University fundraising strategies
It’s common knowledge that at the heart of any university’s mission is to continually strive for new levels of academic and extracurricular success.

That’s why university fundraising is essential for inspiring fresh opportunities for your institution’s next generation of students and staff.

In addition to providing new tools, equipment, and services for enabling college growth, university fundraising also helps shake the dust off your institution’s core facilities — libraries, auditoriums, dorm rooms, etc. — and restore them to their former glory.

While there are several university fundraising trends to explore, we’ve taken the liberty of outlining the top five guaranteed to secure the funds you need for long-term prosperity:

1. Crowdfunding
2. Peer-to-peer
3. Text-to-give
4. Alumni mixer
5. Credit card swiper

By making the most of these university fundraising strategies, your college will be on its way to achieving new heights in higher education.
University crowdfunding campaigns

Due to crowdfunding’s overwhelming success with other fundraising organizations like healthcare and churches, it only makes sense for universities to get a piece of the action too.

Crowdfunding involves an individual or team raising money for a specific cause with an eye-catching online fundraising campaign. Crowdfunders also rely on their inspiring cause to gain viral virtual support from people they know as well as strangers.

Crowdfunding can be an excellent DIY avenue to support specific university fundraising initiatives for Greek life, clubs and organizations, sports teams, and more.

To organize a powerful and cohesive crowdfunding campaign, your university can create branded and tailored donation pages using a crowdfunding platform.
These platforms make it easy to coordinate a variety of crowdfunding operations from one convenient source including:

- Uploading emotional images and videos to engage your audience with visual storytelling
- Sharing your crowdfunding campaign goal and details across multiple social channels
- Showing donor gratitude with thank-you emails and social media shout-outs
- Sharing updates on your crowdfunding campaign’s progress via social media
- Measuring crowdfunding metrics to continually improve your campaign

While individuals can certainly organize an effective crowdfunding campaign, crowdfunding teams usually achieve better results due to the increased number of fundraisers and general communal spirit.

**Final thoughts:** Universities can raise significant funds for team-based projects by creating a crowdfunding campaign people can connect with.
Peer-to-peer university fundraising

If nothing else, a university is a tight-knit community made up of students, faculty, parents, and, of course, alumni. So why not rally together this extended college family with peer-to-peer fundraising?

Unlike crowdfunding, peer-to-peer fundraising calls upon friends and family to raise money for your university through personalized online donation pages.

Essentially, peer-to-peer fundraising can be broken down into these steps:

1. Develop a main donation page on social media for your university fundraising goal

2. Enlist college supporters to create their own online donation pages that showcase their personal investment in your university's fundraising cause

3. Peer-to-peer fundraisers connect with friends and family to invest in university fundraising on behalf of the alumnus

This DIY donation tactic is typically used to raise money for a specific goal that affects a targeted niche of your university, such as housing renovations for Greek life or new athletic equipment for college sports teams.
The personalized angle is also more appealing to donors than receiving a random phone call from your university’s development department.

In addition, peer-to-peer fundraising can be especially useful for engaging recent college alumni who may not be able to give financially due to student debt.

Instead, P2P fundraising empowers this young, tech-savvy group to seek donations from friends and family via social media and reach alumni your university may have lost contact with.

There are also loads of proven P2P best practices your university can incorporate to ensure online donation triumph like:
• Promoting your peer-to-peer campaign on and offline

• Using gamification tools to spark competition among your fundraising team

• Offering peer-to-peer fundraising training workshops in-person and remotely

• Providing P2P downloadable resources for your fundraising team to reference

• Combining your peer-to-peer campaign with a killer fundraising event

Finally, in order to truly be successful with your peer-to-peer campaign, your university must invest in a top-of-the-line P2P platform. **Take a look at our top picks for higher education fundraising platforms guaranteed to kick your peer-to-peer campaign up a notch.**

**Final thoughts:** Universities can launch top peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns to personally engage a diverse college community.
Text-to-give university fundraising

While not everyone carries cash, you’d be hard pressed to find anyone — teachers, staff, students, parents, etc. — walking around your college campus without their phone in reach.

That’s why **text-to-give provides an accessible and efficient fundraising solution for universities to collect donations from college community members on-the-go.**

As opposed to making a donation in-person or tracking down your university’s fundraising webpage, text-to-give allows donors to give in the moment from the comfort and ease of their own phone in four steps or less:

1. **Text the fundraising keyword to the text-to-give phone number**

2. **Receive a link to an online donation form that can be filled out in minutes**

3. **Complete the online donation form and submit it electronically**

4. **Receive a donation receipt and thank-you note via text message**

What’s more, MobileCause text-to-give statistics show that text messages have a 98 percent open rate as opposed to ignored phone calls or in-person solicitation strategies.

**To launch your text-to-give campaign, your development team must first acquire a text-to-give phone number as well as a keyword that relates to your university fundraising cause.**
Once these factors are in place, colleges can then promote their text-to-give campaign at university fundraising events, silent auctions, giving days and much more. You can even have teachers and students act as ambassadors by talking up text-to-give in class and around campus.

Another best practice is to post text-to-give visual media and videos tutorials on your university’s website, social media channels, emails, and e-newsletters for parents and alumni.

Remember that text communications don’t have to promote only timely giving initiatives, but also other fundraising opportunities like campus fundraising campaign updates, event reminders, donation asks, and volunteer openings.

**Final thoughts:** Text-to-give allows donors to contribute or learn more about university fundraising from their mobile devices in a quick and easy fashion.
Alumni mixer fundraising event

When organizing a killer university fundraising event, it’s always a good idea to include your college’s alumni community in the fun.

In fact, an alumni mixer accomplishes just that by treating your past graduates to a fundraising event in their honor that financially benefits their alma mater.

To begin with, your college’s fundraising development team must first track down devoted alumni to invite to your fundraising event. Prospect research tools, like your university’s alumni database or professional wealth screening services, can make this search easier by filtering through ideal donor factors.

For instance, prospect research tools can identify wealth markers and giving factors like past giving to your college, philanthropic support, and political giving to name a few.

These resources can also help you determine the current state of an alumni’s relationship, which can be broken down into categories like:

- **Dedicated prospects** — This crowd has demonstrated commitment to your university’s growth by regularly attending public campus events, going to alumni events, or enrolling their child in your college. In short, these dedicated alumni are your go-to invites.
• **Timely prospects** — This group includes the current class of college graduates and alumni classes with reunions that year. While these prospects may not give normally, a large event may provide the incentive they need to donate.

Once your alumni guest list is coordinated, your fundraising team can then save money by hosting your event on campus or partnering with a local restaurant or bar to host your event for a free or discounted cost.

Investing in top-quality fundraising event software and drawing up a fundraising event budget for details like food, decorations, and venue are also good calls.

On the big night, charge alumni attendees at the door and make the rounds collecting donations throughout the night. **An alumni mixer is another great way to promote your university's text-to-give fundraising for event-goers to donate at a moment’s notice.**

**Final thoughts:** An alumni mixer is a fun and effective fundraising solution to grow alumni relationships and accrue university donations.
Mobile credit card swipers

Fact: most university fundraising is done online or by collecting money at a designated event. While these donation methods are effective, many prospects can still be easily turned off if donating requires them to search for your college’s fundraising webpage or if they don’t carry cash.

Mobile credit card swipers seek to fix these donation issues by providing university donors with a simple and efficient way to collect debit and credit card gifts on the spot.
For example, MobileCause’s sleek mobile credit card swipers are easy to set up and utilize at live university fundraising events or for year-long giving. In fact, let’s take a moment to break down how our mobile credit card swipers work:

1. Attach the MobileCause credit card swiper to your phone
2. Login to your Mobilecause credit card swiper account via mobile app
3. Enter a donation amount on the number pad
4. Swipe the donor’s credit or debit card
5. Collect the donor’s funds and contact information
6. Confirm the transaction by having the donor sign their name on the screen

You’re now probably wondering how your college can track this steady flow of donations. Luckily, our fast-processing MobileCause merchant accounts allow you to monitor donations as they deposit into your bank account 24-48 hours after the transaction.

Colleges can even track donations in real-time with fundraising thermometers and receive a free mobile credit card swiper with their MobileCause merchant account.

In addition, your university’s development team should always double check if your mobile credit card swiper offers these game-changing features:

- Compatibility with Apple and Android mobile devices
- PCI-compliant payment card security
- Donor tax receipts and the ability to set up recurring gifts
- Little to no credit or debit card transaction fees
Granted, every provider of mobile credit card swipers has their own set of instructions and features. What matters most is that prospects are more likely to follow through with university donations when caught up in the excitement of your fundraiser simply by swiping their card.

**Final thoughts:** Mobile credit card swipers can help universities collect credit and debit card donations in person at fundraising events or for annual giving.

**Additional resources**

University fundraising doesn’t have to be all work and no play. In fact, we guarantee that as long as your college makes use of these phenomenal strategies, you’ll be racking up funds all while having a good time!

*For more information on university fundraising and mobile and online giving, check out our handy additional resources:*

- **Alumni Fundraising: 4 Surefire Ways to Engage Recent Grads** — Learn more about building positive relationships with recent alumni by applying our top outreach strategies!

- **Text-to-Done: The Beginner’s Guide** — Connect with your college donor community anytime, anywhere with our exclusive breakdown on text-to-give software!

- **Hiring a Fundraising Consultant:** 12 Essential Tips — Get an expert’s opinion on your next university fundraising campaign with Aly Sterling Philanthropy’s guide to hiring the perfect fundraising consultant.
About MobileCause

MobileCause provides an innovative suite of digital fundraising and donor engagement solutions that help nonprofits do more good.

To speak directly to an expert about implementing MobileCause software and strategy for your organization, visit mobilecause.com, call us at 888.661.8804 or email us at info@mobilecause.com.