Team 17 – DSL Fundraising Strategy

DSL’s Guiding Principles for Fundraising and Donor Stewardship

Draft 1/17/15

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1. Purpose and Overview

Purpose:

These guiding principles have been prepared to help DSL units better understand and navigate the process around fundraising at MIT and its potential as one of the financial budgeting tools (in addition to Institute/GIB sources, revenues and fees) available to assist in helping to achieve programmatic goals. The guiding principles are designed to help staff determine through a series of steps and questions if fundraising is a viable and applicable option for program funding.

Overview:

a. What is “fundraising”?

   i. Cambridge Dictionary: “The act of collecting or producing money for a particular purpose”
   ii. Today, it’s “gifts”
   iii. Does not include funding from grants, foundations, corporations, research grants, etc.

b. Why should DSL be interested in fundraising?

   i. An additional possible source of support for programs and initiatives across DSL that are unable to be funded directly through budget requests or other traditional means

   ii. Fund and maintain specific positions or projects
      o Capital projects
      o DAPER, other units
      o Partnership and collaboration with alumni, donors, and other Institute departments and offices to achieve joint goals
2. Is fundraising a viable option for supporting a program/initiative?

a. Is the initiative in alignment with DSL or unit’s strategic direction?

b. Did you receive approval from to proceed with the program initiative regardless of whether or not funding is approved (including any additional staffing needed to run the program)?

c. Is the program/initiative more suited to being funded from alternative resources noted below?

   I. Re-balancing of existing budget, or shared support with another DSL/MIT group.
   II. Supported by fees or other revenue sources?
   III. Addressed through annual DSL budget increase request process?
   IV. Gifts DSL/unit already have that are not designated for other uses:
      a. Talk with your unit director to see if there may be existing gifts available.
      b. DSL Administration can also assist with a status of existing gifts, uses, $ balances, and whether or not there are potential opportunities to use any available gifts for your program

d. If you answered “yes” to questions (a) and (b) and “no” to question (c), then pursuing fundraising could be an option. You will then need to determine what type of gift is appropriate:

   i. “Endowment” or “Expendable”

      1. Choose an endowment if a program will exist “forever” and the money can be used for restricted or unrestricted purposes. Examples include:
         a. New program that has a significant ongoing cost structure
         b. Recurring resources for an existing program with proven success
         c. Minimum gift size for creating an endowment funds is $100K (per MIT Recording Secretary’s Office guidelines)
ii. If a specific “program need” is short term, but program needs may change over time, then an endowment is the type to pursue. For example:
   a. A leadership program that has a particular theme at a certain time, but could change over time as you build other ideas and themes into the program’s growth.

iii. If a program or initiative is one time (i.e., non-recurring), the gift type is expendable (restricted or unrestricted). For example:
   a. Purchase of a new piece of athletic equipment

3. Seeking DSL senior leadership endorsement/approval.

   Very Important: Before pursing any fundraising opportunity, be sure to secure approval from your unit director and, if necessary, endorsement/approval from the Dean of Student Life.

4. Coordinating with the MIT Office of Resource Development (RD) and Alumni Association (AA)

   Once you have your approval in place with DSL leadership, you must work with the Institute Resource Development (RD) staff and Alumni Association (AA) staff to pursue the opportunity and prepare a plan to approach a donor based on the type and size of the gift, and any activity engaging potential donors already underway.

   a. Find out key information RD needs from DSL for a fundraising proposal
   b. Talk with RD staff to clarify their role and responsibility
   c. Have a working understanding of what DSL’s role and responsibility will be
   d. Get approval from DSL/Dean and RD on the final plan before proceeding

   As defined by Resource Development on a case by case basis
5. Ongoing stewardship once a gift and donor are in place
   
a. Stewardship should be coordinated with RD, AA, and other donor relations areas within DSL.

   b. Approaches to stewardship and communication can vary depending on the type and size of gift, donor wishes, and donor history/potential of giving to MIT for uses in DSL or other MIT departments.

   c. Review of what a DSL unit is doing today/has in place with respect to stewardship activity with a donor or for a gift fund that is set up to receive donations from multiple individuals

6. References & Tools

   Only use these resources if you have first followed the guiding principles for fundraising (above) and have approval from your supervisor and DSL Leadership to fundraise for a particular initiative and you have established an agreed upon plan with RD and AA on your fundraising plans, including the use of any references, tools or other resources noted below

MIT Resource Development

http://giving.mit.edu  External giving site for donor
http://development.mit.edu/  Resource Development site for staff
Contact name: Christina Toro, Executive Director of Leadership Giving, ctoro@MIT.EDU, 617-253-4107, W98-500

Stewardship toolbox

https://web.mit.edu/comdor/stewardship/
A certificate protected site for all MIT community members who are stewarding donors, including best practices from various DLCS and sample materials. Although the site has not been updated for some time, the information remains applicable (with the exception of the contact information) and Resource Development staff encourage its use.
MIT Alumni Association

https://alum.mit.edu/contact/Classes_Staff
Contact name: Steve McAlister, Senior Director, Annual Fund, stevemca@mit.edu, 617-715-5155, W98-158

MIT Foundation Relations’ resource page

http://foundations.mit.edu/resources/

Curated links to online resources about grant writing, identifying funders, understanding philanthropy in the US, and more. This is focused on fundraising from foundations, but there’s plenty of material that is also useful for fundraising from individual donors.

MIT Foundation Relations’ blog “In the Know”

http://foundations.mit.edu/blog/

An MIT-produced blog that focuses on trends and news in fundraising and higher education. Useful for building knowledge about philanthropy in the field of education.