HELPING TO BUILD FOR A NEW LAW CLINIC

A volunteer guide to soliciting campaign gifts
A VOLUNTEER GUIDE
HELPING TO BUILD
FOR A NEW CENTURY

We look forward to working with you on the Kent Law Campaign. Your leadership in this campaign is crucial to the continued growth of the Kent Law School.

You, along with other friends of the School, have helped the Kent Law School become what it is today. The campaign provides an opportunity to renew your relationships with the academic staff, administration, friends and other alumni. Thank you for being a leader in this effort.

Although this handbook is not a complete guide, we hope it will help you, and the Kent Law School, to achieve the goals of this important campaign.

The role of the campaign leader
As a campaign leader for the University of Kent, you have generously agreed to assist the Kent Law School in achieving goals that will advance the quality of the education we offer our students and that will ensure our long-term financial health. In turn, we will strive to provide a fulfilling level of involvement for you as we work together to meet the campaign goals while being mindful of your time. The teamwork of volunteers, administration and staff creates a powerful force for a successful campaign and a positive influence on the future of the Kent Law School.

You are a valuable resource. As a peer of the individuals most likely to make major gifts to the campaign, you are extremely effective in representing the Kent Law School. In addition, your own leadership gift and personal involvement in the campaign clearly demonstrates your belief in the long-range planning and viability of the University.

To prepare you for the tasks you will perform, we will assign you a ‘campaign partner’ from the Development Office who will work with you in your volunteer efforts. Your tasks as a campaign leader may include – but need not be limited to – hosting an event to publicise the campaign, acting as host at a campaign event and soliciting gifts for the campaign.

Effective communication between you and your campaign partner will lead to better results for the Kent Law School and a more rewarding experience for you. So a good first step is meeting your campaign partner. At this meeting, you can begin developing your working relationship and exploring your individualised role within the campaign.
Building friendships

Some alumni and friends whom you will be contacting already clearly know the mission and needs of the Kent Law School and so are prepared to be solicited for a campaign gift immediately; others will need to learn what our vision for the future includes and why their support is needed.

As a volunteer, you will be most effective in making a series of personal contacts with friends of the School, soliciting those who are ready to join the campaign effort, as well as preparing others for solicitation. Your role will be to help bring friends ever closer to the University and to encourage them to join you in supporting our efforts.

Your involvement can take many forms, such as hosting a potential donor at an event, encouraging a potential donor’s participation in campaign activities, participating in informal meetings to discuss recent progress in the campaign, introducing friends of the Kent Law School to our academic staff, providing publications and news from the University, assisting with placement services for graduates and pupillages for students, or helping to identify volunteer roles for other friends of the University. You should view each encounter as a dual opportunity: 1) an opportunity to answer our friend’s questions, and 2) an opportunity to learn our friend’s greatest interests in the Kent Law School so we can begin building a match between our needs and our friend’s interests.

The importance of campaign gifts

Major gifts represent the foundation of a successful capital campaign. Donors of these gifts are demonstrating their belief in the traditions and values of the University and supporting the vision for the future of the Kent Law School. Although these gifts come from a relatively small number of donors they typically account for approximately 80% of the total £s raised in a capital campaign. Gifts at all levels are important, but major gifts set the pace for any campaign. Leadership gifts, those donations committed at the outset of a campaign, often provide the impetus for other major gifts.

Unlike annual gifts, major gifts usually result from relationships between a friend and the Kent Law School that have been nurtured over time. Your role as a campaign leader is an important component of building these relationships.

You may be asked to solicit campaign contributions immediately from those friends who have on-going relationships with the Kent Law School. Before we solicit individuals who have been less involved with the School, however, we first need your help in strengthening relationships. We want potential donors to know about the work the Kent Law School is doing to prepare for the future. Increased contact with the Kent Law School will build stronger ties for all involved.
When it's time to ask for a major campaign gift, remember that a gift could include a component of annual support. Annual gifts which provide unrestricted support are extremely important because they help maintain law scholarships, the mooting programme, the new building and on-going operations of the School.

**Soliciting the gift**

Following the necessary cultivation of a potential donor, you will be ready to begin planning your solicitation.

**Preparing for the solicitation visit** – You will be assigned a small number of individuals to solicit in person. These assignments have been carefully chosen based on your knowledge of the individuals or on similarities in your education and career.

Before making an appointment to solicit a gift, you may want to reflect on your own reasons and motivations for supporting the campaign. Relating your own experience in supporting the campaign will be helpful in motivating others to participate. In addition, you will need to familiarise yourself with the campaign. A thorough understanding of the campaign's objectives will be helpful to you when discussing the prospective donor’s possible areas of interest and support.

**Developing your strategy** – After discussing your prospective donor’s relationship with the Kent Law School, you will work with your campaign partner to formulate a plan tailored to that specific individual. The plan will consist of a calendar of activities, the possible size of the gift and the area of interest to be funded. You and your campaign partner will also devise a strategy for each solicitation. This strategy will include deciding who will be involved in meeting with the prospective donor. Soliciting as a team is often effective, so you and your campaign partner may want to go on the call together, or you may want to ask another campaign partner or campaign volunteer to join you on the call.

**Setting the appointment** – Often your contact with the prospective donor will be timed to follow contacts made by staff or other volunteers. We think you will find your task is easier when you take advantage of the momentum created by these other contacts. When you call to set up an appointment, please request a personal visit to talk about the plans for the Kent Law School. Remember that leadership gift solicitations – at least successful ones – are rarely made over the telephone or by letter. Please avoid a detailed discussion on the ‘phone; instead emphasise your interest in the Kent Law School and your desire to speak about this interest in person with the prospective donor.
Making the solicitation visit – The initial stage of the visit should be used to establish rapport and acknowledge the friend’s past support of the University. Provide a brief overview of the campaign objectives and the needs of the Kent Law School. Updates on campaign progress and on key gifts from people known to the donor also help encourage involvement. And be sure to talk about your own reasons for supporting the campaign. Your own commitment of time and resources is perhaps the most influential element leading to a successful solicitation.

The ask – The solicitation evolves at its own pace. When the time feels right to make the solicitation, be direct in asking the prospective donor to consider the specific gift determined by you and your campaign partner. It is important to make the request direct: “Would you consider a gift of £100,000 payable over three – five years to the University of Kent to help the Kent Law School achieve its campaign objectives?” The amount requested will usually be at the upper end of what is feasible for that donor. It is extremely important to ask for a stretch gift. The Kent Law School will only meet the campaign’s goals if our friends provide extraordinary support.

Silence is golden – After making the ask, wait for the response. Don’t be surprised if you do not receive an immediate answer, gifts of a significant size take time to consider.
If the prospective donor agrees to make the gift ask him or her to sign a gift agreement that includes the payment schedule he or she prefers. Your campaign partner will provide a version of this agreement for your use. You might suggest that payments be made yearly through to the end of the campaign.

Most likely, the prospective donor will ask for time to consider the gift. At this point, emphasise that as large a commitment as possible is needed for the Kent Law School to construct the new building. Point out that only a small number of the School’s friends have the ability to make this kind of commitment and that a confirmed major gift helps to raise the sights of the donor’s peers. A reminder that pledges can be paid over a period of years may also help.

The prospective donor may still need more time to decide on a commitment. In this case, be sure to set a follow-up appointment before you leave. Try to schedule a time within two to four weeks.

**Following up** – A personal letter/email from you thanking the prospective donor for seeing you and for making or considering a gift is important in building strong relationships with our friends. And, for the person still considering whether to make a gift, it is important that your letter restates the amount and purpose discussed at your meeting.

A follow-up visit is also important. You may wish to consider having your campaign partner accompany you. On this return visit, reinforce the importance of the prospective donor’s support and ask if there are any questions about the ideas discussed during your initial visit. This provides an opportunity to hear the person’s response to the proposal.

If the response to the proposal is negative, try to discover the reasons or objections. Remember, no one’s objections are wrong. Once you know the objections, you may be able to resolve the issues directly and immediately.

If the response to the proposal is positive, thank the donor and ask him or her to sign a gift agreement confirming the pledge and outlining the payment schedule.

If the response to the proposal is neither negative nor positive, it is best to get a commitment to return later and discuss the gift further. For this next follow-up visit, it may be especially helpful to include your campaign partner, who will be able to address any specific questions or concerns more thoroughly.

If your campaign partner is not present at the follow-up meeting, please inform him or her of the outcome of the visit as soon as possible. And, of course, send the prospective donor a thank-you letter.
Questions and answers

Why do we need a new building?

The Kent Law School urgently needs a new building to fulfil its mission now and in the future to continue to educate competent, ethical lawyers prepared to meet the challenges for the next century.

Will there be flexibility in the payment of gifts?

The largest component of the campaign, the construction of a building, requires gifts or cash and pledges provided over the campaign period. A commitment to the campaign may be paid immediately or in instalments over a three year period. The campaign staff are available to discuss payment methods.

How will major gifts be recognised?

Gifts of the level required to construct a new building deserve special recognition. Specific locations within the building will bear the names of those individuals or organisations making the most generous gifts. Creative and unique naming opportunities are available.

Why ask in person when I can more easily reach someone by ‘phone or email?

A face to face meeting results in larger contributions on a more consistent basis than any other solicitation technique. Your personal visit conveys the importance of our cause and the level of commitment needed to reach our campaign goal successfully. It also tells prospective donors that they are people worthy of special attention.

How will I know if the amount I ask for is appropriate?

Your campaign partner will work with you in devising the strategy and suggested gift amount. To reach the pressing goals of the campaign, we are asking for extraordinary gifts that an individual may be capable of, but may be higher than ever considered. Your input and guidance will be importance to this process.
What if the prospective donor says ‘no’?

In many fundraising situations ‘no’ means “I need more information” or “I am not convinced of the importance of this project”. It is important to learn why an individual says no so the issue can be addressed. To probe for reasons, you might ask: “Given your history of involvement with the Kent Law School, we had hoped that you join this effort. We very much need your help. Are there circumstances under which you could consider a gift to the project?”

What if I am asked a question that I can’t answer?

Although your campaign partner will make every effort to provide you with information needed for solicitation, occasionally questions arise that have not been anticipated. If this happens to you, tell the individual that you will get back to him or her with an answer. Your campaign partner will help you to find the answer so you can respond promptly.