



REACHING FOR £2 BILLION

Supercharging Growth in UK
Higher Education Fundraising



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INTRODUCTION

Dan Keyworth, Director of Customer Success (International Markets Group), Blackbaud and Bruce Bernstein, Executive Director for Global Engagement, Europe and Africa, CASE

In a time of economic and political uncertainty with increasing competition for talent and resources, there is greater pressure than ever on UK universities to secure game-changing funds to enable them to deliver – and thrive – on a local, national and global stage. Philanthropy and external engagement must play a growing role in this imperative.

Our higher education sector is critical across the UK and to the world: as leaders in education and research, our universities have amazing diverse missions that provide transformative opportunities and impact to students and communities. They are powering economic growth and finding solutions to some of our biggest global problems and Sustainable Development Goals.

Released in April, the Ross-CASE 2019 Report¹ revealed that for the third year running UK higher education fundraising is contributing around £1bn annually in new funds. There has been a small rise this year after a previous dip: from £1.06bn and £979m in the past two years to £1.08bn in 2017-18.

While this is positive news, there is still a massive gap compared to the philanthropic income of US higher education fundraising. Stanford University alone received \$1.1bn in fundraising income in 2017-18², whilst Harvard University announced last September that it had brought in more than \$9.6bn during a five-year capital campaign³. Across the US, giving to colleges and universities rose 4.6% in the last academic year, with roughly \$47bn contributed to all colleges in 2017-18⁴.



¹ www.case.org/resources/ross-case-2019-report with interactive infographics at <https://www.case.org/ross-case-2019-interactive-infographic>.

² <https://news.stanford.edu/2019/02/11/stanford-releases-2017-18-fundraising-results/>

³ <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Harvard-Raised-96-Billion-in/244589>

⁴ <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Giving-to-Colleges-Rises-5-/245659>

With more income, universities can simply do more social good: for example, Lucile Salter Packard Children’s Hospital, part of the Stanford University system, initiated a \$1.1bn expansion plan in 2015 to boost its service capabilities⁵; at Stanford, as with many other leading universities, philanthropy plays a key role in helping to address complex, global problems, by funding scholarships and wider financial aid, academics, research and other programmes.

So, if UK institutions are to remain financially sustainable, globally competitive, and even more impactful to future generations, what can we do to attract more fundraising income? Although £1 billion is a laudable figure that is impacting millions of people – how do we push past this and achieve even more?

In the 2012 Review of Philanthropy in UK Higher Education⁶, Professor (now Dame) Shirley Anne Pearce rightly identified that: *“Fundraising is a long-term game that cannot be turned on and off without losing the support of donors. Universities must hold their nerve and continue to improve. If they do not, they will not reap the benefits set out in this report. If they do, they have the opportunity to receive £2 billion per annum from some 630,000 donors by 2022. Indeed, if they learn from each other and treat their donors well, they may do still better.”*

Seven years on, what can UK universities do to realise that vision, and specifically double fundraising from current levels to **reach £2 billion annually in 2022**? This is the challenge we look at in this eBook.

We identify ten key themes where higher education leaders and their advancement teams can focus attention to supercharge growth, and CASE Europe discuss what the benchmarking data shows is currently happening and its meaning for the future. Simone Kraemer and Dale Cooper describe their respective research work on public policy and major gift fundraising; whilst University College London and Aston University share their experiences of successfully increasing income; and we finish with the global possibilities of digital transformation.

We hope this publication will help you and your team in reaching the next step in your fundraising journey.

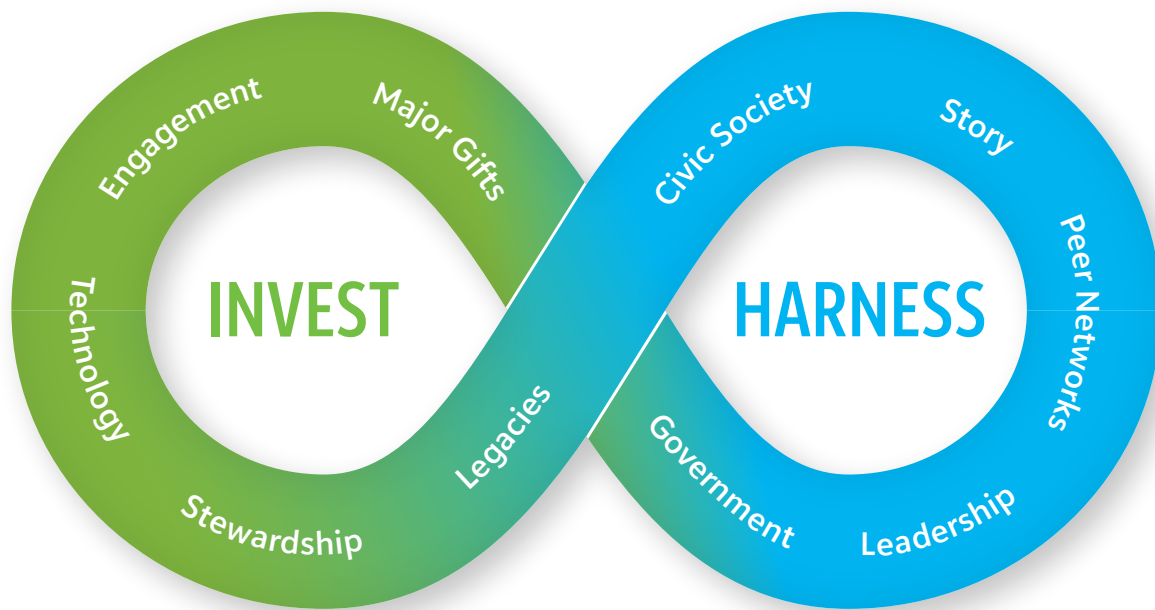


5 <https://www.hospitalmanagement.net/news/newslucile-packard-childrens-hospital-stanford-us-4666421/>

6 https://www.morepartnership.com/library/Review_of_Philanthropy_in_UK_Higher_Education.pdf (2012 status report and challenges for the next decade Report to HEFCE by More Partnership)

SECTION ONE: 10 THEMES FOR GROWTH

Dan Keyworth, Director of Customer Success, (International Markets Group), Blackbaud



1 INVESTING IN ENGAGEMENT

Although the title of this e-book is fundraising – the bottom line is that it's not really all about fundraising. Universities in the UK are increasingly realising that external relations with alumni, supporters and friends is not solely about bringing money in. Engagement has a huge impact on many other areas affecting the university's success, from recruitment and employability to advocacy and brand.

For example, widening participation and access is crucial to most universities, and alumni can play a key role as your largest and most geographically spread members of the university community, not least those working in target schools and communities. Similarly, alumni are an unparalleled source of mentoring, corporate introductions, industry links and careers advice to benefit students and academics alike. And whilst your office can send out social posts, imagine what happens if you also had thousands of your alumni tweeting; the brand exposure increases substantially. Your alumni are your advocates and they are there to help you spread the word about your institution, if you invest in engaging with them.

Philanthropy will thrive when engagement is not just to ask for funds, but to also understand their needs and desire for a continuing relationship with your institution, and then match these and their voice, expertise and connections to your institution's mission. Investment should reflect this wider *return on engagement*, with leaders recognising the multidisciplinary way in which alumni and friends can help. In particular, institutions should prioritise creating a two-way 'value exchange' and build up volunteer networks to a far greater scale than exists today.



2

INVESTING IN MAJOR PHILANTHROPY PROGRAMMES

Almost every successful development function has an established major gift programme, as shown by the Ross-CASE data. A large proportion of overall funding comes from major and principal gifts, including those of £25m and above that can transform an institution's mission delivery. A rising tide lifts all boats: by securing major investment through philanthropy to those areas that a university has greatest strength, it can in time lift the reputation and success of other areas.

Focusing on an outstanding major gifts programme is logical: it is much easier to manage relationships with a small number of people each giving large amounts, than a large amount of people each giving a little, and much easier to involve key academics and leaders with these contacts. If you invest in the right resources and processes for identifying, cultivating, soliciting and then stewarding donors, with technology underpinning the 'moves management' process, then you can secure wins that help make the case to invest in broader programmes. Actively involving and gaining confidence across your executive team and largest supporters will give you the time and money to invest in more long-term campaigns.

3

INVESTING IN LEGACY GIVING

The one area that most universities do not invest in, much to their detriment, is legacies. In the long-term, legacy programmes are potentially the most valuable campaigns any social good organisation can put time and effort into. In fact, many universities were founded in this way, and bequests by will are often the biggest gift someone will ever make – such as donating parts of their estate, and in a tax-effective way from their family's perspective.

However, there are rarely quick wins here – it will involve sustained stewardship of potential supporters and their spouses for many years. Convincing the executive team to invest in legacy programmes is often difficult, simply because there is no gain to see in the short-term. But it is worth it. Universities need to be persuaded to think long-term, and to share and celebrate stories of those who choose to support future generations through their will.

4 INVESTING IN STEWARDSHIP

Effective fundraising doesn't end with the gift. The magic of philanthropy is in transformational outcomes for both beneficiaries and donors, and the network effect this creates for more social good. Strategic priorities vary, but one goal is near-ubiquitous in its importance: to attract, retain and inspire talent in young people, regardless of background or income. At its very best, student support can have transformative impact upon all parts of the institution, from students and applicants to academics, alumni and donors, both individually and together.

Our survey of 110 institutions in January⁷ found a real opportunity exists to improve award and stewardship management, with lack of accountability or responsibility for the holistic process and its outcomes a key theme. That 72% do not have a single portal currently (or don't know of it), 48% think their overall award process is not well organised or streamlined, and 43% think their current way managing awards does not meet institution's needs, all deliver food for thought. Those with decentralised management typically said they were much less effective. It also exposed differing needs of teams internally, with institutions seeking a range of improvements, but not joined-up on what those are. A funds-raised strategy alone cannot suffice; less than half of institutions give away all their funding available (and this is most pronounced in those with least to give away) despite there being a clear need for more.

That need – and the risk of not delivering against it – will only grow in future. There are many types of student awards offered, and this will expand as donors play a greater role. For many institutions, 30% or fewer students receive some form of award today, which will need to increase over time. There is already a wide gulf in funds available between institutions – from less than £25k per year to more than £5m per year – with correlation to maturity of processes. The costs of success and failure are equally high – those that get it right will not only prosper but also deliver real change for communities, whilst others may find themselves unable to compete in the increasingly open market for young talent. At the core is a need to better connect donors and beneficiaries, and demonstrate the impact of philanthropy across generations, with long-term benefits to giving.

5 INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Technology, data and processes are a key enabler to fundraising growth, with a highly positive return on investment because they help to underpin and maximise all of these other activities. The bottom line is that higher education institutions need to see fundraising technology not as cost but as an essential driver of growth; it is the foundation to invest in, or risk failing in all other areas. It is also not a one-time investment; the best returns come to teams with annual programmes for enhancing their systems and processes as they scale up their fundraising.

Your fundraisers and engagement staff simply need powerful technology. This means having capabilities designed around their specific needs, which are very different from other parts of your university. Many institutions fail in their efforts to grow development because they try to treat their advancement teams as if their system needs are the same as other parts of campus, whereas fundraising and gift management are nuanced in a multitude of ways. It is much easier to share data and reporting across your administration ecosystem, with modern open APIs, than it is to customise capabilities in a solution not designed for fundraisers.

⁷ <https://hub.blackbaud.co.uk/scholarships/blackbaud-scholarship-and-stewardship-survey-2018>

Fundamentally, we are living in a digitally transforming world – and this impacts everything we do. Advancement is not immune; and much like everything else, it needs to respond to consumer needs. Some institutions are still very reliant on cheques and other outdated ways of accepting funds. As we begin acquiring supporters and donors from all over the world – and as our alumni spread far and wide, this will happen – so they will have high expectations of flexible engagement and giving methods. We must be ready to respond to that.

6 HARNESSING OUR STORY

If the first five themes above are about how we fundraise and how we steward our supporters, the next five are about how we approach the need for philanthropy and how we tell our amazing story. And it's important to start by realising that we have an amazing story to tell.

Universities across the UK today are essential to social and economic progress, locally, nationally and globally, with education one of the most important drivers of change. Our universities play a fundamental role in advancing each of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, but how many people realise that? How do we tell the story of the difference we make to reducing inequalities, to water security, to curing cancer, to poverty reduction, to climate change, to sustainable cities, and much, much more, as well as to quality education? How are we telling and celebrating our partnerships with charities, foundations, companies and schools to effect such change, and prioritising greater collaboration to grow our networks?

Ultimately large parts of society, and even many of our own students and alumni, are not clear about this today. There is much more that we can do as a sector, as well as individually, to tell our story and to engage across external and internal communities. Our story is one that every consumer can care about. But we need to lower our walls and let more people understand and see what we are doing. When we do so, our supporters will increasingly be not only those who want to give back, but also those who want to change the world by advancing the causes they most believe in.

7 HARNESSING OUR PEER NETWORKS

If you think peer-to-peer fundraising is just for charities, think again. The community you've already built of alumni, staff, students and friends – when engaged with social fundraising in the right way – can do wonders for a university's reach and fundraising potential. Great fundraising depends not only on our direct interactions with donors and prospects but also on cultivating deep, lifelong connections across our alumni and broader communities. When these flourish, they can extend our reach far beyond the individuals we know directly, to a much wider network of supporters. There is growing evidence of the long-term value (to all stakeholders) of a thriving, inclusive fundraising community: supporters increasingly expect such engagement and want it to be timely, frequent, meaningful, relevant and frictionless. Their needs are online as well as offline, and relational as well as transactional.



Every educational institution has a great story and compelling projects it can promote to its alumni, parents and other audiences—many of which they can easily share with their own personal networks. Time and resource are often the two most limiting factors which impede us as development functions. Regardless of how strong we are as fundraisers and the size of our team, we can only reach so many individuals directly. Here is where an increasingly interconnected world and the benefits of online technology can play a greater role.

As JustGiving's 22 million users demonstrate, our donor base shouldn't stop just because our fundraisers' reach does. There are untapped projects which can resonate with new and existing supporters, as well as your students. We all want to reach more people with our missions. If done well, the potential for future levels of engagement within and beyond our alumni base is truly staggering: many of the 98% or more of alumni and parents not giving to their university today can be reached engagingly and without friction by their peers.

8 HARNESSING OUR INSTITUTIONAL LEADERS

In order to be truly successful, fundraising must be an institutional, top-down priority. Advancement is something that will contribute to your university's long-term future, and so the whole leadership team needs to care about and embrace it. Fundraising can't just be the responsibility of development staff working alone – everyone involved with the university should play a part, with your development leadership as conductor of this great orchestra. Vice Chancellors may need to spend 25% or more of their time on advancement – proudly and unashamedly – and to rally their teams to support the advancement activities and share their own networks. But how do you get buy-in at the top level if you don't have it today? We need to better engage with Vice-Chancellors as a combined voice across the sector and help them to better understand our profession and its importance.

Succeed, and they and their leadership teams can elevate their promotion of advancement goals and the university's broadest story and share much more widely all the outstanding things the institution can achieve – and therefore why donors should support you. At its best, this approach extends to our supporter, volunteer and community leaders too, to champions of industry, to the media and government, and other influencers around the world, making them a key part of our collective story.





HARNESSING OUR GOVERNMENT

In 2004, the *Increasing Voluntary Giving to Higher Education* report⁸ recommended the government create a matched funding scheme to boost voluntary giving. It was implemented in 2008 and in total £143m was distributed, whilst annual fundraising by UK universities rose from £513m in 2008 to £694m in 2011. Much more importantly though, the three-year match-funding scheme helped provide the impetus for some universities to improve their fundraising capacity – making investments to harness the opportunity – and it helped to raise the profile of why philanthropy to universities is important.

Now, over ten years on, an active, supportive, collaborative approach from government is needed again. To remain globally competitive, a similar governmental scheme would help champion higher education's role in society and invest directly in helping universities to grow their income streams from philanthropy and other sources.



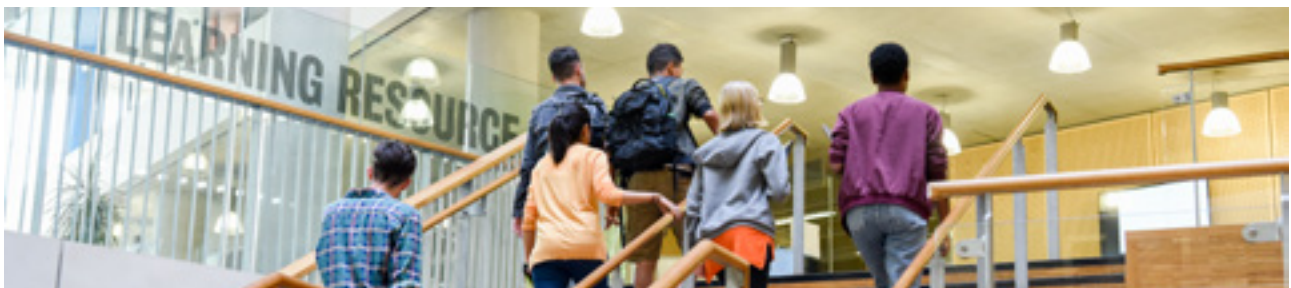
HARNESSING OUR CIVIC ROLE

Many universities in the UK were born out of being civic universities; they were founded in order to help improve the city around it – with examples like the University of Birmingham and City, University of London originating this way. Universities are now at the heart of so many cities and towns across the UK, providing amazing collaboration and services, but there's more we can do to demonstrate impact on the populations around us and gain the support of the surrounding community.

We must ensure cities, and their citizens, feel positively attached to the role of universities and don't feel that their life is unconnected. Universities can, and should, be beacons of opportunity and impact that stretch far beyond students and staff, putting the institutions at the very core of a community's progress and development. The UPP Foundation's recent Civic University Commission Report⁹ highlighted four starting points for universities:

1. Understanding local populations and asking them what they want
2. Understanding themselves and deciding where to focus their “civic” endeavours
3. Working with other local anchor institutions, businesses and community organisations to agree where the short, medium and long-term opportunities and problems lie
4. Agreeing a clear set of priorities.

Taking positive action on these recommendations will bring many benefits, and one of those will be new, much wider avenues for inclusive fundraising and philanthropy. We must also harness our existing connections better: for example, several million people visit university cultural attractions – such as museums, botanic gardens and libraries – across the UK each year, but to what extent are we yet connecting those existing experiences to our wider social good goals?



⁸ <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/17735/1/IncreasingVoluntaryGivingReport.pdf> (Task Force report to Government, also known as the 2004 Thomas Report)

⁹ [Upp-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Civic-University-Commission-Final-Report.pdf](http://upp-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Civic-University-Commission-Final-Report.pdf)



SECTION 2

THE ROAD TO £1BN – HOW DID WE GET THERE?

Yashraj Jain, Senior Research Manager, Europe, CASE

GLOBAL OVERVIEW

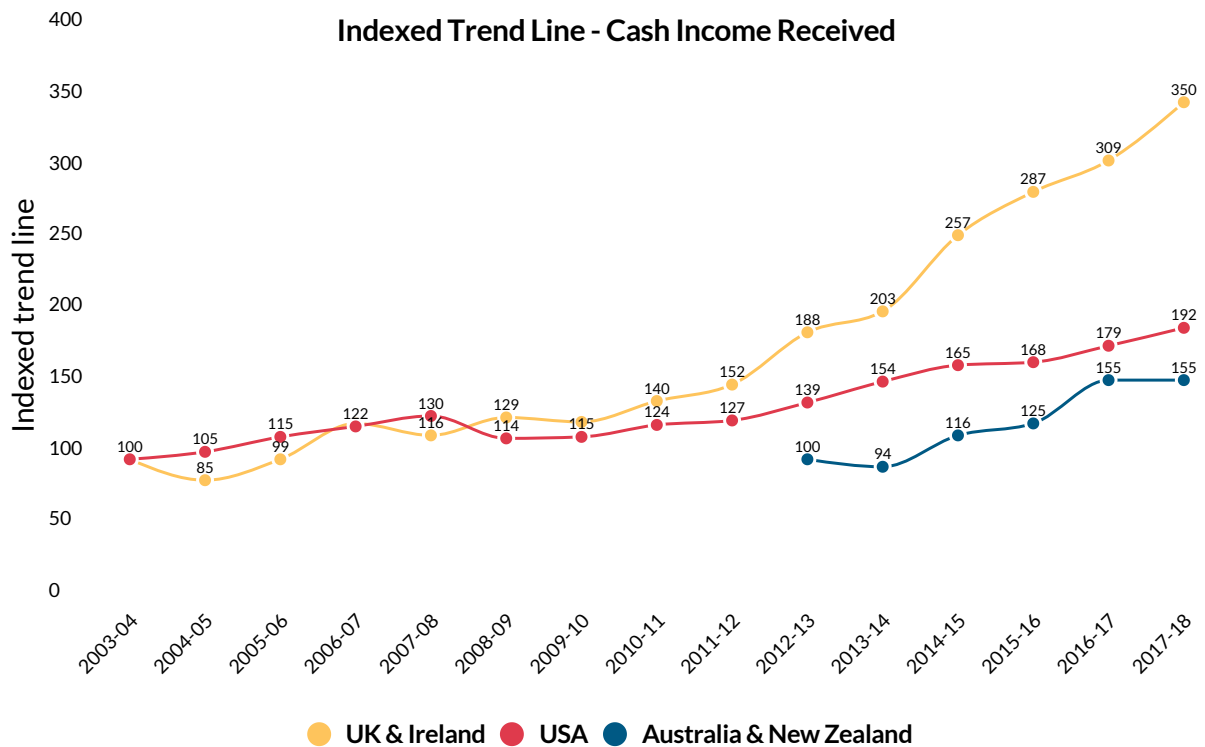
The Ross-CASE Survey Supporting Document prescribes definitions for recording philanthropic income. As per the document the two main methods of reporting philanthropic income are:

- ▶ New funds secured in a year are new gifts and confirmed pledges from donors received during the year. They include both new single cash gifts, and the full value (up to five years) of new confirmed pledges. New funds secured are new, so they do not include cash payments made against gift pledges secured in previous years. This figure reflects the success of current fundraising activity.
- ▶ Cash income received in a year includes all cash which arrives during the year – whether from new single cash gifts, or from cash payments received against pledges secured in this or previous years. Cash income reflects the success of both current, and past years' fundraising activity

The Ross-CASE survey has been collecting data on UK educational fundraising since the late 1990s. This has contributed to the creation of a rich longitudinal dataset based on responses from more than 100 educational institutions from UK and Ireland on philanthropic income, fundraising investment and number of donors. CASE has conducted similar studies in Australia and New Zealand, Canada, and the United States.

CASE recently published a global snapshot of voluntary support to post-secondary education¹⁰ based on indexed trend lines derived from annual mean figures. From this analysis, it was observed that the overarching global trends on philanthropic cash income received by educational institutions has been upward over time. The pace of that growth varies from year-to-year and by region.

#1 Institutions in UK & Ireland increased the amount received in cash income since 2009-10 at a faster rate than institutions in other regions



¹⁰ www.case.org/resources/voluntary-support-post-secondary-education-global-snapshot

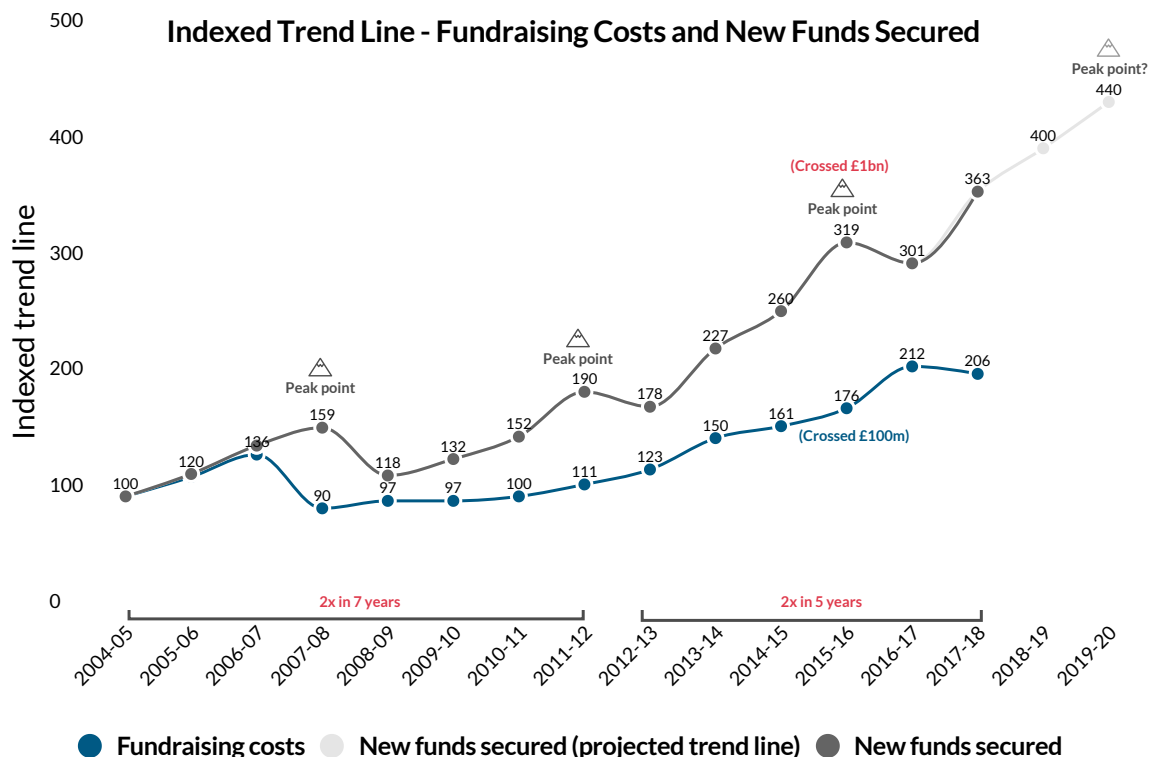
NEW FUNDS SECURED¹¹

A similar indexed trend line based on mean figures for new funds secured from 2004-05 onwards also shows an overall upward trajectory, peaking at three points with index values of 159 in 2007-08, 190 in 2011-12 and 319 in 2015-16. We see a drop in new funds secured in the year following these peak points highlighting the sector's need to pause and before rebooting every three years and moving into the next upward cycle. Does this suggest two more years of upward movement from 2017-18 onwards?

Based on the growth depicted in the trend lines, the sector took seven years to almost double the value of new funds secured from 2004-05 (index 100) to 2011-12 (index 190). More recently, the sector doubled the value of new funds secured over five years from 2012-13 (index 178) to 2017-18 (index 363).

Investment in fundraising operations gradually increased year-on-year from 2010-11 till 2016-17 and slightly decreased in 2017-18. Prior to this, investment in fundraising saw its largest drop (-33%) from 2006-07 to 2007-08. Interestingly, new funds secured in the following year saw its largest drop (-26%) from 2007-08 to 2008-09, signifying a possible knock-on effect of disinvestment in the sector. Since then, with continued upward trends in fundraising investment, new funds secured declined on two occasions by a modest 7% or less and increased by 21% from 2016-17 to 2017-18 when investment in fundraising decreased by 3%.

¹¹ New funds secured includes new cash gifts, the full value of confirmed pledges committed in the year, realised bequests, and the market value of gifts-in-kind. It does not include cash payments made against pledges



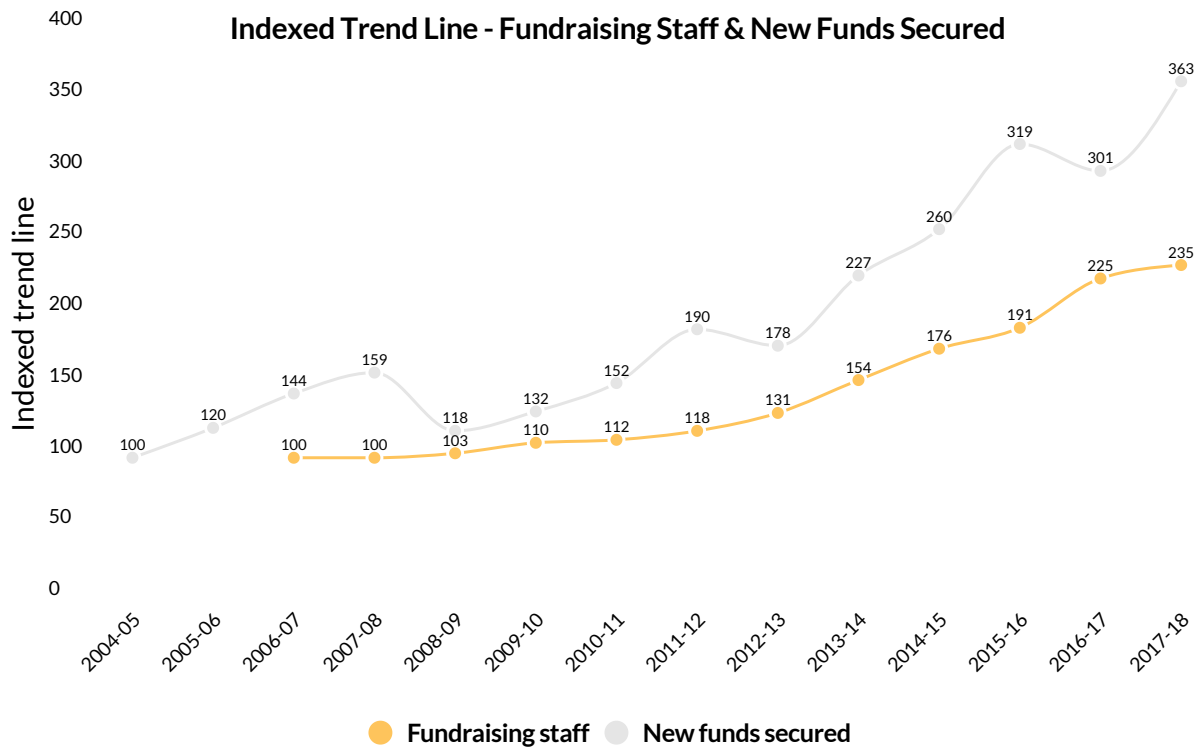
#2 Higher education fundraising cycle in the UK and Ireland demonstrate three-years of growth followed by a period of decline



FUNDRAISING STAFF

The number of fundraising staff in the sector have increased consistently each year from 2006-07 to 2017-18. The rate of increase is higher in last five years than it was in the first five years as seen by a steeper upward trend line from 2012-13 to 2017-18. The workforce almost doubled in size over nine years from 2006-07 (index 100) to 2015-16 (index 191), while more recently it doubled in size over six years from 2011-12 (index 118) to 2017-18 (index 235).

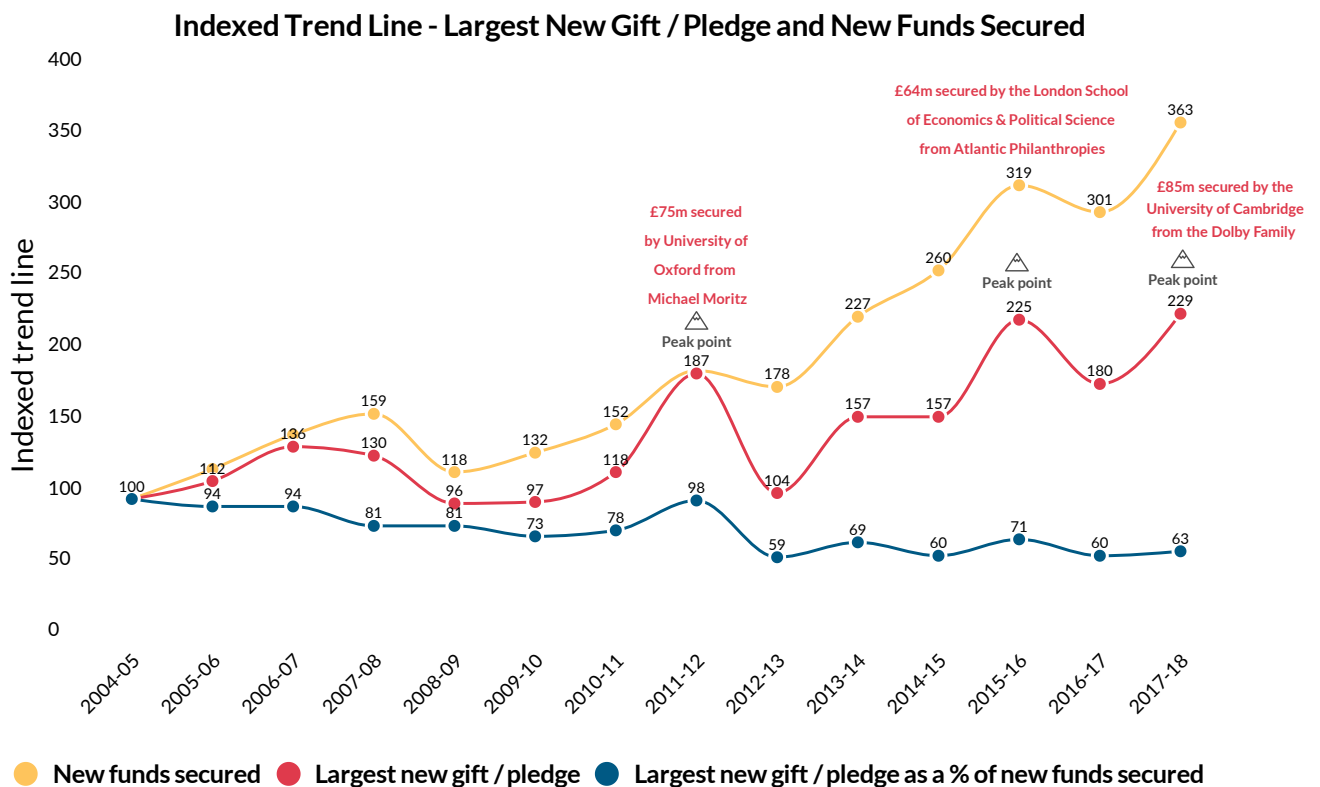
#3 Fundraising staff grew at a faster rate in the last five years (2013-2018) than the first five years (2007-2012)



MAJOR GIFTS

The peak points in the indexed trend line for new funds secured coincide with peak points in the indexed trend line for largest gifts secured by the sector in 2011-12 and 2015-16. Overall, the two trend lines signify an increase in total new funds secured when the value of funds secured from major new gifts or pledges also increases. The indexed trend line for percentage of new funds secured from largest new gift or pledge has decreased from 2004-05 (index 100) to 2017-18 (index 63) suggesting that over time, institutions are diversifying their fundraising portfolio to ensure they don't heavily depend on securing large gifts and pledges to reach their targets. This is also evident from the widening gap between the indexed trend lines for new funds secured and largest new gift or pledge.

#4 Major gifts key contributor to overall growth in the sector

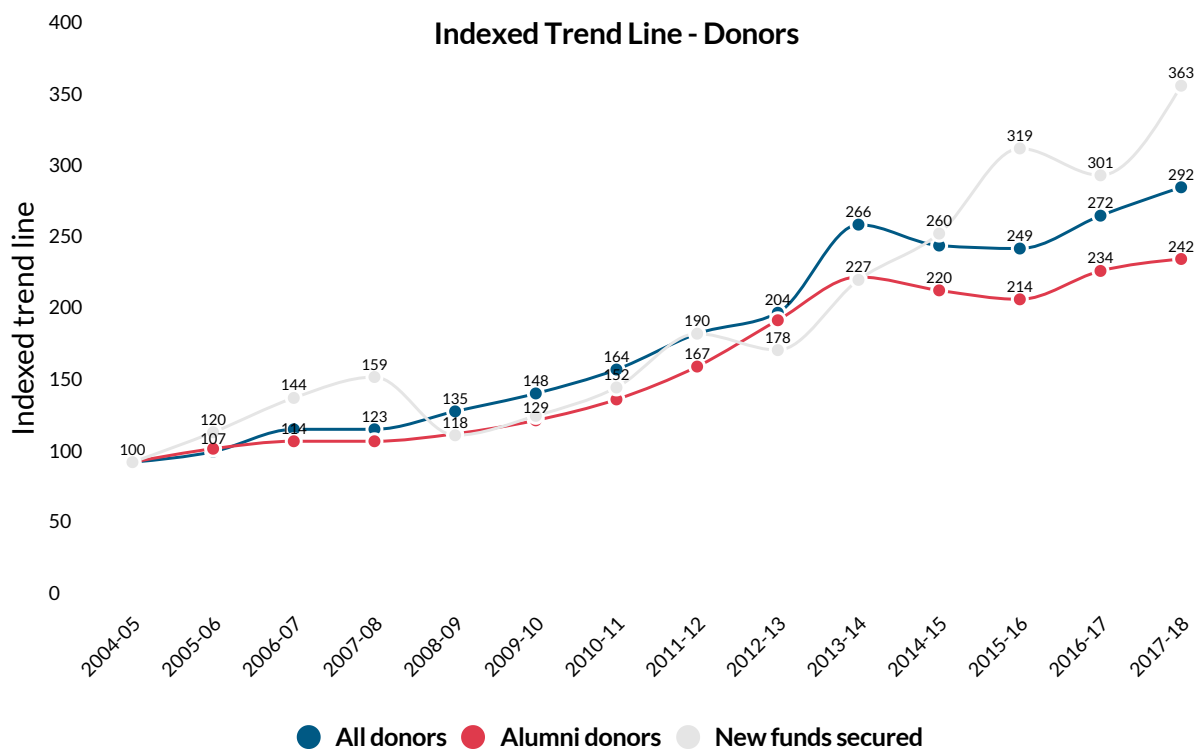


DONORS

An indexed trend line based on mean donor numbers shows a gradual increase year-on-year and a steep rise from 2012-13 to 2013-14. Following this numbers plateaued till 2015-16 and have been rising since then. Trends in number of all donors and alumni donors follow the same path. Donor numbers doubled over eight years from 2004-05 (index 100) to 2012-13 (index 204). Since then alumni donor numbers seem to be stagnating with minor year-on-year movements and total donor numbers have increased by just under 45% over five years from 2012-13 (index 204) to 2017-18 (index 292).

Given these long-term trends with donor numbers changing marginally year-on-year, the sector will continue to look towards securing high-value gifts from a small number of donors. Nonetheless, continuing to cultivate and steward a wider base of constituents (by way of online giving, crowdfunding, annual funds and regular giving) to lay the foundations for a robust fundraising pipeline will also be a critical factor in securing the future health of the sector and its growth.

#5 Growth in donor numbers fueled by non-alumni giving



SECTION 3

ROLE OF PUBLIC POLICY IN SHAPING UK HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDRAISING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Dr Simone Kraemer, Researcher and Practitioner, University of Kent

In 2017, philanthropic funding in UK higher education hit the headlines when the Ross-CASE survey reported that new funds exceeded £1 billion a year for the first time in history. This milestone, together with the general rise in philanthropic income, is often solely attributed to supportive government policies such as the previously run Capacity Building Scheme (CBS) and the Match Funding Scheme (MFS).

My research conducted with data from secondary data analysis of the Ross-CASE survey, archival data and interviews, offers a slightly different explanation for this achievement. The entire credit for the increase in philanthropic income should not be given to two policies, as philanthropic income was on an upward trajectory already. Fundraising offices started to exist and professionalise before the 2000s and sharing of best practice and training already took place. While it is difficult to make any causal links between policy and outcome in this specific case, this research has uncovered that there was a more complex shift-taking place in which fundraisers and the experience and readiness of the institutions had their role to play.

The schemes had political, economic and ideological drivers behind them that aimed to bring more attention to the role philanthropy and fundraised income can play in higher education, but they were not solutions to larger funding problems in higher education. They coincided with the shift of responsibility for paying for education to the private student rather than the public taxpayer that we have seen happening since the early 2000s. What is often forgotten, but this research argues, is that there has always been mixed funding, in fact philanthropy has helped to create and found every HEI in the UK and supports HEIs' mission to contribute to the public good, so philanthropy is by no means 'new'. Philanthropy is not and will never be a complete funding solution given that in most cases (except for Oxford and Cambridge who were outliers) philanthropy does not contribute more than 5% to the overall university income and no long-term policy or scheme has been put in place to support this.

The interview data suggested that the institutions' fundraising results, which vary greatly in the UK, commonly influenced for example the way the MFS was perceived and executed by fundraisers and institutions. Fundraisers had different perceptions of the MFS results to government who celebrated it was successful and in fundraisers' views there were no clear 'winners' of the policies and schemes. The relationships with donors seem to be somewhat in competition with the schemes' goals at times and in some cases, they have been contradicting the schemes' and institutional goals when a fundraiser felt the long-term relationship was more important than an imminent ask for a gift or a donation.

At a closer look, comparing views of government and those who worked with the policies and the donors, the fundraisers, it seemed as if the goals and views differed greatly on the surface. Yet, parallels can be drawn between pragmatism used by government to set up policy and by fundraisers in interpreting policy and then delivering institutional and policy goals simultaneously.

Fundraisers were often disappointed with policy outcomes and wanted longer incentives and control over how this could be applied at their institutions. The government, on the other hand, was satisfied with the results and disseminated this message across the sector. However, while these accounts appeared to be polar opposites, and goals for different actors looked different, both groups used similar techniques to make the outcomes as successful as possible for them.

This was achieved by being pragmatic about the solution and outcomes, and in the end, both parties wanted similar outcomes from the process and achieved some of their goals; the policy interventions were one of several tools for both government and fundraisers to apply to achieve their goals.

The success of the policies was not only dependent on the right time for the policy attention, it was also reliant on the compliance of those fundraisers to contribute to these policy opportunities and reliant on fundraising and institutions to then apply and deliver the set policies. Fundraisers were found to have contributed to the policy attention but their role within the organisation is often unacknowledged and also limited, if not risky, if more powerful stakeholder groups do not support them. This is because they are dependent on others in their institutions and they are put into risky front line positions as internal and external relationship managers.

Further research is needed following up on fundraisers' role within their organisational setting to understand how their approach and goals compare to institutional and policy goals that ultimately enables more and joined up fundraising activities in institutions.

*Extract of findings from doctoral study conducted at the Centre for Philanthropy, University of Kent.





SECTION 4

LEARNING THE CRAFT – A STUDY OF MAJOR DONOR FUNDRAISING

Dale Cooper, University of Manchester

You have probably attended training days for major gift fundraisers where the facilitator runs a role-play session so that participants can practise their newly acquired skills in asking for money. Often they feature wildly eccentric donor characters who throw every conceivable obstacle into the fundraisers' path. While their aim is laudable – to create a safe space to practise – the exercise bears no resemblance to an average donor meeting. For the manager who wants to invest in their team or the major gift fundraiser interested in honing their fundraising skills, one must look to deliberate practice as an alternative approach.

The latest neuroscience research confirms the usefulness of deliberate practice as a powerful tool for skill acquisition. The specific techniques used by deliberate practice promote the growth of myelin in the brain. Myelin wraps around the nerve fibres down which signals are sent and received. By insulating the neural pathway linked with a specific skill, that skill is embedded at a deeper level and with faster recall.

But what is deliberate practice? It's far from the dull repetition of a single exercise, rather it's the conscious execution of a single task that is repeated. Think David Beckham doing 1 keepy-uppy 1,000 times rather than 1,000 keepy-uppies. This usually requires input from a mentor or coach as effective feedback is essential to knowledge and skill acquisition. Ideally, learners reach a point where they are able to evaluate their own performance. Deliberate learning exercises to facilitate this start with the ability to think through an idealised version of the activity, features a depth of planning and concentration, and continues with a repeated focus on weaknesses.



This level of commitment and introspection requires an individual with high levels of motivation that is a consequence of their values or interest. Not all fundraisers have this, but the good news is that they are easy to identify. The best fundraisers must genuinely like, be interested in, and have empathy for people. A study of over 1,200 major gift officers found that socially and intellectually curious individuals represented just 3.8% of the survey population, but had 78% higher odds of exceeding goals (EAB, 2014).

If we want to open up a pipeline of talented individuals who can create sustainable and lasting relationship for their institutions, we first need to recruit individuals who have a 'driven curiosity'. There a number of mechanisms, such as EQ testing, to identify those candidates who fit this description.

This leaves the meat of what a major gift fundraiser should learn. The standard major donor relationship frameworks in use (e.g. the seven steps of solicitation) provide a convenient introduction to the field and a means for measuring progress towards achieving financial targets. Beyond that their usefulness is limited. They do not provide the depth of insight into how to develop a relationship with a donor that generates trust and commitment. Rather than prescriptive models, the major gift fundraiser should look instead to master a range of key skills. This include:

- **Personal development (understanding their own cognitive biases)**
- **Emotional engagement (how fundraisers relate to the cause they are promoting)**
- **Emotional intelligence (how to interpret and evaluate a donors' motivations correctly)**
- **The ability to inspire and motivate a donor**
- **Communication skills (verbal/non-verbal and written)**
- **Relationship development skills (understanding a donor's perspective and interests)**
- **Solicitation skills (how to ask)**

The findings from this research have a range of implications for fundraising managers and the sector in terms of major gift fundraiser recruitment and training. Major gift managers need to create a safe environment where their team members can: discuss and visualise an ideal donor meeting; dissect it into its constituent parts; role-play or walk through the many variations and outcomes in conversation; and once the donor meeting is completed, reflect on the interactions for a deeper understanding.

This process of active reflection that focuses relentlessly on areas of weakness should be repeated for each and every meeting until mastery is achieved. To quote Samuel Beckett, 'Try again. Fail again. Fail better'.

*Summary of findings from an MA research project conducted through the Centre for Philanthropy, University of Kent.

SECTION 5

UCL CASE STUDY: *IT'S ALL ACADEMIC* CAMPAIGN

Adrian Punaks, Executive Director of Development, UCL

When UCL prepared to launch its major new fundraising campaign, it thought hard about the target it should set itself – knowing that, as a world top 10 institution and one of the UK's most successful fundraising universities, it wanted to set its sights high with an ambitious but realistic figure.

In September 2016, the *'It's All Academic'* campaign launched with a major public event that declared the university's intention to raise £600 million, one of the biggest philanthropic targets a European university had ever set.

Nearly three years later, *It's All Academic* has surpassed the £500 million milestone a year ahead of schedule, and is expected to hit its target in 2020. What has driven the trajectory of this highly successful campaign?

WHOLE INSTITUTION ENDEAVOUR

The most successful fundraising universities are just that – fundraising universities, not universities with a fundraising office. UCL's current campaign has a major focus on developing the mentality that philanthropy is a whole institution endeavour.

This has included senior academic involvement through an Internal Campaign Steering Group, representing the whole spectrum of UCL's disciplines, set up at the start of campaign planning and responsible for developing the themes, goals, priorities and strategy of *It's All Academic*.





It now continues to monitor, guide and develop the campaign, ensuring awareness, buy-in and increasing expertise in philanthropy amongst some of the advancement team's most important stakeholders. This cross-university involvement also means that *It's All Academic* is fully aligned with (and is a recognised enabler of) *UCL 2034*, UCL's long-term strategy, further embedding philanthropy as a core 'business as usual' activity.

Alongside that has been a focus on building strong, collaborative relationships with key academic and professional services partners from campaign priority areas and developing their understanding of philanthropy. This reflects the fact that the entry point to an institution for potential supporters is often through a department, an academic or a clinician, who need to be able to spot a prospective donor and know when and how to involve the advancement office – and, most importantly, have the confidence to do so.

Crucially, UCL is headed by a President & Provost, Professor Michael Arthur, who (as a CASE Trustee) is passionate about philanthropy and understands that it needs the time, involvement and endorsement of the institution's leader to reach its full potential. His leadership structure is designed to give him space to focus on philanthropy and around 25% of his time is ringfenced for it. Philanthropists want to know that the work they are funding is an institutional priority; the time and care that Professor Arthur gives those relationships is a crucial signal of UCL's seriousness.

INTERNAL PROFILE OF PHILANTHROPY

In advance of the launch of *It's All Academic*, UCL also changed its senior management structure, promoting the development and alumni relations team from a department to a Vice-Provost's Office, with communications and marketing joining that portfolio in 2018. This sent a clear signal about the significance of philanthropy to UCL, and boosted the profile and influence of the advancement team within UCL and externally.

Investment in the team has also increased (justified by one of the best ROI rates in the UK university sector), reflecting UCL's understanding that sustainable long-term growth in philanthropy is built above all on a properly resourced, highly skilled and experienced team of advancement professionals.

“CHANGE NOT CHARITY”

UK universities have traditionally viewed their alumni community as their most likely source of philanthropic support, but UCL is reaping the benefits of shifting its focus. Increasingly its major donors are now global philanthropists who do not necessarily have a personal connection to the university but are strategic, collaborative cause-led problem-solvers looking for the best partners to pursue their ethos of “change not charity”. The catalyst of a major campaign has undoubtedly increased UCL’s confidence to position itself to these ‘mega-philanthropists’ as a natural partner to drive that change.

That does not, however, mean that alumni are not crucially important to UCL as donors, advocates, volunteers and friends. *It’s All Academic* is broadening UCL’s definition of philanthropy to recognise that there are many different ways of giving – in addition to the £600 million target, the campaign also aims to bank 250,000 volunteering hours.

UNIQUELY UCL

In a competitive international environment, conveying distinctiveness is key to long-term philanthropic growth. The framework of a campaign was an opportunity for UCL to examine where it wanted to focus its philanthropic firepower, identifying those areas in which the university is genuinely world leading and where philanthropy can make the greatest strategic difference.

The profile, structure and narrative that resulted has driven a campaign that is uniquely and authentically UCL, growing donor relationships that are based on shared ambitions, visions and values.

BRIDGE TO £1 BILLION

In talking about UCL’s current campaign, the word that comes up again and again is relationships. Philanthropy is not transactional – it is an activity based on passion and the drive to do good. The relationships that UCL is nurturing through this campaign – with academic and professional services colleagues, students and alumni, and philanthropic individuals and organisations globally – are the foundations on which it will build its bridge to a future £1 billion campaign.





SECTION 6

ASTON UNIVERSITY CASE STUDY: £50M FOR 50 YEARS CAMPAIGN

By Andrew Harris, Executive Director of Campaigns, Aston University

BACKGROUND

In 2012 Aston was looking ahead to 2016 and the 50th Anniversary of the award of our Royal Charter. The University was keen to celebrate this milestone, and also to use this as a platform to launch a major capital campaign. *£50m for 50 Years* had a ring to it, and this was already the stated ambition by the time the new development director arrived in August 2013.

It was very clear that the institution was starting from a low base in terms of the fundraising team size and capability, plus prospect identification, a history of giving and active networks. What Aston did have was willing institutional leadership, some exciting projects (most notably the launch of a Medical School), a great deal of warmth to the institution from within the West Midlands and an alumni body which included a number of extremely successful individuals who credited this success to their Aston education.

CHALLENGES

We needed to address two main challenges. Firstly, to gain any credibility and to be able to build momentum and stories to tell by the launch in April 2016, we had to find a way to get out and see as many of our leading alumni as possible, catalyse the relationships and to get people supporting. The university was quick to agree a

staged five-year investment plan to increase from 3 to 17 people in the Development and Alumni Relations team, but we still needed more capacity to help initiate and develop as many relationships as possible.

Secondly, we had to build the brand of the University among our target audience, and a wider network. Aston has a remarkable history, some great academic centres and unique offerings - for instance we are the only university in the UK to have a Regius Professor of Pharmacy – but as a smaller institution outside of the Russell Group our profile is lower, particularly beyond our region. In light of this, trying to talk to those individuals and companies who had not traditionally had a relationship with Aston was challenging.

SOLUTION

We addressed these challenges by building a committed base of lay-leadership who would come together in Board structures and help us tactically by making approaches and attending prospect meetings, both with Aston development staff and solo. These volunteers expanded our reach and capacity and because of the status of the individuals on the board (CEOs and chairs of household names), they gave us instant credibility in our approaches and particularly with businesses.

Between 2014-17 the team put in place four volunteer boards with a total of 28 members – the main campaign board that oversaw all activity and made approaches to alumni nationally and internationally, a board focussed on relationships in the West Midlands, a business board who would help us develop relationships with corporate partners, and a US Foundation. We were grateful for the leadership of alumni like Dr Tony Hayward, Chairman of Glencore; Dr Matthew Crummack, CEO of GoCompare and to Dr Farhan Sharaff, Chief Investment Officer, Guggenheim Partners. Getting the right people in place to lead the boards was crucial, as was being clear with the membership that where we needed the assistance was primarily with the practical approaches rather than the advice and strategy.

IMPACT

By the 2016 campaign launch milestone we had increased philanthropic giving ten-fold from 2012, had four times as many donors giving annually and had a committed volunteer structure.

As well as increasing traditional giving, our boards have helped us grow other income streams for the University. In 2017 Aston graduated the first degree apprentices in the UK with CapGemini, and with the advent of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2017, we needed to capitalise on our first-mover position quickly. By using the business board and their networks, we were able to get in front of the executive-level at some of the leading apprentice-levy payers in the Midlands and beyond. This was extremely successful, with companies commissioning bespoke 'closed-cohort' executive MBA programmes for their teams, or funding staff to take part in open cohorts of programmes run by Aston Business School and the Aston Professional Engineering Centre.

Development and Alumni Relations is now targeted on a broader definition of 'income' which reflects the true value brought to Aston through the network of alumni and friends of the University. This includes not only philanthropy, but also transactional income (coming from Degree Apprenticeships and research contracts for example), and investment income in our spin-out activity - another area where our volunteer boards have been leading conversations.

In 2019, Aston is a place which recognises the great opportunity a community of alumni offers across the University. Alongside the development of an experienced and committed team and comprehensive fundraising and alumni relations programmes, the volunteer Boards have been instrumental in placing Aston in a position where we have some great stories to tell of alumni philanthropic and transactional income and involvement that touches every aspect of the institutional strategy.



SECTION 7: LEVERAGING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TO SAFEGUARD YOUR INSTITUTION FOR THE FUTURE

Tim Hill, President and General Manager, Blackbaud Higher Education Solutions

Never before has the value of higher education been more critical—or more scrutinised. With UK student loan debts soaring beyond £100bn¹², supporters expect institutions to offset tuition costs through fundraising, and donors expect impact from their giving.

If this trend continues, institutions will struggle to compete and remain sustainable—and some will not survive. Recognising the crucial role higher education plays in building a better world, Blackbaud helps institutions of all types refute this trend by providing purpose-built solutions to drive digital transformation and impact.

At the institutional level, digital transformation isn't so simple. It means changing the way things have always been done. That top-down systemic change can feel daunting, but I believe it's absolutely critical to success. [Digital](#)

¹² <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01079>

[transformation](#) connects a university's supporters in an intrinsic way, allowing them to communicate with supporters how they want, at the frequency they want, and with messages that resonate with them specifically. That takes the right solutions, good data, and the foresight to recognise the benefits.

DEEPEN ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

It's more important than ever for institutions to develop key strategies to cultivate and retain top donors and identify and prioritise new ones.

An institution's future depends upon the extent to which its alumni are connected. Alumni are not only a critical piece of an institution's fundraising strategy but their proudest ambassadors. Alumni want their alma mater to succeed, grow, and transform to meet the needs of that community—because not only does that success change the world for the better, but that success also adds value to their own degrees.

Digital connectivity allows institutions to build and strengthen a real-life community. And with the right tools, higher education institutions can stay connected with their alumni through key life changes and improve the alumni experience. Institutions can keep their alumni engaged through virtual correspondence and build a community that feels connected not only during the few times per year that they meet in the same room, but all year long.

WORK SMARTER WITH DATA AND INSIGHTS

In an increasingly competitive and underfunded environment, I think it's imperative that institutions recognise the value that comes from analytical, data-driven insights—and be willing to invest in that resource. Using data analytics and business intelligence tools are no longer recommended but instead required for success. [Powerful analytics and data](#) can help create a comprehensive picture of every supporter and provide clear guidance on how to grow and where to find potential supporters who can drive the next great era at the institution.

By tapping into the potential of Blackbaud's solutions' comprehensive capabilities, institutions can connect strategically and effectively along the engagement journey – from student to alumnus to donor.

CONNECT YOUR CAMPUS

When it comes to CRM and fundraising systems at most institutions, campus departments and programmes often operate in silos. Reversing this trend and investing in a connected campus enables institutions to not only save time, money, and effort but to gain a competitive advantage.

By consolidating disparate processes, communications, and data into one comprehensive cloud solution that the entire institution can access, a unified team will make smarter, more efficient decisions. With a holistic view of prospects, donors, and volunteers all in one place, institutions can share information seamlessly and use this edge to reach more donors and raise more dollars.

ADVANCE YOUR INSTITUTION'S MISSION WITH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Institutions that stay flexible, empower their teams with data-driven information, and have the right technology will cultivate lifelong relationships, advance their institution with increased revenue, and further their missions. [Embracing digital transformation](#) at your institution is key to its continued fundraising success in our increasingly interconnected world.

Contact us

If you have any questions about our solutions for higher education institutions or would like to find out more about Blackbaud, please contact us at solutions@blackbaud.co.uk



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