

CASE STUDY

Leading the pack with NC State Day of Giving





NC State continues to recommend recommend Bonterra Giving Days solution (formerly GiveGab) to schools looking to build a culture of philanthropy on campus because of its sophisticated gamification functionality, enhanced user experience, and constant innovation and development.”

– Adam Compton | executive director of annual giving for North Carolina State University

OVERVIEW

North Carolina State University (NC State), located in Raleigh, N.C., is one of the top research universities in the country and home to more than 37,500 students each academic year. Complied of 12 colleges representing all major academic fields, NC State provides students with the opportunity to find their passion among 300 undergraduate and graduate degree programs.



At a large university like NC State, it is easy for students to find a place on campus they belong among extracurriculars and academics. This, in turn, creates a strong and active alumni base of individuals who still resonate with the work being done on campus long after they leave it. These alumni have a vested interest in supporting current students to ensure they have the tools and resources needed to have similar experiences. NC State has more than 250,000 living alumni, with approximately 160,000 still in close proximity to the university in North Carolina.

NC State has tuned in to how they can better develop personal relationships and meaningful opportunities for their strong alumni base to drive philanthropic support.

Prior to hosting their first Day of Giving in 2019, NC State’s development office orchestrated traditional fundraising campaigns, which included outreach via email, mail, phone, and text. Adam said that in these previous campaigns, communications were mostly unidirectional. The university would note what an alumnus had given to previously, and then make their ask based on the donor’s past behavior. In these situations, alumni were presented with where to make their gift with limited opportunity to explore other

causes that resonate with them. This siloed approach meant donors were not able to identify new passions, and NC State was not able to highlight new funds and opportunities in a meaningful way.

“ Giving Days are unique from traditional fundraising because they allow donors to choose what they want to support by highlighting many different causes within a single campaign.”

– Adam Compton | executive director of annual giving for North Carolina State University

THE SEARCH FOR A GIVING DAY PLATFORM

In 2018, the NC State team was ready to explore solutions that would allow them to curate a truly interactive giving experience for all alumni, donors, and members of the NC State community that would highlight their unique culture of philanthropy.

They were intrigued by the possibility of hosting a Giving Day and how it would allow them to take a holistic approach to fundraising. By launching a Giving Day with best-in-class technology, NC State could meet so much more beyond its direct objectives.

NC State Day of Giving qualifications:

- Design a customized microsite that leveraged NC State’s branding and story
- Highlight specific funds and areas of greatest need across campus
- Leverage gamification elements and leaderboards to keep donors engaged even after making their gift
- Allow donors to research and support funds they feel most passionate about
- Create a seamless user experience for all who interacted with the Day of Giving microsite

THE LAUNCH OF NC STATE DAY OF GIVING

NC State hosted its inaugural NC State Day of Giving in the spring of 2019 raising an astonishing \$13.5 million through 10,813 gifts!

“ We saw incredible increases in the number of donors, new donor acquisitions, and cash through the microsite. We were blown away by the KPIs and the measures of success we used to track the day. I think some of that is the power of when you give our constituents the opportunity to raise their hand and make it easy for them to give back.”

– Adam Compton | executive director of annual giving for North Carolina State University

Now going into its fifth year, NC State has continued to grow and develop its event to raise more funds, engage more donors, and inspire more gifts. During NC State Day of Giving 2022, the school raised \$23.1 million through 14,542 gifts!

“We continue to see success through Bonterra Giving Days solution because of their leaderboard functionality, the user experience, and the constant innovation and development. We also credit some success to our project managers; we value the relationship that we have with the team and the ability to have those conversations for creative solutions.”

BUILDING AN INNOVATIVE GIVING DAY

Let's explore some of the elements that make NC State Day of Giving so successful and how the school has continued to evolve its campaign to achieve year-over-year growth.

[Project management](#)

[Volunteer Ambassador Program](#)

[Custom branded microsite](#)

[Extraordinary Opportunity Scholarship](#)

[Gamification and leaderboards](#)

[Social Media Marketing](#)

[Campus participation](#)

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

When the NC State team first partnered with Bonterra, they were assigned a dedicated project manager. This person serves as an extension of the NC State team by providing structure around goal setting, assisting the team in navigating the platform, and helping ensure Giving Day planning stays on track.

“Having a dedicated project manager is really powerful. It is part of the reason we continue to use Bonterra Giving Days in a lot of ways. It’s about knowing that we have that level of support where we work with people who know our NC State story, what we are trying to do, and understand how we wish to get there.”

Bonterra project managers are known for keeping the workload for partners manageable by taking on tasks that allow fundraisers to focus on what they are good at—fundraising.

“ Bonterra project management also helps lift some of the burden for the day. These events are massive undertakings for our entire university so knowing that it’s one less thing we need to worry about and that we aren’t spending a ton of time or building out certain pieces, is always super helpful.”

– Adam Compton | executive director of annual giving for North Carolina State University

Along with support from a project manager, NC State also has access to our extensive network of Giving Day Leaders. Our project managers are tuned into the strategies and outcomes of all Giving Days that run on the Bonterra Giving Days solution and are always looking for opportunities to share knowledge and ideas with them.

“Our project manager will come to us with other things that universities are trying and are always willing to be an advocate to help us find creative solutions for our Giving Day.”

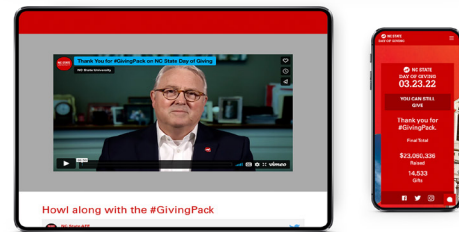
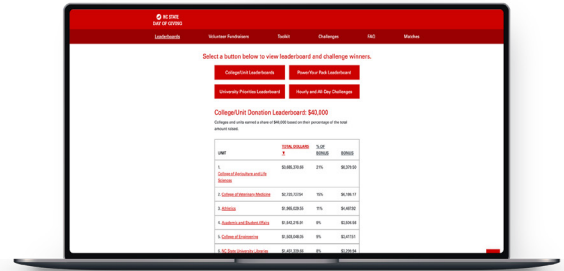
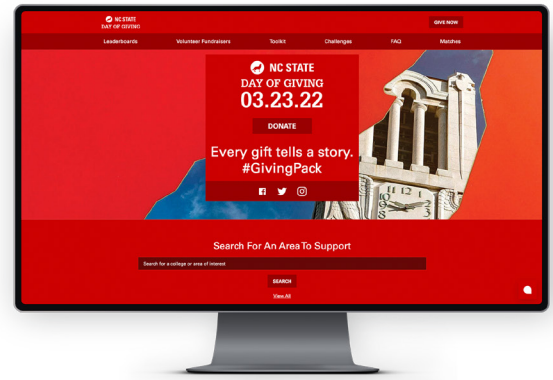
CUSTOM BRANDED GIVING DAY SITE

Over the past few years, NC State has continued to work closely with its project manager and Bonterra Giving Days' product team to build a highly customized Giving Day site that truly tells the unique story of its brand and its dedication to philanthropy.

It's critical for the team to know that when supporters and constituents visit the microsite, they immediately feel that sense of belonging and familiarity with the university's purpose. The development team knows the NC State audience well and work hard to ensure they are providing the level of quality supporters

"For us, Giving Days are an extension of our brand. When we look at our priorities for NC State Day of Giving, yes, it is to raise money and acquire or reactivate donors. But it's also about creating that culture of philanthropy and furthering the brand of the university."

It is also a chance to try new things, be bold with the brand, and engage donors in new and unique ways!



With Day of Giving, we are trying to push the envelope with our brand and use this event as an opportunity to experiment and do things differently. We had a kaleidoscope theme in our first couple of years, and although it aligned with our brand, it's not something we would normally run as part of our traditional messaging platform. By using our Giving Day to try new things and to break through in different ways, it's very important that we have the flexibility to work from a customized site."

– Adam Compton | executive director of annual giving for North Carolina State University

Components of NC State Day of Giving's microsite that are essential to a successful Giving Day:

- Mobile-friendly design, giving all supporters positive user experiences no matter where they are logging in from
- Flexible and secure payment options including PayPal, Venmo, ACH Payments, and Mobile Wallet
- The ability to add video and livestream content directly to the Giving Day landing page
- Social media aggregator to display a social feed of all online activity around the event
- Easy-to-create CMS pages to further tell the story of the Giving Day through FAQs, info pages, and toolkits
- Individual giving profiles for each participating college and unit to create their unique campaign within the Giving Day
- A sophisticated administrative dashboard through which the development office can manage the event, track progress through advanced analytics, and download comprehensive reports.

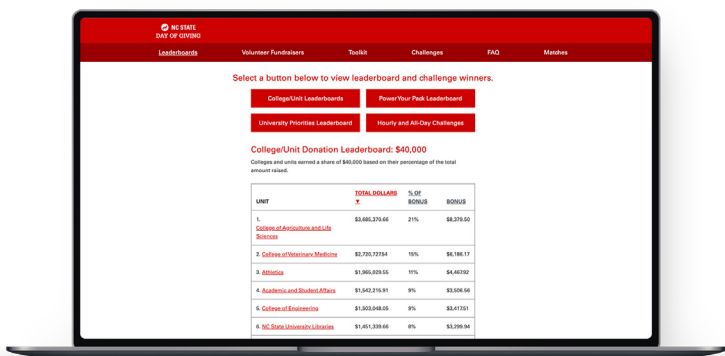


Part of the reason we lean into a very customized Giving Day site with Bonterra is to have access to different pieces of the platform and make them our own. It's a great way to leverage a partner without having to build everything yourself."

– **Adam Compton** | executive director of annual giving for North Carolina State University

GAMIFICATION AND LEADERBOARDS

When conducting a 24-hour digital Giving Day, it's important to give your supporters reasons to continue coming back to the microsite to make additional gifts, check in on the progress, and engage with the event for the entirety of the day. NC State accomplishes this by adding elements of gamification, the "application of game-design elements and game principles in non-game contexts," to the microsite.



"When we think about NC State Day of Giving outside the brand, we are asking ourselves, 'How do we lean into that gamification and user experience?' And what we are looking for in the data is where constituents are interacting and where we are seeing those engagement lifts. We look to how we can continue to grow our Giving Day and continue to engage people and drive that

gamification to where we have people coming back to the website and making 100+ gifts throughout the day."

Their custom leaderboards provide a significant source of this gamification element. These leaderboards display the performance of the various aspects of the event, such as participating units, university priorities, and challenges. Supporters, participants, and volunteers can visit these leaderboards at any time during the day and see how each fund, group, or unit is stacking against each other.

It also opens friendly competition to drive more donations and boost the ranking of the group within the leaderboard. Many of these leaderboards are accompanied by cash bonuses, incentivizing both the donors and the participating colleges and units to continue driving more gifts to bring them to the top spot.

"Their leaderboard's structure is one of the biggest value adds of Bonterra Giving Days and is one of the reasons we continue to use this platform."

Each leaderboard tells a story, showcases the collective impact of each gift, and demonstrates the cause area that donors and supporters care about most. It is important

to the NC State team that they have the flexibility to create custom leaderboards to show different areas of impact and growth they know will connect with their constituents.

NC State recently introduced a customized leaderboard, Power Your Pack, which showcases the percentage increase in the number of gifts a college or unit received compared to the previous year. Those who had the greatest percentage increases received a share of the \$30,000 cash bonus. This provides an equitable landscape for participating colleges and units of all sizes and capacity levels to focus on growing their donor base and beating their personal best.

“The Power Your Pack leaderboard gives our smaller units a great way to raise funds because it is based on beating your best year. We had one unit that was brand new to fundraising and received 13 gifts their first year, and on that leaderboard, it’s all about the percentage of increase, so they were able to come in strong and really win a lot of additional funds and be successful.”

These leaderboards play a tremendous role in driving more engagement to the microsite and encourage colleges and units to work together with their supporters to raise those bonus dollars and rise to the top of the leaderboards!

CAMPUS PARTICIPATION

Part of what makes NC State Day of Giving so impactful is that colleges and units across campus can simultaneously highlight their needs and solicit support all in the same place on one specific day.

“NC State Day of Giving is one of those opportunities when our entire campus comes together to rally around this culture of philanthropy and building impact.”

NC State’s development team focuses its efforts on driving momentum for the Day of Giving. They spend their time building the website, securing challenge funds, and communicating with the masses. While they are building the framework and structure of the event, they encourage each college or unit to take ownership in making sure their supporters show up and give back on the day.

Each participating college and unit is provided with a giving profile that can be customized to tell their unique stories and highlight their most critical needs. Additionally, the

page showcases the total impact of the group and displays a custom leaderboard tracking the performance of any of its areas of support. Participants share their individual pages directly with their supporters, with the total raised for each college and unit rolling up to the collective total shown on the NC State Day of Giving homepage.

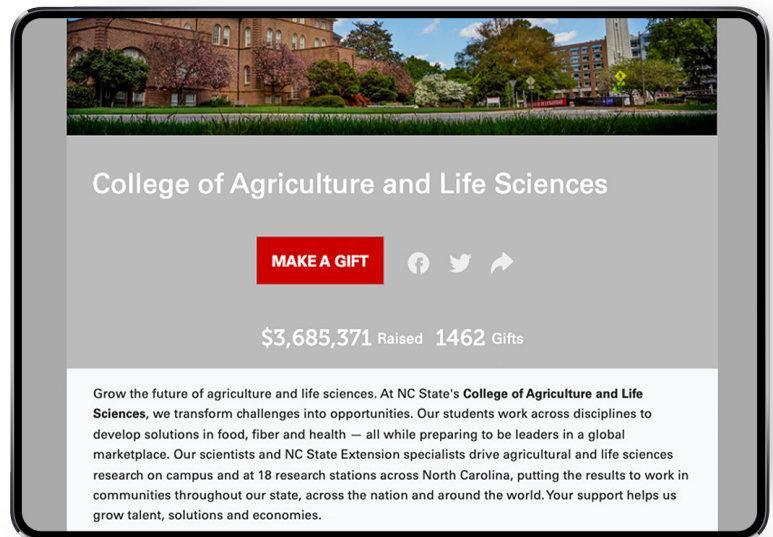
It's important for the development team to set clear expectations for the colleges and units participating in this digital fundraising event and ensure they have all the tools necessary to launch campaigns based on their capacity levels. Participants receive toolkits and templates, so they can begin to build out their own outreach and messaging strategies, all while making sure they stay true to the brand.

Adam also points out that this direct outreach from the participating groups and units may reach potential supporters that mass communications may have missed.

“For those of us who are involved with all things NC State, Day of Giving is all we see in our email inbox and on our social media. With templated messaging, individuals who only interact through one or two channels among certain departments or programs are still seeing that culture of philanthropy that aligns with the brand messaging of the university and with the overall strategy. ”

The colleges and units know their supporters best and understand how to communicate their specific needs in ways that will resonate most. They are able to focus their time on personal outreach and storytelling so that the NC State Day of Giving team can concentrate on the big-picture.

“What makes a Giving Day so successful is that all participants are working and moving forward from the same playbook to drive their efforts for the day. It's also about leadership support. Our chancellor provides unrestricted funds which power the leaderboards and challenges. We aren't putting it on the individual college or unit to find those funds because the leadership believes in the Giving Day.”



VOLUNTEER AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

To grow the reach of their Day of Giving and inspire campus leaders to play a larger role in the success of the event, NC State leverages a Volunteer Ambassador Program through Bonterra Giving Days' Free-Agent-Fundraiser feature. With this, program participants can raise funds on behalf of NC State Day of Giving through an individualized fundraising link that can be shared across their personal networks.



As the Giving Day hosts, the development team creates and distributes fundraising page links to all participants and provides tools for them to customize the pages to display personal stories and connections with NC State. Those who give through an ambassador's fundraising page will be able to donate to any cause on the site while still attributing their contribution to the specific ambassador. These fundraising pages also update in real-time to showcase how much each ambassador was able to generate for the Day of Giving.

When first launching this program, NC State opened participation up to different boards and prominent campus leaders who had access to expansive networks, strong ties to the university, and a vested interest in the campaign's success. The Volunteer Ambassador Program also invoked friendly competition amongst its participating boards and individual volunteers, encouraging 100% participation and excitement to have the page that raised the most funds for the school.

"The Volunteer Ambassador Program adds a fun element of competition amongst our participating boards. From our past results, we know that free-agent-fundraising is where we will continue to grow. The ability for participants to send a custom link to their fundraising page, so someone can support anything they are passionate about with it rolling up into the total raised by the participant, is very powerful. And then to be able to display on the Day of Giving site how much was raised by each ambassador is a great way for people to see their results in action and how it drives the overall success of the day."

During the most recent NC State Day of Giving, participants of the Volunteer Ambassador Program raised \$5,767,114.96 through 4,476 gifts, reaching many supporters of whom may not have given if it weren't solicited by an ambassador.

NC State looks forward to continuing to expand this program as they plan for their upcoming Giving Day in the spring of 2023.

EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

In 2021, NC State began utilizing one of Bonterra Giving Days' new features to highlight its Extraordinary Opportunity Scholarship directly on all donation forms. As donors went through the process of making their gift, they were given a prompt to make an additional contribution to the scholarship. From this prompt, donors could learn about the impact of this fund, select their gift amount, and continue their check-out process seamlessly.

Extraordinary Opportunity Scholarship is a needs-based scholarship that NC State leadership wished to rally more support behind as a critical cause area. This upsell

provided more visibility to students' needs and provided a direct way that donors could give beyond their initial gift. Many alumni and donors visit the NC State Day of Giving site with a specific cause or fund in mind, so the ability to showcase other opportunities to give is instrumental in growing their philanthropy.

Adam also notes that providing this upsell allows the school to further engage and steward donors who chose to make this additional gift in the following year with the intent to convert them into long term supporters of the fund.

We were blown away by the support of our alumni that answered the call. Once people are in the habit and identify with the fund, we steward them with the stories of impact, and they come back to make additional contributions. We have continued to use this

**NC State Day of Giving 2022
Extraordinary Opportunity
Scholarship Upsell Initiative**



114 Gifts \$6,281 Raised

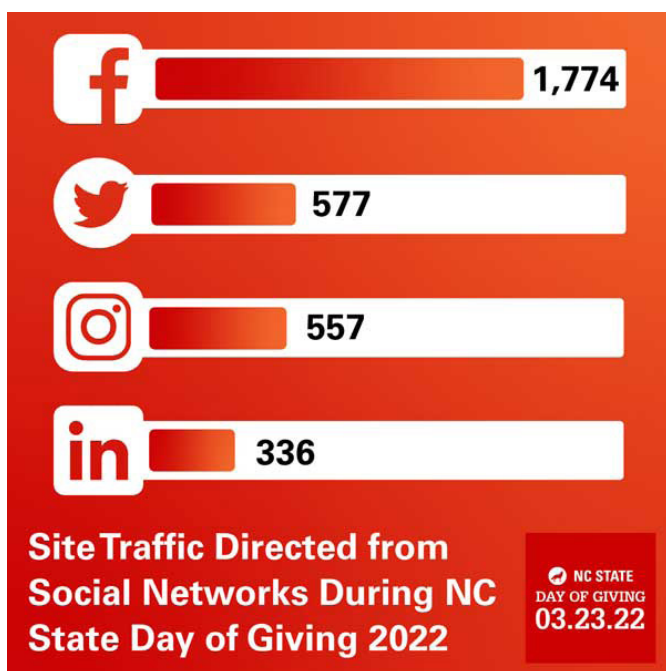
add-on feature for the Extraordinary Opportunity Scholarship because it's a big need for NC State and something we wish to continue raising critical funds for."

This additional call to action on donation forms garnered 114 gifts to the initiative, raising \$6,281 that would not have otherwise been given.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

With so many resources funneled into building this ultimate digital giving experience, NC State understands it's just as important to launch innovative marketing and outreach strategies that will drive more supporters to their Day of Giving site. While the team does put significant

effort into outreach strategies across all platforms, including email and print, they have continued to see significant success on social media.



As Adam put it, NC State Day of Giving's social efforts are all about trying to "break the scroll" by finding creative and engaging ways to interact with their campus community online. One way they do this is through fun (and sometimes silly) social challenges scheduled throughout the day. This encourages participants and constituents to act as influencers, sharing content and photos about the event along with captions about why it's so important to give back.

Incentivized to win additional funds for their college/unit, participants in these challenges also bring more people to the site.

One notable challenge was the Pack Pet Challenge, prompting alumni and NC State supporters to post a picture of their pet in NC State gear while mentioning the college, program, or fund of their choice. And in turn, the university will choose two participants of

the challenge to win an extra \$1,000 for their favorite college/unit.

“As someone scrolls and sees a dog in NC State gear, it reminds them of Giving Day. These kinds of posts drive more eyeballs to the site, and we know that if we can get them on the site, the chance of them making a gift is pretty strong. These fun social challenges have been very successful for us.”

Check out the full list of [Giving and social media challenges](#) on the NC State Day of Giving microsite!

LOOKING AHEAD

NC State will celebrate its fifth annual Giving Day in March of 2023. In anticipation of this milestone, we asked Adam what strategies he is most looking forward to growing or implementing.

“2023 is really going to be about empowering our volunteers and leveraging the opportunities to really lean into our volunteer strategy. We look forward to inspiring more people to be influencers and help to share the message of our day of giving. This will be where we will continue to see growth, and we are going to lean into using more of the features like FAF and use that to really drive the success of the day and continue to get those lifts that we are looking for.”

Giving Day hosts continue to see positive results by implementing peer-to-peer and free-agent fundraising initiatives. On average, each [fundraising page](#) brings in four new donors for your school!

We look forward to seeing how NC State continues to grow its donor base and expand its users' experiences in its upcoming campaign.

ADVICE FOR FUTURE GIVING DAY LEADERS:

And finally, we were excited to ask Adam to share any additional advice he has to offer to similar-sized universities and colleges considering hosting a Giving Day. This is what he shared:

“Ask those innovative questions of what you are looking for in a Giving Day and see where the solutions at Bonterra can help come up with the strategies to reach your goals. Don’t be afraid to say, ‘Hey, this is what I need, and this is what I want.’ The Bonterra Giving Days’ team is there to help you figure out how to make those goals a reality. I also think it’s important for colleges and universities to understand the value of leaderboards and gamification. Other platforms do not necessarily have the same level of sophistication as Bonterra and it’s a really important component and part of the reason that Giving Days break through the mold and continue to be so successful.”

FUNDRAISING RESULTS FOR 2022



\$23.1 MILLION

RAISED



14,542

DONORS