

Oklahoma State University Student Foundation

Proposal to Brandeis University's Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy – Generous U Prize

Background Information

University or college name: Oklahoma State University

Group, club or organization name: Student Foundation

State your group's mission or purpose: Oklahoma State University's (OSU) Student Foundation, or StuFu, is a service organization that promotes philanthropy on the OSU campus through a variety of events and activities. The purpose of Student Foundation is to instill a desire for philanthropy across the student body by educating students about the impact and importance of philanthropic giving and facilitating student giving campaigns. StuFu strives to establish a culture of philanthropy that enhances the future of Oklahoma State University and its students.

Group, club or organization web site: www.osustufu.org

Contact person and Group advisor: John Grice | ██████████

University official confirming Student Foundation's status as a formal organization: Fran Gragg | ██████████

Budget for philanthropy-related activities: Student Foundation operates under a budget of ██████████ Please see the attached budget for more detail.



Executive Summary

How precisely does your group practice philanthropy?

Student Foundation practices and encourages philanthropy through a variety of services and activities focusing on stewardship and philanthropic giving by our students. Stewardship of individuals who make gifts to support Oklahoma State University is a core component of Student Foundation and we believe by encouraging appreciation of these donors, we are making a connection to philanthropy for our students. Stewardship activities include CowboyThx Week, which was developed as a way to educate the student body on the impact that donors to OSU make and to give students a way to express their gratitude by writing thank you letters and signing a giant banner; Thank-A-Thons in which StuFu members place hundreds of calls to donors to thank them for investing in OSU; and Tuition Freedom Week which aims to educate the campus about the importance and amount of private donations needed in order to keep the University running.

In addition to stewardship of OSU donors, StuFu has developed a program to increase the practice and awareness of philanthropy in our own student body known as PhilanthroPete, OSU's very own crowdfunding platform. PhilanthroPete is a 40 day campaign that allows student organizations, as well as faculty and administration, to create a project on the PhilanthroPete website, set a monetary goal and, in partnership with Student Foundation, solicit students for gifts to support their project. Student Foundation administers PhilanthroPete by providing the physical support, publication for the projects and student volunteer fundraisers. The highlight of the PhilanthroPete campaign and what makes it so successful at encouraging philanthropy in our students is that it connects student donors to their passions and empowers the student body to make their peers' projects a reality.

Who has your giving benefitted and how?

StuFu's giving has seen an array of beneficiaries through the PhilanthroPete campaign. Student Foundation features their own project on PhilanthroPete each year called Cowboy Spirit. It is an endowed scholarship fund that is supported by student donations, which are matched by OSU alumni donations, and awards 5-10 scholarships of \$750 - \$1,500 annually to students in need. To date, 45 scholarships have been made to OSU students in need through Cowboy Spirit, totaling \$32,250.

Additional projects and student organizations that have benefitted through PhilanthroPete include: the Marching Band, which raised money for the replacement and refurbishing of instruments; support for Pete's Pet Posse, the campus-wide pet therapy program; support for the student-run, on-campus coffee cart service, OSbrU, which is an entrepreneurship program that teaches students hands-on business experience through starting up and running the coffee-cart, and provides scholarship money to current and future students in the program; the OSU Museum of Art; and the ROTC's participation in the Bataan Memorial March. We encourage you to visit the PhilanthroPete website at www.philanthropete.org to learn more about student projects and the impact student giving has had across campus.

Describe your group's fundraising and/or giving strategies, and/or process.

Three Co-Chairs selected by Student Foundation plan the PhilanthroPete student campaign which includes the following components (1) identification of projects, including an informational session for interested applicants, review of applications and selection of projects; (2) pre-promotion of the campaign including visiting with campus organizations, on-campus promotions and social media; (3) Campaign Week, which includes tabling on campus; and (4) stewardship of student donors.

At the beginning of the 40 day campaign, Student Foundation engages their peers through a series of tabling around campus to publicize the launching of the campaign and encourage student participation. Student Foundation members volunteer at the table and interact with their peers, educating them on what PhilanthroPete is, how they can be a donor and the significance of their donations.

How do you encourage student involvement? Describe plans to increase involvement.

StuFu believes that the best way to encourage philanthropy in our peers is to connect them with their passions and to give them the opportunity to choose a cause that is meaningful to them. We view PhilanthroPete as a unique opportunity for students to engage in philanthropy by making a contribution to a campus project that they feel connected to and passionate about.

Student Foundation leaders are empowered and encouraged to invite potential projects for the PhilanthroPete campaign by crafting a marketing plan to promote PhilanthroPete to their peers by way of Greek dinner announcements, chalking, placing fliers on campus, visiting with student organizations and through social media. Students are invited to visit the campaign information table during Campaign Week to learn about the projects of greatest need across campus. Student Foundation encourages all participation and has accepted gifts of \$1 to \$100 from students passionate about projects on campus, however, gifts of \$10 or greater receive a PhilanthroPete T-shirt so students can show their participation in the tradition of giving at OSU.

In its first year PhilanthroPete had 79 student donors contribute to a project of their choice. Currently in its second year, student donor participation has already increased by over 200%. Although PhilanthroPete is a crowdfunding platform that receives student donations as well as community-wide donations, the success of the current campaigns can largely be contributed to increased student giving. Currently, halfway through the year, student contributions account for 54% of all gifts made through PhilanthroPete, with an average gift size of \$11.95. This is up from just 33% in the previous fiscal year. Increase in student participation can be contributed to the campaign becoming a more recognizable event, a dramatically increased social media presence as well as increased outreach to, and partnership with different areas of campus including the Office of Campus Life, Greek organizations and the Student Alumni Association.

As Student Foundation continues to grow these connections and partnerships across campus, there are still additional avenues we would like to pursue in expanding the program and increasing student giving. Student Foundation plans to partner with the Fine Arts and Athletics Departments in order to boost participation at events with high student attendance. Additionally, this year Student Foundation will host its first annual student donor thank you event, the PhilanthroPete PhilanthroParty, in which all student donors to the PhilanthroPete campaign will be invited to a celebration hosted by Student Foundation. The intent of this event is to serve as a way to steward existing donors, but we expect that it will also serve as a marketing tool as it will increase visibility of PhilanthroPete on campus.

While PhilanthroPete will continue to accept donations from the community as a whole, Student Foundation has made great strides in encouraging the student body to take ownership of PhilanthroPete as a means to support their peers. As a result, we now have a majority of contributions coming from students and by continuing our efforts that have proven successful, as well as employing new avenues of engaging students, we expect student involvement in PhilanthroPete to continue to grow.

If you receive a cash prize, what will you use it for? How is this sustainable?

If OSU Student Foundation is selected to receive the \$10,000 Sillerman Prize, the money would be invested in the sustainability of the PhilanthroPete campaign through the following initiatives: (1) **Reaffirming our commitment to supporting students in need.** In the spirit of StuFu's own PhilanthroPete project, Cowboy Spirit, we would use \$5,000 to support 5 students in need at Oklahoma State University. (2) **Maintaining current student donors through a robust stewardship program.** Stewardship of donors is something that StuFu does well and a goal of ours is to continue to build a strong stewardship program in order to establish a base of student donors who will become ambassadors of philanthropy on campus, while continuing their own personal tradition of giving. The Sillerman Prize would lend \$2,000 to this initiative and would allow us to hire a student intern who would research and identify components of a stewardship program including digital appreciation, deployment of a new decal program and a new thank-you event. In addition to research, the student intern will provide instrumental assistance in planning the thank you event, as well as developing the decal program, which will allow students to proudly display their passion and commitment to philanthropy, their campus and their peers. (3) **Inviting new student donors to join the tradition of giving through PhilanthroPete.** OSU is a school of many traditions and we've worked to integrate PhilanthroPete into the culture of traditions on campus including being a part of OSU's official "Traditions-Keepers Book." Another tradition at OSU is the Camp Cowboy orientation for incoming freshman. We would use the remaining \$3,000 from The Sillerman Prize to purchase annual sponsorship at Camp Cowboy for the next three years. By reaching every incoming freshman that attends Camp Cowboy, this sponsorship will allow us to broaden our marketing initiatives on campus and increase our outreach to more of our student constituency. This will ultimately contribute to the sustainability of the program by making PhilanthroPete a more recognized program across campus.

Conclusion

Student Foundation at Oklahoma State University believes in building a culture of philanthropy across the student body by connecting students with their passions. In giving students the opportunity to choose a cause that is personally significant to them, we believe that we have the best chance at instilling a lasting commitment to philanthropy in our peers. We have worked hard to build Student Foundation and its philanthropic values into the culture at OSU and with the Sillerman Prize and the Generous U title we will be able to carry this endeavor even further. By focusing Student Foundation's efforts both on maintaining current student donors as well as engaging new donors to the PhilanthroPete campaign, we can assure the sustainability of not only the program, but the continuation of philanthropic giving by our students. We thank you for your time and consideration of our proposal and encourage you to contact us should you have any questions.