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About this Document

This document is an overview of best practices for unit level stewardship.

Stewardship is an important part of development -- it conveys the importance of gifts and forms a connection between the donor and the unit they choose to support. Stewardship is especially critical for annual fund gifts, since it helps retain donors who may become the major givers of tomorrow.

Thank you letters and notes

Work with your UW Foundation partners to coordinate thank you letters and receipts. First and foremost, be timely -- send your letters within a month of receiving the gift. We suggest you refresh your letter at least once a year.

As part of the STW campaign, consider adding STW branding or messaging to any thank you letters.

Example:

Dear <<Salutation>>

Thank you for your recent gift to the FUND NAME at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The FUND NAME is a critical source of revenue in UNIT NAME. I employ this fund to solve our most pressing needs: providing initiatives and programs at UW-Madison that are vital to teaching, research and outreach.

Your gift will help me:

● Support unique out-of-classroom initiatives like XXXX
● Fund internships that XXXX
● Keep our best and brightest faculty at UW-Madison by XXXX
● Recruit top graduate students from across the country, growing our XXXX

Your financial contribution supports the legacy of excellence at UW-Madison. Your generosity is an example for current and future Badgers to give back to their alma mater. I depend on your loyalty and continue to be inspired by your kindness.

Thank you again for your gift, it has truly mattered. Please let me know if our department or I can be helpful to you in the future.

In general, a good donor thank you note does the following:

● Is a short and concise message (1 page!)
• Communicates how the gift will be/or was used
• Is personalized
• Promotes the value of the unit by showing steps toward achieving goals
• Leverages how many small gifts make a difference
• Is signed by the administrative head of the unit (e.g., the chair)

For more information, you can review Penelope Burk’s ‘Donor-Centered Fundraising: Thank you letters’
  • http://www.cygresearch.com/burksblog/?p=542

“Donor relations guru” also has example acknowledgement letters:
http://www.donorrelationsguru.com/ssb

For information about gift processing, please see https://www.supportuw.org/campus-partners/

**Thank you emails**

Email can be an efficient and effective way to thank donors and campus units use a variety of email marketing tools.

In general, a good thank you email follows the same best practices for letters and notes. Communicate impact and, if anything, remember that email messages should be even shorter and to-the-point. Strong email messages also incorporate a photo and link to more information, such as the alumni newsletter. Work with your UW Foundation liaison to coordinate messaging and timing.

One challenging aspect of email is that addresses -- as well as data integrity -- vary with alumni constituencies.

**Example:**

Thank you for supporting the Department of XXXX with your gift to **FUND NAME**.

This year, your gift and gifts from others like you have helped us support some of the department’s top priorities, including:

• Recruiting top-notch faculty members like Professor XXXX, who will join us beginning in January.
• Supporting and encouraging promising future scientists through undergraduate scholarships and fellowships.
• Attracting outstanding graduate students whose research efforts are making a difference in fields like XXX
As I begin my time as chair, I have been reflecting upon the importance of our relationship with you, our alumni and friends, who continue to help make our department one of the best in the country. Thank you for all you do for us and for our students.

**Newsletters and print publications**

**Advertorials:**
Work with Eileen Fitzgerald at University Marketing (emfitzge@wisc.edu; 262-8275) to develop “Thank You” advertorials for print newsletters. These ads should be short and concise while communicating impact of gifts.

**Chair’s/Director’s Message:**
Chairs and directors are the leaders of a unit and their messages in print newsletters and magazines lay out the major news, vision and values of the unit. A mention of donor support and thanking alumni supporters can go a long way. Chairs and directors should focus on promoting the value of their degree and note how alumni support goes a long way to preserving and enhancing the value of their unit.

A good leader’s message includes:
- Thanking donors for their ongoing support
- Reminding alumni that every dollar makes a difference and that participation is critical
- Noting how discretionary dollars make a difference to the unit with short, specific examples

**Stewardship/Gift Impact Stories:**
Keep track of how donor dollars are used and write short stories about the faculty, students, research that benefited from that support. Work with your UWF partners to identify potential donors who are comfortable with publicity as well as strategic issues you want to highlight.

**Examples:**
- [http://grow.cals.wisc.edu/environment/seeds-of-greatness](http://grow.cals.wisc.edu/environment/seeds-of-greatness)

Be sure to share stewardship stories with UWF: [https://www.supportuw.org/share-your-story/](https://www.supportuw.org/share-your-story/)

**Social media**

Share specific impact stories via your social media accounts. Consider one story per week.
Example posts:

- https://twitter.com/UWMadisonLS/status/321670093698396160
- https://twitter.com/UWMadisonLS/status/271282078916698112
- https://twitter.com/UWMadisonLS/status/264100278524076032
- https://twitter.com/UWMadisonLS/status/263019381846601729
- https://twitter.com/UWMadisonLS/status/296725252757680128

**Personalized Stewardship**

Consider a hand-written note, phone call or personal email to certain donors. Analyze the number of donors to your unit and determine what is the best way for you to approach your donors. Be sure to work with your Foundation partners to avoid overlap.

**UWF Stewardship Resources**


**UWF and Campus Resources**

- [https://www.supportuw.org/campus-partners/](https://www.supportuw.org/campus-partners/)
- [https://www.supportuw.org/share-your-story/](https://www.supportuw.org/share-your-story/)
- [https://www.supportuw.org/about-us/stewardship/](https://www.supportuw.org/about-us/stewardship/)
- [https://www.supportuw.org/campus-partners/using-gifts/](https://www.supportuw.org/campus-partners/using-gifts/)