Fuel Wonder: The University has launched a $3B fundraising campaign

University of Arizona Foundation
November 2023

The University of Arizona Foundation has launched the public phase of the Fuel Wonder fundraising campaign, which aims to raise $3 billion.

The launch was unveiled at a news conference on Nov. 3, during Homecoming weekend, and included the announcement of $118.65 million in new gifts designed to ignite the aspirations and goals of students, faculty and staff.

The gifts brought the total amount raised so far to $2,040,735,512. Counting toward the campaign goal began Jan. 1, 2017.

"I am incredibly grateful to the thousands of donors who have contributed to our future through the Fuel Wonder campaign," University of Arizona President Robert C. Robbins said in an announcement about the campaign. "It is especially meaningful to announce this campaign during Homecoming weekend, a time when we invite alumni back to campus to reunite with the extended Wildcat community. I am so proud of how the work of our students, faculty and staff inspire alumni and friends to give back so generously."

The fundraising priorities of Fuel Wonder align with the University strategic plan[1] and seek to bolster student success, faculty innovation and community involvement through athletics, arts and public media. The campaign priorities, and specific projects within them, are:

The University Ecosystem

- Undergraduate scholarships ensure that the University of Arizona is accessible and affordable to the broadest spectrum of the brightest students
- Endowed faculty chairs are crucial for recruiting and retaining the highest quality faculty, as well as ensuring top-tier research.
- Knowledge discovery leads to a future where no talent goes to waste and where each person’s unique wisdom is cultivated.

The Front Porch

- A new site for the University of Arizona Museum of Art, which houses works by Edward Hopper, Jackson Pollock and Georgia O’Keeffe, among others.
- Intercollegiate athletics programs that provide opportunities for student-athletes while also serving as a rallying point for the larger Tucson community.
- A new building for Arizona Public Media, a member-supported, nonprofit public media service that provides locally produced, award-winning content from its digital studios on the University of Arizona campus.

Moonshot

- The Center for Advanced Molecular and Immunological Therapies will be a national biomedical research hub in Phoenix to develop novel strategies for the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases.
- Discovery, research and innovation that makes a global impact. University researchers continue to forge innovative pathways, form powerful collaborations and make remarkable discoveries.

The moderator for the news conference was alumna Alex Flanagan, who graduated in 1993 with a bachelor’s degree in media arts. She is a former sportscaster who has worked for NBC Sports, NFL Network, ESPN and Fox Sports.

"I think what really sticks out for me is just how much growth this University has had since I graduated 30 years ago," Flanagan said at the news conference. "And to see and hear the incredible things that are happening on the campus and in the community – it makes me really proud and excited."

Flanagan was joined by a Gamma Phi Beta sorority sister, Marianne Cracchiolo Mago, president and CEO of the Steele Foundation. Cracchiolo Mago also graduated in 1993 with a bachelor’s degree in media arts. She is a campaign co-chair with Terry Lundgren, Class of 1975, former CEO of Macy’s Inc. A significant contribution from the Steele Foundation marked the first philanthropic support for the Center for Advanced Molecular and Immunological Therapies, known as CAMI.

"The goal with CAMI is to develop cell- and gene-based therapies to combat disease – this time to unlock the human immunome, not just for one person in a clinical trial but for numerous others, for anyone who needs it. So, for us, this is what we at Steele Foundation would definitely call a moonshot, after COVID-19 especially," Cracchiolo Mago said at the press conference.

Lundgren shared his own story during a panel discussion, with several students, alumni, donors and faculty and staff members in attendance.

"Like many of our U of A students, I was the first in my family and the only in my large family to actually go to college. So, it was a privilege for me to be able to come to the University of Arizona," Lundgren said. "And I had no idea what a career in retail might look like when I was 20 years old or how it might shape my own future. But with investments through the Fuel Wonder campaign, we hope to educate our students and expose them to successful business leaders and ultimately prepare them for an exciting career."

Flanagan, Cracchiolo Mago and Lundgren joined Robbins and John-Paul Roczniak, president and CEO of the University of Arizona Foundation, to announce gifts from the Baird Foundation, Patricia and Bruce Bartlett, Jim and Vicki Click, John L. Compton, Michael and Sheri Hummel[2], Ellen Kaye, Mona Kreaden and Paul Lipton, Humberto and Czarina Lopez, John and Adrienne Mars, the Waverley Street Foundation[3], Tucson Foundations and several donors who asked that their giving remain anonymous[4].

Students in adaptive athletics programs cheered the announcement of a $6.5 million gift from Jim and Vicki Click supporting adaptive
"You can see from the gifts we are announcing the range of causes that are meaningful to our alumni and friends," Roczniak said in an announcement about the campaign. "And, although we are announcing some large gifts today, the ongoing charitable support of annual donors has a huge impact on campus programs as well. I am grateful to all of them, and proud to share the breadth of impact philanthropy has at this great institution."

The generosity of alumni and friends has also resulted in the six highest endowment giving years in the University's history, by a wide margin. A six-year total of $423.7 million accounts for 35% of the total endowment under management as of June 30. The University's endowment is valued at $1.2 billion, and gifts given to it support the donors' chosen priority areas in perpetuity.

The University of Arizona Foundation, founded in 1958, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the University through philanthropy.

Learn more about the Fuel Wonder campaign and ways to give at fuelwonder.arizona.edu. Read the news release about the campaign launch for more details about recent gifts.