



A gift becomes a lifeline

In March 1994, Shannon Enns was just a few months away from completing her BSc in psychology—but, she was also at the end of her financial rope. “I realized that I was going to run out of money,” she recalls. Faced with the prospect of abandoning her studies and sacrificing years of hard work, a desperate Enns turned to the Students’ Union for support.

In the nick of time, Enns was able to secure a grant, and save her degree. And, to this day, she remains profoundly grateful. “I really appreciated that I was able to get that help—just something to get me through the period of my exams.”

Thankfully, fifteen years later, Enns is now in a position to help others. Through a personal contribution, plus matching funds from the provincial government, she has created a scholarship for a female student in the Faculty of Science who faces financial hardship.

Back in the 90s, her hard-won degree in hand, Enns hit the road for a post-grad motorcycle trip. She ended up in Vancouver, looking for work, but quickly realized that a BSc would not land her a job in psychology. Instead, she headed overseas, to teach English in Korea. After returning to Canada a couple of years later, she looked for a job teaching ESL in Vancouver, and has remained in the field ever since.

In short, the BSc Enns fought so hard for back in 1994 has never translated directly into a single day’s employment. So, why, after all these years, does she still remain so loyal to her university and its Faculty of Science?



“Those were some of the best years of my life,” Enns states simply. “Of course, some classes were harder to sit through than others, and there were days when I just wanted to quit altogether. But, really, I found the U of A to be a community. Getting to know the professors and some of the other students—that was just a super experience, and I maintain some of those connections still.”

University also transformed her from a schoolgirl to an adult. “It was a huge part of growing up,” she says. “Learning to plan my days, and to be self-motivated, because I had to be.”

Enns is thrilled to think that her modest financial contribution might change a life, just as that 1994 grant changed hers. “I wish everybody could go to university.”