Perfecting the Pitch to Appeal to Today’s Donors

The Donor Investor Imperative Part Four
Donor Investor Imperative Webconference Series

Part Four of a Four-Part Sequence

1. The Rise of the Donor Investor
   Available on-demand

2. Sustainably Sourcing Big Ideas
   Available on-demand

3. Communicating the Impact of Big Ideas
   Available on-demand

4. Perfecting the Pitch to Appeal to Today’s Donors

Previous webconferences available on-demand at:

https://www.eab.com/SearchAll?q=advancement%20forum%20webconferences&fq=_readaccessids_int_mv|;searchobjecttypenested_string_mv|On-Demand%20Webconference-0;productnested_string_mv|Advancement%20Forum-0
Donors Seek Credible Connections

Donors Engage with Leaders to Evaluate the Impact of Their Gifts

Direct Engagement Favored as an Evaluation Tool

How High Net Worth Philanthropists Evaluate Organizations

- 79.7% Direct Engagement with Nonprofit
- 45.5% Nonprofit Reports (e.g., Charity Navigator, GuideStar)
- 43.7% Annual Reports
- 6.2% Other

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

Engaging with the People Doing the Work

Donors Want to Be a Part of Problem Solving

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
- Longstanding 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

Faculty Uniquely Positioned to Meet This Need

The Thought Leaders With Whom Donors Want to Interact

Key Skills Already Part of Faculty Responsibilities

- Solving Problems
- Driving Impact
- Teaching
- Telling Stories
- Generating Data
- Explaining Complex Ideas
- Building Rapport With Students

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.
Faculty Reluctant to Engage

Multiple Barriers to Participation

**Scarcity of Faculty Time**

*HOW PROFESSORS SPEND THEIR TIME*

- **Teaching**: 59%
- **Research**: 18%
- **Service**: 23%


- **How they actually spend their time**
- **How departments expect them to spend their time**
- **How Professors would like to spend their time**

**Advancement Asks for the Wrong Things**

**Time**
- Annual fund solicitations, prospect research, project feasibility studies

**Giving**
- Participation in faculty and staff campaign

**Contacts**
- Sharing connections built with students and alumni

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**Faculty Misconceptions About Their Role**

- **Finding** donors
- **Writing** proposals
- **Asking** for gifts

Role Clarification Paramount

Making What We Want Crystal Clear

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

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.
Providing Practice Opportunities

Multiple Options for Preparing Faculty to “Pitch” to Donors

Tactics to Develop Donor-Facing Skills

Creating Compelling Narratives

- University of Florida: Storytelling Workshop

Practicing With a Donor Audience

- Brigham Young University: President’s Leadership Council
- Nyquist University: Deans’ Councils

Engaging Donors One-on-One

- The Advisory Board Company: Philanthropy Leadership Council
- Western University: Donor Stewardship and Cultivation Plan

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.

1) Pseudonym for a private research institution.
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.

Editors, Numbers and Nerves: Information, Emotion, and Meaning in a World of Data

Developing Storytelling Skills

An Opportunity to Help Academics Craft Their Narrative

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

- 3 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

Source: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.
Workshops Create Space for Practice

Blending Learning, Sharing, and Feedback

**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

Source: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.
Making It Work on Your Campus

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 forthcoming 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
Associate Vice President, Strategic Communications and Marketing (former)
University of Florida

Source: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.
Helping Faculty “Talk Like TED”

“Ideas Are the Currency of the 21st Century”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Be Emotional</th>
<th>Be Novel</th>
<th>Be Memorable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You can’t inspire others without being inspired</td>
<td>Teach the listener something new</td>
<td>Set a Time Limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An enthusiastic, meaningful connection to the topic is transmitted to the audience</td>
<td>Include unexpected elements or give the audience a new way of looking at the world</td>
<td>Keep the presentation short for successful transmission of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell stories that engage hearts and minds</td>
<td>Deliver a jaw-dropping moment</td>
<td>Paint a mental picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories help the speaker connect with listeners and make a new idea more convincing</td>
<td>Elicit a strong emotional response to grab the listener’s attention and make the presentation memorable</td>
<td>Allow the audience to envisage concepts that are foreign, complex, or otherwise hard-to-understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a conversation</td>
<td>Lighten-up</td>
<td>Stay genuine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice so that delivering the presentation is as comfortable as speaking with a friend</td>
<td>Don’t take yourself or your topic too seriously</td>
<td>Openness, authenticity, and vulnerability are strengths to be cultivated, not weaknesses to erase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Practicing With a Donor Audience

Creating Channels to Practice “Pitching”

Two Sources for Willing Donor Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>President’s Leadership Council</th>
<th>Deans’ Councils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donors committed to giving $1 million over five years</td>
<td>Trustees, major donors, external prospects with a shared interest</td>
<td>Behind-the-scenes view of academic leaders’ vision, opportunity to give feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits for Donors</th>
<th>Benefits for Academic Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close-up view of institutional priorities, opportunity to ask questions and determine which will be funded</td>
<td>Present projects to donors and respond to their questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share narrative with donors and participate in guided feedback session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.
A Lab to Test the Narrative
Donor Conversations With Training Wheels

Nyquist University Deans’ Councils Create Low-Stakes Donor Interactions

- Division heads determine short- and long-term priorities, and overall vision
- Deans develop donor pitch to promote vision and priorities
- Current donors invited to hear a preview of new priorities
- External prospects invited to gauge interest and build enthusiasm for projects
- 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

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.
Clarifying Volunteer Roles During the Session

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

Closing the Loop with Faculty and Donors

Post-Session Follow-Up Ensures Benefits for All

**Benefits for Faculty**
- Meeting donors in low-stakes environment
- Strengthening narratives before presenting to wider audiences
- Understanding advancement’s role in funding big ideas
- Experiencing how donor advice doesn’t have to be followed

**Benefits for Donors**
- Interacting with key academic leaders
- Making hands-on contributions to vision and narrative development
- Gaining insight into idea development process
- Previewing priorities, with opportunity for lead investments

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.
Pre- and Post-Visit Huddles

Preparation One Visit at a Time

Assuaging Faculty Concerns Before the Visit

“...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 30-40% 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

Reflecting on Visit Execution

Embedding Feedback and Coaching After the Visit

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

Creating an Inclusive Plan for Cultivation

"More Friends are Better Than One"

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

- Of gifts of $10 million or more supported multiple departments and projects.
- 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. Campus partners complete their assigned tasks.

4. Create a plan with timelines for action by all actors.

Ensuring Multiple Touchpoints Across Campus

A Donor-Centered Plan for Stewardship and Cultivation

Sample Organizational Chart
Donor: Dr. Rothenberg
Areas of Interest: Feline historiography, student success
Development lead: KT

Timeline for task completion
Color-coding based on progress

Tasks assigned to development staff and academic partners
Managed by development staff

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Source: Western University, London, ON; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.
In Search of Our Golden Ticket

A Dearth of Data to Quantify Faculty Impact

In Healthcare, Physicians are Most Productive Pipeline Source

Time to Major Gift and Average Gift Size at VMMC

- Board referrals: 6.9 months, $242K
- Patient prospects: 4.2 months, $49K
- Physician referrals: 2.9 months, $455K

22% Percentage of newly qualified $100K prospects made by physician referrals at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Possible Data Points to Capture

$ Financial Measures

Partnership Development

Moves Management

Source: Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, MA; Virginia Mason Medical Center, Seattle, WA; Philanthropy Leadership Council interviews and analysis; Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.
Perfecting the Pitch

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

Forthcoming Resources

Ease implementation with:
- Pre- and Post-Visit Discussion Guide
- Donor-Centered Cultivation Plan
- Storytelling Workshop Sample Agenda and Talking Points
- Donor Feedback Session Sample Agenda and Discussion Guide

Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.
A Tool to Get You Started

Discussion/Self-Reflection and Implementation Guide

Assess how you currently curate engagement opportunities for donors

Identify strengths and areas for improvement

Determine how to provide support to academic partners

Prioritize practices to implement immediately or consider for the future

Evaluating Today’s Session

Please take a minute to complete our survey about today’s webconference.

Contact Information

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Source: Advancement Forum interviews and analysis.