

Tips for a successful crowdfunding campaign

University Alumni and Development Program
April 2021

More than \$2.3 million has been raised since UAccelerate, the University's crowdfunding platform, came online in 2016. The most successful campaign to date has been the ongoing crowdfunding initiative, Fuel the Response. The campaign's first phase raised \$1.3 million from 1,500 donors for the student emergency fund and the Campus Pantry through crowdfunding and an endowed gift from an alumni couple.

But a campaign doesn't have to have a huge goal to take advantage of the platform. In fact, most starter campaigns begin with a goal of \$1,000 to \$2,500.

"That may seem like a small amount, but crowdfunding attracts donors who give \$10 to \$25," said **Krista Voth**, director of annual giving at the University of Arizona Foundation. "Small gifts add up, so having a crowd of supporters is key to success."

Crowdfunding 101

The **crowdfunding platform** ^[1] is operated by the Foundation, which works with faculty and staff members as well as student organizations seeking support for research and programs.

The keys to building momentum, Voth says, include engaging social media followers and people who are signed up for a unit's digital publications. She suggests asking family, friends and colleagues to pitch in.

A few more tips:

- **Offer creative engagement opportunities.** In one example, campaign owners were a couple who were getting married. They asked their wedding guests to make gifts to the Steele Children's Research Center rather than giving them presents. In a crowdfunding effort for the virtual Melanoma Walk, participants joined a "team" by making a gift.
- **Saying "thank you" goes a long way during multiyear campaigns.** The **New Start** ^[2] student orientation program is in its fifth year of crowdfunding. Organizers keep their alumni base engaged by promoting program milestones and sharing notes of gratitude.
- **Be steady and consistent.** Other noteworthy campaigns build on years of experience. The **Cooper Center for Environmental Learning** ^[3] has been honing its crowdfunding skills since 2015. It recently beat a \$30,000 goal by rallying more than 170 donors. A few keys behind its success: securing gifts in advance to build excitement and hype and posting compelling updates during live campaigns.

Memorial Crowdfunding Campaigns

Crowdfunding campaigns can also be used to memorialize family and friends.

Phoebe Chalk-Wadsworth, senior director of development in the Eller College of Management, launched a crowdfunding campaign to honor her late mother, **Anna Marie Chalk**, while supporting the Bobcats Senior Honorary and the Alumni Association Hispanic Alumni Club. Anna Marie, who worked at the University for more than 20 years, had a strong network of Wildcat connections, many of whom honored her through their participation. The campaign has raised more than \$50,000 from 190 donors.

"We're so touched by the outpouring of love and support," Chalk-Wadsworth said. "The crowdfunding platform has been a great way for my mom's former students, colleagues and friends and family to celebrate her life."

Another recent campaign exceeded its goal to raise \$25,000 to endow a scholarship in honor of **Rebekah Hoppel Salcedo**, who joined the University in 2008 and was the executive director of the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid when she died in 2019.

Learn More

The Foundation's Office of Annual Giving is available to brainstorm potential crowdfunding projects. Campus partners are not charged to use the service or the platform, but all new University gifts of \$1,000 or more are subject to a **development fee** ^[4]. Contact the office at supportua@uafoundation.org ^[5].

*The University and the Foundation have launched a **second crowdfunding campaign to help students** ^[6] who are struggling to remain enrolled as they and their families encounter pandemic-related employment difficulties, medical expenses and other challenges. Visit crowdfund.arizona.edu/fueltheresponse ^[7] to give.*

Source URL:<https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/tips-successful-crowdfunding-campaign>

Links

[1] <http://crowdfund.arizona.edu/> [2] <https://newstart.arizona.edu/> [3] <https://coopercenter.arizona.edu/> [4] <https://policy.fso.arizona.edu/fsm/800/833> [5] <mailto:supportua@uafoundation.org> [6] <https://news.arizona.edu/story/fueling-response-students-need> [7] <http://crowdfund.arizona.edu/fueltheresponse>