DONOR PROFILE: Maribel Carrion ’77, ’86 (M.B.A.)

UNC offers more than 325 study abroad opportunities in 70 countries, and nearly one third of UNC undergraduates study outside of the U.S. before they graduate. But many more students don’t see themselves going abroad, don’t feel like it’s possible or have any idea how to go about it.

But thanks to a generous and innovative gift from alumna Maribel Carrion ’77, ’86 (M.B.A.), Global Take Off: Puerto Rico aims to change that.

Intended for first-year students who are generally underrepresented in traditional study abroad programs, Global Take Off: Puerto Rico is a fully-funded, interactive, four-day, faculty-led trip to Puerto Rico over fall break and includes pre-departure orientation sessions as well as post-return reflection sessions designed to give students an introduction to global travel and cross-cultural learning.

The hope is to encourage students to take that first critical step in a lifelong journey of global engagement. Chosen from 252 applicants, the inaugural class included 12 students, 10 from UNC and two from Fayetteville State University whose Honors Program is collaborating with UNC in this effort.

For Carrion, it’s a journey home that she gets to share. “I am so excited to help launch this effort and introduce my home, my culture and my history to these students,” Carrion said. “Travel opens your eyes and your mind to so many opportunities, ideas and perspectives that you just can’t get in any other way, and I can’t wait to see its impact.”

Carrion was inspired to create this program by her late sister, Marisela, who was also a UNC alumna and spent her junior year abroad in Spain. “It opened her to new ways of looking at the world and that experience impacted her throughout her life … and changed the trajectory of mine,” Carrion said. “When I got the opportunity to live and work in Mexico and later in Singapore, I jumped at it, and that’s what we want these students to feel empowered and comfortable doing even as they step outside their comfort zone.”

Carrion said she also wanted to help remove barriers that often deter or prevent students from travel abroad beyond financial need. Often students simply don’t know about the options, or have experienced cultural roadblocks or even language barriers that discouraged them from considering it. Institutional barriers are also contributing factors, such as delayed progress to graduation. Global Take Off: Puerto Rico seeks to break down these barriers.

“We were totally blown away to see 252 applications for 12 spots in the first year of this program, so clearly there is a huge need and interest in a shorter, more manageable introduction to global citizenship among our students,” Carrion said. “I hope others can see how important these experiences are in preparing our students to make a difference in the world and will join me in supporting these efforts. It takes so little to make a huge impact, and something like this is very doable.”

FISCAL YEAR 2016
New commitments: $73,563,702
(as of 10/25/15 fund-raising commitment summary)
Percent year complete: 25%

COMMITMENTS BY AREA TO DATE FY 2016*

-Academic Affairs $16.4 M
-Athletics $5.6 M
-Health Affairs $40.7 M
-Other $10.9 M

* Dollar amounts rounded to nearest $100,000

GIFTS BY PURPOSE FY 2015

-Research 54%
-Strategic Initiatives 28%
-Student 9%
-Faculty 5%
-Capital 3%

Carolina Quick Facts
29,135 students total
18,421 undergraduates
2,006 instructional faculty
13:1 student/faculty ratio

Class of 2019 Profile
31,955 applications
9,467 (29.6%) admitted
4,081 enrolled (43.1% of those admitted)
Average SAT score: 1,330 (critical reading and math)

Class of 2019 Statistics
59% female, 41% male
79% in-state, 21% out-of-state
3% international
From 97 N.C. counties, 44 states and D.C. and 20 other countries
749 transfer students
9% African-American
7% Latino/a
15% Asian/Asian-American
2% American Indian/Alaskan Native
19% first-generation college students
14% Carolina Covenant Scholars

2015-2016 cost of attendance
$33,644 out-of-state tuition & fees
($total: $24,320)
$10 million commitment to support cancer research
UNC has announced a $10 million commitment to the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center from Ken and Cheryl Williams of Burlington, N.C. The couple has designated their gift for the Ken and Cheryl Williams Fund for Venture Initiatives at UNC Lineberger, the state’s only public comprehensive cancer center.

The $10 million commitment will support promising, leading-edge cancer research at UNC Lineberger, enabling the center’s leadership to make timely investments in emerging, high-impact areas of cancer research.

$3.5 million gift will further campus cost savings, underpin academics
Julian H. Robertson Jr., UNC alumnus and entrepreneur, has committed $3.5 million over three years to UNC to support efforts to identify and implement operational efficiency initiatives to help advance Carolina’s academic mission. The funding builds on Carolina Counts, a fiscal-efficiency program launched in 2009 to streamline campus operations and processes, which has saved North Carolina taxpayers more than $160 million to date.

UNC will match Robertson’s donation with other private contributions and non-state institutional funds to expand Carolina’s work with Huron Consulting Group.

Bequest creates $3.25 million endowment for school’s broadcast program
The UNC School of Media and Journalism has announced a $3.25 million endowment supporting its award-winning broadcast program and honoring the late 1965 UNC alumnus John H. Stembler Jr.

The endowment, established through Stembler’s bequest after his death in 2007, will fund five inter-related initiatives in the school: John H. Stembler Jr. Distinguished Professorship; Stembler Professional in Residence; Stembler Associate Producer; Stembler Capstone Immersive Student Experience; and the Stembler Lecture.

The school’s broadcast program has finished in the top 5 of the Hearst Journalism Awards collegiate national competition every year since 2003, including national championships in 2015, 2013, 2008 and 2006.

Sancar becomes UNC’s second Nobel Laureate
Aziz Sancar, Sarah Graham Kenan Professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the UNC School of Medicine, has been honored with the 2015 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Sancar, who has been a professor at UNC since 1982, earned the award for his work on mapping the cellular mechanisms that underlie DNA repair.

Sancar shares this award with two others: Tomas Lindahl of the Francis Crick Institute and Clare Hall Laboratory in Great Britain, and Paul Modrich of Duke University School of Medicine and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. In 2007, Oliver Smithies, Weather- spoon Eminent Distinguished Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at UNC, won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

Spellings to lead UNC system
Former U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings has been named the next president of the University of North Carolina system. Introduced on Oct. 23, she will succeed outgoing president Tom Ross. Spellings was selected by the UNC Board of Governors, which oversees 17 campuses enrolling more than 220,000 students.

Carolina early-action applications set new record
UNC has received a record 19,682 applications for its first-year early action (EA) admission deadline in 2016. The EA deadline passed on Oct. 15, but first-year candidates may still apply for admission until the regular deadline of Jan. 15. This year’s total represents an increase of 2,500 early applications compared to last year.

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