



Voices July/August 2023

July 1, 2023

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OK, I UNDERSTAND





Credit: Jeff Koterba



Publicizing Gifts

Q: Do you have a dollar-level threshold for publicizing gifts from donors?

A: "It's hard to have a policy like this because there are going to be so many exceptions. We usually publicize them if such publicity is important to the donor for stewardship reasons, important to the institution for visibility reasons, or just tells a good story. These are the type of 'know it when you see it' decisions that make it hard to build a policy around."

– Jonathan Enslin, Vice President for College Advancement, St. Norbert College, De Pere, Wisconsin, U.S.

A: "Our institution has a decentralized communications structure, and we do have dollar thresholds for which gifts will be publicized by our two public affairs offices. Gifts of \$5 million or more qualify for coverage from these teams (article, press release, social media post, etc.). But this policy is squishy; we make exceptions for gifts whose purposes align with the university's strategic initiatives or are particularly compelling. We have other outlets for publicizing smaller gifts, such as our advancement department's donor publication, which features gifts of \$1 million and above, among other content."

– Mary Lee, Director of Advancement Communications, Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.

The Scoop on Great Alumni Newsletters

CASE members share the secrets that drive opens and clicks

SUSScribe, Singapore University of Social Sciences
Published quarterly; converted from print to digital in 2018<<https://susscribe.com/>>

"Our team of 27 alumni volunteers writes articles for the newsletter. Volunteers meet quarterly to brainstorm ideas and confirm stories for upcoming issues. Our open rate for the newsletter is about 32% (against the Mailchimp education industry benchmark of 23%), and we are heartened that our alumni enjoy reading it. Issues with key university developments, interesting events, and alumni stories seem to garner a higher open rate."

– Evelyn Chong, Director of Student and Alumni Relations



Alumni & Friends, Mesa Community College, Arizona, U.S.
Published three times a year in print and online<<https://www.mesacc.edu/alumni/news/newsletters>>

"The goal of Alumni & Friends is to connect our constituents to MCC's mission so they may engage with the college and serve as ambassadors. The print version of Alumni & Friends is designed as a cost-effective, trifold self-mailer. The six-page format is a quick, easy read. An email blast directs recipients to our website to read the articles online."

– Jeremy Byrum, Senior PR Marketing Analyst

Alumni News, University of York, U.K.
Published once a month online

"When we include stories from our Alumni Voices blog<<https://alumnivoices.co.uk/>> in our newsletter, they're very well received, as is anything topical—like female-led articles for International Women's Day. Making sure the content flows and is varied is crucial. We tend to adopt a relaxed, more informal tone in our introductions, which has worked well. A catchy, easy-to-read subject line is the first hurdle—keep it short and easy to understand. An eye-catching top image gets recipients to read the full email and take the actions we want them to."

– Charlotte Gibbons, Deputy Head of Operations and Experience

Diversity Digest, University of California, Los Angeles, U.S.

Created as a weekly newsletter in 2020; relaunched as a quarterly e-newsletter<<https://www.case.org/awards/circle-excellence/2021/diversity-digest>>

"In a survey, subscribers recently shared that the Digest covers topics that they care about, keeps them informed about equity issues, and connects them to UCLA on critical developments both on campus and beyond. We're committed to being responsive to emerging topics—



for example, one special issue featured content from Armenian alumni who contacted alumni affairs for support as they were raising awareness of the Armenian genocide.”

– **Cory Rosas, Associate Director, UCLA Alumni Diversity Programs & Initiatives**



Tags

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Alumni Engagement

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