

Donor-Friendly Narrative Evaluation

Instructions

After conducting a faculty discovery visit, ensure that the details of the project meet the expectations of donor investors. Review the project based on the criteria below, and use the scripting below in follow-up with faculty to clarify any details that may be missing.

This evaluation can also be distributed to academic leaders, so they understand what donors seek when listening to a project description.

Creating a Donor-Friendly Narrative

1. Would someone with little or no expertise in this field understand the project? Does the faculty member use too much jargon?
 - What does that mean in lay terms, so that potential donors will understand your message?
 - How would you explain that idea to a family member or a neighbor?
2. Does the story effectively communicate how the project will impact campus, the region, or the world?
 - You are conducting this project here and now. How can we tell donors why this needs to happen in this place at this time?
 - How can we connect this project to the larger global issues that it impacts?
3. Does the project description balance visionary thinking with transparency into potential shortcomings of the project?
 - Major donors are visionary thinkers who want to think about what's possible, but they are also realists. We should focus on the ideal end-state of this project to inspire donors, while also providing insight into major predicted challenges.
4. Are the project plans and funding opportunities presented as a compelling narrative or a "laundry list" of needs?
 - Our donors want to create meaningful, lasting change with their philanthropy. While I understand that there are immediate funding needs for this priority, we should focus on raising donors' sights to the overall vision and impact of the project.
 - Describe the connections between these listed funding needs. How do they each contribute to the overall vision and impact of the project?