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University of Dayton

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Friday May 19, 2023

As part of the University of Dayton's recently launched "We Soar" comprehensive campaign to raise \$400 million to support student access, learning and success, UD alumna Deborah Flanagan Tobias '73 and her husband, Randall, have committed \$5 million to "offer life-changing international experiences and learning for future generations of UD students."

Many of the international experiences will come through an endowment to create the Deborah Flanagan Tobias Leaders, a program to provide UD students who are Pell-eligible with a passport and scholarship support to participate in study-abroad programs.

Also with the gift, the University plans to eventually establish the Tobias Global Challenge Program, which will aim to foster global and intercultural understanding among UD students as they work for the common good, and strengthen the ability of UD's education abroad programs to advance critical global themes through hands-on learning for UD students.

"Randy and I are so happy to play a role in getting UD Flyers out into the world," Deborah Flanagan Tobias said. "We hope these students will see, experience and understand people, life and customs from every part of the world. The goal is to develop leaders who are able to build on their enhanced insights for the common good."

The Tobias' gift includes support of a fund created in 2019 that already has helped more than 100 students participate in study abroad programs on six continents. That fund now will be part of the Deborah Flanagan Tobias Leaders Endowment to provide UD Pell-eligible students study-abroad opportunities.

"We are so very grateful to Deb and Randy Tobias for their passion for UD and their care and concern for our students and their holistic education. Their generosity helps eliminate financial need as a barrier to our students' aspirations to pursue their passions and broaden their horizons while exploring the world. Plus it strengthens the University's ability to teach our students intercultural skills that will give them an advantage in the workplace in an increasingly connected and changing world," UD President Eric F. Spina said. "The Tobias' are supporting our Marianist values to empower all of our students to be global citizens."

Each year around 800 students take advantage of more than 70 study abroad experiences at the University of Dayton, a number which UD Associate Provost for Global and Intercultural Affairs Amy Anderson looks forward to increasing thanks to the Tobias' gift.

"Students who receive Pell grants are very underrepresented in study-abroad programs, and this is a gamechanger in putting the University of Dayton on the map as a destination for them to be able to study abroad," said Amy Anderson, associate provost for global and intercultural affairs, and executive director of UD's Global and Intercultural Affairs Center. "In their first year, we will help them obtain a passport and develop a plan for studying abroad during their time at UD, and then provide a scholarship as part of our commitment to being inclusive in giving our students a global education."

Deborah Flanagan Tobias, who graduated from UD with a degree in secondary education, is a current member of the UD board of trustees and the chair of UD's "We Soar" campaign. Deborah spent her career at technology firms Juniper Networks, Cisco Systems, StrataCom and Infotron. Involved in many charitable endeavors in her native Indianapolis, Deborah is a current member of the IU Health Foundation Board and previously worked with the Catholic Youth Organization and the United Way's "Ready to Learn Ready to Earn" child literacy program.

To date, the University's "We Soar" campaign has raised \$334 million for key University priorities, including scholarships to ensure a UD education is accessible to highly qualified students from a range of backgrounds, hands-on learning opportunities, and support for excellent, innovative faculty and staff.

Anyone interested in contributing to the endowment created by Deborah and Randall Tobias can contact Chris Morrison, UD vice president for advancement, at cmorrison1@udayton.edu.

For an interview or a picture of the Tobiases, please contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of news and communications, at srobinson1@udayton.edu.