



CASE STUDY

How the University of Baltimore ended a 5-year giving plateau with Giving Days



BONTERRA DONOR ENGAGEMENT'S GIVING DAYS SOLUTION (FORMERLY GIVEGAB)

“ The Bonterra Giving Days’ team has allowed my team to quickly and efficiently build a Giving Day experience that provides our campus with energy and a sense of excitement about the impact of philanthropy.”

– Leslie Joyce | senior director of development at The University of Baltimore

OVERVIEW

The University of Baltimore (Ubal) is a public university located in the heart of Baltimore, Maryland. With both graduate and undergraduate programs, this university is home to approximately 4,000 students from all walks of life.



Set in an urban environment, University of Baltimore students do not live on campus and commute to their classes. Many of their students also work outside of their class schedule, and do not spend the majority of their time on campus.

As a non-traditional campus, Ubal is faced with a unique set of fundraising challenges regarding how to best engage their students and alumni. For most schools, a majority of fundraising efforts are focused on campus involvement and speaking to the nostalgia that alumni have for their “dorm days.” At the University of Baltimore, it was essential to find creative ways to bring their campus community together online and create a sense of unity!

Prior to joining the Bonterra’s Giving Days solution, the University of Baltimore held fundraisers for specific initiatives at a smaller scale. As the popularity of GivingTuesday continued to grow, Leslie and her team understood the importance of leveraging this global day of generosity to encourage the Ubal community to give back. This naturally led to a university-wide campaign that took place annually on GivingTuesday, known as #BowOnPoe, which launched in 2014.

While these efforts were fruitful, Leslie and her team understood that in order to break out of the giving plateau they had experienced over the past five years, they needed to partner with the best-in-class Giving Day technology.

“We lacked the ability to truly build a brand around our day and provide our campus partners with collateral to download and samples that could help their efforts in one location.”

Her team was also searching for ways to fill gaps in their ability to update their community in real time about the progress of their Giving Day, and to expand their engagement strategies, which at the time solely relied on social media.

JOINING GIVING DAYS

The University of Baltimore began working with the Giving Days team ahead of their 2019 fundraising campaign, #BowOnPow. The entire Ubalt team saw the potential of #BowOnPoe to reach new fundraising goals and build a greater online presence, but they needed the functionality, features, and project management Giving Days provides!

Partnering with Giving Days was an easy decision because they could have a beautifully branded site created specifically to fuel their fundraising initiatives - one that is extremely easy to navigate, allowing site visitors to find the participating funds they wished to give to effortlessly! Since Ubalt has the additional challenge of being a commuter campus, it was extremely important that they bring the university to life online with the #BowOnPow giving experience.

The University of Baltimore team was also paired up with one of Giving Days' dedicated project managers, Rebekah, who assisted them with the planning and logistics of their Giving Day. Rebekah was responsible for keeping the Ubalt team organized and on track to meet their Giving Day goals. This was incredibly helpful for Leslie's team as they were still exploring new ways to expand their fundraising efforts through a Giving Day model.

“ Working with Leslie from the University of Baltimore to plan #BowOnPoe for the past 3 years has been an amazing journey! It's been an honor to watch their Giving Day program grow and flourish online year-over-year. Leslie is a force to be reckoned with as she organizes, manages, and executes her Giving Day with such ease!”

– Rebekah Casad | senior project manager for Bonterra Giving Days

#BOWONPOE 2019

Ubal's 2019 campaign on Bonterra's Giving Days solution demonstrated the importance of providing their alumni, students, and community with an easy way to connect online. On GivingTuesday, the University of Baltimore's #BowOnPoe campaign raised a collective \$63,134.21 through 465 gifts made by 339 donors! With engaging site design and easy-to-use functionality, they were able to exceed their fundraising goal of \$40,000 by 57.8%.



#BOWONPOE 2020

Following the success of their 2019 campaign, Leslie's team took a strategic approach to growing their #BowOnPoe initiative. While they still wanted to leverage the power of GivingTuesday, they also sought after a Giving Day all of their own. The University of Baltimore held a GivingTuesday campaign on December 1, 2020 and a separate #BowOnPoe Giving Day a few months later on March 3, 2021.

The 2020 GivingTuesday campaign was centered around creating opportunities for the Ubal community to give their time and dollars in support of the University. The GivingTuesday movement aims to spark generosity around the holiday season, and Leslie's team was able leverage the #BowOnPoe site to do just that! During the holiday season, donors are actively seeking organizations or initiatives to support. By having an online presence on this day, #BowOnPoe was an easy choice for those affiliated with the school and were looking for ways to give back.

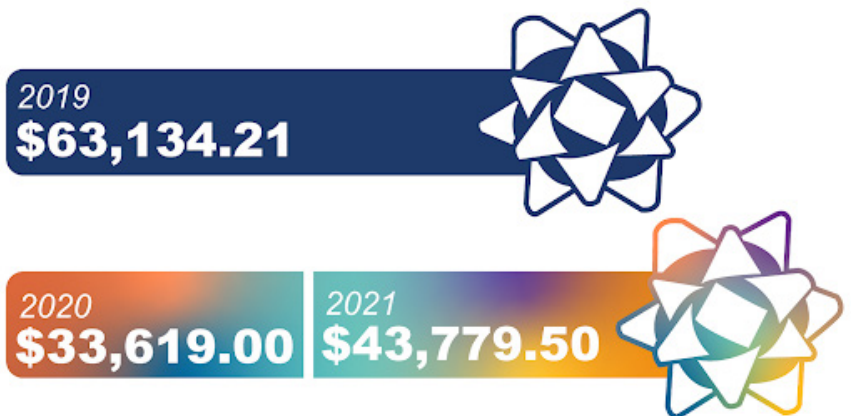
In 2020, Leslie's team expanded on the number of participating funds to seven by adding a "university-wide" giving option. They also added nearly 400 sub-funds that allowed donors to support specific initiatives around campus. For example, rather than giving to the Merrick School of Business, donors could make a gift to the Marketing Department, Entrepreneurial Center Endowment Fund, or the MSB Case Study Competition. By doing this, they could be sure that each donor could find a cause that resonated most with them.

All campaigns for Merrick School of Business

[Back to Merrick School of Business](#)



Despite the setbacks in giving that many schools faced in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the University of Baltimore was extremely successful in gaining support around their GivingTuesday campaign. By highlighting the university's needs and showcasing their commitment to future, current, and past students, on December 1, 2020, they raised \$33,619.00 through 187 gifts made by 135 donors.



#BOWONPOE 2021

In the spring of 2021, the annual #BowOnPoe campaign expanded to launch a spring Giving Day presence in addition to the End-of-Year GivingTuesday initiative. The University of Baltimore celebrated their first spring #BowOnPoe Giving Day just four months later on March 3, 2021!

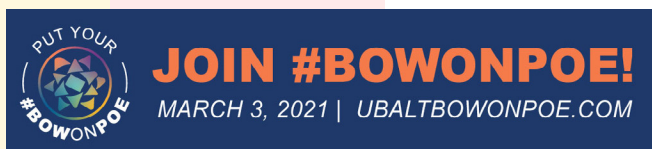
A #BowOnPoe Giving Day allowed Leslie's team to be more strategic in their messaging and outreach to rally support for the University without the distractions of the holiday season. Her team chose this spring date to celebrate the campus community while they could enjoy the spring weather and before things began to ramp up for their university after spring break. This event became a celebration of all the accomplishments of its students, faculty, and staff, and highlighted ways that donors could make a significant impact for the school.

Many schools find difficulty in re-engaging donors who gave in previous campaigns. By having two online giving events that were spaced four months apart, The University of Baltimore was able to capitalize on repeat donations. The spacing allowed for #BowOnPoe to remain recognizable and top of mind while combating donor fatigue. A majority of #BowOnPoe donors gave both to their 2020 and 2021 campaigns.

During their spring Giving Day on March 3, 2021, #BowOnPoe raised \$43,779.50 from 251 donors. By combining their GivingTuesday and Giving Day totals, they surpassed their 2019 results by 23%.

“ The Giving Days team has allowed my team to quickly and efficiently build a Giving Day experience that provides our campus with energy and a sense of excitement about the impact of philanthropy. The amount of professionalism and responsiveness by the entire Giving Days team is unparalleled, and their tolerance to listen to our ideas that push the boundaries of engagement and donor-centeredness is appreciated. Our University has benefited from the push to speak to donors in a new way. It has created an environment where our campus partners are part of the development process and not just passive contributors.”

– Leslie Joyce | senior director of development at The University of Baltimore



WHAT MAKES #BOWONPOE CAMPAIGNS UNIQUE?

Despite having a non-traditional campus, the University of Baltimore found creative ways to unite the Ubalta community during its giving events both in-person and virtually!

PUTTING A # BOWONPOE

Located in the Gordon Plaza at the University of Baltimore sits a statue of Edgar Allan Poe in recognition of his literary achievements. This statue is well known to all who are familiar with

the university and is an integral part of their campus.

To create engagement throughout their campaigns and show their donors' impact in a tangible way, Leslie and her team began putting a single bow on the Poe statue every time a gift was made. This attracted current students to the statue to learn more about this endeavor and allowed online donors to feel a closer connection to the campus.

THE GIVING CUP AND BOWPHY

Prizes and challenges are a must for Giving Days looking to inspire their participating funds and colleges with a little friendly competition. Leslie and her team have perfected this strategy by offering two physical prizes in addition to cash prizes. The Giving Cup is awarded to the participating school or college who raises the most dollars, while the Bowphy is awarded to the one with the most donors. These coveted prizes instill a sense of pride for the winners and motivates the participants and their dedicated donors to get the word out about the event.

The winning school or college then gets to keep the prize in their office for the remainder of the year. That way, when a student, faculty, or staff member walks past the prize they can be reminded of the campaign so they are ready to defend or take back the prize of being the best fundraiser on campus!

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Leslie and her team are eager to continue growing both their GivingTuesday and spring Giving Day #BowOnPoe campaigns. They are developing new ways to promote and market their initiatives while also sharing

stories of impact from students who have directly benefited from the school's support. The University of Baltimore is excited to take part in GivingTuesday 2021 on November 30.

FUNDRAISING RESULTS FOR 2021



\$43,779.50

RAISED



251

DONORS