Forward-thinking and entrepreneurial, Kathleen Flanagan, MBA ‘00 will lead Women & Philanthropy into the next decade of support for UCLA. During a recent conversation, the start-up company founder and current vice president for communications and government relations at Loyola Marymount University discussed her new role and primary goals.

How does Women & Philanthropy motivate giving?
At Women & Philanthropy, we engage with the UCLA community to learn first-hand about the challenges the university faces and the positive impact philanthropy can have. Every gift—even the most modest—does make a difference, especially when you join a group of like-minded philanthropists. The group's efforts add up to real positive change.

What inspires you to do this work?
Education has made a huge difference in my life. I want to help young adults who are unable to afford the education that everybody deserves. The power of philanthropy is that it can make equitable access to education possible, despite the challenges presented by limited state funds and increasing costs. Our members have given more than $10 million to directly support students in the last decade. I want to build on that legacy.

What are your top priorities?
It is all about the basics: increasing our membership and our philanthropic giving. To do that, I want to focus on the outstanding students that ultimately benefit from our efforts. They are our inspiration and best tell the story of UCLA.

Can you give an example of how you plan to grow participation?
One way we can do that is by building a mentoring program to engage women at a younger age. Through our example and collaborative relationships, more women will have the opportunity to connect to the people and programs that make UCLA such a highly regarded university across the country. This will be a goal of ours with the formation of a committee led by Board member Barbara Bergman.

What is the biggest obstacle to achieving the W&P mission?
I do not see any big obstacles. I believe in the motto “Just do it!” This is a group of dynamic women who get things done. It is only a matter of devoting time and brain power!

Is there a Women & Philanthropy experience that stands out?
Supporting the university with fellow Women & Philanthropy members has led to some of my most memorable experiences at UCLA. This past spring, Women & Philanthropy held an event that highlighted Operation Mend, a wonderful program that was made possible by one of our Board members and her husband. This is a partnership between the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center and the Brooke Army Medical Center to perform plastic surgery on the faces of U.S. soldiers who were injured while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. We brought in two of the soldiers. It was so emotional and very empowering to see how philanthropy made possible something so needed in an area overlooked by the government.

I will never forget that day—it is the ultimate example of how philanthropy and excellence and reaching out can make a difference.
In decades past, Rita Pynoos worked tirelessly as a proponent of women’s rights and the Equal Rights Amendment. Today, she channels her vibrant energy toward several areas of interest. Women’s issues remain a passion, which partially explains her involvement with Women & Philanthropy at UCLA.

She and her late husband—engineer, inventor, real estate developer and civic booster Morris Pynoos—worked together for several decades to generate support for causes close to their hearts. In 1970, when their son Jon developed a corneal disease called keratoconus, they established the Discovery Eye Foundation, a research center now based at UC Irvine. They also worked actively on behalf of UCLA and other community institutions.

Rita and Morris were avid collectors of contemporary art. Today, Rita takes pride in her collection and remains personal friends with luminaries including David Hockney, whose works occupy a special place in her home. She is an accomplished weaver and designer of unique furniture, a long-time commissioner of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, a member of the UCLA Iris Cantor Breast Imaging Center and, of course, an active participant in Women & Philanthropy at UCLA.

“All the good that we do for people reverts back to us a hundred-fold,” Rita says. “There is great satisfaction in helping others.”

“Research takes money,” says proud mom Rita, who also supports the work of her other son Jon, the UPS Foundation Professor of Gerontology at USC. “And raising money requires teamwork.”

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At Women & Philanthropy, women from all walks of life come together for a common cause,” Rita says. “They each follow their own path to advance UCLA.”

“For Rita, that path leads to supporting the research of her son, psychiatry professor Robert Pynoos, who directs the university’s Trauma Psychiatry Service at the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior. A member of the faculty since 1980, Dr. Pynoos has become nationally known for his expertise in post-traumatic stress disorder.

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Women & Philanthropy at UCLA recognizes and promotes women’s leadership and philanthropy on the UCLA campus.

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From aerospace engineering to the humanities, UCLA’s women alumni are demonstrating their leadership skills in high-flying fashion.

**K. MEGAN MCAFARThUR**

Few have flown as high as NASA astronaut K. Megan McArthur, who will serve as a mission specialist on the upcoming flight of the space shuttle Atlantis. McArthur, who earned her B.S. in aerospace engineering at UCLA and her doctoral degree at UC San Diego, has been at NASA since 2000 and will be one of seven astronauts to fly on the space shuttle’s fifth and final servicing mission to repair and upgrade the Hubble Space Telescope.

**KAY RYAN**

If McArthur finds inspiration in outer space, Kay Ryan prefers to look inward to pursue her passions. A reluctant poet at first, her compact, witty and philosophical work over more than 30 years has earned her an appointment this year as the 16th poet laureate of the United States. Ryan, who received both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English from UCLA, has published six collections of poetry and garnered myriad awards and honors. Her work has been described as “intense and elliptical as Dickinson, as buoyant and rueful as Frost.”

**BRUIN ALUMNAE SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS**

A teacher of special education teachers at Cal State Dominguez Hills and Cal State Northridge, Patty became involved with Women & Philanthropy at UCLA through her giving and is an active board member. “These women use their influence for the good of the university and the community, and strive to make a difference in a very positive way,” she declares. “It’s a wonderful group and I am so proud to be a member in support of UCLA.”

Patty Boyle, center, spoke at the math department’s commencement ceremony last June. Here, she poses with daughter Rebecca and department Chair Christoph Thiele.
UCLA Pediatrician Anisha Patel is partnering with the L.A. Unified School District to lead the fight against childhood obesity. Together, they are working to provide access to free, clean, chilled drinking water in public schools so that children will consume fewer sweetened drinks.

Anisha is a fellow in the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program, a national philanthropic initiative that trains physicians to be community leaders, both in public policy and the research arena. UCLA’s scholars conduct transformational, community-partnered projects in the multi-ethnic Los Angeles area—a pursuit that supports Chancellor Gene Block’s priority to strengthen community ties at the university level.

“Our scholars are an extraordinary group of very accomplished young doctors who are committed to improving the health of communities,” says Dr. Carol Mangione, UCLA professor of medicine and co-director of the program along with doctors Robert Brook and Kenneth Wells. “They come to us with excellent clinical skills, and we overlay public-health training, teaching them community engagement, policy analysis and leadership skills so they can be effective agents of change for communities.”

The clinical scholars, all of whom have finished medical school and residency or are in the research years of a surgical residency, complete a two- to three-year structured program leading, for most, to a master’s degree in the science of health services (MSHS). During the first year they learn the fundamentals of being a researcher, then go on to design and implement projects in partnership with community agencies and guided by their faculty and community mentors. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a long-time supporter of UCLA’s medical science enterprise, pays the cost of tuition and provides each of them a modest stipend and research budget.

Dr. Mangione, a professor of internal medicine and public health at UCLA since 1994, stresses the importance of going beyond the program’s requirements. “Just because our scholars publish their research in JAMA doesn’t mean they’re done,” she says. “Our clinical scholars must think outside the box and work with their partners to find solutions to problems that aren’t in the traditional medical model. Often they must work to change the cultural norms if they are to make a real difference in our communities.”

Clinical Scholar Nazleen Bharmal, far left, works with representatives of the L.A. Urban League and Rand Corporation to sort photos on photovoice methodology.
No one was predicting that Dawn Harper, a 2006 UCLA alumna, would win the gold medal in the women’s 100-meter hurdles in last summer’s Beijing Olympics. She had garnered the last spot on the American team at the Olympic Trials by 0.007 seconds, and the surprise made her victory that much sweeter.

“The UCLA connection was deeply felt among all the athletes and coaches in Beijing. “It was nice having our Bruin family there,” says Natasha Watley ’05, who won silver as a member of the U.S. women’s softball team. “There were four of us on the team and it made for good bonding between us because we all got to represent UCLA at the Olympics.”

Indeed, the event provided an opportunity for women to demonstrate their athletic skill and leadership on the world stage. Twenty-five of the 39 UCLA representatives, including 12 of the 15 medalists, were women, and three of the four golds were garnered by women athletes.

The university’s third female gold medalist, current junior Lauren Cheney, was a member of the U.S. women’s soccer team that played Brazil to a 1-0 victory in the deciding game. Born with a congenital heart defect, Lauren had open-heart surgery when she was three and her doctors encouraged her parents to keep her active in sports. She was a soccer standout before her sixth birthday.

“I think I’ve wanted to go to the Olympics since I was seven years old,” Lauren says, “and the 1999 Women’s World Cup win only made me want it that much more. “But UCLA is not just about soccer, it’s about learning how I can contribute to the world.”

Qualifying for the Olympics is a medal-winning feat in itself. The Women & Philanthropy family is proud to salute all 39 members of the UCLA contingent to the Olympic Games. Please see the sidebar for a complete list of participants.

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