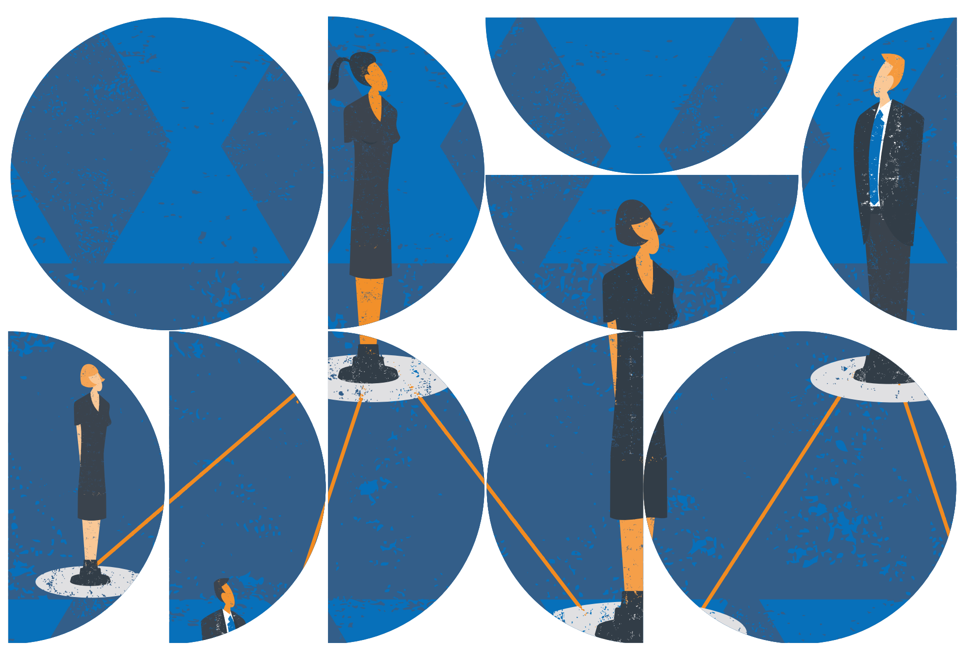
EAB

The Donor Investor Imperative

Engaging Academic Partners for Transformational Ideas and Impact

Advancement Forum



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Supporting Members in Best Practice Implementation

Resources for Principal and Transformational Giving

Since its founding, the Advancement Forum has dedicated our research to helping advancement leaders reach their fundraising goals and lead successful campaigns. From staffing up for comprehensive campaigns to stewarding endowed scholarships, these additional resources are designed to help you reach ambitious annual goals, engage donors at the top of the giving pyramid, and build a pipeline for future success.

We offer a variety of services to assist you with your mission. For additional information about any of the services detailed below, please contact your organization's relationship manager or visit our website at eab.com. To order additional copies of this publication, please search for it by title on eab.com.

Preparing and Staffing Operations for Capital Campaigns of One Billion Dollars or More

This research brief shares how advancement leaders reorganize staffing and unit structure to prepare for and support billion dollar-plus comprehensive campaigns. It traces campaign timelines and budget development based on the staff needed to reach higher-than-ever goals.

Venture Philanthropy: Attracting, Developing, and Managing Venture Capital Funds

This research brief explores how institutions procure, finance, and maintain venture philanthropy projects and initiatives. It profiles institutional venture capital funds that support student-centered programs, technological innovations, and entrepreneurialism across campus.

Crafting a Compelling Case

This on-demand webconference explores how to create high-impact proposals for today's donor investor. From making the case for investment in your institution to the project-specific impact metrics donors seek, this webconference is designed to help frontline fundraisers and proposal writers assemble concise, compelling collateral for big ideas on campus.

Development Office Organization and Structure

This research brief details the organizational structure and staffing of major giving and prospect management teams. It investigates the roles and responsibilities of staff members, communication strategies, and metrics for assessing success across functional areas within the advancement shop.

To access the full range of services available to you, please visit our website at eab.com/af.

Executive Summary

Over the past decade, higher education fundraising has outpaced all other causes thanks to the proliferation of the billion-dollar campaign and increasing numbers of million-dollar gifts to institutions of all types and sizes. However, the emergence of a new breed of philanthropist, the donor investor, threatens this success.

These donor investors seek transformational ideas with world-changing impact, and they want to make deep connections with the individuals doing the work. Today's donors will invest in innovation anywhere. However, with the proliferation of nonprofit organizations, there is increased competition for their philanthropy.

Institutions of higher education need to prove that they are the best place for high-impact philanthropic investments, a responsibility that often falls on advancement leaders and frontline fundraisers. Despite this pressure to prove the value of investing in colleges and universities, advancement staff find themselves limited by tired strategic plan priorities and a lack of compelling projects from faculty members. Furthermore, academic leaders are reticent to engage with donors, pitch their ideas, and assist development staff in reporting impact over time.

This study and accompanying tools are designed to help advancement leaders jumpstart their approach to the donor investor and sustain fundraising success into the future by:

- Implementing a process to unite campus leaders and source big ideas across campus;
- Working with faculty to communicate the impact of big ideas to top donors before and after a gift is made;
- Providing opportunities for academic leaders to perfect the donor-facing pitch.

The Rise of the Donor Investor

SECTION

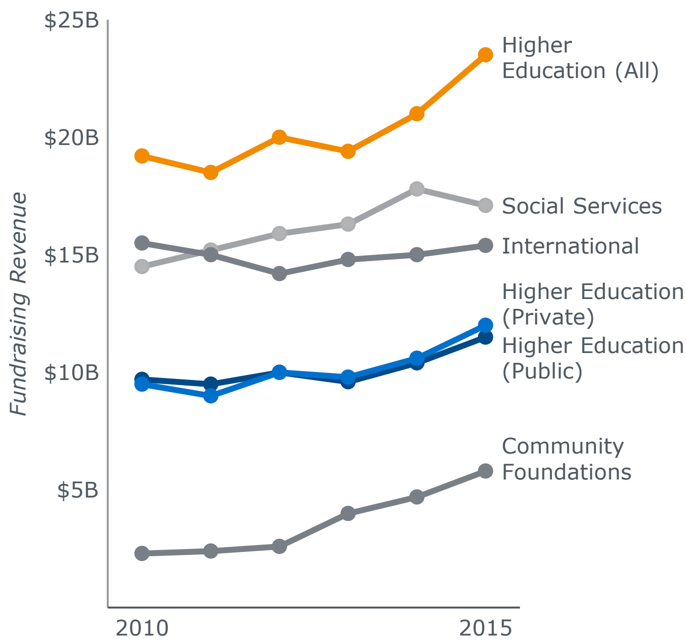
1

Giving to Higher Education at All-Time High

Driven by a Decade of Mega-Campaigns

Over the last decade, public and private higher education together raised more philanthropic revenue than any other cause. This success can be traced to the emergence of the billion-dollar capital campaign. While not all colleges and universities have set their sights on $1 billion, institutions of all types and sizes are either embarking on or planning for the largest campaigns in their histories.

How Causes Have Fared Over the Years



Recent Billion-Dollar Campaigns

$6.0B — USC University of Southern California

$5.0B — MIT

$2.0B — University of Toronto

$1.2B — The University of Akron

$1.5B — Michigan State University

80 $1B+ campaigns completed in the last 10 years

50 $1B+ campaigns currently underway

The last decade has witnessed the completion of 80 campaigns with goals of at least $1 billion. Of these, 62 were conducted by institutions of higher education. As of the writing of this study, there are approximately 50 campaigns of at least $1 billion underway, 48 of which are being conducted by institutions of higher education.

Source: Olsen-Phillips P, O'Leary B, "How 18 Causes Have Fared Through the Years," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, Oct. 29, 2015, https://philanthropy.com/interactives/phil400-chart-2015; Grenzebach Glier and Associates, "Billion Dollar Capital Campaigns," Mar. 15, 2015, http://www.grenzebachglier.com/assets/files/GG+A%20-%20Billion%20Dollar%20Campaign%20List%20-%203-15-2015.pdf; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

A Strong Track Record of Million-Dollar Gifts

And Not Just at Elite Colleges and Universities

Higher education's campaign success has relied on larger gifts at the top of the giving pyramid. More than one quarter of all gifts to higher education in 2015 were raised by the top 20 fundraising institutions in the United States. However, $1 million gifts are not reserved for elite institutions—colleges and universities of all types have received gifts of this size in the past five years. Of the $40.3 billion raised by the sector as a whole in 2015, 71.3% was raised by institutions outside of the top 20.

Record Sums Raised by Higher Education in 2015[1]

$40.3B
Funds raised by all colleges and universities in 2015

28.7%
Percentage of all gifts raised by top 20 institutions

8
Gifts of $100 million or more reported in 2015

$1M+ Gifts Across Higher Education

		Total Value of Gifts[1]	Average Gift Size[2]	Largest Gift[3]
Baccalaureate Institutions	Public	$56.0M	$25.0M	$11.0M
	Private	$863.0M	$5.0M	$102.0M
	Total	**$919.0M**	**$4.7M**	
Master's Institutions	Public	$378.0M	$3.1M	$45.0M
	Private	$757.0M	$5.0M	$20.0M
	Total	**$1.1B**	**$4.2M**	
Research Institutions	Public	$5.6B	$8.4M	$84.0M
	Private	$8.4B	$21.0M	$306.0M
	Total	**$14.0B**	**$13.1M**	

1) From a living individual, couple, or family in FY 2010-2014, as reported by the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.
2) From a living individual, couple, or family in FY 2010-2014, as reported by the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.
3) From a living individual in FY 2010-2015 as reported by the Council for Aid to Education.

Source: Council for Aid to Education, "VSE 2015 Press Release," 2015, http://cae.org/images/uploads/pdf/VSE_2015_Press_Release.pdf; Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, "Million Dollar List: A Database of Charitable Contributions," 2013, http://www.milliondollarlist.org/data; Council for Aid to Education, *Voluntary Support of Education Survey*, 2015, http://vse.cae.org/; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Emerging Challenges Impeding Progress

Pain Points for Principal Giving

Despite success in soliciting million-dollar gifts, chief advancement officers shared that they struggle to source the types of funding priorities that will propel a current donor to make their next big gift. EAB uncovered three emerging trends which threaten to impede or erode progress in principal giving. First, institutional strategic plans do not provide fundraising priorities that appeal to donors. Second, deans and faculty members do not think in terms of large-scale, high-impact projects. Finally, donors have greater expectations for the institutions they support.

Challenge 1

Strategic Plans Inadequate for Fundraising

- Institutional uniqueness lost in favor of broad priority areas
- Many priorities merit internal funding
- Statement of priorities too broad for advancement

Challenge 2

A Lack of Ideas on a Grand Scale

- Deans prioritize immediate needs over long-term vision
- Faculty work in silos and are unwilling to share data
- Research projects not linked to large-scale impact

Challenge 3

A New Breed of Donor

- Donor investors seek long-term sustainable impact
- Expectation of deep relationship with project leaders
- Desire for hands-on engagement and influence

Large-Scale Projects not Emerging

"What I'm not finding at our institution are enough big ideas that will take the $1 million gift and make that next gift $5 million. The ideas are very operational. They're not thinking longer term or coming to me and saying "if I had a $20 million gift, I could do X, Y, and Z." We're just not seeing those conversations emerge."

Vice President, Development
Public Research Institution

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

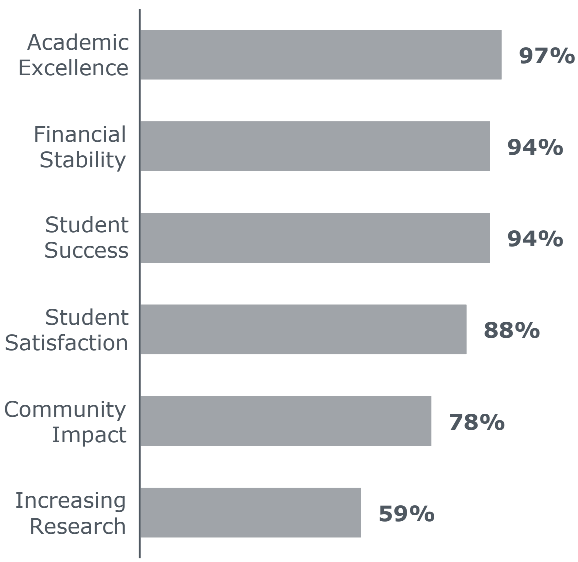
Strategic Plans Inadequate for Fundraising

What Got Us Here Won't Get Us There

Strategic plans demonstrate remarkable similarity across institutions. Pick up a strategic plan at almost any college or university, and you will find a long-term vision replete with goals such as "academic excellence" and "student success." An EAB analysis of strategic plans and capital campaign priorities showed the general themes highlighted in strategic plans were often repeated as broad buckets in the campaign.

Strategic Plan Goals Become Campaign Priorities

EAB Analysis of Strategic Plans



Higher Education's Pinnacle Gifts Cross Silos

Johns Hopkins University

Michael Bloomberg pledges **$250M** for interdisciplinary research

Santa Clara University

Jeff and Karen Miller pledge **$25M** for center for social entrepreneurship

Swarthmore College

Eugene Lang pledges **$50M** to foster links between engineering and the liberal arts

University of Oregon

Connie and Steve Ballmer give **$20M** for human development faculty cluster

However, principal and transformational gift donors increasingly want to support concrete projects that encourage multidisciplinary thinking and drive large-scale impact both on and beyond campus. Record-breaking gifts to higher education cross academic silos and fund new, high-impact programs and initiatives. Advancement leaders can no longer afford to be without distinct, concrete initiatives and projects that attract principal and major gifts.

Source: "Big Charitable Gifts: Where Donors Have Given $1 Million or More," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, https://philanthropy.com/factfile/gifts/1?DonorDisplayName_cu=lang&Category=any&GiftRecipients_RecipOrgDateline_c=&GiftRecipients_RecipStateFull=any&GiftDonors_SourceWealth_cu=&GiftDonors_aStateFull=any&GiftYear=any; "Campaign Nets $50 Million Gift," University of Oregon, http://giving.uoregon.edu/s/1540/development/index.aspx?sid=1540&gid=2&pgid=3341&cid=7128&ecid=7128&crid=0&calpgid=2113&calcid=4773; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

A Lack of Ideas on a Grand Scale

Internal Obstacles Prevent Faculty from Thinking Big

While the work that advancement professionals have undertaken in the last 20 years has created a cadre of key allies for fundraising across campus, there is still work to be done. Across the research, the Forum heard a constant refrain: academic leaders struggle to think of big fundraising ideas. Academic culture rewards deans and faculty who focus on research in their specific areas of interest. Cost pressures mean that deans attend to immediate needs instead of envisaging the future. Our academic partners do not see how advancement is crucial for their survival.

Current Academic Culture

- Deans focus on day-to-day operational needs and lack long-term vision
- Deans and department heads actively incentivized to think within their purview
- Scarcity of resources at odds with need for big-picture thinking

Advancement-Faculty Disconnect

- Advancement and academic leadership unaware of ongoing faculty projects
- Faculty don’t understand or trust advancement
- We ask deans and faculty to do something with little previous training

“Faculty are ultimately **preservationists of the Academy**. They have willingly come along on enrollment because they know that tuition is connected to their success. When faculty start to see that **their stability is contingent on our ability to raise funds from alumni**, that those are the stakes, they are likely to become more willing to help us.”

Terrence Sawyer
Vice President, Advancement
Loyola University Maryland

“I don’t wait for deans to come to me with ideas. We constantly educate them on what would be a good fundraising opportunity. If you’re not in that dialogue, and you don’t know how to have that conversation, **you will be the campus ATM**. The line will form at your door.

Lisa Raiola
Vice President, Institutional Advancement
Roger Williams University

In fact, many faculty members view advancement as a mysterious black box on campus, where certain departments consistently get donor support while others are ignored. Relationships between advancement and academic leaders are often strained due to misunderstandings of what working with advancement entails and what will interest a principal gift donor. Long-term principal gift success is only possible if advancement leaders clarify what donors expect, and how academic leaders can become partners in the process.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

A New Breed of Donor

With Heightened Expectations for the Organizations They Support

Today's principal and transformational donors have highly specific expectations for the organizations they support. "Donor investors" view their philanthropy as an investment in an institution that can change the world. This trend is not limited to higher education. These donors bring the same expectations to any nonprofit organization they support. Meeting donor investor expectations requires directly addressing what they seek in any nonprofit organization—compelling ideas for investment with transformative impact promoted through credible connections with the individuals who will do the work.

An Emerging Donor on Everyone's Mind

NonProfit PRO
Strategic Philanthropy: The Shift in Donor Behavior That's Shaking Up the Nonprofit Sector

FT FINANCIAL TIMES
Philanthropy: How to Give Away $1B

THE CHRONICLE OF PHILANTHROPY
Treat Donors Like Investors, a Top Philanthropist Urges

"Donors everywhere are much more strategic and thoughtful about their giving. They want to see data and outcomes. They constantly ask 'Can you show me the numbers?'"

Heidi McCrory
Vice President, College Relations
Kenyon College

The Donor-Investor Seeks

Compelling Ideas
Innovative, large-scale solutions to local, national, or global problems

Transformative Impact
Evidence that their gift has led to change that would not otherwise be possible

Credible Connections
Investment in people who can link big ideas to impact

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Seeking Compelling Ideas

Solving Problems with Innovative Solutions

Donor investors make investments in organizations and individuals that can solve large-scale problems. The MacArthur Foundation's 100&Change initiative highlights this strategy by challenging anyone in any field to submit innovative proposals for long-term impact—the best idea will be rewarded with a $100 million grant. Although it was issued by a foundation, this challenge encapsulates the goals that individual donors set for their philanthropy and the standards they set for any organization they support.

MacArthur Foundation Sets the Bar

Others Follow Suit

CHAN ZUCKERBERG INITIATIVE

"By making big bets today, we will dramatically expand opportunities for all."

- Goals: advancing human potential and promoting equal opportunity
- Focus areas: science and education
- Researchers, advocates, engineers, and scientists work together to find breakthroughs and create new technologies

Higher Stakes for Higher Education

"Donors are interested in substance. They are trying to achieve something in the world, and they can use universities to do that. What we have to do is convince them that **a university is a good investment for how they want to change the world**. That information is only going to come from the academic leaders."

Provost and Vice-Principal, Academic,
Canadian Research Institution

The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative epitomizes how individuals are launching grand challenges of their own to solve global problems, raising the stakes for institutions of higher education. It is increasingly important to prove to donor investors that investing in colleges and universities, as opposed to other philanthropic organizations, is an effective way to change the world and have an impact on their preferred causes.

Source: "100&Change," MacArthur Foundation, https://www.macfound.org/programs/100change/strategy; Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, https://chanzuckerberg.com/; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Impact Is the New Naming Opportunity

Investing in Large-Scale Change

Endowed scholarships and capital projects don't make the grade for attracting donor investors, and we can't rely on institutional affinity to retain them. Instead, top prospects and donors have strong affinity to regional, national, and global issues. They support projects and organizations that will have an impact on those issues. Unlike past generations of donors, after-the-fact impact reporting no longer suffices—donor investors will not invest unless they have seen up-front impact estimates.

Donors Are Impact Centric

62%
Want information on how the organization plans to use the gift

75%
Want information on results achieved with their gift

64%
Want stories about people who were helped

How Next Generation Donors Consider Philanthropic Investments

1. **Setting Goals**
   First decide philanthropic goals, then search for potential recipients
2. **Evaluating Organizations**
   Conduct research and due diligence before deciding what to support
3. **Solving Problems**
   Fund efforts that address root causes and attempt systematic solutions
4. **Analyzing Results**
   Prefer information on proven effectiveness or measureable impact

In a survey of donors aged 21 to 40 who are currently active or becoming active in their families' philanthropy, the Johnson Center for Philanthropy uncovered how up-and-coming donors determine where to make gifts. They start by setting goals for their philanthropy. Then, they evaluate which organizations are best-positioned to achieve those goals by addressing root causes. Afterwards, they seek information on measurable impact so they can determine where to invest. If impact is not reported in an accurate and timely way, donor investors will not continue to invest in the project or organization.

Source: Burk P, "The Burk Donor Survey: Where Philanthropy Is Headed in 2013," Cygnus Applied Research, Inc., Sept. 2013; Johnson J, "Including the Young and the Rich," *New York Times*, Apr. 18, 2014, www.nytimes.com/2014/04/20/fashion/white-househosts-next-generation-young-and-rich.html?_r=2; Johnson Center for Philanthropy, 21/64, "#NextGenDonors: Respecting Legacy, Revolutionizing Philanthropy," 2013, www.nextgendonors.org/wp-nextgendonors/wp-content/uploads/next-gen-donor-reportupdated.pdf; *Fulfilling the Donor Investor Mandate*, Philanthropy Leadership Council, The Advisory Board Company 2014, 11; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

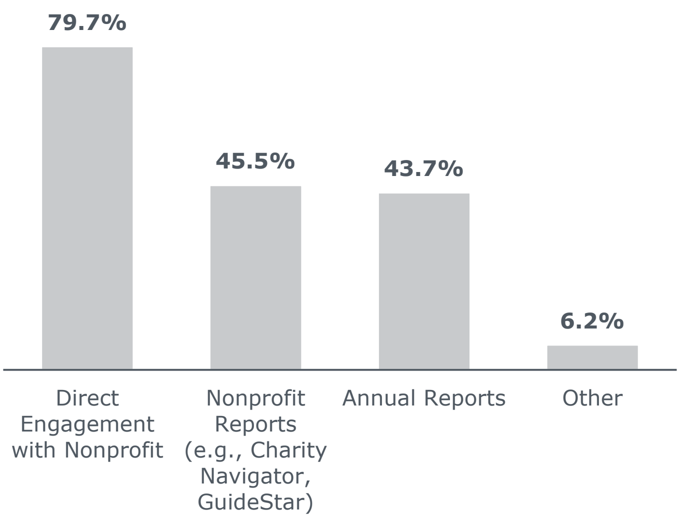
Building Credible Connections

Engaging with Leaders to Evaluate Gift Impact

People invest in people. High net worth philanthropists invest in organizations where they have direct connections to the individuals who will use their gift. When determining where to invest, they favor direct engagement over other means of evaluation. Donor investors would rather have a meeting with a nonprofit organization's leaders than read about its mission and impact online. Fortunately, colleges and universities have a head start over other organizations in meeting this expectation.

Direct Engagement Favored as an Evaluation Tool

How High Net Worth Philanthropists Evaluate Organizations



Donors Invest in People

> Any nonprofit is only as good as the people who run it**. At the end of the day, you're investing in people**… It's a lot more informative to have a conversation with whoever is carrying out the group's mission than to read about them online.

Carrie Morgridge
Vice President, Morgridge Family Foundation
Author, Every Gift Matters: How Your Passion Can Change the World

Alumni Invest in Faculty

55%

Of alumni consider relationships with their professors to be a primary source of affinity for their college, university, or school

Relationships with professors are a primary source of alumni affinity for their alma maters, and non-alumni donors are often convinced to give through in-person meetings with faculty members, department chairs, division heads, and the president of the institution. This increases the pressure on advancement to ensure that the meetings are successful and that donor connections to faculty endure over time. To attract donor investors now and into the future, advancement must strengthen its partnerships with the academic enterprise.

Source: "The 2014 U.S. Trust Study of High Net Worth Philanthropy," US Trust, Oct. 2014; Morgridge C, *Every Gift Matters: How Your Passion Can Change the World*, Austin: Greenleaf Book Group, 2015, 38; "Alumni Attitude Study," Performance Enhancement Group, in Henderson N, "It's Academic," Council for Advancement and Support of Education, Jan. 2014, http://www.case.org/Publications_and_Products/2014/January_2014/It%E2%80%99s_Academic.html; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

What Only Our Academic Partners Can Do

Donor Expectations Require Renewed Partnership with Academic Leaders

In an increasingly competitive market for philanthropic support, we need to move beyond the strained relationships of the past to effectively partner with academic leaders. Deans, department chairs, and faculty members have exactly what donors want—compelling ideas, transformative impact, and compelling connections. Yet, academic partners are often unaware of how to package and promote their own ideas, or that advancement can be instrumental in fundraising success.

Current Challenges

Compelling Ideas → **Sourcing Big Ideas**

- Deans have a scarcity mindset
- Disconnect between deans and faculty activities

Transformative Impact → **Communicating the Impact of Big Ideas**

- Faculty unaware of reasons to share results internally
- Deans unaware of importance of bigger-picture impact

Credible Connections → **Perfecting the Pitch**

- Academic leaders ill-equipped to communicate their expertise to donors
- Advancement leaders ask faculty for the wrong things

Integral Opportunities

Sourcing Big Ideas

Communicating the Impact of Big Ideas

Perfecting the Pitch

While the current environment is fraught with challenges, advancement leaders have a unique opportunity to build relationships with faculty members and donor investors. To jump start faculty engagement with advancement, three areas are crucial—big ideas, impact, and the donor-facing pitch. Focusing here will enable advancement leaders to build the necessary groundwork for long-term principal giving success.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

EAB

Sourcing Visionary Ideas

SECTION 2

Too Many Ideas, Not Enough Filters

The Challenge of Finding Big Ideas

It comes as no surprise that identifying big ideas is a constant struggle for advancement staff. Donor investors seek multidisciplinary high-impact projects, but deans often focus on meeting their immediate needs and increasing their unrestricted funds for the next budget crisis. Chief financial officers do not approve of projects that will cost the institution over time or be challenging to execute, and many line faculty do not communicate at all with advancement for fear that their ideas will be ignored or irreparably changed by a donor.

Idea Sources	Institutional Challenges	
Donor Interests	• Idiosyncratic • Mismatch with institutional needs • Unrealistic expectations	*"The donor wants to start a new college, but we'll never be great in that area."*
Deans' Needs	• Focus on today's operations • Limited vision for tomorrow • Unappealing to donors	*"Donors don't want to pay to clean the carpets and keep the lights on."*
Faculty Pet Projects	• Perceived as advancement "playing favorites" • Difficult to sustain • Long-term financial obligations	*"Faculty only care about their tiny corner of the universe."*
Broad-Based Crowdsourcing	• Mixed quality of ideas • Unrealistic plans • Unsustainable over time	*"'Boaty McBoatface' tops public vote as name of polar ship."*[1]

Some institutions have taken a plunge into crowdsourcing for proposals, but top vote-getters are often undesirable to campus leadership. These traditional sources of big ideas are problematic, and advancement shops need to implement processes to move beyond them. However, faculty members cannot simply "think big" just because they are asked to do so. To successfully surface big ideas across campus, advancement needs to bring order to chaos by implementing a transparent big ideas process.

1) The National Environment Research Council (UK) chose to ignore poll results. The Council's new polar research vessel was named "RRS David Attenborough" instead.

Source: "'Boaty McBoatface' Tops Public Vote as Name of Polar Ship," BBC News, Apr. 17, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-36064659; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Bringing Order to Chaos

Developing a Process to Capture Big Ideas

A big ideas process shouldn't be limited to wishful thinking about getting faculty to "blue sky" ideas. Following the six critical steps outlined here will enable you to source the ideas you need while building working relationships with academic leaders and faculty members. The first step is getting core partners to buy in to the process and define what constitutes a big idea. Then, create a request for proposals (RFP) and promote the process. Finally, use a transparent process to choose the best ideas, and be sure to clarify next steps for faculty members whose ideas were chosen.

Six Steps to Sustainably Source Big Ideas

Case Exemplars

UC DAVIS UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

The Forum identified four case exemplar institutions conducting best-in-class big ideas processes. The steps illustrated here take key components of each institution's process to create a comprehensive plan for big ideas. At each institution, a big ideas process took place at the start of a capital campaign, or as the result of a new strategic plan. Regardless of when the process begins, it has to start by getting the right campus leaders at the table.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Advancement Runs the Playbook, the Provost Leads

For the big ideas process to succeed, advancement and the academic enterprise need to coordinate each step. As such, engaging with the provost is critical. The provost should serve as the face of the process, even though advancement coordinates each step behind the scenes. This provides academic credibility for advancement's work and ensures that winning big ideas are aligned with the president and the provost's priorities. Other senior leaders on campus should lend their talents to the process, from the chief business officer determining how ideas should be funded, to deans encouraging faculty participation.

The Right People and Roles

Chief Advancement Officer
Initiates the process, directs team for eventual solicitations

President
Ensures alignment of big ideas to strategic priorities

Provost
Leads big ideas process

Chief Business Officer
Allocates funds for big ideas

Vice President, Research
Links big ideas to research enterprise

Deans
Encourage faculty participation

"**The Provost is critical to dean and faculty engagement**. He has to place value on it and create an expectation around it—advancement cannot force it. If we can demonstrate that there is potential opportunity for significant philanthropic investment, then it's an easier sell to the faculty—but it has to be supported by the provost."

Jane DiFolco Parker
Vice President, Development
Auburn University

"**This was the first time this group of campus leaders had come together** to focus on generating ideas that philanthropy could fund. They originally didn't understand why they needed to be involved. It set the stage for a unified approach."

George P. Watt, Jr.
Executive Vice President,
Institutional Advancement
College of Charleston

While the president should be aware of the process (and should be ready to help pitch the best ideas to top donors), he or she is most important in ensuring that the final set of ideas aligns with institution's overall direction. Uniting campus leaders at the start of the process educates them about the importance of philanthropy in accomplishing the institution's goals and gains buy-in for the big ideas process itself. This may be the first time that this group is together and speaking about the same subject, and it should not be the last.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Kicking Off the Process

Engage Academic Leadership Constructively with an Agenda and Goals

Even getting senior leaders in a room together can be challenging, so advancement leaders should make the most of a kickoff session by explaining why the group is assembled and what is expected of them in the big ideas process. During the same session, determine how the process will look and how ideas will be selected so that everyone leaves the room with a holistic view of what will happen and how they will be involved. This session should be facilitated by the chief advancement officer and/or the provost to demonstrate that the process is a priority across campus divisions.

Big Ideas Kickoff Session Agenda	Tips to Aid the Process to Initiate Big Ideas on Your Campus
I. Introduction • Purpose and goals • Everyone's role	Session can be co-facilitated by the Provost and Chief Advancement Officer
II. Setting Criteria • Sample criteria • Key questions to define a big idea	Think about criteria *without* focusing on philanthropy in order to surface the best ideas on campus
III. Choosing the Best Ideas • Decision method • Creating a points system	A transparent process builds positive working relationships with academic partners who participate in the process
IV. Starting the Process • Timelines for implementation • Next Steps	Clear roles and responsibilities hold campus partners accountable and ensure success

Determining the criteria for a big idea should also take place during the session to maximize the time together and enable advancement to roll-out the criteria to the rest of campus as soon as possible. Creating implementation timelines and assigning ensures that each leader is held accountable for making sure that the big ideas process is a success. However, before the process can start, you have to determine what is and is not a big idea on your campus.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Create Evaluative Criteria for Your Institution

For this process to succeed, everyone on campus needs to understand what is and is not a big idea. The University of California, Davis (UC Davis) clarified what was expected of big idea proposals by publicizing short lists of criteria that mark big ideas (and ideas that would not be considered as such). Creating and publicizing this list enabled the idea selection committee to quickly sort proposals based on which ones met the basic criteria and which did not.

UCDAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Ensuring Success by Clarifying What Is Expected

A Big Idea Should:	A Big Idea Should Not:
Transform the University and the world	Be defined *solely* by a capital project
Make the University unique in the marketplace	Bundle together smaller ideas
Focus on where the University is good but could become better	Solely feature a naming opportunity
Include areas where the University is emerging as a leader	Lead to slow, incremental improvement

The basic criteria at UC Davis emphasize that a big idea should make the university unique, focus on where it is emerging as a leader, and transform both the campus and the world. When creating your own baseline criteria, consider your institution's long-term goals and areas where it could excel. Clarifying what is (and is not) a big idea creates a culture of transparency for academic partners, who are able to tailor proposals so that they qualify as big ideas.

Source: University of California, Davis, CA; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Key Information to Objectively Review Ideas

After determining the baseline criteria for a big idea, consider what other questions faculty should answer to explain their ideas to the selection committee. These questions should be included in the RFP and should be based on the criteria that will be used to select fundraising priorities from all of the proposals that are submitted. The RFP should encourage faculty to explain their ideas in terms that the selection committee and other non-experts can understand, which will enable advancement staff to eventually promote the priorities to prospective donors.

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Ensuring RFP Provides Necessary Information

Faculty required to explain:

- Alignment with mission and academic plan goals
- Building on existing academic strengths
- Fostering interdisciplinary collaboration
- Links to fundamental societal challenges or opportunities
- Viable funding model, including philanthropy and institutional funding
- Sustainability beyond three to five years

Questions to Create an Institution-Specific RFP

Institutional Niche

- How does this take advantage of our existing strengths?
- How does this make us unique, or differentiate us in the marketplace?
- How will this make a difference on campus in the long term?
- Which regional or global problems does this initiative solve?

Implementation Thresholds

- How much is this idea worth?
- Could this idea be funded through philanthropy or other outside sources?
- How will funding be sustained over time?
- How will the project use both existing and new resources on campus?

In addition to project descriptions, ask faculty members to link their individual projects to institutional strengths or areas that could become strengths. Additionally, faculty members should be able to provide information about how the project will be implemented and how new funding will be spent. This ensures that faculty connect the dots on projects before they receive funding and that projects are realistic and feasible.

Source: University of Oregon, Eugene, OR; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

A Big Ideas Information Hub

The best criteria and RFP are useless if faculty members do not know they exist. To start promoting the big ideas process across campus, create a website with the criteria and other critical information. At UC Davis, this site is hosted on the Development and Alumni Relations webpage. This was an intentional decision designed to build stronger relationships between advancement and the academic enterprise. Additionally, the website included an endorsement from the Chancellor, demonstrating that the process was an overarching priority on campus.

Dedicated Website Clarifies the Process

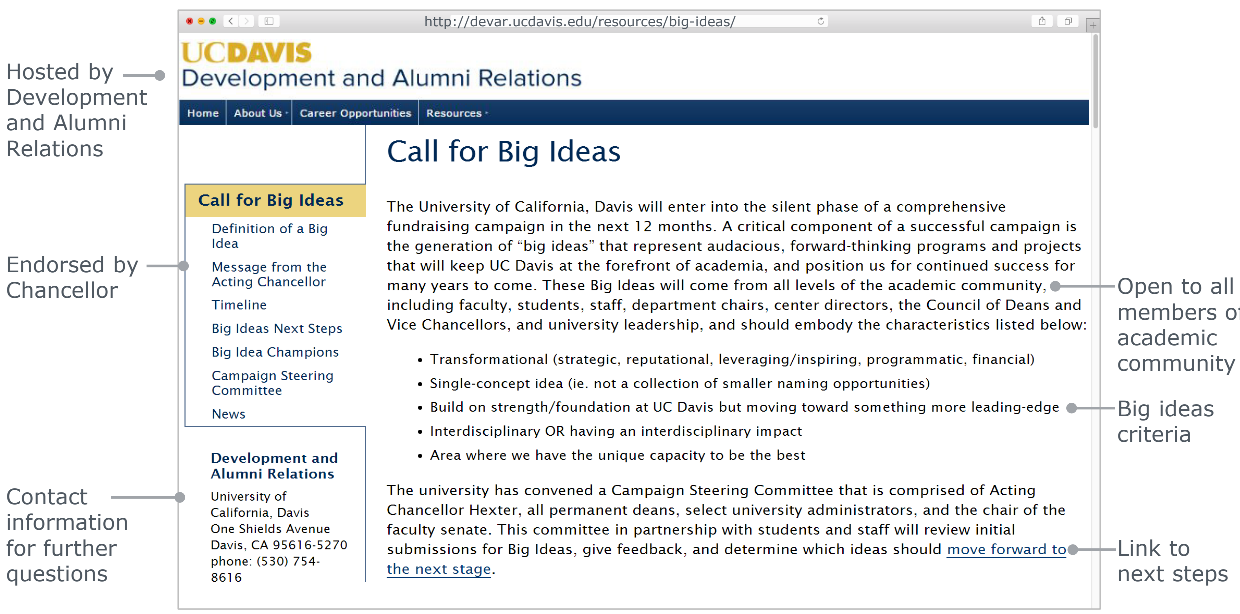


IMAGE CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS.

The site also featured details about who could participate, the steps in the idea selection process, and contact information for further details about the process. When creating your big ideas website, be sure to explain how ideas will be selected in order to build trust among skeptical faculty members. Additionally, providing contact information for further questions shows that advancement is open to working with faculty members and will allow faculty members to submit the best possible proposals.

Source: University of California, Davis, CA; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Extensive Communications Plan Leads to Success

In addition to creating a website, UC Davis engaged partners across campus to promote the process. Deans sent memos, communications staff created an e-news blast, and advancement staff worked with faculty across campus. At your institution, choose forms of communication that will reach everyone who can submit a big idea. A wide-ranging communications process ensures that faculty understand the potential benefits of the process and know how to participate. In addition to explaining the process itself, ensure that faculty understand how to submit their ideas for consideration.

No Form of Communication Left Untouched

- Dedicated Website
- Memos from Each Dean
- On-Demand Presentations
- Q&A and Feedback Sessions
- E-News Blast

"The process we executed has been fantastic for development and has had far-reaching benefits for the entire campus. Leadership is thrilled with what came of the process, because **it galvanized hundreds of faculty and staff around the idea of stopping, taking a deep breath, and really thinking about what we're good at,** where we can go big, and what will define us for the next 20 to 30 years."

Shaun Keister
Vice Chancellor, Development and Alumni Relations
University of California, Davis

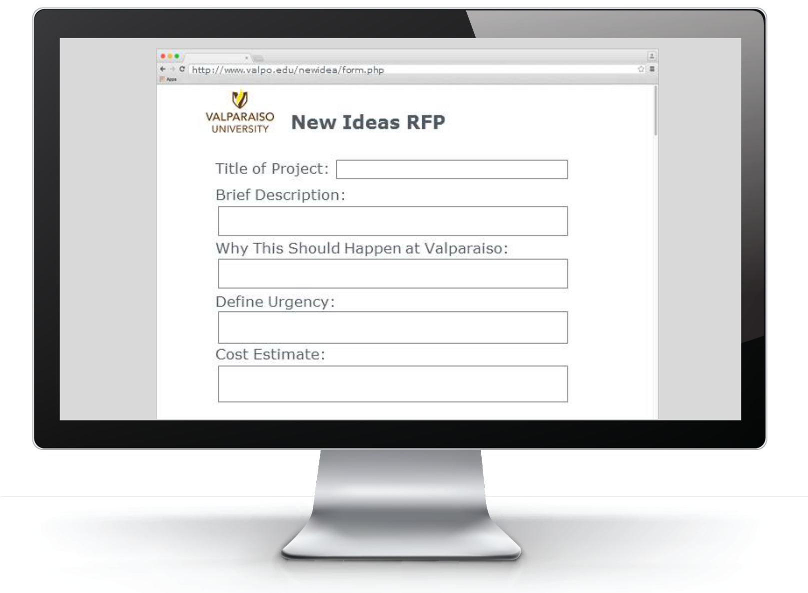
Source: University of California, Davis, CA; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Making Idea Submission Easy

Grounding Big Ideas in Reality

After publicizing the process, create an online submission form so faculty members and other constituents can submit their ideas over the course of the big ideas process. This form should include all of the questions included in the RFP and be as user friendly as possible. At Valparaiso University, the idea submission form is open to the public, so that all members of the campus community can submit ideas throughout the year, providing an ever-developing pipeline of new ideas.

Valparaiso University's Online Submission Form



Three Outcomes for Proposals

Rejected Outright
Proposals that do not meet the criteria are removed from further consideration

"Banked" for Future Consideration
Proposals are saved for re-evaluation at a later date

Moved to Proposal Stage
Chosen ideas are turned into full proposals that include budgets and implementation plans

As part of the online RFP, Valparaiso clarifies the possible outcomes for ideas, ensuring that participants across campus are aware that every idea cannot become a fundraising priority. This reduces disappointment while showing that advancement is committed to a clear communications pipeline.

Source: "What's Your New Idea?," Valparaiso University, http://www.valpo.edu/newidea/form.php; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Embedding Transparency in the Decision Process

Creating a Principled Scoring Process

Lines of communication shouldn't close after idea are submitted, and that includes sharing how ideas will be selected to become fundraising priorities. A transparent scoring system allows big ideas to be chosen while avoiding questions of bias and unfairness. At the College of Charleston, ideas were selected based on two phases of scoring. First, ideas had to meet baseline big ideas criteria—strategic plan alignment, disciplinary distinction, and need for philanthropy. The proposals that met all of the criteria were moved to the second scoring phase, when a weighted points system was used.

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

Big Ideas Criteria

- Aligned with the strategic plan
- High degree of distinction related to preeminence in select disciplines
- Required philanthropy to achieve excellence

80 Proposals met criteria and continued to scoring process

Big Ideas Scoring System

Transformative impact on campus	10
Meets an immediate need	8
Increases national acclaim	6
Creates pan-campus collaboration	4
Maximum score possible	28

During this second phase, each criterion was assigned a maximum number of points, and each member of the big ideas leadership committee gave a numerical score for each idea. This scoring took place during a group meeting, allowing for an open discussion of each proposal's merits.

Source: College of Charleston, Charleston, SC; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

An Objective and Inclusive Evaluation

Scorecards Indicate Best Idea Proposals

During this scoring meeting, every committee member assigned points to each idea. All of the points were added together to create a total score for each idea. A communications staff member projected an overall ranking in real-time so committee members could watch the highest-scoring ideas rise to the top. After the meeting, the top proposals were sent to the President for approval before becoming campaign priorities.

College of Charleston Sample Scorecard

Proposal	Campaign Bucket	Committee Members						Average Score
		Provost	VP Advancement	VP Business Affairs	VP Student Affairs	Chief of Staff	Director of Athletics	
Center for Southern Jewish Culture	Power of Place	14	16	16	14	24	16	16.7
Student Leadership Initiative	Student-Focused Community	20	14	18	20	18	24	19.0
Center for Livable Communities	Academic Excellence	9	12	9	8	7	13	9.7

Proposals from deans and faculty

Scores from committee members

Priorities sent to President for approval

30
Priorities sent to President

11
Commitments of at least $1M

$17M
Revenue from big ideas

When scoring your own big ideas, include a wide variety of institutional leaders on the committee. Create a clear set of weighted criteria before beginning, and ensure that everyone responsible for rating ideas understands them. Group similar proposals together, so that committee members can identify the strongest among them. Most importantly, follow up with everyone who submitted a proposal, including those who didn't make it past the first selection round, to build positive relationships for the future.

Source: College of Charleston, Charleston, SC; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Closing the Communication Loop

Following up with every big ideas participant is crucial to the success of the process. At UC Davis, the provost sent a thank-you note to every participant and development officers held one-on-one meetings with participants to share feedback. If faculty members asked, they could see numerical scores and qualitative feedback from the selection committee. This added value for faculty, who rarely receive comprehensive feedback for grant proposals. Faculty were also encouraged to edit their proposals and resubmit them in the future.

Follow-Up Process at University of California, Davis

Thank-You Notes	One-On-One Conversations	Release Scores and Comments	Faculty Engagement
Provost thanks each faculty member for participating	Unit development officers share feedback with faculty members	Faculty may request numerical scores and written commentary	Faculty feel included, better understand advancement's role, and are willing to participate again

Process Far Exceeds Expectations

40	196	46	10	$40M
Proposals expected	Proposals submitted	Proposals fully met criteria	Featured as campaign priorities	First gift from big ideas

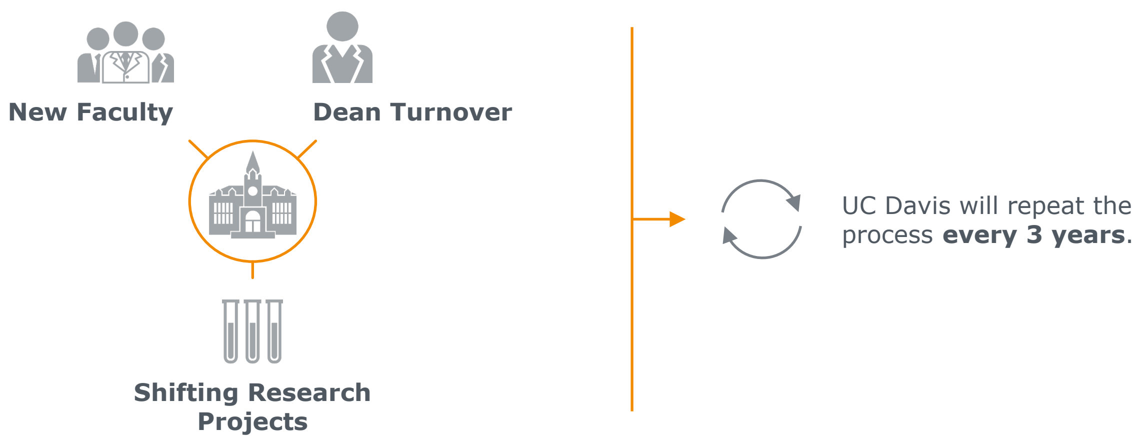
The big ideas process at UC Davis far exceeded advancement's expectations. Of the 196 proposals that were submitted, 46 fully met all of the criteria for big ideas and could have served as stand-alone campaign priorities. The projects that were not selected as campus-wide campaign priorities became unit priorities, or were shelved for potential donors who are interested in that specific research area. Faculty now have a positive perspective on working with advancement, which will make the process possible again in the future.

Source: University of California, Davis, CA; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Show Results and Repeat the Process

With positive results in mind, UC Davis plans on repeating the big ideas process every three years. Regardless of whether they are conducting a comprehensive campaign, the process uncovers faculty projects can drive the institution forward. Repeating a big ideas process ensures that any institution maintains a strong pipeline of ideas for donor investors, and the process will become easier as campus constituents recognize it over time and understand how they can and should participate.

Big Ideas Don't End at the Deadline



Uncovering Funding Priorities In and Out of Campaign

> "Big ideas aren't generated at once—they come and go, so you can't just do this and stop. **We'll do this even if we aren't in a campaign, because the process works so well.** Leadership sees ideas they haven't heard about before. They have a better sense of what faculty are passionate about, where the strengths are, or where some faculty have come together for the first time to create these ideas."

Shaun Keister
Vice Chancellor,
Development and Alumni Relations
University of California, Davis

Source: University of California, Davis, CA; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Key Takeaways and Tools

Sourcing Visionary Ideas

Spending six to nine months implementing a big ideas process is a large investment of time and intellectual capital across campus. However, it will pay dividends by ensuring that your institution has the big ideas that donor investors want to support while proactively building relationships with key faculty members. Following each step in the process can transform the search for fundraising priorities from a headache to a valuable asset to leaders across campus.

Key Takeaways

- Institutional leaders define what constitutes a big idea
- Design an RFP to include academic and philanthropic goals
- Widely promote the process
- Select ideas through a transparent, principled process
- Follow up with all participants to clarify next steps
- Repeat the process regularly

Resources Included

Ease implementation with:

- Digital Tools to Launch the Big Ideas Process
- Provost Discussion Guide
- Big Ideas Launch Guide
- RFP Template Elements
- Proposal Scoring Plan

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Digital Tools to Launch the Big Ideas Process

Customizable Deck and Scoring Guide

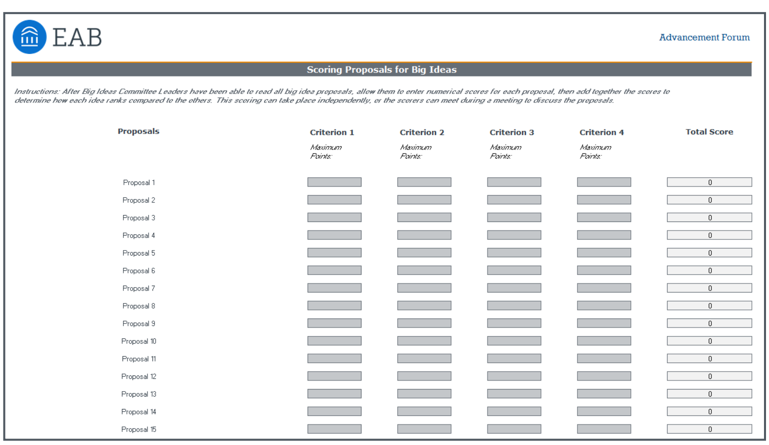
Engaging Campus Leaders in Thinking Big

The Advancement Forum has created customizable digital resources to assist members in leading a big ideas process with leaders from across campus. These resources can be edited to fit the big ideas process at your institution, and they can be distributed to members of the big ideas leadership committee as needed.

Big Ideas Kickoff Presentation

This PowerPoint features:

- Introductory material on the importance of big ideas and where campus leaders should engage in the process
- Interactive exercises to determine the criteria for a big idea
- Talking points for advancement staff leading the kickoff session



EAB Advancement Forum

Scoring Proposals for Big Ideas

Instructions: After Big Ideas Committee Leaders have been able to read all big idea proposals, allow them to enter numerical scores for each proposal, then add together the scores to determine how each idea ranks compared to the others. This scoring can take place independently, or the scorers can meet during a meeting to discuss the proposals.

Proposals	Criterion 1 *Maximum Points:*	Criterion 2 *Maximum Points:*	Criterion 3 *Maximum Points:*	Criterion 4 *Maximum Points:*	Total Score
Proposal 1					0
Proposal 2					0
Proposal 3					0
Proposal 4					0
Proposal 5					0
Proposal 6					0
Proposal 7					0
Proposal 8					0
Proposal 9					0
Proposal 10					0
Proposal 11					0
Proposal 12					0
Proposal 13					0
Proposal 14					0
Proposal 15					0

Proposal Scoring Sheet

This Excel sheet features:

- Space for big ideas leadership committee to enter scores for each big ideas proposal
- Automated total score calculation
- Customizable fields based on number of criteria and ideas submitted

Download the Big Ideas Kickoff Presentation and the Proposal Scoring sheet at **eab.com**

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Provost Discussion Guide

Introducing the Big Ideas Process to Senior Leadership

Instructions

Before launching a big ideas process on campus, meet with the provost to explain why the process is important, how it relates to other fundraising initiatives (like ongoing or upcoming campaigns), and why their engagement is crucial for success. Add additional conversation points as needed.

After explaining the process and its importance, conclude the meeting by determining who across campus should be on the big ideas leadership committee so that the process can begin as soon as possible.

Talking Points

1. Institutional Context
   - Where the institution stands in terms of strategic priorities and annual development goals
   - Current campaign status and future plans
   - Interests and expectations of principal and transformational gift donors and prospects
   - Importance of building relationships with faculty members and academic leaders

2. Introducing the Big Ideas Process
   - Why big ideas are important, and how current efforts to surface ideas may have fallen short
   - Benefits of implementing a process to surface ideas
   - Why now is the best time for the big ideas process
   - Overview of the process itself and estimated timelines

3. Key Questions to Get the Provost on Board
   - How can we work together to engage faculty members and other campus constituents in this process?
   - Do you have any concerns about implementing a process like this?
   - How can we ensure that advancement and the academy stay on the same page throughout the process?
   - How can we empower deans to promote this within their schools or colleges?

Selecting the Big Ideas Leadership Committee

Work with the provost to determine the campus leaders who will be responsible for guiding the big ideas process and selecting ideas to become fundraising priorities. Ensure that a variety of perspectives from across campus are represented. Select eight to ten of the following leaders to participate on the committee, or add additional individuals as desired.

Campus Leaders
- ❑ President
- ❑ Provost
- ❑ Chief Business Officer
- ❑ Vice President, Research
- ❑ Vice President, Student Affairs
- ❑ Director of Athletics

Unit Leaders
- ❑ Deans
- ❑ Multidisciplinary Program Leaders

Key Donors and Volunteers
- ❑ Campaign Steering Committee Members
- ❑ Trustees

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Big Ideas Launch Guide

Preparing and Leading the Kickoff Session

Instructions

Use the following tools to prepare and lead and kickoff session for the big ideas leadership committee. The session can also be led in partnership with the provost. Regardless of who leads the meeting itself, advancement leaders should work with the provost to ensure that the session meets academic and philanthropic goals.

Step 1: Schedule the Session

Choose a date for the session and reserve a room for two to three hours. Ensure that a computer and projector will be available during the session.

Step 2: Invite Attendees

Work via the provost to send an email to the members of the big ideas leadership committee (selected with the provost during the conversation to introduce the big ideas process). Use the following template or create your own to explain the session to attendees and communicate logistical details. Update the information in italics to reflect the planning process at your institution.

Dear Colleagues,

[*Insert provost's name here*] and I are beginning a new process to identify transformative ideas across campus to serve as fundraising priorities for the upcoming comprehensive campaign. We would like your assistance in designing the idea selection process and choosing the best proposals.

As a reminder, the goal of this process is to uncover groundbreaking multidisciplinary ideas and initiatives that are aligned with academic priorities and the strategic plan, can garner philanthropic support, and enable faculty, staff, and students to collaborate between divisions on campus. This program may also surface ideas that deans can use as fundraising priorities for their own schools or colleges.

In order to design a process that is both fair and transparent, we would like to invite you to serve on the big ideas leadership committee. This group of campus leaders will plan and execute the big ideas process. You will also be responsible for selecting the proposals that become campus-wide priorities for the advancement team.

The big ideas kickoff meeting will occur on [*date*] at [*location*].

The kickoff meeting will include:
- Explaining what constitutes a big idea
- Setting criteria for big ideas on our campus
- Determining how big ideas will be selected
- Planning next steps to start the process

This process would not be possible without support from across campus, and we appreciate your willingness to help us make this a success. Please confirm with me that you will be in attendance, or let me know if you cannot attend but would still like to participate in the process.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I will also be available throughout the big ideas process and look forward to working together.

Sincerely,

[*Your Name*] and [*Provost's Name*]

Source: Advancement Forum Interviews and Analysis.

Big Ideas Launch Guide (cont.)

Preparing and Leading the Kickoff Session

Step 3: Prepare for the Session

Before hosting the kickoff session, edit the agenda below as needed and assemble any additional materials. Ensure that the provost or president understands their important role in kicking off and concluding the session.

Big Ideas Kickoff Session Sample Agenda

I. Welcome and introduction: Provost or President

II. Introduction to big ideas: Chief Advancement Officer

- What is a big ideas process?
- Why are we conducting one at our institution?
- Roles and responsibilities of Big Ideas Leadership Committee members

III. Designing big ideas criteria for our institution: Chief Advancement Officer

- Interactive exercise: what is a big idea? what is not a big idea?
- Baseline criteria: what should *all* big ideas do?
- Selection criteria: what should *the best* big ideas do?

IV. Overview of the rest of the process: Chief Advancement Officer

- Timeline
- Selection process
- Responsibilities of advancement staff and committee members

V. Thank you and conclusion: Provost or President

Additional Materials:

- ❑ Big Ideas Kickoff Presentation (*available on eab.com)*
- ❑ Copy of agenda for each attendee
- ❑ Suggested timeline for big ideas process
- ❑ Whiteboard or flipchart
- ❑ Markers for whiteboard or flipchart

Step 4: Lead the Session

On the day of the kickoff session, ensure that attendees understand their role. Emphasize the importance of engaging partners across campus in order for the process to be successful. Be sure to follow up with each attendee to thank them for their time and restate expectations for their participation in the process.

Source: Advancement Forum Interviews and Analysis.

RFP Template Elements

Instructions

Use this template to create the RFP that will be distributed to big ideas process participants. Add or remove questions as necessary to ensure that faculty proposals provide all the required information to be scored based on your predetermined criteria for big ideas.

1. **Project Leadership**
   - Faculty members, their departments, and other constituents on campus involved in the proposal

2. **Big Idea**
   - Project Title
   - Project Description (250 words or less)
   - How does this project take advantage of current institutional strengths?
   - In what areas will this make our campus a national leader?

3. **Impact**
   - How will this project impact our campus? Why do we need this project here?
   - How will this project impact the local community or region?
   - How will this project solve large-scale societal or global issues? Why does the world need this project now?

4. **Resources**
   - What grants and funding have you already received towards this project?
   - How does this project harness preexisting resources on campus?
   - What additional resources do you need to solve the large-scale issues you described? Please include cost estimates for all elements of the project.

5. **Implementation and Sustainability**
   - How long will it take for you to make an impact locally or globally?
   - How will this project be sustainable for the next three to five years?
   - Will this project continue beyond three to five years? What additional impact will it have?

6. **Philanthropy**
   - Do you have any donors in mind for this project?
   - If you receive philanthropic funding, how would you communicate progress over time to the donor?

Download the RFP elements in an editable PowerPoint at **eab.com**

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Proposal Scoring Plan

Creating the Points System

Instructions

After the kickoff session, consider the criteria for big ideas proposed by the members of the leadership team. Follow the steps on this plan to determine the criteria that all big ideas should meet, and set a scoring plan for team members to use when ranking proposals.

1. **Baseline Criteria**
   Looking at the ideas proposed by the committee, what are three to four criteria that all proposals must meet in order to constitute big ideas?

2. **Selection Criteria.**
   Once ideas have met the baseline criteria, what are four to five criteria that will differentiate good ideas from the best ideas? Rank them from most important to least important.

Most Important

Least Important

3. **Scoring System**
   Assign point values to the selection criteria, with the highest value assigned to the most important item and the lowest point value assigned to the least important item. The total possible points should equal 100.

Selection Criteria	Points Assigned
Maximum Score	**100**

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Communicating the Impact of Big Ideas

SECTION

3

Transformational Donors Want to Make an Impact

Giving Linked to Clear Case and Measurable Outcomes

Merely having big ideas is not enough to attract donor investors to your institution. Unlike previous generations, donors between ages 35 and 65 are motivated by specific initiatives with a clear case for support. They only give where a gift will have an impact on universal issues or causes with measurable results. Institutions and organizations need to prove that they are best-positioned to make an impact, and higher education is not immune to this trend.

Giving Preferences of Donors Age 35-65

- Specific initiatives
- Clear case
- Measurable results
- Best to address issue

"Middle-aged donors are impressed when their giving is tied to specific initiatives that produce measurable results, and when fundraisers communicate those results based on information in a compelling fashion."

A Trend Increasingly Seen in Higher Education

"The higher education sub sector has seen a significant change within the context of philanthropy, one that I've witnessed first-hand. **As faculty members, we were once insulated from showing impact and reporting data**. **That is no longer the case**… we're being asked by funders and donors to share more than ever before, and we are holding ourselves to a higher standard in demonstrating the impact of our work."

Una Osili, Ph.D.
Director of Research,
Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

While donors in the past assumed that colleges and universities were the best places to address global issues, today's donors are willing to consider a wide range of organizations before making a gift. As a result, it is increasingly important that stakeholders across campus, not just advancement staff, are prepared to present information about their projects and share impact data with donors.

Source: Burk P, "The Cygnus Donor Survey 2012: Where Philanthropy is Headed in 2012," Cygnus Applied Research, Inc., June 2012; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Faculty Critical for Identifying Impact

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles Are Not for Donors

Faculty members are driven by their research. They ask critical questions, generate data to find the answers, and publish the results in academic journals. This leads to a deep understanding of the research's impact, and faculty can speak about it more compellingly than anyone else. However, asking faculty describe how a project is having impact before it is finished can be challenging because they are afraid of putting their credibility on the line.

Unique Attributes of Big Idea Faculty

Expertise
Specialized knowledge and training about a specific discipline or issue

Data
Qualitative and quantitative information about research and results

Narratives
Passionate, compelling stories about why the research matters

Burden of Scholarly Impact Often Impedes Easy Data Extraction

"In marketing speak, you take liberties that might not be fully substantiated. But the academic side wants to be accurate and fully explain everything."

Vice Chancellor, University Relations
Public Research Institution

"Their credibility is on the line, and they worry about what other academics will say, which sometimes prevents them from telling a good story, or adds tension to the process."

Associate Vice President for Development,
Private Research Institution

Because they are used to conducting an experiment, analyzing the results, and then reporting on the impact, faculty are often unwilling to make assumptions that could be called into question later by their academic peers. In many cases, advancement has a crucial role to play in highlighting how discussing impact for donors doesn't carry the same risks as submitting a less-than-perfect article to an academic review.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

“Impact” Is a Flexible Term

No Standard Definition or Expectation

The good news for both faculty and advancement staff is that, as far as the donor investor is concerned, there is no single definition of impact. Frequently, donors are more focused on progress and project sustainability over time than the statistical significance of an experiment’s outcome. Donors want to know about two types of impact—impact on the issue, and impact the organization has. While advancement staff can highlight the impact of an entire college or university, only faculty are positioned to discuss the impact of their work on specific issue sets.

Multiple Indicators of Impact

Issue-Specific Impact

78%

Of donors seek information about long-term benefits to society from addressing or resolving issues

Organization-Specific Impact

75%

Of donors seek information about the impact of an organization

Issue-Specific Impact	Organization-Specific Impact
Overall issue size and scope	Specific issue subset addressed
All populations affected	Geographic area and population served
Innovative solutions developed	Projects to be funded through philanthropy

Source: “Research-Informed Philanthropy: Donor Behavior in Seeding and Using Information,” http://www.rootcause.org/docs/Blog/Informed_Giving_Full_Report.pdf; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Helping Faculty Link Work to Societal Issues

Jump Start Outside-of-the-Lab Thinking

Despite the flexibility in the definition of impact, faculty often struggle to link their work to the global issues that donors want to solve. Academic culture rewards highly specific projects with small-scale impact that is widely tested before being shared with the public. Plus, academic audiences often inherently understand all of the issue sets touched by their projects. When thinking about donors, faculty members need to explain the links between their work and the issues it helps solve, instead of assuming that those links are already understood.

Appreciating Innovation Anywhere

"Anybody with significant means anywhere in the country will have **a national, if not a global mindset** of how they think the world is moving, and what the innovations are. They will appreciate innovation anywhere and investments for their own communities or the world to continue to thrive."

Amir Pasic
Dean, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

From the Lab to the Global Stage

Faculty Research

Behavior, senescence, parasitology, predation, and conservation of Malagasy lemurs

Local Area Affected

Ranomafana National Park, Madagascar

Societal Issue Set

Climate change, public health, conservation

Impact to Scale

Local, regional, and global spheres of impact over time

Since donors are willing to support innovation at any organization, we need to ensure that projects are framed by the national or global issues they solve. As one institution showed through a donor-funded lemur research project, this is often merely a matter of getting faculty to explain how their projects fit into the global research landscape.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Treating Faculty Like Donors

Discovery Visits with Faculty Provide More Intel on the Project

To get faculty thinking in terms of impact, advancement needs to take the lead. We need to start by treating faculty members like donors, and this is especially critical after the best proposals from a big ideas process have been selected. Even if a formal big ideas process has not been conducted, this remains a critical step in engaging faculty with advancement to meet donor expectations. Before asking a donor to make a gift, a development officer will conduct a discovery visit to pinpoint their interests, and working with faculty should start in the same way.

Set context and establish expertise

- Background and previous research
- Current role at institution
- Upcoming research initiatives

Describe the project and its relevance

- 30-second "elevator pitch" for initiative
- Most exciting aspects
- Distinguishing features from other programs

Communicate impact and urgency

- How institution is well positioned for project
- Benefits to campus, region, and world
- Value of philanthropy and other funding sources

Consider potential roadblocks or delays

- Emphasis on predicted challenges, not visionary thinking
- Project plans as a "laundry list" of needs

A faculty discovery visit provides an opportunity to gain critical insight into the project itself and the person behind its success. To ensure the visit is a success, start by asking about the project leader's motivation and reasons for conducting the project, then ask questions about the project itself. After understanding enough about the project (and its potential impact) to be able to describe it to a donor, think about why the project merits philanthropic funding. Finally, be sure to discuss potential roadblocks, so there are no surprises for donors or advancement staff in the future. All together, the information from the faculty discovery visit will be crucial for telling a compelling story to donors.

Source: Philanthropy Leadership Council, "Narrative Preparation Guide," *Resources for Charting Philanthropy's Path to 2020*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2013, 3; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Capture Details to Create the Proposal

Using a Storytelling Framework to Start the Conversation

Before donors can hear a compelling pitch, faculty members need to know that they have a story worth telling. Use a storytelling framework to guide the discovery conversation and build a case for support that will appeal to the donor investor. This conversation guide, inspired by Annette Simmons' *Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins*, can be used by development officers to build relationships with faculty at the start of a project or before looking for a lead donor. To keep the conversation low stakes and high value for all, make it as easy as possible for the faculty member to attend.

Get to Know Their Passions and Help Build the Project Narrative

1. Who are you?
2. What do you do?
3. What are your passions?

Building faculty narrative and confidence (questions 1–3)

4. How does it impact the campus, region, or world?
5. Why does it matter in this time and place?

Providing information for advancement to create a compelling case for donors (questions 1–5)

Faculty Discovery Visit Logistics

- Lasts 30-45 minutes
- Occurs in their office or lab
- Conducted by a gift officer or communications staff

Source: Simmons A, *Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins: How to Use Your Own Stories to Communicate with Power and Impact*, New York: AMACOM, 2007; Philanthropy Leadership Council, "Story Building Framework for Prospect Conversations," *Philanthropy-Physician Partnership Toolkit*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2013, 71; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Framing Projects in a More Appealing Light

Helping Faculty Translate the RFP into Donor Investor Terms

Outside of an in-person conversation, a written proposal is often the only way that advancement staff learn about faculty projects. However, these descriptions are often incomprehensible to non-experts (like the “Program Overview” below). While traditional proposals may describe everything that another academic would want to know, they do not satisfy a donor investor’s information needs. Successful discovery visits and follow-up conversations enable advancement to curate clearer, donor-friendly value statements that highlight how the project can have a unique impact.

Original “Program Overview”

“The program will successfully link concerns over access, diversity, and equity in the United States with a **hemispheric model** of internationalization. We will champion **new paradigms** to offer responses to this challenge that understand US socio-economic and political processes within larger global and hemispheric contexts. This proposal includes **new classes and research agendas, multilingual classrooms, a strategic cluster hire, and an endowed chair**.”

Revised “Value Statement”

“We will **take the lead** in studying the **impact** of internationalization and respond to the **challenges** it presents on a local, regional, and global scale. We will answer questions about access, diversity, and equity through innovative teaching and research, fostering **collaboration among experts** and building a dialogue that is **unique to our institution**.”

Key Language Elements

- ☑ Minimize academic jargon
- ☑ Clearly focus on short-term outcomes and long-term impact
- ☑ Highlight how this institution is uniquely positioned to have an impact

If faculty members struggle to move beyond scientific jargon, ask them to explain their ideas as if they were speaking to a non-expert. Asking “how would you explain this project to your grandmother?” encourages academic leaders to think about how a non-expert hears and understands their description, without adding the pressure of addressing a potential donor.

Source: Philanthropy Leadership Council, *Fulfilling the Donor Investor Mandate*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2014, 28; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Communicating in Their Terms

To help faculty members understand what resonates with donors, share terms that donor investors often use to discuss their own interests and philanthropy. These phrases can be used in faculty conversations and when translating from faculty proposals to donor-facing collateral. Showing academic partners the language used by a donor audience can help explain that a proposal isn't weak, but that it may not appeal to its target audience merely because it uses the wrong terms. This helps continue the conversation in the language that encourages donors to invest.

Value Category	Sample Terms and Phrases for Donor Investors
Innovation	Academic and translational research leader, innovation incubator, technology pioneer, entrepreneurship center
Competitive Advantage	Attract and retain top talent, improve access to higher education, become the leader in the field, maintain a tradition of excellence
Research Outcomes	Solve global problems, answer societal questions, translate data into impact
Impact	Improvement over time, catalyst for change, local community, regional development, global shift
Financial Performance	Sustainable initiatives, efficient management, seed funding, institutional investments
Recognition	National rankings, faculty awards, public reputation, competitive research grants and fellowships
Progress	Time to reach goal, key milestones, new or additional investment, seed funding
Community Value	Impact on the local community, reach underserved populations, student engagement

Source: Philanthropy Leadership Council, *Fulfilling the Donor Investor Mandate*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2014, 28; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Setting Expectations Up Front

Using Impact Worksheets to Plan for Stewardship

Since donors are flexible in how impact is defined (as long as it is explained in terms they understand), advancement has the opportunity to work with faculty to set expectations for how impact will be shared over time. This can be as simple as a lab visit to see new equipment, or a classroom observation to watch new teaching methods at work. An impact reporting worksheet creates a shared set of expectations among faculty members, advancement staff, and the donor.

Cincinnati Children's

A Tool to Set Expectations for Faculty (and Donors)

Discovery Visit

Use visit to determine next steps

- Define "success"
- Identify crucial project milestones
- Consider potential roadblocks

Create Impact Reporting Worksheet

Sets path for stewardship with Impact Reporting Worksheet

- Create donor engagement and reporting plan
- Set faculty expectations for participating in stewardship
- Determine data to be shared during project

Implement Impact Worksheet

Check in with faculty to gain data for impact reporting

- Impact worksheet sets schedule for check-ins
- Stewardship meets donor expectations
- Plans in place for roadblocks or delays

The worksheet defines how impact will be measured for a specific project, and provides a clear timeline for when impact will be reported. As a result, faculty members understand how and when they are expected to help steward a gift, while donors are prepared for what information they will receive. Regardless of how many donors support a project, faculty members only have to complete the worksheet once per reporting timeframe, eliminating redundancies.

Source: Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH; Philanthropy Leadership Council, *Fulfilling the Donor Investor Mandate*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2014, 40; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Tell Them Exactly What You Need

Worksheets Simplify, Standardize Process for Big Ideas Faculty

When designing the impact reporting worksheet, keep in mind what will be meaningful to a donor and what will be feasible for faculty members to complete in a short amount of time. Set a reporting schedule to which faculty members can adhere, and ensure that the questions on the worksheet are adapted for the specific project. This enables advancement staff to create customized impact reports for donors without requiring substantial follow-up conversations with faculty members every time an impact report is due.

Cincinnati Children's

Impact Information Worksheet

1. What is your progress on the milestones agreed upon initial receipt of funding?
2. How are you tracking towards desired project outcomes?
3. Do you have an example of an impact story from this project?
4. What could philanthropy enable you to do next?

Download a template to create customized donor impact reports at **eab.com**

Key Considerations

- Refer to case proposals for metrics and milestones that faculty agreed to track
- Development staff pre-populate worksheet with milestones
- Request anecdotes, photos, and charts to add color to impact communications
- Ask for information about future opportunities for reinvestment
- Provide faculty sufficient time to complete worksheets
- Share worksheet via email or in a live conversation with faculty

Source: Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH; Philanthropy Leadership Council, *Fulfilling the Donor Investor Mandate*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2014, 39; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Show How the Funds Will Be Used

Building a Donor-Friendly Project Budget

Impact can be a flexible, but spending donor funds is not. When making a gift, donor investors want to know how their funds will be spent. Asking faculty to create an upfront budget estimate for projects to ensures that they are committed to undertaking the work and have thoroughly considered their needs. At Riva Ridge University, advancement staff used this process to determine whether projects were on solid footing—if faculty members could not complete a budget, the project was probably not ready for donor funding.

At Riva Ridge University,[1] Faculty Determine Project Details

"Things have to be faculty driven. It's been a process of **educating faculty about practical considerations** of what the plan looks like. **They're the ones who are going to have to sustain it**. If faculty aren't committed to a project, there's no way a project would be sustainable over the long term… They have to connect all of the dots before we can have bigger strategic conversations or get donors involved.

Executive Director of Development
Riva Ridge University

Elements of a Project Budget

Faculty Cost Estimate
Faculty create budgets with projected expenses for new initiatives

Institutional Investment Projection
Chief Financial Officer determines institutional funding for new initiatives

Impact Over Time
Pro forma shows long-term impact of philanthropic and institutional investments

Showing Impact of Funding
Project proposal includes overview of funding sources and sustainability over time

Creating a budget also helps faculty to think beyond the traditional fiscal year, since a donor is likely to make a multiyear commitment to the project. Furthermore, the estimates are useful for chief financial officers, deans, and department chairs, since some projects may merit funding from the institution so that they can begin before a donor is found. Additionally, many donors want to see institutional investment in a project before making a gift, and a project budget can show how much seed funding has already been contributed. Finally, showing donors the numbers can help make the case for a larger-than-planned gift.

1) Pseudonym for a private master's institution.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Modeling Gift Impact

Donors Receive Individualized, Simplified Five-Year Pro Forma

To get donors at Riva Ridge University to think about making larger gifts, advancement staff show them how gifts of various sizes could different levels of impact on campus. A project-specific *pro forma* shows donors the potential impact of their gift over time based on data from the project proposal and budget. The document is assembled with assistance from financial planners, who estimate future costs, and the chief business officer, who provides information about what the university will be able to invest.

Pro Forma Models Gift Outcomes and Investments

Entrepreneurship Center: No Philanthropic Support

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Student Fellowships	5	5	6	7	8
Business Seed Funding	$4,000	$4,080	$4,160	$4,250	$4,300
Cost to Institution	$500,000	$100,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000

Entrepreneurship Center: $5M Philanthropic Support

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Student Fellowships	5	10	12	14	17
Business Seed Funding	$10,000	$10,200	$10,400	$10,600	$10,800
Cost to Institution	$0	$0	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000

Entrepreneurship Center: $10M Philanthropic Support

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Student Fellowships	10	20	24	28	33
Business Seed Funding	$15,000	$15,300	$15,600	$16,000	$16,300
Cost to Institution	$0	$0	$0	$15,000	$15,000

Critical Components to Model Gift Outcomes

- Proposal and project budget from academic partners
- Financial data from CBO or investment manager
- Financial model to predict future costs and returns based on gift size
- Estimated project investment from the institution
- Size of potential gift from prospective donor

Shows increased impact and reduced cost to institution for largest gifts

This proves to the most skeptical of donors that the institution is invested in the project's success, and that it will be sustainable over time. Showing the different levels of impact that are possible is often the best way to convince a donor to give a larger current use gift than they had previously considered.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Pulling It All Together

Even the best ideas will not appeal to donors if they are not accompanied by a clear case for support. This requires combining information from faculty members stated in terms donors will understand, with a preview of impact reporting and a clear view of how funds will be spent. Instead of merely assembling the core elements, the University of Washington customizes proposals based on the questions that donors are likely to ask before making a gift. Answering these questions in the proposal allows the donor to engage more deeply with the project earlier in the gift process.

Working with Faculty to Build Better Proposals

- Details from faculty discovery visit
- Terms translated for the donor investor
- Prewired milestones for impact reporting
- Transparent project budgets and financial estimates

Clear case for investment

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Proposal Elements Anticipate Donor Questions

Mission and Purpose

- What problem are you trying to solve?
- How is your unit uniquely qualified to tackle this problem?

Goals

- What action will you take?
- How will you measure success?

Fundraising Plan

- What will the gift fund?
- How will the donor's gift shape the outcome?

Impact

- What will be the benefits of your action?
- Why is this now a pressing need?

Source: Philanthropy Leadership Council, *Fulfilling the Donor Investor Mandate*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2014, 25-42; "Case for Support," University Advancement, University of Washington, http://depts.washington.edu/uwadv/central-resources/comm/case-for-support/; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Staffing for Success

Gift officers are often responsible for making an idea sound as exciting on paper as it does in person. However, they frequently struggle to conduct the necessary research, create attractive collateral, and estimate gift impact up front. To move beyond this challenge, cases can be created based on one of two staffing models—assignment to existing staff, or hiring professional writers. When proposals are assigned to existing staff, they become an opportunity to improve written communication skills and rethink how to highlight the impact of big ideas.

Where Gift Officers Currently Struggle

- Quantifying and demonstrating gift impact
- Using background research to surface data and stories
- Crafting compelling collateral to engage donors
- Evaluating impact of specific gifts to promote stewardship

Two Alternative Staffing Models

1

Assign to Existing Staff

Existing staff upskilled to create donor-facing cases

- Cost-effective
- Opportunity for professional development

Consider assigning creation to:

- Major gift officers
- Marketing and communications staff
- Unit Liaisons

2

Hire Additional Staff

Staff hired to craft the case for big ideas

- Consistent voice across collateral
- Written communications skills already strong

UC DAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Case exemplar:

- Three dedicated FTEs create all case statements and proposals
- One FTE added to support big ideas process

This can serve as a useful professional development opportunity for staff seeking stretch roles, and ensures that proposals are customized for the donor by the fundraisers who know them best. Hiring dedicated writers ensures that all collateral uses the same voice and style. UC Davis, for example, has three proposal writers, one of whom was added to support the big ideas process. Regardless of the staffing model chosen, donor-facing cases for support should include all of the details that will convince a donor to give with an emphasis on impact and sustainability over time.

Source: University of California, Davis, CA; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Communicating the Impact of Big Ideas

Discussing impact with donors should not be frightening, challenging, or a distraction from other development work. Meeting faculty early in the process, encouraging them to share their stories, and collaborating to decide how impact will be reported guarantees that there will be no surprises later for faculty, donors, or advancement staff. Furthermore, adding impact data to the case for investment can convince skeptical donors that higher education merits their gift. Bringing the pieces together creates a case for support that builds trust with faculty members and excites donors at the top.

Key Takeaways

- Discover faculty passions through discovery visits
- Translate big ideas into donor-friendly terms
- Prewire impact reporting by agreeing on milestones
- Show donors the impact of their gift
- Create a clear, concise case for investment

Resources Included

Ease implementation with:

- Faculty Project Budget Worksheet
- Faculty Discovery Visit Conversation Guide
- Donor-Friendly Narrative Evaluation
- Impact Reporting Worksheet Template
- Impact Milestone and Metrics Discussion Guide
- Impact Reporting Tracker
- Project Pro Forma Template
- Customizable Impact Report Template

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Faculty Project Budget Worksheet

Instructions

Faculty members should complete a budget for their project before a faculty discovery visit takes place. This budget can also be used when faculty members approach advancement with an idea in need of funding. If they cannot complete a clear budget, the project is not sufficiently-developed for donors.

Project Information

1. Project title: ___________________________________ Department: _________________________________
2. Faculty and staff involved:
   ____
   ____
3. Brief description of the project or problem being solved:
   ____
   ____
   ____

Estimated Budget

Include additional staff lines, travel costs, equipment, and any other items necessary for the project's success.

Item	Unit Cost	Units Needed	Total Cost
		Total Cost Estimate:	

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Faculty Discovery Visit Conversation Guide

Instructions

Use this guide to learn the most important details about a faculty member and their research projects during a discovery visit. Be sure to document their answers to the questions to that other advancement staff can benefit from the conversation.

Understanding the Project

Set context and establish expertise:

1. What is your role at the institution? What is your background?
2. Tell me about your current research and upcoming potential projects.

Describe the project:

3. What is the 30-second "elevator pitch" for what this project entails?
4. What are the most exciting parts of this project to you?
5. What items in the budget are most crucial? What items are nice-to-have but not need-to-have?

Communicate the project's potential impact:

6. How will this project impact our campus and local community?
7. How will this project benefit other regions and/or the world?
8. How will this project contribute to solutions to global problems or issues?

Communicate urgency and relevance:

9. Why is it important that philanthropy helps to support this project? What value can philanthropy add?
10. What other sources of funding will be available to support this project?
11. Why is our institution best positioned to lead this effort or take on this project? How will this project distinguish our institution over time?
12. What is unique about this project that will distinguish it from other efforts in this field?

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

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?

Source: Philanthropy Leadership Council, "Ally Storytelling Guide," *Resources for Charting Philanthropy's Path to 2020*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2013, 3; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Impact Reporting Worksheet Template

Instructions

Send this worksheet to academic partners before key donor reporting milestones. Development staff should complete the background information and allow adequate time for the faculty member to complete the form and send it back, so that advancement staff can review it for excess jargon, spelling or grammatical errors, and incomplete sections. Use the information to create donor-facing impact reports. Feel free to modify questions to fit each project or a donor's expectations for reporting.

Impact Report for [*Project Name*]

Background Information (to be completed by development staff)

Department and unit: ______________________________

Gift recipient(s): ______________________________

Gift receipt date: ______________ Impact report due date: ______________

Total gift amount: ______________ Remaining balance: ______________

Overview of Project Progress (to be completed by academic partner)

1. What is your progress on the milestones and/or impact metrics agreed upon with development staff and/or the donors to this project?

   ____
   ____
   ____

2. How are you progressing towards desired outcomes of this project? (check one)

   ❑ On track ❑ Behind schedule ❑ Ahead of schedule

3. If you checked "behind schedule," please provide more details:

   ____
   ____
   ____

4. What were your top three purchases with the philanthropy dollars raised for this project?

   1. ______________________________
   2. ______________________________
   3. ______________________________

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Impact Reporting Worksheet Template (cont.)

Project Impact (to be completed by academic partner)

1. Do you have a story of how campus, the community, or the world has benefited or will benefit from this project? Please also attach photographs, quotes, or other anecdotes as appropriate.

    ____
    ____
    ____

2. Do you have any data that we may use in the impact report (graphs, charts, etc.)? If yes, please attach them here.

    ____
    ____
    ____

Future Plans (to be completed by academic partner)

1. If there are still philanthropy dollars available, how are you planning to spend them? What are your top expected purchases?

    ____
    ____
    ____

2. If there are no funds left, what would additional philanthropic funding enable you to do?

    ____
    ____
    ____

3. What challenges or opportunities do you see on the horizon for this field? What are your next expected projects?

    ____
    ____
    ____

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Impact Milestone and Metrics Discussion Guide

Instructions

Once a donor has been identified or a big idea is selected, work with academic partners to determine how impact can be reported, and when it should be communicated to donors. Ensure that the schedule includes milestones that will be most salient to donors, but will be manageable for academic partners.

Impact Discussion Questions

Defining Impact

1. How do you define "success" for this project?
2. How will you measure progress toward success?
3. After receiving funding, how long will it take for the project to start?
4. What is your predicted project timeline? What steps will you undertake to conduct the project?

Reporting to Donors

5. How often will there be progress that can be reported to donors?
6. Ideally, at what points on your predicted timeline would you report impact?
7. What stories, data, images, or other forms of information will you be able to share?
8. Are you willing to meet donors in-person during the project? At what points would an in-person meeting make sense?
9. Who else is working on the project? Can the development team contact them with impact reporting questions?

Managing Setbacks

10. What setbacks are most likely to occur?
11. How will you communicate setbacks or roadblocks to the advancement team?
12. If the project is not successful, how can we work together to communicate with a donor?

Checklist for Metrics

Ensure that impact metrics meet the following criteria before finishing the discussion.

- ❑ Accessible: can be collected, calculated, and reported easily
- ❑ Aligned: reflect institutional priorities and strategic goals
- ❑ Relevant: demonstrate impact of philanthropic support
- ❑ Easily communicated: convey impact in layman's terms
- ❑ Worthy: resonate with donors and their desired impact

Source: Philanthropy Leadership Council, "Metric Selection Checklist," *Fulfilling the Donor Investor Mandate*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2014; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Impact Reporting Tracker

Instructions

Use this worksheet to ensure that impact is reported to donors at agreed-upon project milestones. Advancement staff should fill in milestones and dates as soon as a gift is made (or even beforehand) and send a copy of the reporting schedule to gift recipients. Proactively remind academic partners when reporting milestones are approaching, and mark when reports have been sent to keep the tracker up to date.

Impact Reporting Schedule for [*Donor Name*]

Background Information

Project name: ____

Department and unit: ____

Gift recipient(s): ____

Impact Reporting Milestones

Milestone	Faculty Impact Worksheet Due	Status	Send Donor Impact Report	Status
Ex: Project kickoff	*Sept. 10*	✓ Received	*Sept. 20*	✓ Sent
		❑ Received		❑ Sent
		❑ Received		❑ Sent
		❑ Received		❑ Sent
		❑ Received		❑ Sent
		❑ Received		❑ Sent
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		❑ Received		❑ Sent
		❑ Received		❑ Sent

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Project Pro Forma Template

Instructions

Use this template to show a donor how a larger gift could have substantially larger impact over time. To show as full a picture of impact as possible, include multiple measures of impact, and multiple potential gift sizes (starting with the gift they are expected to give, and rising from there). Use data from the project budget, and work with your CBO or financial manager to estimate future returns.

Potential Gift 1: [*Insert gift amount here]*

Measure of Impact	Year 1	Year 3	Year 5	Year 10

Potential Gift 2: [*Insert gift amount here]*

Measure of Impact	Year 1	Year 3	Year 5	Year 10

Potential Gift 3: [*Insert gift amount here]*

Measure of Impact	Year 1	Year 3	Year 5	Year 10

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

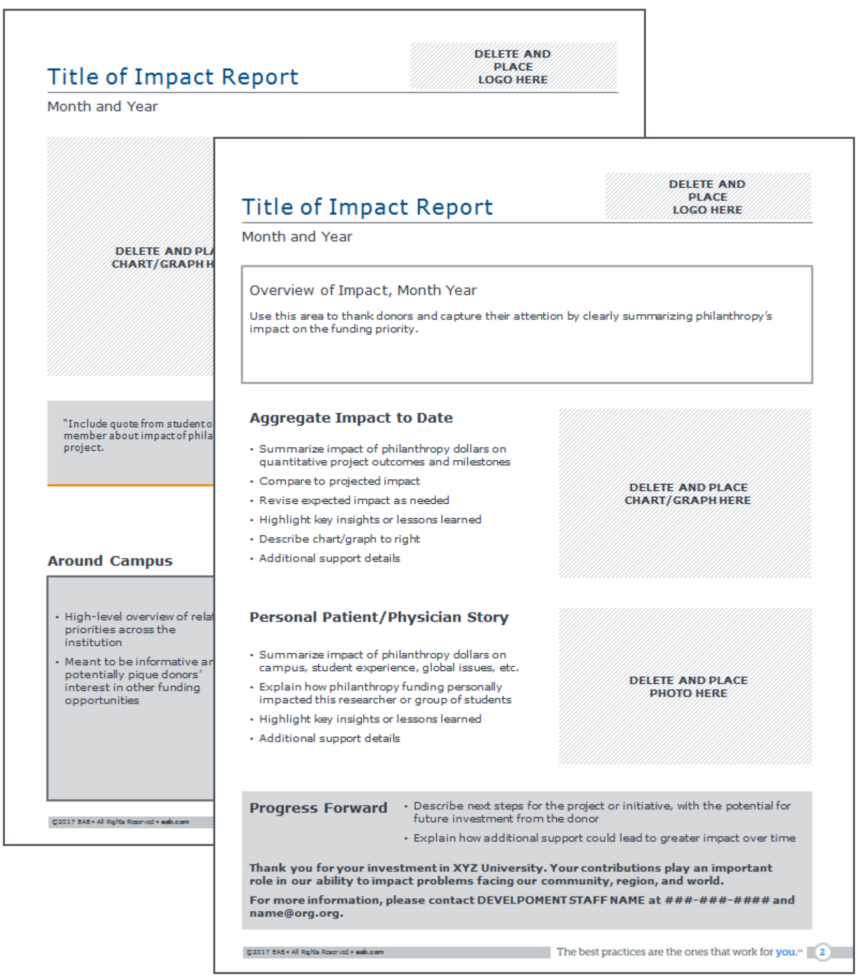
Customizable Impact Report Template

Customizable Impact Report Template in Brief

Instructions: Download and edit the Customizable Impact Report Template when creating impact reports for individual donors. Create one impact report for any given project, priority, or initiative. Then, customize the information to appeal to the specific donors who have supported that area.

Impact reports can be created by major gift officers, donor relations staff, or proposal writers. Regardless of who creates the report, it should include the contact information for a donor's main point of contact on campus. Updated reports should be sent on a regular basis to keep donors informed about project progress, ongoing impact, and how their philanthropic investments have made a difference.

Note: Impact reports should reflect the qualitative and quantitative data that will meet individual donors' expectations. Add or subtract elements as necessary to make the impact report a clear, compelling case for additional philanthropic investments in the project or institution at large.



Title of Impact Report

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Month and Year

Overview of Impact, Month Year

Use this area to thank donors and capture their attention by clearly summarizing philanthropy's impact on the funding priority.

Aggregate Impact to Date

- Summarize impact of philanthropy dollars on quantitative project outcomes and milestones
- Compare to projected impact
- Revise expected impact as needed
- Highlight key insights or lessons learned
- Describe chart/graph to right
- Additional support details

DELETE AND PLACE CHART/GRAPH HERE

Personal Patient/Physician Story

- Summarize impact of philanthropy dollars on campus, student experience, global issues, etc.
- Explain how philanthropy funding personally impacted this researcher or group of students
- Highlight key insights or lessons learned
- Additional support details

DELETE AND PLACE PHOTO HERE

Progress Forward

- Describe next steps for the project or initiative, with the potential for future investment from the donor
- Explain how additional support could lead to greater impact over time

Thank you for your investment in XYZ University. Your contributions play an important role in our ability to impact problems facing our community, region, and world.

For more information, please contact DEVELPOMENT STAFF NAME at ###-###-#### and name@org.org.

The best practices are the ones that work for you.

Download the Customizable Impact Report Template at **eab.com**

Source: Philanthropy Leadership Council, *Fulfilling the Donor Investor Mandate*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2014, 40; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

EAB

Perfecting the Pitch

SECTION 4

Donors Want to Be a Part of Problem Solving

Engaging with People Doing the Work

While big ideas and global impact may draw a donor's attention to higher education, donor investors want to engage more deeply with an organization before making an investment in a project. They seek to learn from people doing the work, contribute their own talents to solving problems, and build close relationships with the institution. While advancement staff can facilitate these connections, donors do not only want to make friends in the development office. The only way to build enthusiasm for faculty projects is to hear them described by the experts who will be leading them.

Opportunities to Listen and Learn

- Better understanding of the cause or institution
- Knowledge of what is missing from the current landscape
- Stories of impact

Occasions to Lend Personal or Professional Talents

- Move projects forward or increase impact
- Hands-on, individualized engagements
- Value-add for both the donor and the institution

Close Relationships with Institutions or Causes

- Trust in leadership across the institution
- Long-standing interest in a specific cause
- Multiple relationships to maintain stability over time

> "Giving without significant, hands-on engagement feels to them like a hollow investment with little assurance of impact"
>
> *Sharna Goldseker and Michael Moody*
> *Editors, "#NextGenDonors: Respecting Legacy, Revolutionizing Philanthropy"*

> "Nothing is more exciting—or more informative—than sitting down face-to-face with the people in charge."
>
> *Carrie Morgridge*
> *Vice President, Morgridge Family Foundation*
> *Author,* Every Gift Matters: How Your Passion Can Change the World

Source: Morgridge C, *Every Gift Matters: How Your Passion Can Change the World*, Austin: Greenleaf Book Group, 2015, 85; Johnson Center for Philanthropy, 21/64, "#NextGenDonors: Respecting Legacy, Revolutionizing Philanthropy," 2013, 5, www.nextgendonors.org/wp-nextgendonors/wp-content/uploads/next-gen-donor-reportupdated.pdf; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Faculty Uniquely Positioned to Meet This Need

The Thought Leaders with Whom Donors Want to Interact

On every college and university campus, there is no shortage of subject matter experts conducting innovative projects who can engage with donors. Plus, the skill set required to engage with a donor is already part of the toolkit that academic leaders bring to their work every day. This enables faculty members to have the high-level conversations that move the gift process forward. Donors excitedly engage with academic leaders because of their ability to discuss their ideas, even if the conversation has a few awkward moments.

Key Skills Already Part of Faculty Responsibilities

Donors Want to Engage with High-Level Thinkers

"Faculty do their research behind the scenes, and big-thinking donors like engaging with people like that. Yes, it often results in awkward conversations over cocktails, but they like talking about that kind of stuff. **With faculty, quirky is cool**."

Brad Bundy
Senior Associate Vice President, Advancement
Miami University

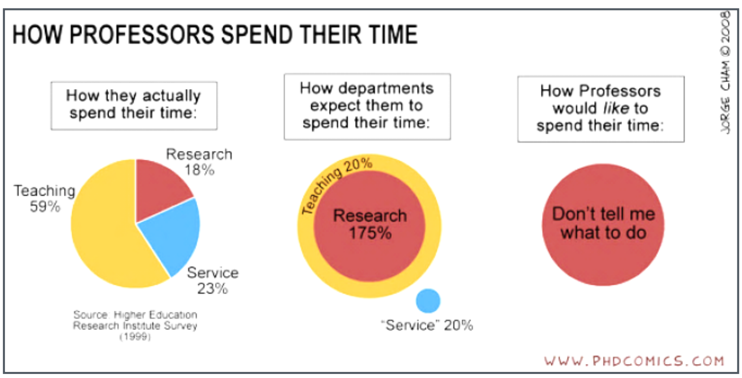
Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

But Faculty Reluctant to Engage

Multiple Barriers to Participation

Despite the fact that donors want to engage with them, academic leaders are often unwilling to spend time on advancement-related activities. Between teaching, research, and service to the institution, their workday is already stretched thin. Plus, advancement staff have a history of trying to engage faculty through the things they hold dear: their own financial contributions, and connections to students and alumni who could make a gift. Asking for access to faculty members' wallets and contact lists has contributed to a widespread culture of distrust of anyone connected with development.

Scarcity of Faculty Time



Advancement Asks for the Wrong Things

Time
Annual fund solicitations, prospect research, and project feasibility studies

Giving
Participation in faculty and staff campaign

Contacts
Sharing connections built with students and alumni

Faculty Misconceptions About Their Role

Finding donors

Writing proposals

Asking for gifts

Aside from past missteps on the part of advancement, faculty members and academic leaders often misunderstand their role when partnering with us. Development officers do not need faculty members to find donors, create collateral, or make the ask. Yet faculty members are afraid that they will be required to do all three activities at once, in addition to their other responsibilities on campus.

Source: Cham J, "How Professors Spend Their Time," PhD Comics, Aug. 25, 2008, http://www.phdcomics.com/comics/archive.php?comicid=1060; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Role Clarification Paramount

Making What We Want Crystal Clear

Advancement staff need to take the first step in rebuilding positive relationships with faculty members across campus—clarifying where faculty will and will not be asked to work with donors. This helps academic leaders understand what they will (and will not) be asked to do, so there are no surprises in future donor interactions. Starting by clarifying roles in working with donors helps faculty understand that advancement needs them to be the quirky experts they already are, not an extension of the gift officer.

Where Faculty Should Be Involved in Advancement

Discovery

- Assessing donor capacity
- Conducting donor discovery visits
- Meeting donors without informing advancement

Cultivation

- Presenting current research
- Sharing ideas for future projects
- Building donor enthusiasm

Solicitation

- Drafting the proposal
- Planning the visit
- Making the ask

Stewardship

- Reporting outcomes data
- Communicating at key milestones
- Documenting impact over time

“**Deans don’t need to make the ask**. That is the role of their development officer, and that’s why **it has to be a partnership**. Deans need to speak with passion about an area that is important to them and the donor. Then, when it’s time to make the ask, turn to the fundraiser.”

Heather Engel
Associate Vice President for Campaigns and Constituent Development
Rochester Institute of Technology

Specifically, faculty members need to understand that they are most important during cultivation and stewardship, moment when donors most want to engage with the experts on campus undertaking innovative projects. Reassure academic partners that they will not be asked to do prospect work or make the ask, and be sure to provide ample space to practice the skills they will need to succeed when they are asked to work with us.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Providing Practice Opportunities

Multiple Options for Preparing Faculty to "Pitch" to Donors

Just because academic partners understand their role in working with advancement does not mean that their project pitch is donor ready. The best big ideas will not resonate with donors if a faculty member doesn't describe them effectively. The following strategies enable advancement leaders to help faculty members practice and improve their donor-facing pitch so that big ideas are allowed to take center stage. Providing practice opportunities also shows faculty members that advancement is a valuable team member, not just another distraction from their research and teaching.

Tactics to Develop Donor-Facing Skills

Creating Compelling Narratives	UF University of Florida Storytelling Workshop	
Practicing With a Donor Audience	BYU President's Leadership Council	Nyquist University[1] Deans' Councils
Engaging Donors One-on-One	The Advisory Board Company – Philanthropy Leadership Council Pre- and Post-visit Huddles	Western University · Canada Donor Stewardship and Cultivation Plan

1) Pseudonym for a private research institution.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

“Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins”

Faculty members discuss their ideas all the time. They give conference presentations and present lectures to their classes. They understand how to explain complex ideas, and they are experts in their fields of study. However, this does not guarantee that they can easily make their research accessible and compelling to a non-expert. Donors are often left behind when faculty members forget to provide context for their work and don’t add details that make sense of data. Without including additional details, it can be challenging for any audience to understand why the narrative matters outside of the library or lab.

Elements of a Winning Story

- Authentic voice, including imperfections
- Provides a sense of time and place
- Adds meaning to data

Where Faculty Go Wrong

“The purposes of this **planning process** are to improve upon and leverage existing **engagement programs**, to identify opportunities for additional engagement on campus and to develop a long-term plan for **supporting and sustaining such efforts**. This project would leverage the knowledge and skills of faculty and staff currently **implementing engagement programs** to **work with campus leaders** on a campus-wide engagement plan.”

Lacks specific details, unique features, and meaning for non-academic audiences

Helping Numbers and Narratives Work Together

“In the past two decades, cognitive science has increasingly come to support the claim that we, as a species, think best when we allow numbers and narratives, abstract information and experiential discourse, to interact, to work together.”

Scott Slovic, Ph.D. and Paul Slovic, Ph.D.,
Numbers and Nerves: Information, Emotion, and Meaning in a World of Data

However, faculty members may not understand that their data does not makes sense without this additional context. To move forward and ensure that faculty have compelling donor interactions, we need to ensure that they understand how to combine their data with the narrative that helps it make sense to a non-academic audience.

Source: Simmons A, *Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins*, New York: AMACOM, 2007; Slovic S, Slovic P, *Numbers and Nerves: Information, Emotion, and Meaning in a World of Data*, Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2015, 4; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Developing Storytelling Skills

An Opportunity to Help Academics Craft Their Narratives

To help deans improve the narrative that describes their vision for their unit, the University of Florida created a storytelling workshop for academic deans during the planning phase of their comprehensive campaign. The workshop was designed to explain the elements of a good story and allow deans to practice their narratives and receive feedback. The basics of storytelling were explained by a journalism professor, who added additional academic credibility to the workshop. Deans were then able to practice their own narratives with an audience of other deans and development staff.

Storytelling Workshop for Deans

Workshop Goals

1. Learn the basics of storytelling and the aspects of a compelling narrative
2. Have an opportunity to practice stories and receive feedback
3. Build relationships between academic leaders, communications staff, and development officers

Evolved into Larger Training Series

- **Three learning modules**
  - Roles for academic partners and prospect management
  - Storytelling, communications, and stewardship
  - Unit visioning in the context of a comprehensive campaign
- **Deans brought modules to their units**

  Participants included department chairs and faculty leaders

This showed deans that storytelling does not have to be high-stakes, and that development staff are happy to help improve the pitch in the future, a first step to building closer relationships between unit-based fundraisers and academic leaders. The first workshop lasted for five hours, too long a time commitment for many campus partners. As a result, the content was divided into three separate hour-long modules, which each dean could bring to their unit as desired. As a result, faculty members across campus learned about their role in the campaign, how to communicate with donors, and how a strong narrative and vision translate into philanthropic support for research and teaching.

Source: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Workshops Create Space for Practice

Blending Learning, Sharing, and Feedback

To make the storytelling workshops as useful as possible, the sessions are designed to emphasize practice over lecture, and attendees are asked to prepare a story in advance. Each dean shares their story and receives feedback from the group. Afterwards, they are encouraged to continue improving their stories by working with the development officers based in their units. This shows that stories do not have to be perfect at the start and that progress over time is an ongoing process.

Session Overview

Pre-session Preparation
Attendees prepare a story to share with the group

Session Overview
Elements of a compelling narrative and feedback guidelines

Sharing Stories
Attendees tell their narratives to their peers and advancement partners

Feedback
- Positive and constructive comments
- Peer review
- Self review

Refining the Message
Continued improvement over time

Key Benefits for Academic Partners

- Overall role and impact of philanthropy, and their role in advancing philanthropic conversations
- How to tell a compelling story to a non-expert audience

Module Logistics

- One-hour session for academic leaders
- Round tables and assigned seating encourage department-specific discussion
- Development officers at each table facilitate discussion

When bringing this session to an individual college or school, advancement staff ensure that the workshop lasts no more than one hour and assign seating to ensure that participants share stories with the development staff assigned to their areas of expertise. This helps build individual relationships between faculty members and development staff while helping participants see the bigger picture of how each session is valuable in the context of the campaign.

Source: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Making It Work on Your Campus

A successful storytelling workshop can show academic leaders that their stories are valuable additions to advancement's work, and that fundraising success would be impossible without them. The workshops are also an opportunity for advancement to show faculty members how they can contribute their expertise to a comprehensive campaign, avoiding confusion and reluctance later in the process. Furthermore, these sessions can be adapted for any academic audience, as long as the audience is comprised of peers at the same level in the institution.

Keys to Success

- Ensure that attendees are peers
- Prioritize practice over lecture
- Assign seating to develop partnerships
- Encourage learning in action and long-term sustainability

Campus Resources

- Identify potential workshop facilitators in faculty and staff
- Ask experienced development officers to share best practices
- Use the **Storytelling Toolkit**

Audience

- Deans
- Department chairs
- Academic leaders
- Faculty associated with campaign priorities
- Principal investigators

"It's our first time really convening this group in a purposeful fashion. We really facilitated conversations that deans and development officers weren't having about the larger vision for the colleges and how that could be communicated. In their day-to-day lives, they weren't making the time to sit down and have those connected conversations."

Tom Evelyn
Former Associate Vice President, Strategic Communications and Marketing
University of Florida

An audience of peers ensures that academic leaders are comfortable engaging in an activity that may be new, different, or uncomfortable. Nobody wants to appear less than qualified in front of their superiors. In addition to keeping the session among peers, find partners on campus who can contribute their expertise in development, storytelling, and other areas in order to show the importance of learning from across disciplines to succeed. A successful storytelling workshop can show everyone in attendance that practice leads to success, and that development staff are happy to share their own successes with academic partners.

Source: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Helping Faculty Talk Like TED

"Ideas Are the Currency of the 21st Century"

While practice sessions can enable academic partners to dedicate time to their project pitch, they need to understand the elements that make a story appealing to a broad audience. TED Talks are designed to do this well, and reviewing the criteria that make them work gives faculty members another model for describing projects without boring a potential donor. Share the aspects of a successful lecture with academic partners and development staff who need a reminder about what makes a narrative compelling to any audience.

Be Emotional

- **You can't inspire others without being inspired**
  An enthusiastic, meaningful connection to the topic is transmitted to the audience
- **Tell stories that engage hearts and minds**
  Stories help the speaker connect with listeners and make a new idea more convincing
- **Have a conversation**
  Practice so that delivering the presentation is as comfortable as speaking with a friend

Be Novel

- **Teach the listener something new**
  Include unexpected elements or give the audience a new way of looking at the world
- **Deliver a jaw-dropping moment**
  Elicit a strong emotional response to grab the listener's attention and make the presentation memorable
- **Lighten up**
  Don't take yourself or your topic too seriously

Be Memorable

- **Set a time limit**
  Keep the presentation short for successful transmission of ideas
- **Paint a mental picture**
  Allow the audience to envisage concepts that are foreign, complex, or otherwise hard to understand
- **Stay genuine**
  Openness, authenticity, and vulnerability are strengths to be cultivated, not weaknesses to erase

Source: Gallo C, *Talk Like TED: The 9 Public-Speaking Secrets of the World's Top Minds*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2014; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Creating Channels to Practice "Pitching"

Two Sources for Willing Donor Participants

Once academic partners have had time to practice with their peers, they need to deliver the pitch to a higher-stakes audience—potential donors. However, faculty members need space to practice pitching to donors before they are asked to join a donor visit. Plus, inviting prospective donors to be part of a practice environment is one way to engage prospects in an exclusive, behind-the-scenes look at new projects and priorities, for which they can become lead investors.

	BYU **President's Leadership Council**	Nyquist University[1] **Deans' Councils**
Audience	Donors committed to giving $1 million over five years	Trustees, major donors, external prospects with a shared interest
Benefits for Donors	Close-up view of institutional priorities, opportunity to ask questions and determine which will be funded	Behind-the-scenes view of academic leaders' vision, opportunity to give feedback
Benefits for Academic Partners	Present projects to donors and respond to their questions	Share narrative with donors and participate in guided feedback session

At Brigham Young University, the President's Leadership Council gives faculty members the chance to pitch projects to an audience of donors who have already committed to giving at least $1 million over five years. This audience arrives ready and willing to invest in a compelling pitch, and at least one of the faculty presentations is fully-funded by Council members every year. At Nyquist University, a private research institution, pitches are presented to donors who have expressed interest in that faculty member's field of study, and each pitch is followed by a dedicated feedback session. At Deans' Councils, advancement staff create an environment where faculty members are given the opportunity to pitch their ideas to donors without worrying about winning or losing potential gifts.

1) Pseudonym for a private research institution.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

A Lab to Test the Narrative

Donor Conversations with Training Wheels

At Nyquist, deans are asked to develop narratives about their long-term visions and priorities, and groups of donors are invited to hear a preview before it is publicly released. Participants are chosen because they have already made gifts to that subject area, or they are known to be interested in it. After hearing the pitch, donors give feedback on the vision statement. Advancement staff guide the session to ensure that it stays on topic and that faculty members feel comfortable with the audience.

Nyquist University Deans' Councils Create Low-Stakes Donor Interactions

Deans Develop Narratives

- Division heads determine short- and long-term priorities, and overall vision
- Deans develop donor pitch to promote vision and priorities

Donors Invited to Preview Narratives

- Current donors invited to hear a preview of new priorities
- External prospects invited to gauge interest and build enthusiasm for projects

Feedback Session

- Donors asked to respond to vision and priorities presented
- Advancement staff guide the discussion

> "It was shocking **how little faculty knew about how to express a big idea in a compelling way with donors**. Faculty are learning that donors aren't only going to fund what you need them to fund. This is a longer process of aligning interests with campaign priorities."
>
> *Associate Vice President for Development*
> *Nyquist University*

Deans' Councils give faculty members a new understanding of how donors react to ideas. They began to understand the donor point-of-view when hearing about new fundraising priorities, and received constructive feedback to make the vision more appealing to donors once the campaign launched.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Establishing Clear Ground Rules for Feedback

Clarifying Volunteer Roles During the Session

To keep the focus of the session on constructive feedback, it begins with an explanation of ground rules and feedback guidelines. Clarifying expectations upfront ensures that everyone benefits from participating. At your institution, ensure that donors have time for individual reflection before being asked give feedback on a dean's pitch. Advancement staff should guide the discussion, so that academic leaders can focus on the feedback and interacting with the audience.

Feedback Session Process

1. **Establish Ground Rules**
   Clarify what constitutes positive feedback to maximize benefits to donors and faculty

2. **Time for Reflection**
   Allow donors to consider the presentation before soliciting feedback

3. **Guided Discussion**
   Questions for donors include:
   - Does this resonate with you?
   - What's missing?
   - What other information do you need?
   - What follow-up would you like?

Guidelines for Feedback

Feedback Should:

- Focus on improving the narrative
- Target the content of the presentation
- Share donor's knowledge and unique perspective
- Provide direction and cite specific examples

Feedback Should Not:

- Criticize without proposing a solution
- Target oration or presentation skills
- Set unrealistic expectations
- Be too general to be helpful

Source: Philanthropy Leadership Council, "Board Feedback Guide for Case Development," *Resources for Charting Philanthropy's Path to 2020*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2015, 1; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Closing the Loop with Faculty and Donors

Post-session Follow-Up Ensures Benefits for All

The benefits of donor-facing practice do not end after the feedback session. Advancement staff should follow up with all participants to ensure that everyone leaves with a positive impression. Reassure faculty members that they do not have to follow all of the advice from donors, but that they should continue practicing their pitches with the donor audience in mind. Help donors see how they have made a direct contribution to the project being discussed, and note that they can become lead investors if they are interested.

Benefits for Faculty	Benefits for Donors
Meeting donors in low-stakes environment	Interacting with key academic leaders
Strengthening narratives before presenting to wider audiences	Making hands-on contributions to vision and narrative development
Understanding advancement's role in funding big ideas	Gaining insight into idea development process
Experiencing how donor advice doesn't have to be followed	Previewing priorities, with opportunity for lead investments

For donors who did not like the pitch or are not interested in the projects discussed, advancement staff can use the follow-up conversation to propose other gift opportunities on campus. As a result, all donors feel that their input was valued, even if they had negative feedback to share. For faculty members, pitching to a donor audience proves that they are ready to help advancement staff with individual donor strategy.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Preparation One Visit at a Time

Assuaging Faculty Concerns Before the Visit

Advancement's work does not end once faculty are ready to join donor visits. Development officers need to brief academic partners before each visit to clarify the goals of the visit, the role of each participant, answer outstanding questions, and address lingering concerns. This ensures that everyone sends a coordinated message to the donor, and that faculty members know that they can rely on advancement staff to handle any surprising circumstances that may occur. This allows academic partners to focus on the primary reasons they are involved: the donor and the pitch.

"If we hire a secretary, that person will have to go through dozens of university trainings for their job responsibilities. **I have never been trained for 95% of what I do, especially the 30% to 40% that is fundraising."**

David Perlmutter, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Media and Communication
Texas Tech University

"I am best used by getting me in front of the **right people** with the **right preparation**, the **right understanding** of **why we are meeting**, and **what we hope to accomplish**. For recent big gifts in the $10M range, it was all about the relationship and not at all about a transaction."

Larry Pulley, Ph.D.
Dean, Raymond A. Mason School of Business
College of William & Mary

Clarifying Roles, Goals, and Messages

Before meeting with a donor, brief academic partners on:

- Donor background information
- The goal for the meeting
- Who will do what during the meeting
- How the conversation will flow
- How to answer difficult questions

Source: Philanthropy Leadership Council, "Ally Storytelling Guide," *Resources for Charting Philanthropy's Path to 2020*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2015, 4; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Reflecting on Visit Execution

Embedding Feedback and Coaching After the Visit

While pre-visit preparation ensures that the visit itself is a success, long-term progress will not occur unless post-visit feedback is provided. As soon as possible after the meeting, participants should have a discussion about what went well and what could be better on the next visit. Both sharing and receiving feedback will ensure that faculty members feel comfortable working with advancement in the future. Moreover, actively requesting feedback from your academic partner models important behavior that will strengthen the relationship and avoid alienating crucial allies on campus.

Post-visit Questions

Discuss the visit as soon as it is over, starting with the following questions:

- What key thoughts do you have about our interaction with the donor?
- What went well in this visit?
- What could we do better next time?
- What could I do to make the experience better for you?
- Do you have any specific feedback for me?
- Was our preparation helpful? What do we need to remember for the next visit?

Effective Feedback

Share feedback about what did or did not go well using the following guidelines:

- Ground comments in specific circumstances
- Provide objective impressions and perceptions
- Communicate impact or consequence

Next Steps

Strengthen relationships over time by keeping faculty in the loop:

1. Determine follow-up, including individual responsibilities and timelines
2. Inform academic partners about the final results
3. Publicly acknowledge the role of faculty in attaining the gift

Regardless of the outcome of the visit, advancement staff need to keep faculty members informed about how the donor relationship develops over time and whether a gift is eventually made. This success will show faculty members that they are valuable parts of a larger donor strategy, which would not work without them.

Source: Seashore C, et al., *What Did You Say? The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback*, Columbia: Bingham House Books, 1992; Philanthropy Leadership Council, "Ally Storytelling Guide," *Resources for Charting Philanthropy's Path to 2020*, Washington, DC: The Advisory Board Company, 2015, p. 6; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Preparing Faculty for Deeper Engagement

Creating an Inclusive Plan for Cultivation

Explaining donor strategy to academic partners should focus on how donors seek relationships across an institution before making a gift and how faculty members play a crucial role in principal gift success. A recent analysis of gifts to the University of Chicago showed that the majority of recent multimillion-dollar gifts supported more than one department or initiative and that donors had close bonds with five to ten individuals within the institution before making an investment. These gifts would not have been possible without faculty engagement.

"More Friends Are Better Than One"

At University of Chicago, success comes from building relationships across campus

70% Of gifts of $10 million or more supported multiple departments and projects

5-10 Close bonds within the institution held by donors who make multimillion-dollar gifts

"We had one gift that involved eight internal partners with different responsibilities. It was magical when everything came together in the end."

Melanie Norton
Vice President, Development and Alumni Engagement
DePauw University

Each Donor Investor as a Mini-Campaign

1. Ascertain donor interests and potential areas to support
2. Determine who on campus should be involved
3. Create a plan with timelines for action by all actors
4. Ensure campus partners complete their assigned tasks

Once academic partners understand the value of their work with advancement, explain how building relationships is one part of an overall strategy. Explaining how each donor investor is like a mini-campaign, with strategy, planning, and engagement across campus, shows faculty how and when they will be asked to engage with donors. For academic partners, this clarifies how they will work with advancement over time and ensures that donor interactions are never a surprise.

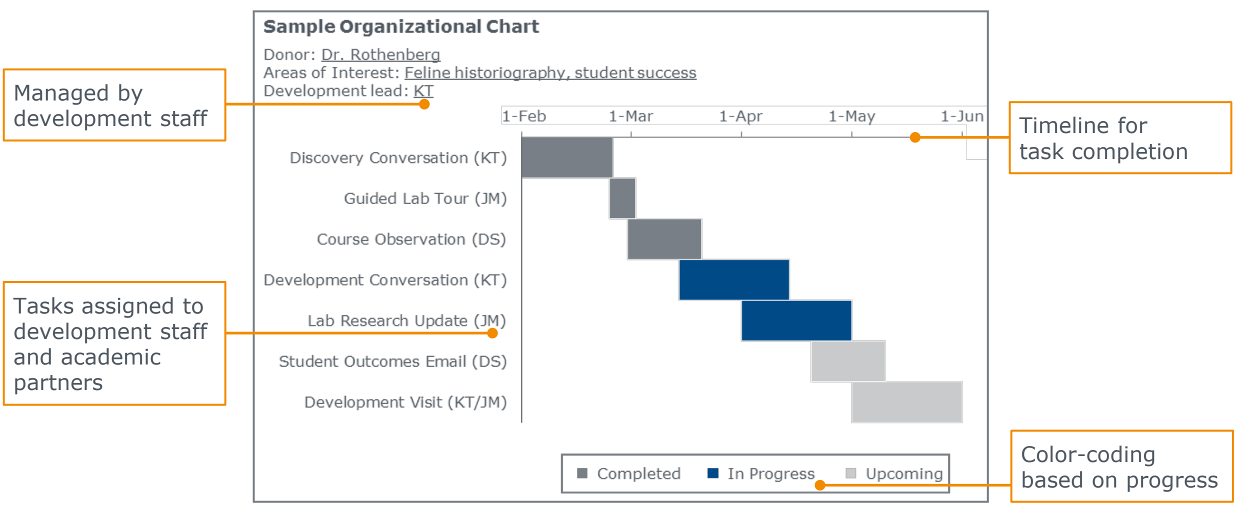
Source: Hall H, "How to Win Very Big Gifts," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, June 14, 2011, https://philanthropy.com/article/How-to-Win-Very-Big-Gifts/226399; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Showing the Key Players

Ensuring Multiple Touchpoints Across Campus

As donor strategies encompass more and more partners in order to succeed, create a plan to ensure that everyone is engaged and sees how their work contributes to overall success. At Western University, stewardship plans show each campus stakeholder's assigned tasks so that everyone knows who is responsible and when each task should be accomplished. Advancement staff identify which interactions will be most meaningful for a donor. Those become the priorities when the plan is created.

A Donor-Centered Plan for Stewardship and Cultivation



Similar plans could also be created for donor cultivation to show how a series of connections on campus lead to success overall. By listing everyone involved in a gift in one place, advancement staff would be able to easily recognize every partner involved when a gift closes. Faculty members will also be able to see how their engagement helps move the process forward, instead of serving as a one-off event for a donor. Regardless of how the stewardship or cultivation plan looks, academic partners will only work with advancement in the long-term if they are aware of how they contribute to overall strategy and are recognized when success occurs.

Source: Western University, London, ON; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Perfecting the Pitch

To ensure that big ideas are donor-ready, academic leaders and faculty members need a variety of practice opportunities. Moving from peer-to-peer practice to pitching to a donor audience enables faculty to practice explaining their projects while building enthusiasm for their projects both on- and off-campus. However, practice only makes perfect if academic partners are briefed before and after visits, and know how they fit into a larger strategy, so that they understand how they are valuable contributors to overall gift success.

Key Takeaways

- Communicate the roles for faculty with donors
- Ensure the pitch for big ideas helps data and narrative work together
- Develop donor-facing skills and provide opportunities for feedback from peers
- Create practice opportunities with a donor audience

Included Resources

Ease implementation with:

- Pre-visit Briefing Template
- Post-visit Discussion Guide
- Donor-Centered Cultivation Plan
- Storytelling Workshop Launch Guide

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Pre-visit Briefing Template

Instructions

Complete this guide before donor visits in which academic partners will participate. Review the information in-person before the visit to answer clarifying questions and provide additional details.

Donor Information

1. Donor Name(s) and Age(s): ____

2. Interests: ____
____

3. Most recent gifts to the institution:

Date	Amount	Purpose

Meeting Details

1. Date and Time: ____

2. Location: ____

3. Desired Outcomes:
____
____
____

4. General Meeting Agenda:
____
____
____
____
____

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Pre-visit Briefing Template (cont.)

Roles and Responsibilities

	Development Officer(s)	Academic Partner(s)
Role		
Key Talking Points		

Difficult Questions

Prepare sample donor questions on the following topics so that academic partners understand how to respond during the meeting. Feel free to add other questions based on your knowledge of the donor.

1. Why should I invest in you?
2. What do you do differently from other colleges and universities? How will my impact be greater here?
3. How will you respond to this red flag or roadblock?
4. How will this project align with my worldview and political perspective?
5. Can you respond to recent negative press about the institution?

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Post-visit Discussion Guide

Instructions

Use this guide to share compare experiences and share feedback with academic partners after a donor visit. Before the discussion, review the guidelines for effective feedback together. Be sure to plan next steps before finishing the conversation so faculty members understand how their support helps move the prospect forward and contributes to overall strategy.

Guidelines for Effective Feedback

All feedback should:

- ✓ Ground comments in specific circumstances and examples
- ✓ Provide objective impressions and perceptions
- ✓ Communicate impact or consequence
- ✓ Propose solutions for future improvement

Post-visit Discussion Questions

Discuss the visit as soon as it is over, starting with the following questions. Add questions as needed to help faculty members improve their performance in future situations.

1. What is your immediate impression of the visit? How do you think it went?
2. What went well in this visit?
3. What could we do better next time?
4. What could I do to make the experience better for you?
5. Do you have any specific feedback for me?
6. Was our preparation helpful? What information was most useful?
7. What do we need to remember for the next visit?

Next Steps

Indicate when each item is completed by advancement staff.

Following Up	Communicating Results
❑ Assign follow-up responsibilities	❑ Inform academic partner about results of the visit
❑ Create follow-up timeline	❑ Publicly acknowledge role of academic partners in attaining the gift
❑ Communicate timeline to campus partners	❑ Prepare academic partners for stewardship

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Donor-Centered Cultivation Plan

Instructions

Create a cultivation (or stewardship) plan that integrates stakeholders across campus by listing each stakeholder who should be involved, then creating a comprehensive list of activities in which they will be involved. Once created, the chart should be distributed to everyone involved in the process and entered into the data system. Work proactively with campus partners to ensure that steps are completed before the deadlines.

After creating a cultivation plan for a large-scale project, it can be adapted for future donors instead of starting from scratch each time.

Donor and Project Details

1. Donor Name(s): ____
2. Proposed Gift: ____
   ____
3. Estimated Solicitation Date (Month, Year): ____
4. Development Point-of-Contact: ____

Campus Stakeholders

Department or Division	Stakeholder(s)

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Donor-Centered Cultivation Plan (cont.)

Cultivation Plan Template

Activity	Stakeholder(s)	Start Date	End Date	Status
Ex: Lab Visit	*Professor Chen*	*7/10/2017*	*7/17/2017*	✓ Completed
				❑ Completed
				❑ Completed
				❑ Completed
				❑ Completed
				❑ Completed
				❑ Completed
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				❑ Completed
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				❑ Completed

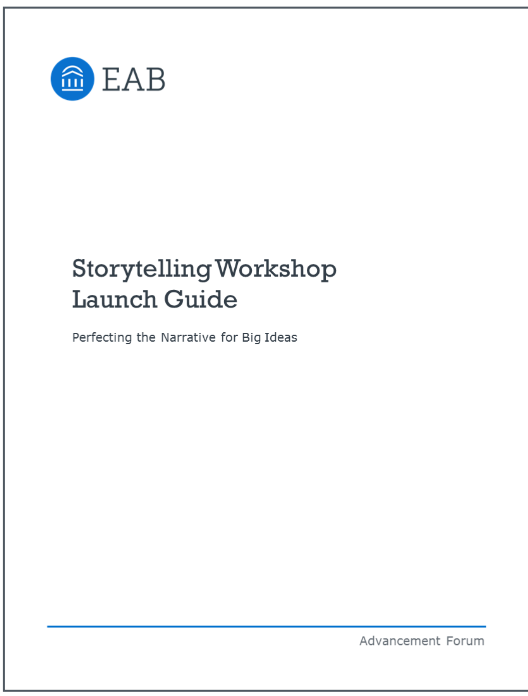
Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Storytelling Workshop Launch Guide

Perfecting the Narrative for Big Ideas

Storytelling Workshop in Brief

Faculty leaders have the data, narratives, and expertise with which donors want to engage. However, academic partners are often uncomfortable engaging with donors, or do not know how to turn their expertise into a compelling narrative. Conducting a storytelling workshop for academic partners enables advancement staff to create a comfortable environment where faculty leaders can perfect their donor-facing pitch.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Storytelling Workshop Launch Guide

Perfecting the Narrative for Big Ideas

Advancement Forum

Storytelling Workshop Launch Guide Contents

- Elements of a Compelling Narrative
- Facilitator Preparation Guide
- Facilitator Talking Points
- Introductory, Editable PowerPoint Presentation
- Interactive Exercises

Designed for Three Key Audiences

1 Advancement Leaders

Use the Facilitator Preparation Guide to:

- Pinpoint the right audience for the workshop
- Unite fundraisers and academic leaders in working towards fundraising goals

2 Frontline Fundraisers

Understand the Elements of a Compelling Narrative to:

- Provide constructive feedback to academic partners
- Build stronger relationships with academic partners and a better understanding of their work

3 Academic Partners

Participate in Interactive Exercises to:

- Gain confidence pitching big ideas to new audiences
- Refine the narrative about research projects to appeal to donors

Download the Storytelling Workshop Launch Guide at **eab.com**

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Maintaining Our Momentum

SECTION 5

In Search of Our Golden Ticket

Improving Data Collection to Quantify Faculty Impact

To achieve long-term success with principal and transformational giving, academic leaders must understand that they play a crucial role in the process. Faculty members who have successfully raised money are often willing to work with advancement again, but getting more academic partners on board requires showing their importance using quantitative measures, instead of describing one-off faculty fundraising success stories. As campaign goals grow, increasing numbers of provosts are considering establishing development goals for deans and other academic leaders.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Focusing Deans' Time on the Right Activities

Set Expectations

- 50% — Portion of deans' time to be spent on fundraising
- 125+ — President's annual visit goal
- $2B — Total campaign goal

Define What Counts

- Articulating vision
- Engaging advisory boards
- Meeting quantitative metrics
- Spending funds strategically
- Attending appropriate events
- Stewarding donors
- Working with top 25 prospects

Support Success

- Monthly progress reports
- Quarterly deans' council update
- Ongoing professional development

Goals can serve a dual function—they motivate deans to work with advancement in the present while providing data over time that can be used to show how the involvement of academic partners helps increase long-term fundraising revenue and can decrease the timeline for major and principal gifts. At the University of Oregon, deans are expected to spend 50% of their time fundraising, but which activities counted within that was often unclear. Advancement staff determined key areas where deans should focus their fundraising time. They ensured that the results were consistently reported back to show progress, both overall and with the top 25 prospects for each division. Over time, deans will be able to see how their efforts have led to improved fundraising outcomes for their units and the institution as a whole.

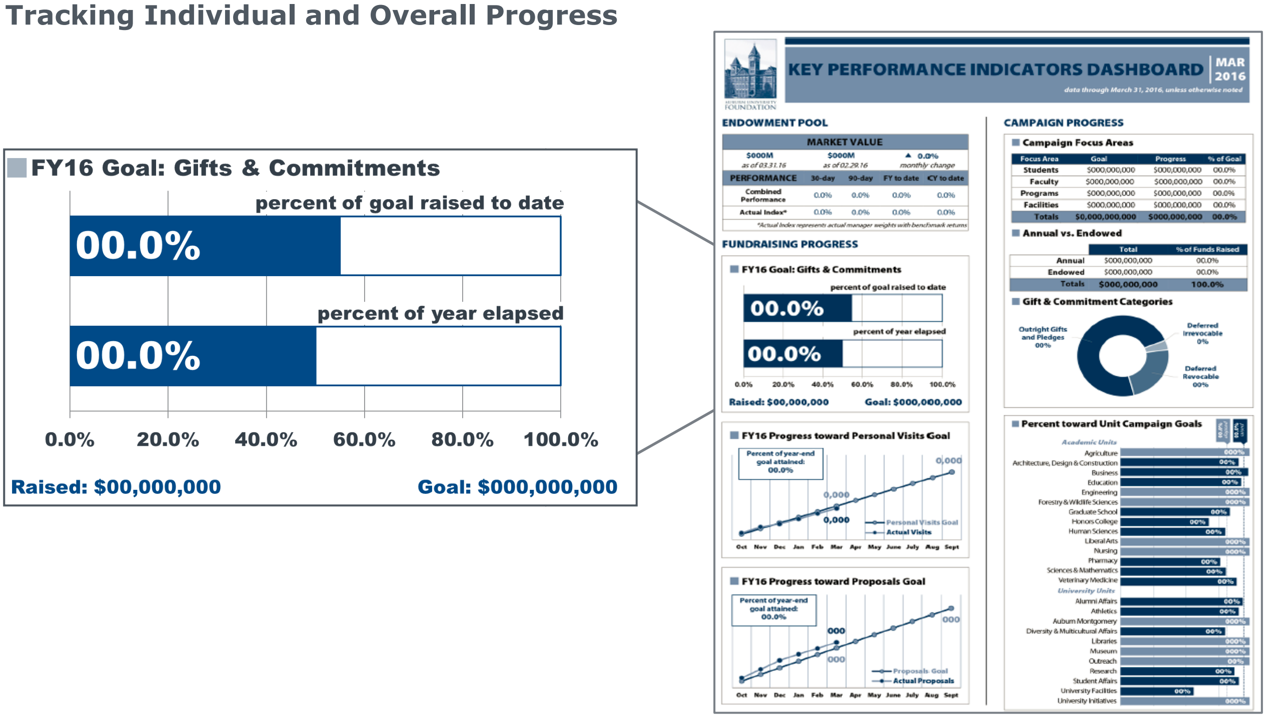
Source: University of Oregon, Eugene, OR; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Visualizing Success

Dashboards Track Key Performance Indicators for Deans

To go beyond monthly reports on fundraising performance, deans should be able to see their progress in real time. At Auburn University, fundraising dashboards show deans how they are performing relative to their individual goals and compared to other departments. Although they do not impact promotion or compensation decisions, the dashboards demonstrate how deans are being assessed, and set the expectation that they will make an effort to perform. If they do not spend the suggested time on development activities, their peers will see.

Tracking Individual and Overall Progress



This adds a small dose of healthy competition to fundraising and shows the deans that they are all expected to make efforts to improve performance over time. Moving forward, the dashboards will enable advancement staff to show faculty members how partnering with advancement leads to philanthropic impact on their department, program, or unit. However, making the data-based case for engagement is merely a single step for long-term success in principal and transformational giving.

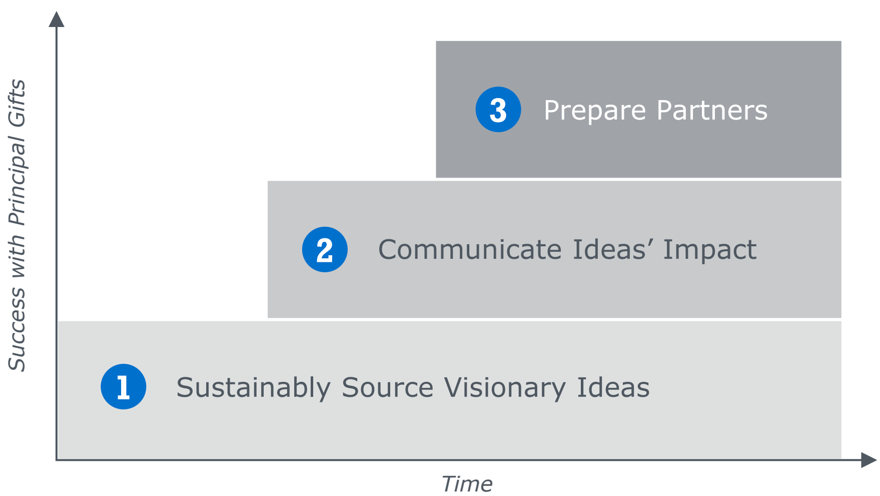
Source: Auburn University, Auburn, AL; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

Maintaining Our Momentum

Ensuring Success at the Top of the Giving Pyramid

To attract donor investors to higher education, advancement leaders need to build strong working relationships with academic partners to surface the big ideas in which donors want to invest, communicate their impact, and offer a compelling pitch. Without academic partnerships, it will become impossible to meet today's revenue goals and complete tomorrow's bigger-than-ever comprehensive campaigns. As competition among nonprofits increases and the pool of principal and transformational donors shrinks, advancement leaders cannot ignore the work that only academic leaders can do.

Three Strategic Imperatives to Attract Today's Donor Investors



Putting academic leaders front and center with donors, and supporting them along the way, will build the momentum that will be crucial for future success in higher education philanthropy. Academic leaders are visionary thinkers, impact drivers, and compelling storytellers, and they are the partners we cannot afford not to have. Investing in these relationships now will ensure that colleges and universities stay at the forefront of innovation, impact, and funding through transformational philanthropy.

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

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