

ETSU Annual Giving Operating Plan 2023-24 July 26, 2023

Executive Summary

This document establishes the plan and schedule for annual giving activities at East Tennessee State University. University Advancement developed this plan with the cooperation of fundraising staff within the units.

Annual Giving Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals:

Vision – the Annual Giving Office will build, sustain, and grow a significant base of supporters, ensuring a continuing source of annual, expendable, and unrestricted funding for the University.

Mission – we will acquire, upgrade, and renew contributors to the University, providing thoughtful and compelling case statements and acknowledge/communicate the impact of donors’ actions. We will also identify and cultivate future major and planned gift supporters and collaborate effectively with Advancement colleagues.

Values – we are guided by strong ethics (as reflected in University policy and the ETSU Core Values), a high level of accountability, and by the pursuit of excellence.



Annual Giving Goals:

1. Develop, Document, and Communicate Consistent Practices:
 - a. Benchmark with colleagues and aspirational peers.
 - b. Review/document procedures.
 - c. Improve methods to analyze data and target specific opportunities.
2. Increase Annual Giving to \$2.5M by 2026 (raised \$2.32M in FY23; FY24 goal is to raise **\$2.42M**).
3. Increase Donor Participation across all segments:
 - a. Analyze historical data and patterns.
 - b. Segment donor populations to prioritize and maximize effectiveness.
 - c. Reach out to constituents on a regular basis to build giving habits and provide stewardship.
 - d. Develop giving circles to promote passion, belonging, and teamwork. Create consecutive giving circle by 2024-25.
 - e. Plan and conduct ETSU Day of Giving (DoG), including a faculty/staff campaign.
 - f. Include students in giving solicitations, starting with Giving Cords and Day of Giving.
4. Improve awareness/importance of student philanthropy and heighten the visibility of Annual Giving among students (Gold Cord Circle; Leadership Annual Giving; and Day of Giving).
5. Increase Social Media activities – continue to enhance Facebook and Instagram activity and add an AdvanceETSU presence on LinkedIn.

Plans and Activities

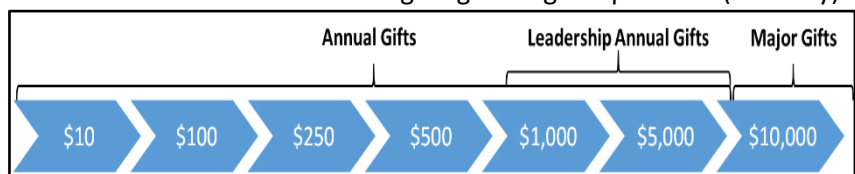
Unit-Specific Solicitation Activities:

- **Major Gift Officers** – annual giving will work closely with all giving officers to ensure the close collaboration needed to provide consistent solicitations to prospects.
- **Targeted Direct Mail and E-mail Appeals** – we will prepare and send one direct mail letter per year per schedule in Appendix 1, targeted to alumni of each major ETSU unit, with follow-up via e-mail.
 - In the case of alumni who have more than one degree (which is true for a large number of our alumni), they will receive a mailing from the unit they have chosen to be their “preferred.” Lacking a preferred unit, they will receive the mailing from which they graduated *first*.
 - Letters are prepared to be generally consistent with other annual fund letters for that fiscal year, but customized to include content, branding, and/or signatures from the unit in particular.
 - Letters will include a customized reply slip recommending designations specific to the unit (Appendix 3).
 - For Graduate and Continuing Studies, Honors College, Libraries, Roan Scholars, Student Life & Enrollment, and other units as determined, Annual Giving will work closely with Advancement Services and assigned directors of development to establish and maintain constituent lists. These lists may include past donors of the unit/program, past student interns, past employees, those with a personal passion, and others. Annual Giving will use these constituent lists to solicit annually on behalf of these programs (see Appendix 1). For Athletics, we consider their “alumni” to be student-athletes, whether or not they graduated from ETSU.
 - Unit heads will approve letters and Annual Giving will distribute as shown in Appendix 1.
 - Units may send direct mail at other points they wish, but those will be developed and paid for by the respective unit. Units can also send emails to constituents using software solutions they may have access to. Units without access to a current email marketing program can contact the Alumni Association to get access to Anthology/Encompass (formerly called iModules).
- **Phonathon** – after a two-year “pause” (2018 – 2020) the ETSU Phonathon was eliminated. While a systematic phonathon program will not take place, Annual Giving may call or otherwise communicate with households who have consistently given via the phone channel in past years. The College of Medicine Phonathon “paused” their separately operated phone program in 2021-22 and eliminated it effective with the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Central Activities:

- **End-of-Year Message and Calendar** – one per year, mailed in October/November, targeting all donors of the past ~six years (~11,500 addresses). This letter/calendar stewards loyal donors and serves as a reminder to make tax-deductible contributions before the end of the year. Letter will include content regarding current events on campus, but will not be customized by unit. Letter will include a pocket calendar, reply slip, and link to online giving. Annual Giving provides about 500 copies of the calendars to the Alumni Association.
- **Events** – we will attend select events to help attendees better understand philanthropy in general, and the purpose of the Annual Fund, in specific. In addition, we want students to understand there is a gap between the amount paid for tuition and the total cost of their higher education. Examples of student events include gold cord events, graduation celebration, orientation, etc.
- **Giving Days:**
 - **Fall** – we will continue to participate in GivingTuesday (1st Tuesday after Thanksgiving), but we will do so primarily electronically and mostly as a means of saying thank you to our donors. Annual Giving will manage this program with the advice and guidance of unit directors of development.
 - **Spring** – we will plan a separate day of giving (around mid-April each year). This will include solicitation activities and will emphasize a faculty/staff/retiree campaign, student philanthropy, and outreach to partners and friends. Starting in FY 2021-22, we began soliciting students. Annual Giving forms a cross-campus committee (to include representatives from units) to plan and conduct giving day activities and to recruit ETSU advocates to help spread the word.
- **Simple Simon Appeal** – once per year, mailed in advance of Day of Giving, targeting non-recent giver (and never-giver) alumni. We work to track recipients of past appeals and make sure households are targeted at least every other year.

- **Website and Social Media** – Annual Giving will prepare content for use on our own website and in social media and other similar media channels. Content will always include an invitation to engage and/or to give. Stories will be from the general viewpoint of ETSU and won't be customized by unit, although we may use examples of students, programs, or curriculum. Stories will always include the link to online giving and Annual Giving contact info.
- **Pledge Confirmation/Reminders** – Annual Giving follows up on pledges made during ETSU Day of Giving, through personal calls to traditional phone givers, and through WETS-FM drives. Reminder process will be:
 - o Pledge Confirmation Letter – sent approximately 2 weeks from date pledge is made
 - o Reminder 1 – sent ~60 days after the date of the original pledge
 - o Reminder 2 (e-mail) – sent ~90 days after the date of the original pledge, if not already paid
 - o Reminder 3 – sent ~120 days after the date of the original pledge, if not already paid.
 - o Approximately 150 days after the date of the original pledge, outstanding pledges will be marked as unhonored.
- **Failed Credit Cards** – we follow up on failed transactions whether one-time or recurring. Work with Foundation Accounting (for TouchNet), WETS-FM, iModules, and donors to get accepted transactions for all credit card gifts.
- **Recurring Stops** – twice per year, Annual Giving will reach out to donors whose recurring giving stopped in the previous 6 months, without a new recurring transaction having started.
- **No-contact Confirmation** – once per year, Annual Giving will reach out to alumni and friends who have indicated/confirmed more than 5 years previous, they do not want to be solicited by direct mail. The letter will provide updated information regarding ETSU and ask them to either renew or retract their request that we not contact them.
- **Last Year but Unfortunately Not This (LYBUNT) and Lapsed Letters** – the December edition of this letter will be combined with the Pocket Calendar mailing and will include a reminder of the upcoming deadline to make tax-deductible donations. Throughout the year, we will send Anniversary Cards to donors one year from the date of their last gift. We'll also send a LYBUNT mailing in June of each year. Annual Giving will keep the AVP for Advancement and DoDs in the loop on these communications, to include sending them a list of the current LYBUNTs. Major Gift Officers may reach out personally in an effort to remind people to give. Appendix 4 includes information DoDs can use to contact constituents.
- **President's Circle Solicitations & Reminders** – Annual Giving will reach out periodically to remind President's Circle members of the commitment to donate \$1,000 per fiscal year (increased amount starting in 2022-23. Refer to the President's Circle Policy. PC members will also receive a special Day of Giving letter.
- **Scholarship Funding** – we monitor unspent/underspent scholarship funding. Specifically, we work with DoDs to ensure award criteria/documentation is appropriate and that funds are being awarded. When we identify endowments needing modification, the unit DoD will take the lead role to do so, contacting the donor as appropriate.
- **Matching Giving** – Annual Giving will promote, monitor, and help administer the corporate matching giving program.
 - o Links and information will be added to all communications, including the acknowledgement sent when donors make gifts online.
 - o We subscribe to the Affinaquest (formerly HEP) Matching Giving database and have incorporated the link in our website and into our online giving form.
 - o We proactively remind annual gift donors to prepare/send matching forms after they donate.
- **Leadership Annual Giving** – we've developed a program focusing on consistent givers, encouraging them to aspire to major gift-level support. We work closely with advancement officers to ensure consistency and to make sure we don't duplicate efforts. The assistant director of annual giving manages a portfolio (auxiliary) of regular annual givers who are not already managed. We'll incorporate this into the consecutive years giving circle, when that's implemented.



- **Reply Devices:**

- We review reply slips and other reply devices annually, the results of which will be published in this document (see examples in Appendix 3).
- Solicitations on behalf of each College/Unit will include the designations they request (must be active Foundation accounts) PLUS Top University Priorities, Martin Center for the Arts, and Other, with a line for donors to write in a designation (Appendix 3, Example A).
- University-wide solicitations (pocket calendars, Day of Giving, President’s Circle, etc.) will include the list shown in Appendix 3, Example B.

Stewardship Activities:

- *Thank You Notes from Students* – placed in the envelope with the gift acknowledgement to all donors, except WETS-FM, Athletics, and Quillen College of Medicine.
- *Giving Levels, Clubs, and Societies (DPT, President’s Circle, Gold Cord Circle, Consecutive Giving Circle, etc.)* – used to help recognize donors and encourage them to “move” to higher levels of giving.
 - First-time Donors – because donors are difficult to engage and because they are more likely to give in a following year if they give in one year.
 - Consecutive Year Donors – annual recognition for people who donate for 5 years or more consecutively (by 2024-25).
 - Gap or Returning Donors – annual recognition for people who have donated again after not donating for 3 years or more (pending).
- *Tax Summaries* – no later than January 31 of each year, **Advancement Services** will provide recurring givers (credit card, EFT, payroll, and those sending monthly checks [bill pay]) with a summary of their donations for the year. This summary will give the total amount donated through all means.
- *Endowment Reports* – Annual Giving will prepare reports for endowments, providing financial status of accounts. Reports, (completed ~early November of each year), will be delivered to donors, with courtesy copy to DoDs so they can perform outreach, as necessary.
- *Holidays* – Annual Giving will periodically recognize holidays and other events that may tie in with giving activities. Recognition may take place via email/social media or through cards/letters/calls.

Calendar of Activities – see Appendix 1

Themes and Branding

- The Annual Giving portfolio of activities is referred to generally as the ETSU Annual Fund. All materials generated will be similarly branded, including ETSU and/or college markings, as appropriate. Content will be developed to convey a consistent message/theme. Specifically, it will reflect our efforts to sustain ETSU and that even though this is an “annual” fund, the nature of our work is perpetual and continuing, without regard to specific campaign objectives.
- All print communications will be coordinated with University Relations.
- See Appendix 2 for a sample solicitation.

Evaluation and Reporting

The Annual Giving Office will review this plan each year, make updates, recommend changes, and solicit feedback from all Advancement staff. DoDs should share with their deans and/or department heads. We will post the final plan, including the communications calendar, to the Policies section of our website. To evaluate effectiveness of our programs, we use metrics, benchmark with peers, and provide an annual report to all significant units of ETSU.

Appendix 1 – Calendar of Annual Fund Activities

	Direct-Mail	E-Mails	Day of Giving	Social	Events/Other
July, 2023	Prepare Draft Annual Ltr Prepare Schedule/Budget Coordinate with Units			Independence Day	
August, 2023	1 - PC (w/labels) 10 - PC Drop-offs 15 - WETS Rec. Stop			Welcome Back	25 - Community Showcase
September, 2023	21 - Alum Donors 21 - Alumni Couples 28 - SLE	21 - Donors		Student Features	
October, 2023	1 - QCOM Ltr & Athletics 21 - Friend Donors 15 - WETS Drive	Cords WETS-FM		Student Features Tailgates & Fball	Grad. Celeb.
November, 2023	15 - Pocket Cal (11K)	Cords 30 - Giving Tues		6 - Homecoming Thanksgiving	
December, 2023	5 - Holiday Cards 5 - WETS Holiday Cards	Cords 15 - Holiday 15 - WETS Thanks	ID Volunteers & Unit Champions Committee Mtg	GivingTuesday EOCY Giving Holidays	Cords
January, 2024	New Donor Letter PC Reminder	Football Schedule	Unit Toolkits Committee Mtg	Welcome Back Spring Semester	
February, 2024	5 - Valentine Cards 15 - Honors 21 - WETS Rec. Stop		Advance Mssging Committee Mtg Promo Items	Student Features Valentine's Day	
March, 2024	15 - Class of 73 (1.1K) 10 - DoG Save-the-Date 31 - SIMON	Cords WETS Drive DoG	Advance Mssging Committee Mtg	DoG Info Video	Grad. Celeb.
April, 2024	7 - Library & GS 8 - Gatton & MCA 18 - DoG (see sched.) 18 - Once-per-year	DoG Cords	Committee Mtg Day of Giving	Faculty/Staff Retiree Posts Student Giving DoG	Day of Giving?
May, 2024	Unsubscribes PC LYBUNTS	Cords	Stewardship TY to Volunteers	Graduation Student Giving	Cords
June, 2024	LYBUNTS/Lapsed Targeted Segment (3K) Targeted Segment (1.5K)	Final Push	Lessons Learned Committee Mtg	EOFY Giving	

Anniversary Cards/Renewal Letters = prepared monthly

LYBUNT = Last Year But Not Yet This Year

Simon = No-frills appeal typically sent to alumni who haven't given to ETSU before.

Appendix 2 – Sample Annual Appeal (front side)



[Date]

[Barcode]

[Combined Salutation Name]

[Address Line 1]

[Address Line 2]

[City], [State] [Zip Code]

Dear [Combined Salutation Name],

Together with our partners, supporters, alumni, and students, ETSU is at the forefront of higher education. No longer “just a commuter-school,” our university makes tremendous impact on *people* all across the region, across the country, and even the world. This is reflected in countless rankings and in the high quality of our graduates.

The challenges of the last few years resulted in a stronger, more determined, and more flexible team. We overcame struggles *together*, leaving us even more certain that *putting people first* is good business and the right thing to do. ETSU will continue to lead and to share messages of renewal, hope, and optimism for what is to come. We hope you'll stay with us on this journey.

Over the past year-plus, the university undertook a rigorous planning and visioning effort, outlining strategic goals the institution seeks to achieve by its 125th anniversary in 2036. The aim is to develop a future-focused vision for ETSU, maximizing the power of the collective talent of the university and surrounding community to improve the lives of people everywhere. You can view this vision document at etsu.edu/125II. Here are some other accomplishments and plans in [Unit]:

- [Unit Bullet 1]

- [Unit Bullet 2]

- [Unit Bullet 3]

- [Unit Bullet 4]

I ask for your continued support today. Your gift is not only an investment in our unit and in our students; it's a signal of what we can accomplish together. If you have questions or would like to learn more about engaging with ETSU, contact [DoD Name], [Duty Title], at [Phone] or [e-mail].

Sincerely,

[Graphic with Dean signature and title]

P.S. You can help us *put people first* by making a donation at etsu.edu/give. Your recurring or one-time gift can mean the difference between a student attending college...or not.

(cut here)

Annual Gift to ETSU

I am enclosing \$_____ to support ETSU as shown on the reverse.

[Combined Salutation Name]

[Address Line 1]

[Address Line 2]

[City], [State] [Zip Code]

Payment Methods

Check: # _____ (to ETSU Foundation)

Online: etsu.edu/give

We are compliant with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) and we work to ensure your data is protected. If you are not comfortable donating online (or by check) you are welcome to call our office at (423) 439-6141.

[E-number]

Appendix 2 – Sample Annual Appeal (back side)



(cut here)

Designate my gift to the area(s) below. If no boxes are checked, it will be directed to **[Unit]** Unrestricted.

[Graphic with Unit Designations]

I (or my spouse) work for a matching gift company. Find out if your employer matches at www.matchinggifts.com/etsu.

Please send me information about:

- How to make a recurring gift to ETSU
- How to create a scholarship/professorship
- How to include ETSU in my estate plans
- How to make a stock or securities transfer

Office Use

AN24[XX]

ETSU is an AA/EEO Employer

Appendix 3 – Solicitation Reply Devices

Example A. *College/Unit Letters* will include the designations requested by the college/unit, PLUS Top University Priorities and Other, with a line to write in a specific designation. For example:

Designate my gift to the area(s) below. Gifts with no boxes checked will be directed to University Top Priorities.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Top Priorities in the College of Nursing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hancock County School-based Clinics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> James Michael Mitchell Memorial Nursing Student
Emergency Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Johnson City Downtown Day Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Johnson City Community Health Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Nehring Endowment for Faculty Excellence and
Innovation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Martha B. Mosley Student Crisis Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> University Top Priorities (greatest need) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain City Extended Hours Health Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) _____
_____ |

Example B. *University-wide Solicitations* (pocket calendars, Day of Giving, President’s Circle, LYBUNTs, etc.) will use the designations shown here:

Designate my gift to these area(s). If no boxes are checked, it will be directed to University unrestricted.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alumni Legacy Scholarship Endowment | <input type="checkbox"/> Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College of Arts and Sciences | <input type="checkbox"/> College of Public Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College of Business and Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Sherrod Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College of Clinical & Rehabilitative Hlth Sci | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Life & Enrollment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clemmer College (formerly Education) | <input type="checkbox"/> Roan Scholars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College of Graduate & Continuing Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Martin Center for the Arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honors College | <input type="checkbox"/> University Athletics (Excellence Fund) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> James H. Quillen College of Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> WETS-FM Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College of Nursing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) _____ |

Example C. On certain solicitations, it may be appropriate to include some or all of the following designations. This will be done with the approval of the VP for Advancement.

- Buccaneer Student Crisis Fund
- Bucky’s Food Pantry
- WETS-FM Radio
- Noland Family First-Generation Scholarship

Appendix 4.1 – Contacting LYBUNTs (those who donated last year but not yet this)

Background:

Retaining donors we have worked so hard to acquire, is critical to growing production and increasing alumni participation.

The Goals and Expectations Policy asks prospect managers to conduct or orchestrate a minimum of two substantive face-to-face contacts per year with each managed prospect. Ideally, at least one of these contacts will include a discussion about making an annual gift.

DoDs can use the sample “invoice” letter (Appendix 4.3) as a starting point, as needed.

Schedule:

July	Fiscal year begins
August – June	Anniversary Cards on anniversary of their last gift (central; monthly)
November	LYBUNT messages added to calendar appeal (central)
November	Calls to people on the DPT “bubble” (units) LYBUNT appeal, as determined by directors of development (units)
April	Day of Giving LYBUNT appeal (central)
June	LYBUNT and Lapsed appeal (central)
June	LYBUNT/Lapsed calls/emails (units)
Quarterly	Quarterly ETSU Foundation President’s Report

Sample Anniversary Card (**central**):



Appendix 4.2 – Contacting LYBUNTs (Sample Scripts)

Hello, may I speak with [Name of Prospect]? Hi Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____, I'm glad I was able to reach you – my name is _____ and I'm the (title) at East Tennessee State University. We're coming to the end of the fiscal/calendar year on [Date], and we are reaching out to our past donors to see if they will renew a gift to the University this year. [**For end-of-CY,**] If we receive your gift postmarked by December 30th, your gift qualifies as a tax-free charitable donation for the 20XX tax year.

"I already received a call; I said I'd think about it." Okay, thanks for your consideration. In the event you decide to make a gift before [Date], is it ok if I send you a return envelope in the mail? If yes, Is <address> the correct place to send? Also note that you can make an online gift at any time by visiting: www.etsu.edu/give

"I don't think I can do anything this year." I understand. We realize that it's not always feasible to support ETSU; however; at this point in the year, we are emphasizing alumni participation...so, really, even a gift of \$____ would be more than generous. If not, perhaps \$20.23 for 2023?

"Yes and/or what did I give last year?" Last year you made a gift of \$____ to _____. Do you think you could do \$____ this year? (Upgrade giving level; work from last year's amount)

"Sure. Just send me something in the mail." Great. I will be more than happy to send you some more information. Is there anything in particular you would like to know more about? I just want to remind you that our giving year ends on June 30th. We would be so appreciative if you could make your gift by that date. Do you think you are able to do a gift of \$____?" (Upgrade; if that's no good, perhaps another amount or \$20.23 for 2023.

No reply... There are a lot of great things happening right now on campus [talk about your area(s)]. Last year you made a gift of \$____ to _____. Do you think you could do \$____ this year (Upgrade giving level)

Pledge closure...

1. Thank again for gift
2. Verify contact info – emphasize **e-mail** and **employer name**
3. Make sure to provide/remind online giving link: www.etsu.edu/give
4. Thank again and tell donor to have a great night/afternoon

Rejection closure....

1. "Thanks for taking some time to talk with me."
2. "We hope we can count on your support in the future."
3. Thank again, and tell donor to have a great night/afternoon.

Voicemail Script:

Hello, I'm calling to speak with Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____, My name is _____ and I'm the (title) at East Tennessee State University. We're coming to the end of our fiscal year on June 30th, and I am calling to see if you'd consider making a renewal gift to the University this year. You can give me a call back at _____ or, if you'd like to make a donation online, you can visit www.etsu.edu/give. Thanks very much for your time and have a great day!

Make checks payable to ETSU Foundation, PO Box 70721, Johnson City, TN 37614

Appendix 4.3 – Contacting LYBUNTs (Sample “Invoice” Letter)



July 1, 2022

Elizabeth Doe
123 W Main St
Jonesborough, TN 37659

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me about ETSU. We appreciate your consistent support, especially to the College of XXXXXXXX. Your donation will immediately go to work, helping our most critical resources: Buccaneer students!

To make your gift, fill in the form below and return in the envelope provided or visit our website at etsu.edu/give. If you have questions or need more information, do not hesitate to reach out to me at (423) 439-6141 or seejs1@etsu.edu.

Thanks again for your generosity and involvement!

Sincerely,

Jon See, Exec Dir
Annual Giving

----- (cut here) -----

ETSU Annual Gift

I am enclosing \$_____ to support East Tennessee State University
Designated to: _____

E12345678

Elizabeth Doe
123 W Main St
Jonesborough, TN 37659

Payment Methods

Check: #_____ (Payable to ETSU Foundation)

Online: etsu.edu/give

We are compliant with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) and we work to ensure your data is protected. If you are not comfortable donating online (or by check) you are welcome to call our office at (423) 439-6141 to make your gift by phone.