UTICA
COLLEGE

Crowdfunding
Project Guide

Academic Year 21-22 Funding Opportunities
Fall 2021 in function with ALLIN UC application deadline: 8/20/21
Winter 2022 application deadline: 12/15/21
Spring 2022 application deadline: 4/1/22

**The Office of Advancement
Annual Support Programs
2021-2022**

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What is Crowdfunding?

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or initiative by raising a number of small monetary donations from a large number of people through an online campaign. Crowdfunding can be used to fundraise for a wide variety of projects initiated by faculty, staff, and students, all of which must further Utica College's mission.

Crowdfunding is...

• technology-enabled fundraising that solicits online contributions.
• driven by advocates and often includes video testimonials providing the "case for support."
• a time-limited campaign that supports a specific project with a defined dollar goal.
• amplified by social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, enabling contributors to share their support of the campaign and encourage others to join the effort.
• a contribution channel that meets newer donors where they spend their time: on social media.

What channel does Utica College use for crowdfunding?

GiveCampus is the official platform used by Utica College. GiveCampus was designed specifically for education fundraising and is trusted by over 800 educational institutions.

Campaign Guidelines

Each crowdfunding campaign must further Utica College's mission by supporting College programs and initiatives. Funds cannot be redirected to a third-party entity, such as an external non-profit or individual. Crowdfunding campaigns must not violate any law, regulation, or Utica College policy.

Any current faculty or staff member may submit a campaign application. Student-run campaigns are permitted but student groups must identify and work with a faculty or staff member who will act as their advisor. Prior to the submission of the application, the project must be approved by the School Dean or Division head. Each campaign must identify one faculty or staff member to serve as the campaign team leader or campaign advisor.

The Office of Advancement will determine the eligibility of submitted applications and approve each project on a case-by-case basis. Campaigns should not be run in conjunction with other efforts to fund the same project by an individual or group. Crowdfunding campaigns should not be run in conjunction with institution-wide initiatives (i.e., the College's annual Give Day).

Each campaign must identify an approved Utica College gift account to receive donated funds. All funds raised will be deposited to the gift account, even if goal is not reached, and all donated funds must be used for the stated purpose(s) of the campaign. The collection of donations will be conducted by the Office of Advancement. Individuals and organizations are strictly prohibited from keeping any portion of the funds raised as profit or compensation.

All campaign content will be reviewed by the Office of Advancement prior to the project's launch and the Office of Advancement has the authority to edit or require revisions at any time.

The Office of Advancement does not and will not distribute contact information for alumni, parents, friends, or students. Campaign teams must develop campaign and marketing content and be willing to contact their personal networks. The Office of Advancement will consult with teams to provide crowdfunding training, generate ideas, provide feedback, and review content.

The Office of Advancement must review and approve any donor benefits or incentives prior to the start of the campaign.

An active campaign may be discontinued at any time due to failure to comply with these guidelines or if the project's eligibility for crowdfunding has changed.

What you need for a successful campaign:

1. A well-defined project that has been fully-vetted by the appropriate College offices and a specific and realistic monetary goal. Keep in mind that most crowdfunding campaigns last no more than 30 days. The monetary goal must reflect the amount of funds needed to support the particular project _and_ what can be reasonably raised in the allotted time. Applications that request open-ended campaigns will not be approved.

2. At least one team leader, who must be a Utica College employee. Most successful campaigns have a project team composed of at least 2-3 people.

3. Collaborators: Three to five project champions. These are volunteers who are directly connected to the project and who can attest to the benefits of the project.

4. Ambassadors: Ambassadors do not have to be direct beneficiaries, however they have a connection to or a "stake" in the project and also have large social networks. Successful campaigns tend to have a minimum of 10-15 active ambassadors who are able to speak to the project and encourage others to give. Recent data suggests that the project can raise $150 to $250 per ambassador if those ambassadors are active and engaged in promoting the project throughout the crowdfunding initiative.

5. A stewardship plan that will thank each donor and provide "real time" status updates on the project. The Office of Advancement can assist in the development of stewardship plans, but most should consist of handwritten thank you notes, personal emails, phone calls, donor recognition events, video updates, in-person donor visits, etc.

6. A time commitment of thirty minutes to an hour a day for each day the campaign runs. Campaign leads will be responsible for providing updates on the project and developing contact for multi-channeled outreach during the entire campaign. Please keep in mind that stewardship activities continue after a campaign has concluded.

Campaign Timeline

- **8 weeks prior to launch date**
  - Submit your application to the Director of Annual Support Programs.
  - Have your team/collaborators recruited and engaged with planning
  - Begin drafting content for your campaign page.

- **6 weeks prior to launch date**
  - Upon approval of the application, submit your draft campaign page.
  - Set meeting with the Director of Annual Support Programs.

- **4-6 weeks prior to launch date**
  - Meet with the Director of Annual Support Programs to discuss needs. edits and communications plans.
  - Refine solicitations and communications plans with the project team.
  - Attend a givecampus training

- **2-4 weeks prior to launch date**
  - Send out "Save the Date" communications to announce launch date
  - Draft emails, social media posts, blog posts, etc.
  - Create video for the main page.
  - Send draft "thank you" communication to the Director of Annual Support Programs for approval.

- **Day of launch**
  - Share project page link on social media sites and send initial emails/communications to personal networks.
  - Spread the word and encourage others to follow the campaign page through on-campus events (i.e. tabling, Morning Mention, etc.).

- **During Campaign (7-30 Days)**
  - Post regular updates to the campaign page to engage donors (Suggested: 1-2 per week).
  - Post regular updates to social media (Suggested: 3-4 per week).
  - Hold regular meetings to check-in with the project team.

- **Close of Campaign**
  - Send thank you letters to donors (no later than one week after close).
  - Complete project implementation.
  - Take photos or create videos to show the impact of the donations.
  - Send follow-up communication to share the impact with donors.

Team Responsibilities and Structure

Team Leader
- Acts as the campaign manager and liaison to the Office of Advancement. Must be an employee of the College. This role requires approximately 6-8 hours of work per week throughout the campaign to insure success. Responsibilities include:
    - Submit application and project page.
    - Recruit and oversee project team (collaborators and ambassadors).
    - Oversee development of campaign plan, timeline, and goals.
    - Oversee communications plan and implementation.
    - Provide project updates and thank you letters to donors.
    - Meet with and send regular updates to the Director of Annual Support Programs.
    - Send communications and share posts to personal networks.
    - Put together a list of at least 100 names and personal emails of close contacts that have a potential giving capacity of $50 or above.
    - Must attend training sessions with the Director of Annual Support Programs prior to the launch of the project and two weekly thirty minute check in meetings while the project is active.

Collaborators
- Team members of the campaign who will assist the team leader in developing the project content, social media, and other communications. This role requires approx. 3-4 hours per week throughout the campaign. Responsibilities include:
    - Assist in development of campaign plan, timeline, and goals.
    - Recruit , work with and motivate Ambassadors.
    - Complete tasks assigned by Team Leader.
    - Send communications/share posts to personal networks.

Ambassadors
- Share the campaign on social media. This role will require approximately 2-3 hours per week throughout the campaign. Responsibilities include:
    - Share communications and updates provided by the project team via social media, email, text messaging, etc.
    - Spread word about the project and ask for contributions via word-of-mouth.

Creating Your Project Page

Please note that after your crowdfunding application has been approved, the Director of Annual Support Programs will build a crowdfunding site specifically for your project.

Basic Info
- *Project Title & Tag Line* - This should be concise and compelling.
- *Project Images* - Choose a photo that is clear and depicts positivity and enthusiasm.
- Phone number and email address of Team Leader.

Pitch
- *Project type: Funding*
- *Funding Goal*
  - Your goal should be between $1,000 and $5,000. (campaigns that need higher amount can be approved, call the Director of Annual Support Programs to discuss prior)
    - Consider what is needed to fund your project and round up (ex: round $234 to $250)
    - Ensure your goal is reasonable for the project and attainable based on the size of the project team and your networks. For example, 10 people should not expect to raise $5,000.
  - Set your end date at least 8 weeks before you need the funds to allow for gift processing time. If, for example, you need to make a purchase on December 1, then the end date of the campaign should be no later than September 30.
- *Media*
  - Be sure that no content will infringe on any copyrights.
  - Plan to create a video. It should be between 30 seconds and 90 seconds in length. It does not need to be highly produced. Simple videos made with cell phones can be just as effective.
- *Description*
  - Contains all of the details of your project including:
    - Why is it important to you/your group/the campus? Be as compelling as possible by using statements from students, emotion, and demonstrating passion for the project.
    - Information on how the money will be spent.
    - Links to social media pages that will be used.
- *Donation Levels*
  - Provide at least three levels (i.e., $25, $50, and $100).
  - Offers donors options by highlighting varying levels of impact based on your budget
    - Example: A $25 gift will buy dinner for one student on Friday night at conference

Tips for Success

- **Set a meaningful and realistic goal**
  - If your goal is reached mid-campaign you can use your momentum to set a "stretch goal" and encourage your network to achieve more success.
  - Set your completion date on a Sunday (more people give on weekends).

- **Tell a compelling story**
  - The use of images with your social media posts and other communications will engage your network more.
  - Successful campaigns use students and faculty as the voice of the project.
  - Projects that use videos are more likely to be successful.
  - Plan for active, daily feedback by faculty and students who are being funded. They provide daily updates throughout the campaign and after to contributors.

- **Practice your pitch and be prepared to address objections**
  - Personalize your conversations/messages. Remember, you wouldn't talk to your friend the way you would a stranger.
  - Think of the reasons why someone would say no to giving and provide a polite and sincere counter argument.

- **Stay positive and enthusiastic, and always express gratitude**
  - Even if someone says no to giving, thank them for their time and consideration.
  - Your influence can be tracked through the site by sharing the links from the project page.

- **Have clear calls to action in all your communications**
  - Donors are likely to give more with specific 'asks' compared to open-ended asks.
    - Ex: Hey! We are headed to XXX conference and we need your help. Would you consider giving $25 to help us get there?
  - Every communication should include an invitation to donate.

- **Plan your asks**
  - Plan to reach out to affinity groups that have a similar mission to the work for which your project is raising funds. This can be other similar student groups, academic departments, or non-profit organizations.
  - Gather pre-commitments from donors to ensure momentum in the first days of your campaign.
    - Acquire these through personal emails and face-to-face asks.
    - This should ideally be 20-30% of your goal prior to your launch date.

Checklist

__ Establish team collaborators' tasks and recruit ambassadors

__ Develop project goals and timeline

__ Develop project communications plan

__ 8 weeks out - Begin draft of project page in a team google drive

__ 8 weeks out - Submit application to Director of Annual Support Programs

__ 6 weeks out - Once approved submit draft project page

__ 6 weeks out - Set meeting with Director of Annual Support Programs

__ 4-6 weeks out - Complete meeting with Director of Annual Support Programs

__ 4-6 weeks out - Edit project page

__ 4-6 weeks out - Work with project team to refine communications plan

__ 4-6 weeks out - Work with project team to refine solicitations and ask amounts

__ 2-4 weeks out - Draft emails and social media posts

__ 2-4 weeks out - Send "Save the Dates" to family, friends, alumni, etc.

__ 2-4 weeks out - Send draft "thank you" letter to Director of Annual Support Programs for approval

__ 2-4 weeks out - Reserve tabling/public space for launch day if needed

__ Launch Day - Share link on all social media pages

Days 1-7

__ 3 Posts to social media __ Post update to project page __ Meet with team collaborators

Days 8-14

__ 3 Posts to social media __ Post update to project page __ Meet with team collaborators

Days 15-21

__ 3 Posts to social media __ Post update to project page __ Meet with team collaborators

Days 22-28

__ 3 Posts to social media __ Post update to project page __ Meet with team collaborators

Days 29-35

__ 3 Posts to social media __ Post update to project page __ Meet with team collaborators

Days 36-42

__ 3 Posts to social media __ Post update to project page __ Meet with team collaborators

Days 43-45 (Or final days)

__ Final social media post

__ Final update to project page

__ Send a final version of the "thank you" video to Director of Annual Support Programs to be sent out to donors

__ Share photos/video of project to social media pages to show impact

F.A.Q.

Who can use the crowdfunding platform?
Faculty, staff and students who have project ideas or need funding for equipment or programs may apply. Projects/needs must have a clear and concise goal.

What kinds of projects can be submitted?
Projects must directly support the College and support the mission and strategic plan. Projects can not support a third party or external charity.

Who can donate to a project campaign?
The beauty of crowdfunding is that everyone and anyone can donate.These campaigns are an avenue for donors to provide support directly to Utica colleges individual schools, programs and specific projects that are meaningful to them. Having something specific to support often inspires people to embrace giving. Today's donors want to know exactly where their money is going and how it will make an impact.

How much can I expect to raise?
With crowdfunding, your primary objective is to obtain a large amount of typically smaller sized gifts from a targeted audience. You can assume that each member of a team can typically generate between $100-250. We recommend for first time applicants to set a goal between $1,000- 5,000 and base it on the actual cost of the project or item. It is better to set attainable, realistic goals and surpass them than to fall short.

How much time will it take to create and manage a project?
Crowdfunding may seem like a quick and easy way to raise large sums of money, but successful projects need a team and a plan. We give teams 4 weeks to create their page, strategize how they will crowdfund and create a list of prospects. You must have a passionate team and a large crowd of potential supporters. We are here to help. Approved projects will be supported by the office of advancement annual support team and provide training and guidance every step of the campaign.

How do project teams access the funds they raise?
Funds will be deposited in UC approved accounts through the business office. The annual Support Programs team will work with the project team leaders to let them know when funds are available.

Who reviews and approves project applications?
Submitted applications are initially reviewed by the Annual Support Program team and then presented to the Advancement crowdfunding committee. The committee will review applications based on: team commitment, goal achievement potential, project appeal and impact. If approved, final sign off by the VP of advancement and the appropriate Dean or Vice President is required.

May I use a different crowdfunding platform?
Givecampus is the only approved crowdfunding platform for philanthropic giving to UC.