




The Donor Investor Imperative: Sourcing and Refining Big Ideas

In this exercise, you will evaluate the following ideas and their application to a fundraising campaign that aligns with the principles we've discussed today.

First, evaluate each idea by asking "is it a Big Idea?"

Big Ideas Criteria

 <p>A big idea should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transform the University and the world • Make the University unique in the marketplace • Focus on where the University is good but could become better • Include areas where the University is emerging as a leader <p>A big idea should not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be defined <i>solely</i> by a capital project • Bundle together smaller ideas • Solely feature a naming opportunity • Lead to slow, incremental improvement 	 <p>Big Ideas Scoring System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformative impact on campus Meets an immediate need Increases national acclaim Creates pan-campus collaboration 	 <p>UNIVERSITY OF OREGON</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with mission and academic plan goals • Building on existing academic strengths • Fostering interdisciplinary collaboration • Links to fundamental societal challenges or opportunities • Viable funding model, including philanthropy and institutional funding • Sustainability beyond three to five years
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Next, consider whether or not you think it is actually a "good idea." Not all big ideas are good ideas! In this context, "good idea" means 1) an idea that would align with the institution's needs, strengths, and opportunities and 2) an idea that that could be packaged and communicated in a way that potential funders and donors would find compelling and inspiring.

Of course, this is subjective. An idea could resonate powerfully with the constituents of one institution, based on its culture, brand, and history – and could fail to gain traction at another institution with a different mission, set of offerings, and audience.

However, consider that donors tend to gravitate towards ideas that allow them to leave a distinctive legacy, that better the future, and that address or advance important values and causes. They are most resistant to those ideas that seem to merely remedy operational shortfalls or gaps.

Finally, you may want to make notes on how you would *change* an idea to make it "big" or "good."

Concept	Evaluation
<p>Educating A Digital and Data-Literate Workforce To succeed in the labor market in 2030, every student must have skills in their toolbox that are rare today, like data analysis and visualization, coding and software programming, and web and user interface design. This initiative envisions that <i>every single student</i> – whether they major in liberal arts, humanities, STEM, business, or beyond – who graduates will hone at least one in-demand data or digital skill they can add to their resume, through either classroom or internship experiences.</p> <p>Big Idea?</p> <p>Good Idea?</p>	
<p>Preparing for Aging in the 21st Century As Baby Boomers reach advanced age, we must revolutionize fields like gerontological care, chronic disease management, lifelong enrichment, motivational wellness, physical space adaption, assistive technology, retirement planning and Medicare policy. Our region will also fall far short of the healthcare workforce we need to care for this population. This interdisciplinary initiative will seed a new College of Health Professions and Aging Studies, including a research institute and faculty cluster hiring effort. It will examine all aspects of aging, including slowing its effects, enhancing welfare for the elderly, and studying economic and social impacts.</p> <p>Big Idea?</p> <p>Good Idea?</p>	
<p>Leveling the Playing Field Low income students persist at lower rates through school and take longer to graduate. They are also less able to engage in co-curricular and experiential opportunities, which affects their engagement and job attainment. We will expand career-linked work-study positions and close disparity gaps in study abroad, internships, undergraduate research, cultural exposure, and student leadership activities, allowing every student to maximize their experience regardless of financial situation. Our goal is the same on-time graduation rate between Pell- and non-Pell-eligible students by 2025.</p> <p>Big Idea?</p> <p>Good Idea?</p>	
<p>A New Public Works Many cultural institutions are struggling to remain open in these difficult economic times. Our institution will prepare to assume the management of struggling galleries, libraries, music facilities, museums, art installations, cultural festivals, and literary events across our community to ensure they remain accessible to the general public whose lives they enrich. These will become laboratories and boundary-of-campus extenders for our own students to share, develop, and sell their work to the public.</p> <p>Big Idea?</p> <p>Good Idea?</p>	

Concept	Evaluation
<p>Winning the Future with Technology</p> <p>Our region is rapidly shifting from a manufacturing-based economy to one focused on knowledge workers providing technology-centric services, but entrepreneurs complain they lack the skilled workers they need to build and scale new enterprises. We commit to doubling the number of STEM graduates and teachers equipped to teach STEM courses in high schools (armed with the latest pedagogical innovations) in the next 10 years. (We will do this by launching targeted recruitment initiatives, redesigning gateway courses with active learning to reduce DWF rates, creating more internal capacity for instruction and classrooms, and aligning 2+2 associate's programs more closely with community colleges.)</p> <p>Big Idea?</p> <p>Good Idea?</p>	
<p>Serving a Maturing Market</p> <p>We will transform our campus operations, community, and culture to triple the number of working adult students and degree completers who do not enroll right out of high school and may come instead from the workforce or the military, having gained some credit else-where, in the next 10 years.</p> <p>Big Idea?</p> <p>Good Idea?</p>	
<p>Growing Sustainable Communities</p> <p>Cities and towns must reorganize themselves to promote green living for their residents, to minimize waste and carbon emissions, and to steward water and energy resources. This initiative will cross multiple disciplines (i.e., public health, architecture, climate science), create a new undergraduate major and online master's degree, and sponsor executive education for city managers across the state and the region. We will also role model the way by making the campus itself carbon neutral through facility retrofits and energy management initiatives by 2030.</p> <p>Big Idea?</p> <p>Good Idea?</p>	
<p>Civility, Diversity, and Internationalization</p> <p>Our society is more global and complex than ever, and these differences often lead to conflict. As the demographics of Pennsylvania and our region continue to shift, this problem will become worse, not better. We will spearhead a series of initiatives to prepare our students to engage in critical dialogue, to consume information from trustworthy sources, and to reflect on their own biases and backgrounds. At the same time, we will seek to make our campus a more welcoming place to those from historically under presented groups and enhance our climate of inclusion to international students.</p> <p>Big Idea?</p> <p>Good Idea?</p>	

The Donor Investor Imperative: Communicating Impact

A good “big idea” has multiple layers of appeal to different constituents and can be framed differently based on the stakeholder you are appealing to. It also lends itself to effect impact communication through both stories and statistics. Pick one of the “big ideas” we discussed and describe how you would frame and communicate it through the lens of a group that care most about impact on....

...the institution (current students, future students, alumni, faculty, staff, overall university brand).

...the region (community, state, employers, workforce, other local stakeholders or constituencies).

...society or the world (people, places, or populations affected by a certain societal issue or cause).

If asked, why is your institution uniquely deserving of this gift and capable of solving this problem?

The Donor Investor Imperative: Fundraising Products

It is not difficult to come up with major and principal gift concepts that align with the big ideas we discussed. But it is more difficult to find opportunities with a commensurate feeling of impact at the annual fund level – though offering such opportunities is critical for effective pipeline development and for laddering undercapitalized annual giving donors up to the mid-level giving tier.

Choose one of the “big idea” themes we discussed and brainstorm up to three “fundraising products” you might create, to expand this campaign theme beyond those who can write six-figure checks. If possible, even take a guess at the price tag.

Big Idea _____

Fundraising Product Idea #1: _____

Fundraising Product Idea #2: _____

Fundraising Product Idea #3: _____
