Foundation Stewardship Best Practices: Managing Grants to Ensure Long and Healthy Relationships Between Foundations and the U of A

What is foundation stewardship and why is it important?

Stewardship is the practice of ensuring that gifts are used as donors intend, and also includes the communication of progress through acknowledgement and reporting. Because developing strong relationships between funders and the U of A is critical to the success of present and future giving opportunities, we must properly steward relationships to nurture, enhance, and contribute to successful UA/funder relationships.

Foundations play an increasingly important role in higher education. Their funding decisions significantly affect universities, and their funds frequently serve as a catalyst for new projects. A foundation’s vote of confidence is often crucial to further support from additional sources.

How can I work with the GIFT Center to effectively steward my grant?

Applying for and receiving a grant is just the beginning. Foundations investing in your program will want to know how your project is progressing and often have specific expectations for reporting. Follow donor guidelines. The GIFT Center is available to provide advice on acknowledgment and thank you letters, and on the preparation and distribution of progress reports.

To better assist you, please keep us informed and alert us if you:

- Receive correspondence or are contacted by the foundation; please provide a copy of all substantive correspondence related to the grant.
- Anticipate any major changes to the scope of the work, timeline or budget.
- Have faculty or staff changes that could impact the grant and your ability to meet reporting deadlines.

How can I effectively steward my grant?

There are several easy ways to assure funders that their investment was well made:

- Meet deadlines and provide all reports and other information as requested.
- Keep the lines of communication open, so if you experience a roadblock such as slower than expected progress, your first message to the foundation isn’t that you will miss your deadline.
- Invite foundation officers to your events, particularly those related to the grant.
- In many cases, it is courteous or required to discuss recognition (press releases, use of foundation name in publications and events, etc.) in advance with your foundation contact.
- Send your foundation program officer a copy of related publications, papers, press releases, or copies of press coverage.
- Provide an alternate contact in case the primary contacts cannot be reached. GIFT Center staff are available to serve as alternates.
Where can I find additional resources? What if I have questions?

Please contact the GIFT Center: giftcenter@uafoundation.org or 621-3579.