engineering is a great thing to do.

Contributions to the school help support programs like this. Programs like this help produce good engineers—and more of them. Graduation rates increased by a factor of 60 percent in the first six years of this program. That’s a good return on investment.
Elise Roberts was in Brussels, Belgium, for the 2014 meeting of the SUNY Model EU (European Union) when she heard an address by the head of the Canada and U.S. Division of the EU’s diplomatic service. By the time he finished, she was sure she wanted to go to graduate school to study international affairs. Elise, who worked an off-campus job during her four years at UB, got help from the UB Honors College donor-supported Academic Enrichment Fund to make the trip. The idea of graduate study in international relations wasn’t a bolt from the blue. Elise completed three bachelor’s degrees at UB—in political science, international studies and Italian, with a minor in French for good measure. At the mock EU meetings in Belgium, she played the part of Italian foreign minister Emma Bonino. There could hardly have been a better prepared U.S. college senior. She’ll be good for the world. When you support UB, you support students like Elise.

Elise Roberts

Why I give

“My studies at UB established the foundation on which I have built a career in education. I am grateful for all that UB did for me.”

—Randy Hollister, PhD ’88, EdM ’84, Graduate School of Education
Samantha Kulu lists her time commitments as home, church, work and school. Home includes her 3-year-old son. She drives to UB every morning, drops him off at the campus child care center, spends the day in class and in the library, then picks up her son and goes home at the end of their “workday.” When she was finishing her UB health and human services degree, Samantha was accepted into UB’s 12-month accelerated bachelor of nursing program. She received a scholarship from a donor-supported fund and a New York State stipend for her son’s child care center tuition. That means she can work fewer hours at her job as a care aide in an assisted living facility. She plans to apply next for admission to the three-year doctor of nursing practice program and, when she finishes, to work as a nurse practitioner in a family medicine or pediatrics practice. Then maybe a PhD so she can teach. The scholarship support she finds along the way makes her road less steep. Students like Samantha can get there because they have tons of determination and because donors like you help.
The good time was MathFest, billed as the nation’s largest annual summer gathering of mathematicians. On the second day of the conference, in a Mathematical Association of America student session in the Connecticut Convention Center, Schmidt presented “p-adic Analysis and L-functions via Explicit Methods,” a synopsis of his UB Honors thesis.

What could beat mixing with 1,500 professional mathematicians and math graduate students for three days?

On the serious side, there were lectures to full houses in big halls by mathematics superstars. On the lighter side, there were tables of math games—Schmidt chatted with a young woman who’d already spent two and a half hours on a puzzle he suspects was impossible.

And for the true devotee, there was a 20-minute talk on the great 18th-century mathematician Euler’s essay on how to improve crop yields on Russian farms, which Schmidt attended.

The great treat for students is to wander loose in this world of professional mathematicians, to watch and listen, to meet fellow students, to read research posters and pick up math tchotchkes. In Schmidt’s words, “There was a ton of stuff to do.” It’s the world he wants to live in for the rest of his life.

Travel expenses for the UB contingent came from the department’s Math Resource Fund, which annual donors support. It wasn’t a large amount—but the payoff could be priceless.

GIFTS AT WORK

Math conference adds up to huge benefits

At the end of July 2013, Matt Schmidt, who had just finished his undergraduate degree at UB and was about to start graduate study in mathematics, drove to Hartford, Conn., with two other students for a good time. The math department paid for the trip.

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New sports medicine facility to benefit student-athletes

Thanks to support from generous donors, UB Athletics has started construction of a full-service Sports Medicine Center on the west side of UB Stadium.

The center will consolidate physician examination, treatment and rehabilitation services for all UB student-athletes. Featuring four examination rooms and an X-ray room, 16 training tables for modality treatment and taping, and three hydrotherapy pools, the Sports Medicine Center will expedite the diagnosis and treatment of sports injuries when they occur.

Construction is far enough along that the center could begin providing treatment by the start of the upcoming football season, but fundraising to complete the facility is not over. There are still a number of opportunities for UB supporters to associate their names with this project.

Our student-athletes train hard and play hard. They deserve the very best care in the most modern facilities that 21st-century sports medicine can offer, and that’s what our generous donors are giving them.