

TEAM DONOR JOURNEY

UIEA ACCELERATOR SPRING 2019

Identifying opportunity areas for a development strategy
based on behaviors and unmet needs of alumni.

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the processes, findings, opportunities, and concepts developed by Team Donor Journey during the Spring 2019 UIDEA Accelerator. It is intended to serve as inspiration for the University of Illinois Foundation (UIF) leadership to consider while innovating upon existing engagement methods. Some concepts have been framed as potential projects for future UIDEA batches.

THE TEAM

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OUR PROCESS

This project utilized a human-centered design approach to identify unmet needs, emergent behaviors, and subconscious motivations of potential donors. Our process focused on collecting qualitative data through interviews and observations and then synthesizing our data into design opportunities. We conducted this user research using a wide range of Illinois alumni. There was great variety in college, major, and graduation year, even dating back to 1952. Gathering insights from the stories we heard from these alumni, we found inspiration for innovative concepts around giving and the alumni donor journey.

After this insight-gathering process, we outlined the different types of behavioral personas we observed. We then mapped out a donor journey, indicating the “moments that matter,” and opportunity areas for design inspired by these “moments that matter.” These moments lead to our ideation of initial concept directions within these opportunity areas. We translated these into creative briefs for the giving experience. These briefs can contribute to the UIF’s future innovation strategies and support a pipeline of new offerings and services within UIF internal priorities.

LOOKING IN



WITH WHOM WE TALKED

During the process of “looking in,” we conducted 21 interviews with administrators and staff within UIF, the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Institutional Advancement (OV CIA), and the University of Illinois Alumni Association (UIAA). These interviews provided the team with a current understanding of Advancement at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Interviewees ranged from UIF leadership concerned with the big picture of donor engagement to research team members responsible for identifying prospective donors. Additionally, we interviewed Major Gift Officers (MGOs) responsible for procuring donations over \$25,000 from alumni. Most interviews were small-group conversations of about an hour long, although a happy hour with eight MGOs was organized to gather information on current practices utilized for donor engagement. Later in the process, we also reviewed potential implementation ideas for feedback from five of the MGOs listed as well as with some members of the UIF Research and Portfolio Management Team.

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INSIGHTS FROM LOOKING IN

INSIGHT 1: BIG DONATIONS MATTER MOST.

“90% of [dollars] are from 2.5% of the donor base.”
“We keep track of 2% of [our prospects] essentially. As new people float to the top we put them into management.”
“60-65% gifts need to be \$1 million or more.”

While annual gifts are important for establishing a habit of giving, major and principal gifts are responsible for the overwhelming majority of dollars raised by UIF. These large donations are critical for reaching the ambitious goals of large campaigns, such as With Illinois which has a multi-billion dollar goal. Understanding this reality is important in deciding how to spend time and resources in securing donations.

INSIGHT 2: UNIVERSITY SCALE AND DECENTRALIZATION HINDERS EFFICACY.

“Every college has rules so that their gift officers are not stepping on other people’s toes. That still happens because there’s still a lot of grey area.”
“Big distinction: [the UIAA is] focused on engagement as a whole. UIF is really focused more on the donor and those who might become donors.”

Working as part of the University of Illinois means navigating a multitude of colleges and units all with their own unique missions and needs. The massive scale of the University leads to decentralization which, at times, can be a barrier to communication. Along with that, the silo-esque nature of the University makes developing and implementing both unified strategies and best practices difficult, as new ideas and change are localized to particular units.

INSIGHT 3: REBUILDING IS A CONSTANT REALITY.

“Everything is developing so fast, and I don’t have enough time or resources.”

Due to the ever-growing and changing alumni body, UIF must evolve, reshaping its practices to best fit the new generations of the Illini family. Needs and wants of alumni change over time, especially with technological advancements hemming the fabric of what it means to effectively communicate. The UIF, OVCIA, and UIAA have thus experimented with new ideas to reflect this development. Additionally, when on-boarding new major gift officers, it can be difficult to decide what lessons are important enough to be retaught and which are out-dated.

INSIGHTS FROM LOOKING IN

INSIGHT 4: LIMITED RESOURCES AND HIGH TURNOVER MEAN RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AT EVERY CAPACITY IS CHALLENGING.

“People flip jobs because it’s hard work and they don’t get paid as much as their sales counterparts.”
“No one graduates college and says, ‘One day, I’m going to work in Advancement!’ There are too few of us. We’re fighting a losing battle.”

High staff turnover is a constant challenge in Advancement: the average employment time for an MGO is 18-24 months. Given that this is a relationship-based industry, this presents a unique challenge to establishing a relationship between alumni and the formal institution of the University. Ultimately, many MGOs leave their positions in favor of greater leadership opportunities and salaries.

INSIGHT 5: THERE’S A TRUE PASSION FOR ESTABLISHING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UNIVERSITY.

“The human element of it... to me there’s no substitute to sitting down with a prospective donor... and really eyeballing them and getting their body language. You can’t get that over the phone or in an email.”
“When you have great relationships with people, that donor wants to make a difference.”
“Stewardship is what distinguishes Advancement from sales. It is the idea predicated on the person and prospect.”

In talking with the members of UIF, OVCIA, and UIAA, it was abundantly clear that there is a true passion for establishing meaningful relationships between alumni and the University at every level. From MGOs to senior leadership, everyone we talked to exuded passion and enthusiasm in the greater meaning of their job. However, the passion did not necessarily lie in personal relationships. The most important aspect of relationship building at this level is to make sure that, along with a possible friendship that exists, the main goal remains fostering a connection with the University and a love for the institution.

FIELD RESEARCH



WITH WHOM WE TALKED

Part of the human-centered design process is to draw inspiration from the extreme ends of a particular user group and learning from the individuals on the fringes of the bell curve. This leads to creative ideas that can benefit individuals across the entire community. In the case of this project, ours extremes referred to the level of engagement of a particular alumnus: either highly engaged and participatory or not at all.

Our team worked closely with the UIF Research and Portfolio Management Team to identify a pool of alumni we labeled as “dormant donors.” These donors were individuals identified as capable of providing a major gift and who had previously given small gifts to the University but had not given at all within the last 10 years. Identified dormant donors were contacted through cold calls and emails. While the original list contained alumni from all three universities, ultimately we were only able to arrange interviews with alumni from the Urbana-Champaign campus.

In addition, interviews with alumni who had never given to the University were arranged through the personal connections provided by team members Ava Bilimoria, Lucas O’Bryan, and Rachel Switzky as well as through personalized LinkedIn outreach. Interviews were also conducted with those who are major gift donors via connections provided by their managers. This included one individual serving as a lifetime director of the UIF board. In total, we spoke with 28 alumni living in San Francisco, Seattle, or Chicago. These locations were selected for their high concentrations of Illinois alumni.

Synthesis of data from these interviews was a multistep process in which the concrete observations from our interviews were abstracted into insights, patterns, and themes around the concept of engagement. Frameworks for understanding the data such as the map of the donor journey or the two-by-two matrix of behavioral personas, were created to visually represent these insights, patterns, and themes. Our frameworks allowed us to identify opportunity areas of possible innovations and strategies, and ultimately the solution concepts we have presented in this document.

THE DONOR JOURNEY

Defining a single donor journey proved to be one of the most challenging components to this project, given that each alumnus has a different story. During our looking in interviews, we were able to gather an understanding of Advancement's view of the donor journey. Shown below, this interpretation of the donor journey starts when an individual has graduated from the University. Very soon after, they are contacted to donate to the annual fund and are opted-in to a number of marketing communications. These communications and solicitations, along with invitations to events continue, until an individual has been identified as a potential prospect for a major gift. This prospect is then engaged through the donor development process of qualification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship. Donors with the capacity to give multiple gifts may go through this process several times.

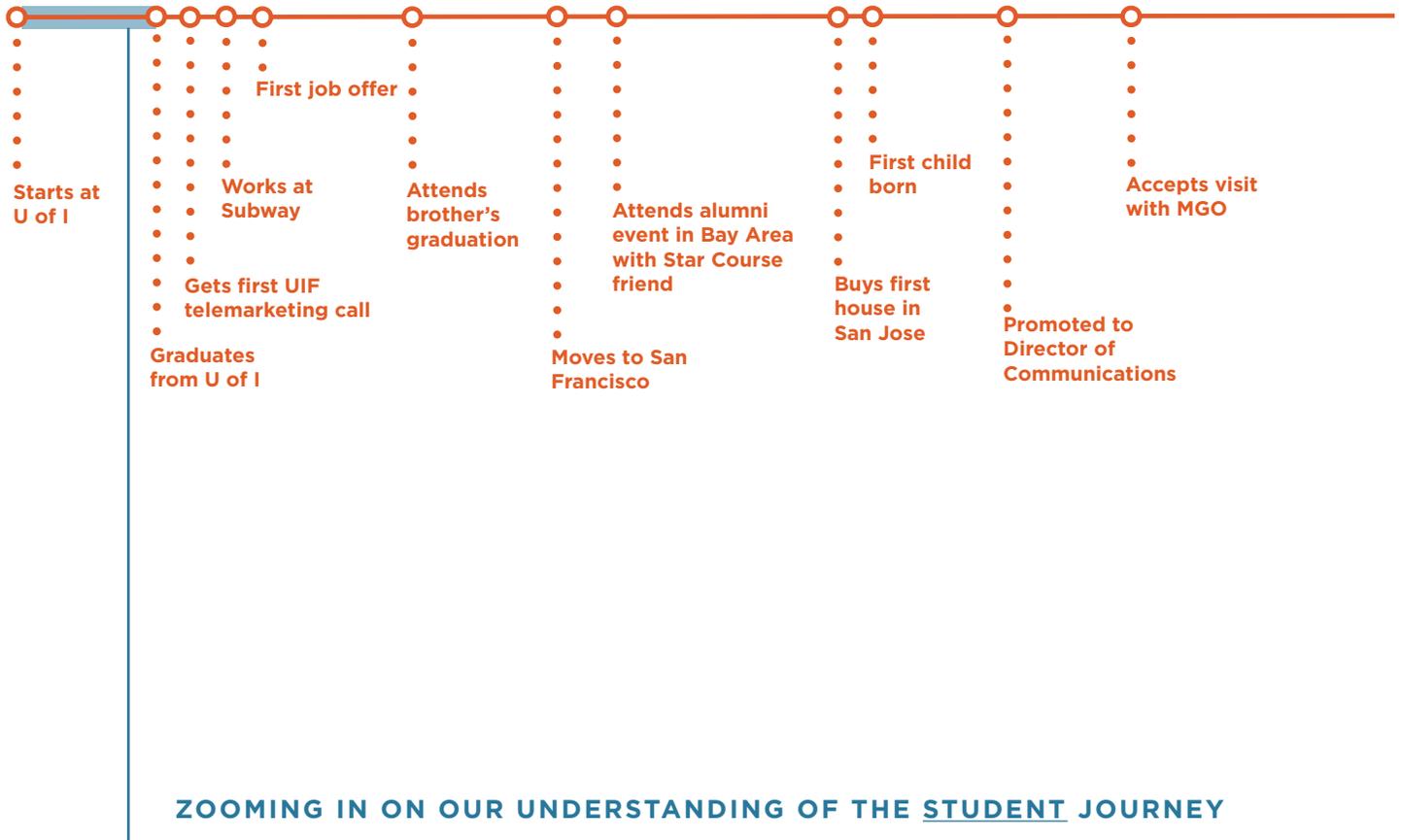
ADVANCEMENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF DONOR JOURNEY



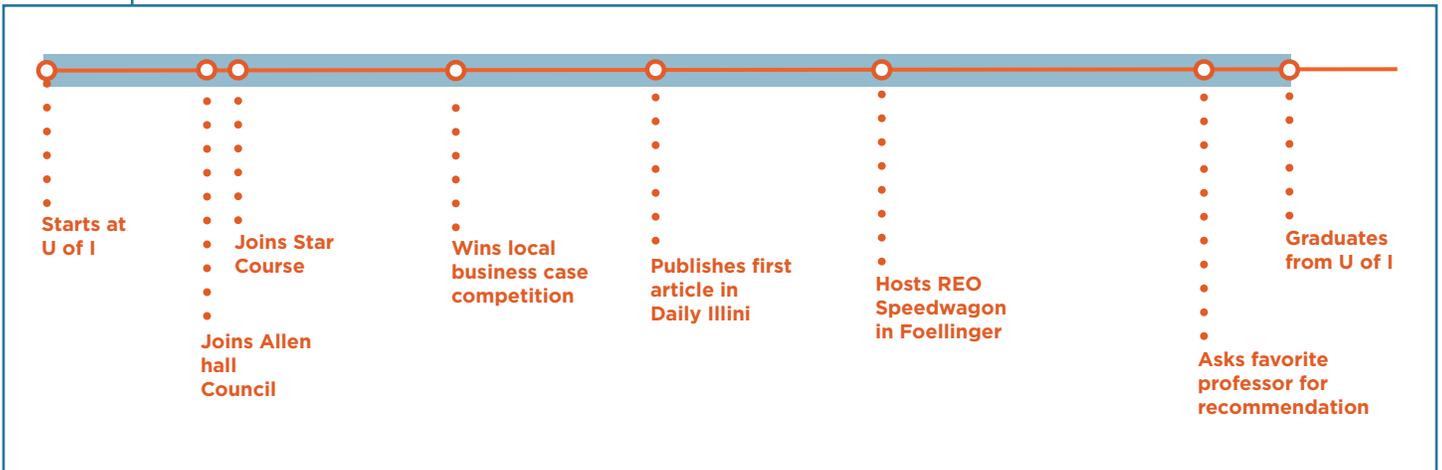
After interviewing the 28 alumni during our research, we developed an understanding of the donor journey from the perspective of an alumnus's life. The story laid out below is not directly indicative of one individual; instead, it serves to highlight some of the many moments that matter that we heard during our interviews. Some of these moments are obvious, such as moving to a new city, having a child, or earning a promotion. One large insight from our research was that the years before undergraduate graduation—the time that an individual spends outside of class while on campus—were fundamental to the donor journey. Experiences in dormitories, dining halls, and most importantly, in extracurriculars, were the formative experiences that not only shaped the alumni relationship with the University but were often fundamental to personal development. Understanding and appreciating these important moments outside the classroom is critical for cultivating passionate, engaged donors.

THE DONOR JOURNEY

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE DONOR JOURNEY



ZOOMING IN ON OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE STUDENT JOURNEY



THE DONOR JOURNEY

By overlaying these two interpretations of the donor journey and looking at the overlaps and gaps, opportunities for expanding Advancement’s understanding of the donor journey became evident by including many of the moments that matter during our alumni’s lives.

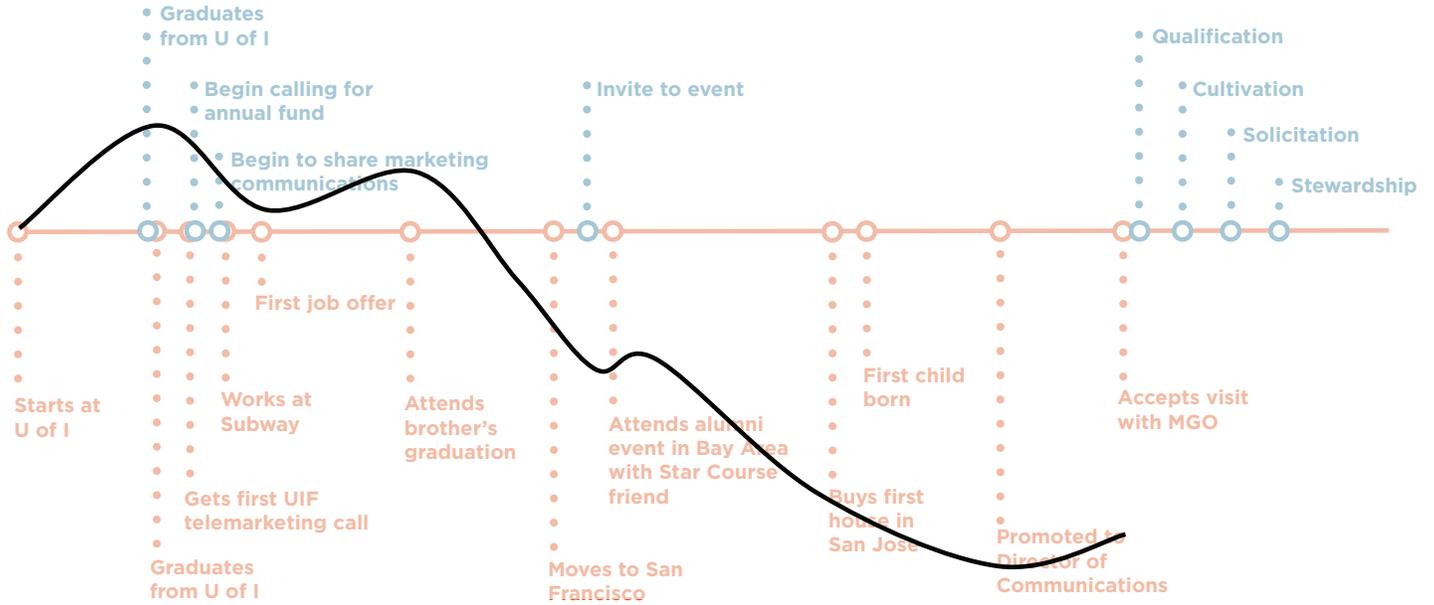
DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY + DONOR JOURNEY



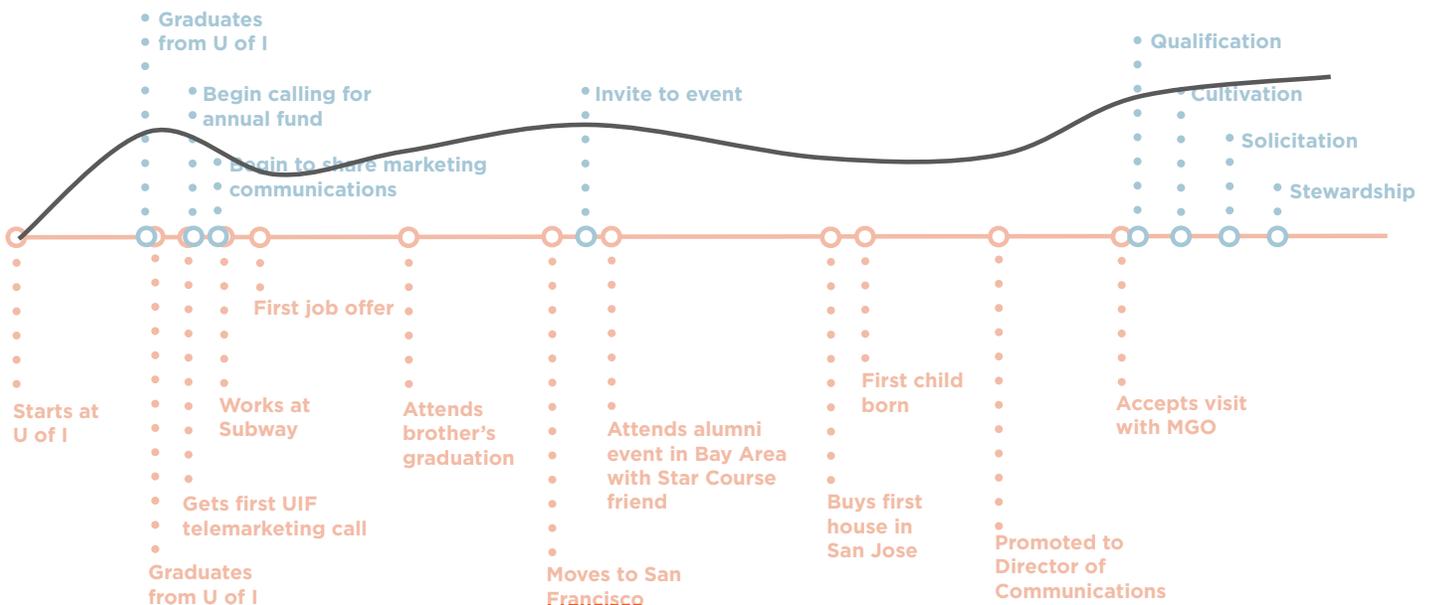
Taking the donor journey framework one step further and mapping engagement over time reveals that for all alumni, engagement is highest upon graduation, but each moment of transition afterwards is a critical inflection point. For a disengaged donor, these transitional moments lead them to become increasingly distant from the university. When it comes time to engage via the traditional development process, there is a large amount of work required to ramp up to the same levels of engagement needed for a gift. Engaged donorson the other hand, have stayed connected post-graduation and have utilized these transitional moments as means for being engaged.

THE DONOR JOURNEY

ENGAGEMENT OVER TIME: DISENGAGED DONOR



ENGAGEMENT OVER TIME: ENGAGED DONOR



BEHAVIORAL PERSONAS

In addition to developing the donor journey, our initial synthesis also led us to identify the following eight behavioral personas:

SCORNED OR UNHAPPY: individuals with a passionately negative opinion and/or relationship with the University.

“MY MONEY COULD GO FURTHER ELSEWHERE”: individuals who believe their money makes a larger impact when donated to a cause or organization other than the University of Illinois, such as a smaller, local organization.

“NO ONE ASKED ME”: individuals who never received an ask to donate, perhaps due to a change in address or email, or through fault of data collection.

THE INDIFFERENT: individuals with a neutral or apathetic stance on the University, often having a highly transactional view of their education and time on campus, instead of transformational.

INFORMED ALUMNI: individuals who stay up to date with the University to some extent and are aware of Illinois in the news, such as new buildings, professors, or awards.

PEOPLE, NOT PLACE: individuals who have a strong relationship with the people they connected with while a student on campus (e.g. friends, professors) but who have no connection with the University as an institution.

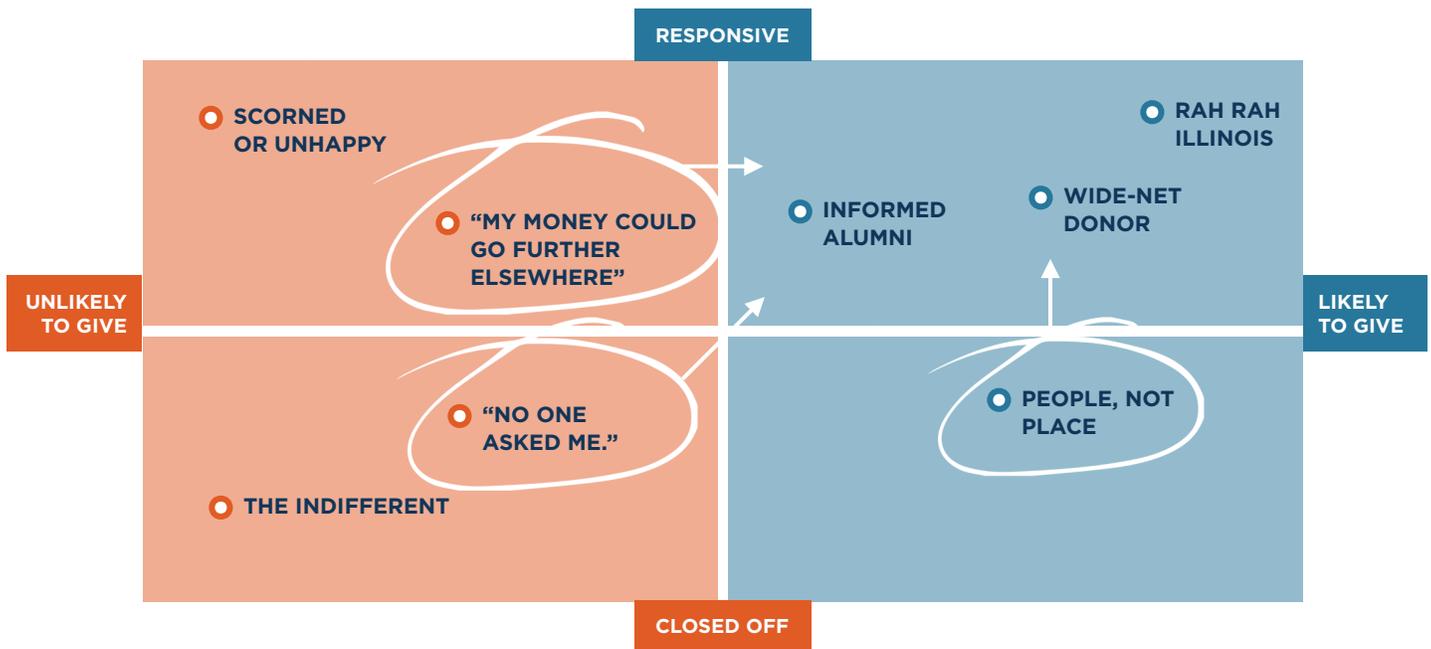
WIDE-NET DONOR: individuals who donate to the University of Illinois as part of their larger portfolio of giving but the University may not be their primary philanthropic priority.

RAH RAH ILLINOIS!: individuals for whom the University of Illinois is their top philanthropic priority and are openly proud to have graduated from the University.

BEHAVIORAL PERSONAS

Below, these behavioral personas have been laid out on a two-by-two matrix of “responsiveness” versus “likelihood to give to the University.” “Responsiveness” is measured through answering emails, communication with the University, and openness to meeting a major gift officer. “Likelihood to give to the University” is measured through personal connection, pride, and connection in relation to the University.

Again it is important to remember that human-centered design is qualitative and not quantitative. The data is in the quotes. The primary focus of the concepts proposed by our team focused on moving three personas (“My Money Could Go Further Elsewhere,” “No One Asked Me,” and “People, Not Place”) into the top-right, most-engaged quadrant.



INSIGHTS FROM ALUMNI RESEARCH

INSIGHT 1: HIGHLIGHT EXTRACURRICULARS THAT ALUMNI LOVE.

“[An RSO] was the beginning of my social life and all the people I’ve stayed connected with.”

“I explored a lot outside the campus community.

I wasn’t as locked into the University.”

“I never felt connected to my department... I didn’t feel community within the department.”

DESCRIPTION

While on campus, registered student organizations (RSOs) play a massive role in the student experience. RSOs serve a multifaceted purpose; they are a way to explore potential career paths, work on projects with others, and be involved in something outside one’s major. Often times, they are a huge social outlet: the place where many individuals find the communities that help Illinois feel like a home. These communities and affiliations to student organizations last well beyond an individual’s time on campus. Many alumni expressed that the people they met in their extracurriculars were the people they have stayed in contact with since graduating. We know of course that some alumni strongly identify with their department, but for those who do not, RSOs are a critical avenue for engaging with the University.

HOW MIGHT WE CREATE A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL CULTURE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH ADVANCEMENT?

As the main focus of our pitch for Demo Day, this opportunity has the most extensive strategy laid out for how to address it. Many of the concepts generated during our ideation process addressed the need to establish a stronger relationship between Advancement and students during their time on campus. We envision this as part of a five year strategy to create a mutually beneficial relationship between students and Advancement—beginning with enhancing existing processes, then the creation of new programs, and ultimately leading to a cultural shift in the way these two groups interact.

5-YEAR VISION OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & ADVANCEMENT



Utilize existing processes to embed students within Advancement

Create new programs to improve the Advancement and student relationship

Develop a more symbiotic relationship between Advancement and undergraduate students

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Current undergraduate students develop a comprehensive understanding about our alumni and Illinois support

Current undergraduate students and Advancement administrators and staff develop shared trust and understanding

Advancement will have a role in providing meaningful engagement activities for current undergraduate students

ADVANCEMENT LIAISONS

To begin the work on this five year plan, we propose enhancing the existing development process by including students in the experience. This would be done through a program called Advancement Liaisons.

ADVANCEMENT LIAISONS

Students who are identified for this role accompany MGOs on prospect and cultivation visits and attend Alumni Events as a means of remind alumni of their experiences and connections to the university

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

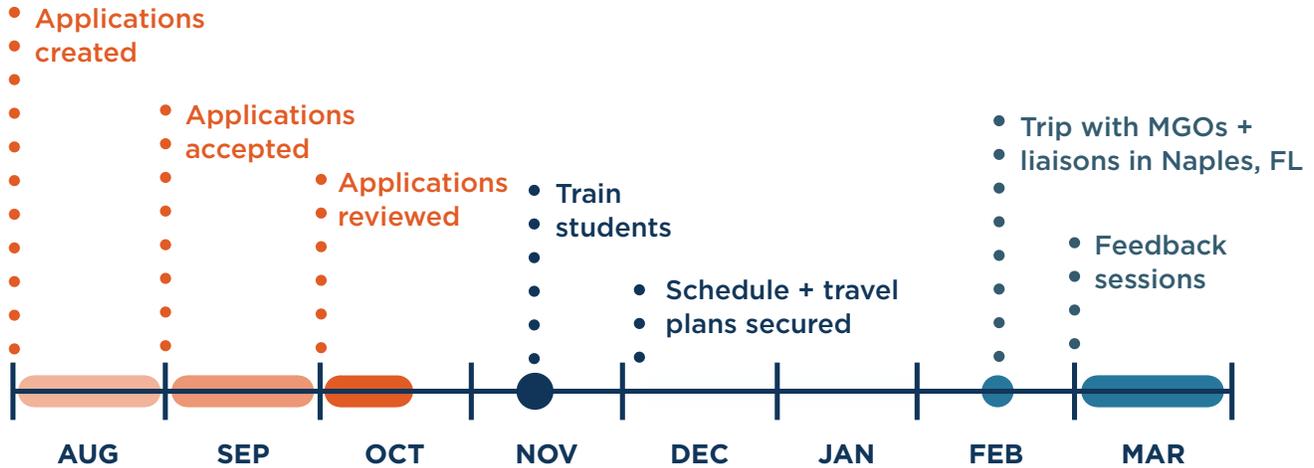
Provides alumni a first-person exposure to contemporary campus life

Establishes a personal connection with an alum that an MGO might not provide

Incentives UIF + Advancement cooperation student organizations

Enhances current student experience by providing valuable alumni connections, building leadership and interpersonal skills, and connecting them with Advancement as a career path

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



REQUESTED BUDGET

EXPENSE	AMOUNT/STUDENT	TOTAL (4 STUDENTS)
Round-Trip Airfare	\$400	\$1,600
Housing (3 Nights)	\$450	\$1,800
Per Diem (4 Days)	\$128	\$512
Student Training	\$100	\$400
SUBTOTAL		\$4,312
10% Contingent		\$431
TOTAL		\$4,743

SCD + UIDEA PART II

In addition to the immediate opportunity to establish this Advancement Liaison program, there is a need to gather more information on how to create a successful and mutually beneficial relationship between Advancement and current students. The Siebel Center for Design (SCD) intends to apply to the next round of UIDEA for this further investigation.

Going into this next batch, our design process will be accelerated by the addition of sacrificial concepts developed during the course of this current project. Sacrificial concepts are potential solutions that can be brought to early interviews for evaluation. The key to sacrificial concepts is the fact that they are “strong opinions, weakly held.” They are based upon the research previously conducted, but if they are not met with any interest or enthusiasm from Advancement, alumni, or students, then we can quickly discount them and move on. One potential sacrificial concept developed in this project is the idea of Footprint Grants: small, repeatable, unrestricted grants offered by UIF to student organizations in return for data on past members. We soft tested this idea, among others, with a handful of students and while we received some interest there were numerous questions around data privacy and the restrictions on these funds. Going through another round of human centered design research will allow us to not only uncover new insights and opportunities specifically regarding a cultural shift around the Advancement student relationship but also allows for the evaluation of sacrificial concepts like Footprint Grants.

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8	WEEK 9	WEEK 10	WEEK 11	WEEK 12	
PRIORITIZATION OF DIRECTIONS Work with advancement stakeholders to determine directions to pursue (ie, student organization partnerships) Map out early hypotheses			STUDENT RESEARCH Based on prioritization, conduct qualitative sessionsk such as with student organizations, to gather deeper insights		SYNTHESIS & STORYTELLING Synthesize our insights into patterns, themes, and meanings, creating behavioral personas and finding “moments that matter”				CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT Finalize materials, develop roadmap for next steps, and prioritize concept briefs to move forward into pilot and implementation			

INSIGHTS FROM ALUMNI RESEARCH

INSIGHT 2: ~~BET ON THE UNDERDOG~~ SCREW MIDWESTERN HUMILITY.

“I love telling people that I went to Illinois.

*Like, ‘F*** you, I didn’t go to Harvard or CMU.’”*

“I am very proud that I went to a public university.

That is something that I think is an important value.

At a big public university, you can find your people. They are there.”

“I think about the Illinois experience, and personally

as an alumnus, I’m proud of it. I don’t have the

‘go Harvard’ or ‘it’s the Alabama football game’

mentality... My friends out here really enjoyed

their experiences but don’t need to boast it.”

DESCRIPTION

Illinois is one of the most preeminent universities in the world, boasting numerous top programs across our colleges. While the academic reputation of the University is strong in the eyes of recruiters and rankings, we uncovered that alumni in careers putting them in direct juxtaposition with graduates of private institutions harbored a real underdog pride in their alma mater. Private institutions often purport a sense of prestige over public universities, and yet many University of Illinois graduates know their education was equal, if not better, than that of a private school. In markets where U of I alumni are in contrast with alumni of private institutions, there is a real sense of pride that translates into an underdog mentality. An opportunity exists to speak to these alumni by changing the tone of marketing from the quiet Midwestern humility that has traditionally characterized the brand of the University to a bolder and more provocative stance that plays upon this underdog pride.

HOW MIGHT WE LEVERAGE THE UNDERDOG MENTALITY WHILE RETAINING OUR MIDWESTERN RELATABILITY?

Creating a new marketing effort for the University was outside the scope of the skillset of our team. However, we uncovered that this opportunity presents itself as a unique challenge for a new campaign. Our team briefly discussed a few ideas on how to lean into this underdog identity without clashing with existing marketing efforts. Ultimately, this opportunity presents itself as a chance for UIF and Advancement marketing, as well as centralized University Marketing, to craft a

INSIGHTS FROM ALUMNI RESEARCH

INSIGHT 3: LEVERAGE PEOPLE'S TRUST IN THEIR FRIENDS AND COMMUNITIES.

“I wasn't engaged until I had a classmate who asked me to go to an alumni event in Arizona.”

“Whatever post-grad involvement I have is coming through personal connections.”

“There's strength in the Greek alumni network. You need to utilize that.”

DESCRIPTION

During our research, we found time and time again that people's relationships with the university are often built upon the trust they have in their friends and communities. Some alumni may not engage at all until they are invited by someone they know. Others recognize that they're engaging as part of a larger community. The obvious challenge arises: given that Illinois is home to so many different communities with their own unique priorities, how do we connect with each of these distinct groups? To combat this challenge of scale and diversity, we've developed three potential concepts that leverage people's trust in their friends and communities.

HOW MIGHT WE REMIND PEOPLE OF THE MANY FACETS OF THE ILLINI COMMUNITY?

STORIED, a publication under the direction of Storytelling Director Kim Schmidt, presents the sort of ideals and stories that interest alumni. Both in its beautifully done online format and Chicago-based print publication, its stories come across as both riveting and congenial. As we talked to many different alumni, they expressed a common desire to learn about interesting but relatable alumni. The typical measures of success were not as engrossing to them as hearing about an alumnus who may have, for example, started a small vineyard. Especially with the recent CASE award being awarded, the STORIED publication has revealed itself as something that is both loved by alumni and respected in its field.

Our proposal is for a wider distribution and funding of STORIED. Currently, one print version has been released to Chicagoland residents who have certain portfolio index scores. Our research suggests that this could be distributed on a nationwide level and to engage donors of all portfolio index scores. While there are a few stories about current students in the online version, these stories could be further developed beyond the simple Q&A format they are currently in. Furthermore, some of the funding should be allocated for more advertisement. Not just for alumni, it would be great for anyone to be able to more easily find these fantastic stories related to the University of Illinois. Our research showed that the STORIED online website also solves the problem of creating an easy reminder and method for alumni to update their mailing address. The website is intuitive to navigate and also has links for donating and navigating to the larger University of Illinois homepage.

INSIGHTS FROM ALUMNI RESEARCH

HOW MIGHT WE CREATE MORE INTIMATE, NICHE INTERACTIONS FOR ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT?

In speaking with several MGOs, we heard that there have been several situations in which there have been gatherings of alumni and student interns within a particular company. More often this has been by happenstance rather than by Advancement organization. In order to leverage the familiarity and trust existing via company community ties, we propose a unified strategy for bringing students and alumni together in more intimate gatherings. For example, there could be a series of events for alumni at Facebook that involves current student interns. There are numerous ways to tie this to other existing programs at the University. Additionally, we could leverage the student presence in Chicago with the Grainger College of Engineering's City Scholars at either Illini Days or other mid-year Chicago events to bring a closer connection between Illini past and present.

HOW MIGHT WE UTILIZE EXISTING COMMUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO GIVE?

A current natural mechanism for utilizing communities and trust networks to give is through Facebook's fundraising channel. Every year when it is a user's birthday, the user is prompted to start a group fundraiser in lieu of receiving a monetary gift personally. Through this avenue, Facebook encourages users to pick charities that are meaningful to them. The University nor UIF are currently official charity options, which could be easily amended.

Beyond that, even when analyzing the reasons why people gave monetarily to the University of Illinois system, there exists a willingness to support units that have personally affected the donor or the donor's circle of friends. Giving circles exist in UIF fundraising; however, with the popularity of digital crowdsourcing sites rising, a more modern refresh is necessary. In a more innovative paradigm, this idea could be explored to allow for individuals to choose a specific cause to support, be it a specific student's scholarship or a professor's trip to a conference. This is perhaps another opportunity to further explore, especially as many donors would like to see exactly where their money is going, and sites such as GoFundMe, Kiva, and Patreon prove exactly that. Furthermore, these sites harness the power of social media sharing to create multiplicative effects of giving, which UIF could engage through efforts to advertise the importance of "Illini Share": a concept to tap into communities through the importance of the initial individual.

INSIGHTS FROM ALUMNI RESEARCH

INSIGHT 4: BE PRESENT IN MOMENTS OF TRANSITION.

“I was never contacted personally. It’s the simple thing to do.”

“When you have an established career and are reached out to, I take it as a sign of respect.”

“The big thing is to keep you engaged when you first leave then keep you going.”

DESCRIPTION

As demonstrated by the donor journey framework we created, touch points in the careers of alumni are critical moments to place alumni in the pipeline to become engaged donors. At times, this can be difficult as people move away and become detached geographically and emotionally from the University. It is especially imperative then that alumni are intentionally engaged at these moments. Every alumnus wishes to be recognized and acknowledged by their alma mater and even the simplest of measures matter.

HOW MIGHT WE ENCOURAGE ALUMNI TO UPDATE THEIR CONTACT INFORMATION?

In today’s digital environment, the connection that many people have with the University or even each other is through their online networks, be it Facebook, LinkedIn, or a multitude of other sites. During our research, we thanked participating alumni by giving them Block I stickers that cover the “I” letter key on computer keyboards. They were quite excited to receive this small gift and they loved that they could show their Illini Pride at home and at work. Our proposal is for an “Alumni Appreciation Giveaway,” a social media campaign to give these stickers away to all alumni. Posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and all other social media that the University utilizes would tell alumni that they are eligible for a free sticker for their computer. It is important that this giveaway is framed as a free gift to alumni, and that there is no mention that they would have to do is fill out a form with correct mailing information so that UIF has their contact information. People do not want to feel manipulated by the offer, even though this information will necessarily be collected to deliver their sticker anyways. Through this, the University would be able to surreptitiously collect information while thanking alumni for attending the University however many years ago.

This could be further enhanced by integrating the data collected from the form into TED. By manipulating the form to have questions such as “What is your current email?”, “What was your NetID?”, or even “What was your UIN?”, the data could very easily be integrated into TED. However, it is unlikely that alumni would remember their UIN, or even their NetID. Without these pieces of information, TED integration becomes much more arduous, and there must be a cost-benefit analysis if the data is not as articulate as needed. A possible fix is to include specific identifying questions to the survey, but this may become tedious for the alumnus filling out the survey. Striking the balance between respecting the alumni’s patience and collecting the necessary information for identification is critical. Currently, there is discussion of a TED portal being developed that would facilitate data integration on both sides of the survey, alumni facing and University facing. With the addition of this project, the Alumni Appreciation Giveaway could be a great success.

INSIGHTS FROM ALUMNI RESEARCH

INSIGHT 5: CREATE AND FACILITATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALUMNI TO GIVE THEIR TIME TO STUDENTS.

“I prefer to give time all things considered.”

“I have not given back at all... I do portfolio reviews for my high school and would totally do Skype one-on-one remote portfolio reviews [for U of I students].”

“Engagement is about supporting students with more than just money.”

“I want to get in on helping more U of I students... I would be 100% down to help advertise an alumni gathering at Google.”

DESCRIPTION

Beyond the quantitative measure of engagement through donations, many alumni simply want to give back to students and to the University with their time. In such cases, this propensity to give time can indeed be funneled into a willingness to give significant gifts. As with the case of Larry Gies, who was not identified by Advancement as a high capacity donor, there is a limit to the accuracy and breadth of data on alumni. However, alumni who donate their time and talent to the University are more likely to give money in the future when approached. With Larry Gies, this was seen in his yearly commitment to return to campus to give guest lectures to business classes. The eventual ask to give came from his faculty friend. We can anecdotally justify that the role of advancement is to not only procure the high level donors of today but to set up the pathway for the Larry Gies of tomorrow. Thus, the opportunity to channel the “time-giving” nature of alumni presents itself.

HOW MIGHT WE CREATE A FORMAL MECHANISM FOR ALUMNI VOLUNTEERING?

Currently, there exists no formalized best practices for alumni volunteering. Some MGOs individually may curate their own list of opportunities and arrange for alumni to give back to the University. These lists could include mentoring hackathon participants, judging a startup competition, or giving lectures for a class or department-affiliated RSO. Although generally, these opportunities to give back are left to the MGO or alumnus to pursue. Centrally collecting these opportunities and intentionally connecting specific alumni with them presents itself as a chance to significantly enhance potential donor engagement; however, the creation of such a mechanism is a complex, multifaceted challenge with multiple stakeholders all with different needs. In creating a more synergistic relationship between Advancement and students, the possibility of an alumni volunteering portal will be considered as a potential sacrificial concept for further investigation. The formal alumni volunteering mechanism is an idea that presents itself as a strong potential for a future UIDEA batch project.

THANK YOU!

Through this project we have learned more than we ever thought possible. The complex and fascinating world of Advancement showed us the incredible depth of the University and the challenges that the University must overcome at such a massive scale. Traveling across the country was an extraordinary opportunity provided to us by UIF and we are incredibly grateful. We loved working with everyone in UIF, OVCIA, and UIAA and are eager for the opportunity to do so again.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS RELATING TO THIS PROJECT
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