

ANNUAL GIVING SOLICITATIONS IN HIGHER ED

A COLLECTION OF SAMPLES TO INSPIRE YOUR NEXT APPEAL





FOREWORD

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We hear regularly that you want ways to freshen up your annual giving solicitations, so we put out a call last fall to our entire annual giving audience for your best print or digital pieces. Here is a collection of our favorites - with tips on how to employ some of these strategies in your shop. (We've linked to all the complete pieces as well.) A few things resonated with me in reviewing your submissions:

- 1) We know that an "Ugly Betty" letter can be your best-performing piece, and we certainly saw that reflected in your entries. While we chose to include more graphic-forward appeals here, your "back-to-basics" letter should continue to be an important tool in your communications portfolio.
- 2) Nearly 20% of your entries highlighted a student story, including a picture. This continues to be a great way to build affinity while indicating a specific need. I particularly like the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management approach on page 12.
- 3) Pieces where you demonstrate impact can be some of the strongest-performing. Doing so in a graphical way, like The Shipley School on page 17 and the University of Dayton on page 26, is an easy way to steward current donors and educate future donors.

We hope you enjoy this. As always, we would love to hear from you.

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PRIOR-YEAR DONORS AND LAPSED DONORS



“Through the generosity of people like you, Pace University is able to provide scholarships, upgrades to equipment and technology, opportunities to participate in conferences, competitions and workshops, and access to real-world experiences that put our students on track to achieve personal and professional success.”



Tip: Include the contact information currently on file for donors to encourage data updates.



PACE UNIVERSITY | [ANNIVERSARY LYBUNT APPEAL](#)

AUDIENCE

Prior-year donors and lapsed donors

GOAL

Renew LYBUNTs around the anniversary of their last gift to the university. Send letters via direct mail in first week of each month, and follow with e-mail in fourth week of each month. Customize solicitation for first-time donors, consecutive-year donors, and leadership-level donors.

IMPACT

This “back to basics” piece is especially notable for its results:

- 15.6% response rate
- \$137,283 in profit
- \$192 average gift
- \$.04 needed to raise a dollar



CENTRAL COLLEGE | [YOU ARE PERFECT](#)

AUDIENCE

Prior-year donors

GOAL

Ask LYBUNTs to keep their consecutive giving streak alive. Send a two-color, two-sided postcard each March asking for a gift to the annual fund, which supports student scholarships.

IMPACT

Overall results:

- 26% response rate
- \$35,120 raised
- 161 donors

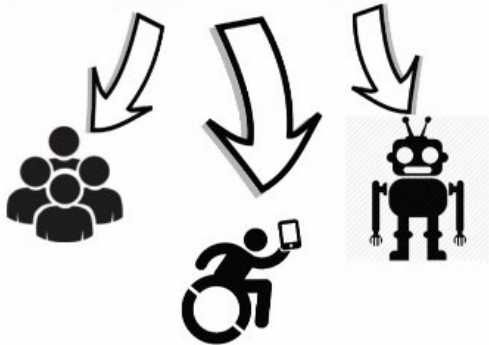




\$5 Million
in Scholarship Support



\$550,000
SAIT Opportunities Fund



SOUTHERN ALBERTA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | [SPRING SOLICITATION: STUDENT ASK](#)

AUDIENCE

Alumni prior-year and lapsed donors

GOAL

Renew lapsed donors and upgrade previous donors. Email a video teaser and follow with direct mail piece featuring a student's story. Then send follow-up video by email linking to digital version of mailer in case donors missed it.

IMPACT

Several donors expressed appreciation for communication coming from a student rather than faculty or staff. Average gift was 50% higher than previous solicitations.

HAPPY Baruchiversary!



YOU

BARUCH COLLEGE | ANNIVERSARY

AUDIENCE

Prior-year donors

GOAL

Renew donors. Send postcard to donors on the anniversary of their last gift. Email the same message prior to sending the postcard.

IMPACT

Emailed version of anniversary message had open rates of 50% and click-thru rates of 25%.



Tip: Include the contact information currently on file for donors to encourage data updates.

VASSAR COLLEGE | FISCAL YEAR 2017 APPEAL

AUDIENCE

Alumni donors and alumni non-donors

GOAL

Increase overall participation. Send print appeal to classes of 1940-70. Send digital appeal to classes of 1971-2016.

IMPACT

This piece achieved an especially positive response from prior donors:

- 6.5% response rate
- \$182.50 average gift

Alumni from the 90s and 00s also responded positively. Overall results:

- 1.28% response rate
- \$280.85 average gift

“You have supported Vassar in the past - and we deeply appreciate that. If you care about the world being a better place, about light overcoming the dark, about the traditions of critical thought and rigorous understanding, I hope you will consider making a new gift to The Vassar Fund today to help spark the torch of a future fellow alum.”



Tip: Use less expensive forms of contact like email for lower-performing segments.



“If you are like me, you had big dreams when you came to Illinois Tech. Lots of people told me my dreams were too big. But I’m here, and it’s because of alumni like you.

Will you make a gift today to help me and my fellow students keep dreaming big?

Many of my classmates and I wouldn’t be here without the scholarships you support. Your donations give people like me the opportunity to realize our dreams. This is what Illinois Tech stands for, and this is what changes the world.”



Julian Bautista
Civil Engineering, Third Year

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | YOU MAKE MY DREAMS POSSIBLE

AUDIENCE

Alumni prior-year and lapsed donors

GOAL

Renew or reactivate donors. Send a full-page letter telling one student’s story to detail the impact of donor donations.

IMPACT

Accounted for over 1/3 of total direct mail donors for the year.

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LEADERSHIP ANNUAL GIVING

Giving in Action



Because of you, Maddie Jesser, '19 BSB, earned an internship with Deloitte, got involved in student leadership groups, and excelled in her classes—all in her freshman year

Your support allows entrepreneur and aspiring consultant Drew Reilly, '17 BSB, to get valuable hands-on experience in the Carlson Ventures Enterprise



Your gift empowers Jamie Glover, '17 MBA, to launch a start-up providing athletic apparel that encourages Muslim girls and women to be active without compromising religious beliefs



Tip: Provide concrete examples and student stories illustrating the impact of donations.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA | CARLSON SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT | [INVESTORS CIRCLE INTRODUCTORY PAMPHLET](#)

AUDIENCE

Leadership annual giving donors and prospective donors

GOAL

Secure 200 new members to the Investors Circle, a new benefactor recognition society for those giving annual giving gifts of \$2500 or more. Send an introductory pamphlet with pledge card detailing the benefits of joining the circle.

IMPACT

215 new Investors Circle members gained from this solicitation.



We invite you to live the legacy of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg Society members and join this exclusive network to promote excellence in education at Muhlenberg College for the next 50 years and beyond.

Annual gifts to Muhlenberg are a vital source of support. All gifts made between July 1 and June 30 count toward HMMS membership regardless of their designation. Gifts designated to **The Muhlenberg Fund** help support student scholarships, attract and keep distinguished faculty, benefit research and update equipment and technology, thereby enhancing the Muhlenberg experience for current and future students. **If you choose to contribute to another area of the College, please consider giving at least a portion of your gift to The Muhlenberg Fund.**

Levels of HMMS Leadership

The Chairman's Circle	\$25,000 and above
The President's Circle	\$15,000 to \$24,999
The Trustee's Circle	\$10,000 to \$14,999
The Dean's Circle	\$5,000 to \$9,999
The Professor's Circle	\$2,500 to \$4,999
The Henry Melchior Muhlenberg Circle	\$1,500 to \$2,499



Tip: Avoid dates on solicitation materials to extend their shelf-life.

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE | [HENRY MELCHIOR MUHLENBERG SOCIETY INVITATION](#)

AUDIENCE

Higher leadership annual giving donors

GOAL

Increase membership and awareness of society. Send invitation via mail to educate constituents about society in hopes of increasing membership. Target current and former members, individuals with strong donation record, and those with a high wealth rating.

IMPACT

This invitation increased retention rates and resulted in membership growing by 21% (233 first-time members).



“I am inviting you and a small number of members of the CMU family to join us as we prepare for the future, because I believe you will appreciate what we are striving to achieve through the strategic plan **A Difference with Distinction.**”

“While our institutional accomplishments have been considerable, our aspirations are ambitious. These are exciting timings here at Central Methodist. With your support, we look ahead with great confidence.”



CENTRAL METHODIST UNIVERSITY | STRATEGIC PLAN LETTER FROM PRESIDENT

AUDIENCE

Leadership annual giving prospects

GOAL

Raise \$1,000 in gifts via direct mail. Select 130 households to receive letters hand-signed by the president along with personalized pledge cards and reply envelopes.

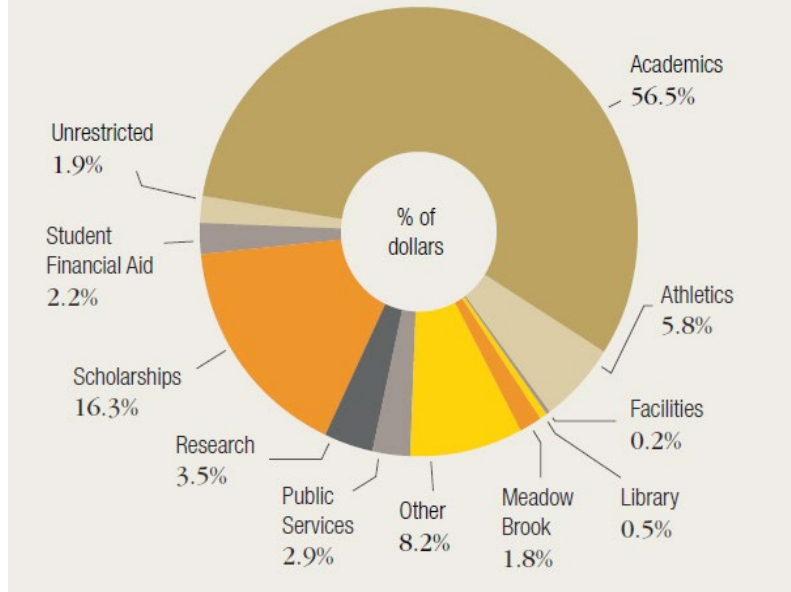
IMPACT

Of the selected households, 14 responded with gifts totaling \$14,300.

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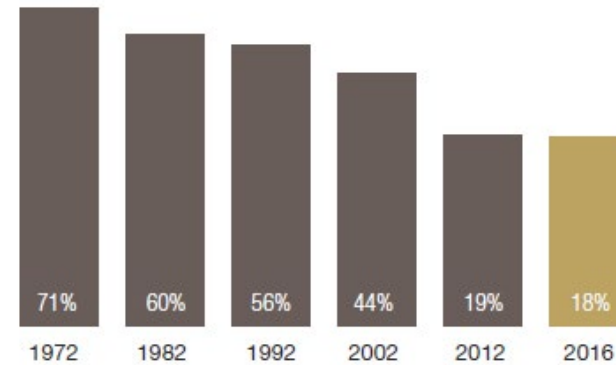
STEWARDSHIP

How does your support impact the OU experience?



State funding has dropped

Funding model: base state appropriation



The OU experience starts with you

The Oakland University experience leads to lifelong friendships, career paths, leadership skills and more. **This is possible through philanthropy**, which grows in importance year after year.

Your support can help reduce student debt and maintain our high standards in education, offering students a greater OU experience.

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY | [FALL 2016 APPEAL](#)

AUDIENCE

All alumni except young alums

GOAL

Increase overall participation and educate donors on the importance of their gifts. Send mailer educating alumni on the financial realities of the college that make gifts especially important.

IMPACT

This piece raised nearly \$30,000 from 323 donors. Anecdotally, it helped lay the groundwork for the most successful year in donors and dollars in many years.

THE SHIPLEY SCHOOL | SEPTEMBER APPEAL

AUDIENCE

Alumni non-donors and former faculty

GOAL

Raise money for the annual fund by educating potential donors on the projects they will be supporting.

IMPACT

Anecdotally, this appeal got more replies than any other appeal in the same fiscal year.

WHERE DOES



MY GIFT





BOSTON UNIVERSITY | [SUMMER STEWARDSHIP APPEAL](#)

AUDIENCE

Prior-year donors

GOAL

Thank LYBUNTs and encourage them to renew giving. Mail thank-you messages that include a BU-branded luggage tag.

IMPACT

- Overall results:
- A nearly 6% response rate
 - Over \$215,000 In profit
 - \$148 average gift
 - 1,455 donors



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GIVING DAY

LAST YEAR

 400 

alumni, parents, students,
faculty, staff, and friends
PARTICIPATED

THIS YEAR
on **MARCH 30**

if **500** 

DONORS PARTICIPATE,
we will receive an additional

\$50,000 
from 2 generous donors!

WHEELOCK
GIVING DAY



WHEELOCK COLLEGE | 2017 WHEELOCK GIVING DAY

AUDIENCE

Alumni, parents, and friends

GOAL

Secure 500 donations. Send mailed appeal advertising a 24-hour fundraising drive.

IMPACT

Goal of 500 donations was surpassed, triggering an additional \$50,000 from two donors. Overall results:

- Over \$200,000 in profit
- 760 donors

Campaign also saw significant increases in participation over the previous year:

- Alumni donors increased by 44%
- Parent donors increased by 100%

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI



**Donate \$10 or more* and
receive this limited-edition
Bearcat ornament!**

uc.edu/givingtuesday

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI | [GIVING TUESDAY CAMPAIGN](#)

AUDIENCE

All donors

GOAL

Receive over 1,000 gifts on Giving Tuesday and increase donor and participation numbers. Run email and social media campaign and send mailers to alumni without email account in database.

IMPACT

Received over 1,300 gifts totaling roughly \$80,000.



Nov. 29, 2016



A global day
of giving



Join the
movement
with a gift
to UC

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PARENT GIVING



BELLARMINE COLLEGE PREPARATORY | BOUNDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

AUDIENCE

Current parents

GOAL

Raise \$500,000 for the annual fund from parents by educating them on the projects they will be supporting.

IMPACT

Approximately \$650,000 raised from this solicitation - 30% more than the original goal.



Each and every
student benefits from
The Bellarmine Fund through:

19 immersion trips to 11 countries

34
honors and AP classes,
spread over 96 sections

Over **150** charitable
organizations served
by Bells last year

3 theatre productions
8 concerts 

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GENERAL SOLICITATIONS

**UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC | [DUGONI SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY](#) |
[SPRING 2017 APPEAL](#)**

AUDIENCE

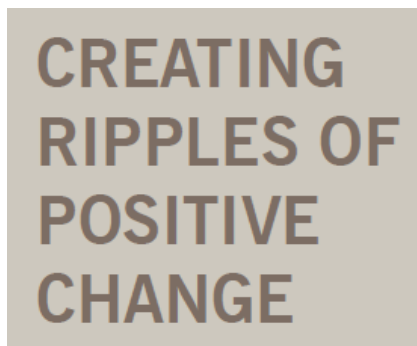
Prior-year donors, lapsed donors, non-donors, and graduating students

GOAL

Boost annual fund giving at the end of the fiscal year. Send print mailer as part of a larger spring campaign also including email, video, monitor displays, and tabling.

IMPACT

Approximately \$68,000 in annual fund donations from this campaign – with LYBUNTs and graduating student segments performing best.



1 MISSION

11,250 STUDENTS

114,587 ALUMNI

3,413 FACULTY & STAFF

TOP+TIER CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

OVER \$116 MILLION IN SPONSORED RESEARCH

- \$5 million in annual alumni-supported scholarships
- 97% of first-year students receive financial aid
- 24,000+ annual hours of service by student organizations



UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON | FALL APPEAL

AUDIENCE

Loyal donors, current parents, “golden” alums (50+ years), and leadership annual giving

GOAL

Start fiscal year strongly. Send print mailer highlighting how much the university community can accomplish by working together.

IMPACT

One segment saw a response rate over 19%, with total revenue exceeding \$100,000. Total raised was \$250,000.



TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY | [APRIL STATEMENT MAILER](#)

AUDIENCE

Graduates, alumni, parents, and past parents

GOAL

Secure last-minute donors before the next round of fundraising. Send mailer highlighting the impact of donations.

IMPACT

Resulted in 20 gifts totaling \$2,735.



ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE NEW YORK | [ANNUAL FALL SCHOLARSHIP APPEAL](#)

AUDIENCE

All alumni

GOAL

Send large mailer to raise essential money for scholarships.

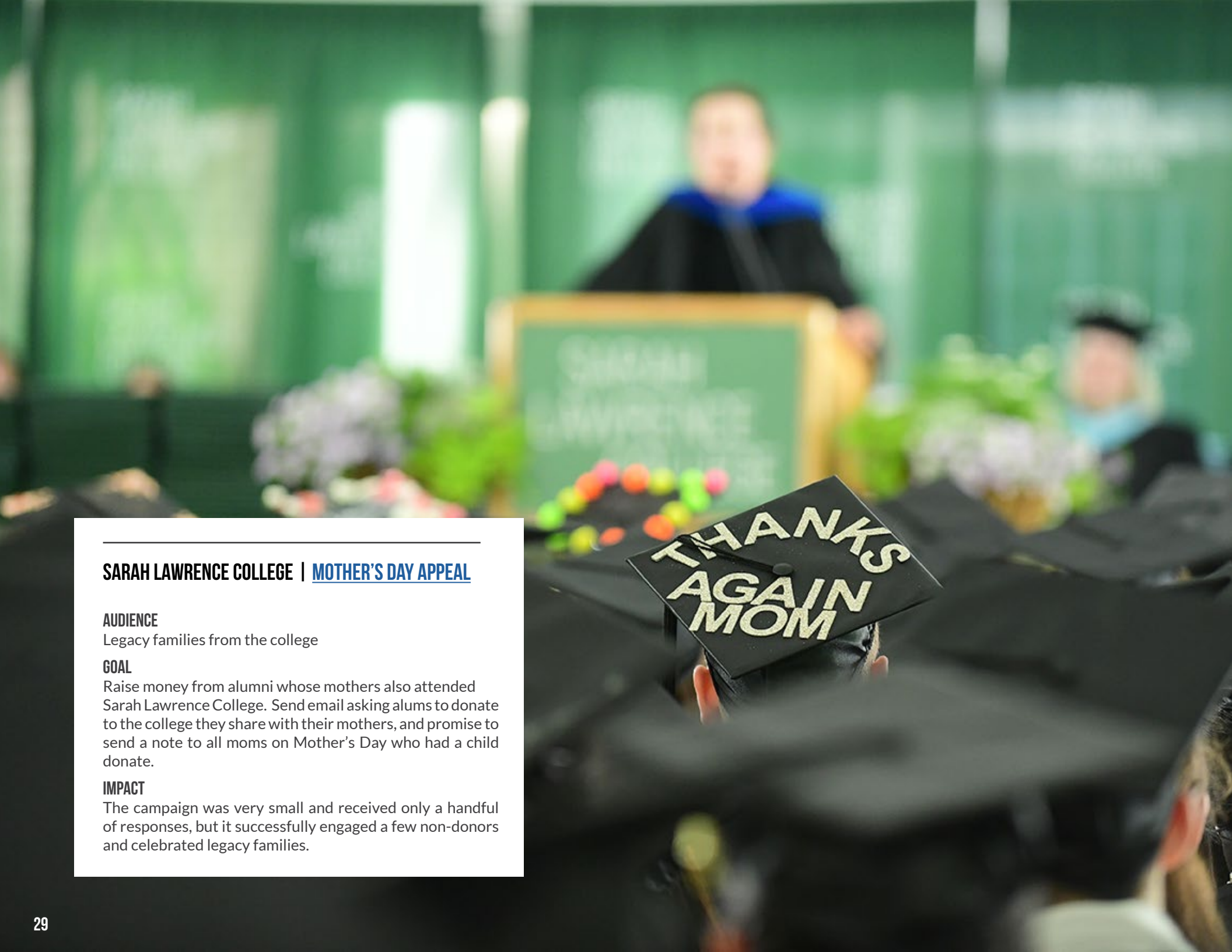
IMPACT

One of the few entries received around scholarship fundraising, this piece raised \$60,000 for student scholarships.

**“From the moment
I arrived at SJC,
I became a part of the
tight-knit community.”**



Tip: Be strategic when listing suggested gift amounts to avoid limiting donations unnecessarily.



SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE | [MOTHER'S DAY APPEAL](#)

AUDIENCE

Legacy families from the college

GOAL

Raise money from alumni whose mothers also attended Sarah Lawrence College. Send email asking alums to donate to the college they share with their mothers, and promise to send a note to all moms on Mother's Day who had a child donate.

IMPACT

The campaign was very small and received only a handful of responses, but it successfully engaged a few non-donors and celebrated legacy families.



Tip: Send follow-up emails to support initial contact.

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY | [LEGACY SOCIETY RENEWAL](#)

AUDIENCE

Alumni who made senior gifts

GOAL

Renew the support of alumni who made senior gifts and confirm their contact information. Send email near first anniversary of graduation asking for \$21.16, an amount representing their graduation year.

IMPACT

Achieved high open rates and accounts for ongoing gifts.





YALE UNIVERSITY | [YALE HARVARD CHALLENGE](#)

AUDIENCE

All alumni

GOAL

Capture more donors for the annual fund than rival (Harvard University). Send full-color, two-sided postcard in the lead-up to the annual Yale vs. Harvard football game.

IMPACT

This campaign accounted for 4,250 donors and over \$2.1M.

