



WISCONSIN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION: CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP STEWARDSHIP

BEST PRACTICES

Stewardship is any action taken to ensure that donors experience positive interactions with UW–Madison and to foster long-term engagement and investment. Stewardship is commonly thought to have three key elements: acknowledgement, impact reporting, and recognition.

Acknowledgment

Thanking donors in a timely manner is the foundation of all stewardship. Every donor will receive a notification from WFAA that their gift has been received via a receipt document that can be used for tax purposes, but a more personal thank-you should be sent as well. Make sure your thank-you shows that you appreciate the donor: use their correct name or nickname and emphasize how this gift will help change lives. Reference any previous gifts they may have given or, if they are a first-time donor, warmly note this milestone. **Avoid mentioning the gift dollar amount in the donor's acknowledgment.**

It is best to acknowledge donors' gifts within a month of when they're given, no matter the size of the gift. For pledges, we recommend acknowledging the pledge initiation and last payment rather than every single payment.

- Request a donor acknowledgment report from your chapter representative at least monthly.
- Request thank-you cards on the chapter leader web page. Use these to thank donors for gifts, pledge initiations, and final pledge payments.
- Check with your chapter representative to confirm which acknowledgements have been sent out.

Impact Reporting

It's important for donors to see the impact and transformative power of their generosity. Anything you do to keep them informed and show them the difference their gift makes is impact reporting, including creating opportunities for donors and scholarship recipients to interact.

- Request an email be sent to all scholarship donors once the scholarship recipient(s) has been selected, but before announcing the recipient(s) to the whole chapter. Include any relevant (but not confidential) material from their application.
- Optional: Include scholarship recipient information in a chapter newsletter.
- Optional: Share thank-you notes written by students with all scholarship donors.
- Optional: Bring recipients to a chapter event, where they can meet donors in person (e.g., a scholarship reception, etc.).

Recognition

There are many ways to creatively recognize donors both privately and publicly. Not all donors seek public recognition for their philanthropy, so it is important to respect anonymity if the donor desires it. A few good ways to recognize donors may include:

- Add “Donor” stickers to all scholarship donors’ name tags for chapter events.
- Optional: Publish a year-end social media post thanking scholarship donors by name.
- Optional: Acknowledge donors at a chapter event in an event program or presentation slide.

Different Ways to Say “Thank You”

- *Thank you very much; your support is greatly appreciated.*
- *We would like to express our gratitude.*
- *I am most grateful for your support.*

Sample Thank-You Message

Dear [NAME],

Thank you so much for your generous gift to the [SCHOLARSHIP NAME] fund. Because of you, the dream of a life-changing UW education is now a reality for deserving students from our local community. You are helping new Badgers build bright futures for themselves — and for others they meet along the way.

Thank you once again for everything you’ve done. On, Wisconsin!