The Power of Giving
University of Dayton, Ohio (url: http://www.udayton.edu/index.php)

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The University of Dayton attracted nearly $22.2 million in commitments last fiscal year — a 14 percent jump over the previous year's $19.5 million mark.

Thanks partly to a monthlong "I Love UD" campaign, the alumni participation rate climbed 1.2 percentage points, from 14.3 to 15.5 percent.

Of significance: Young alumni participation nearly doubled, and faculty and staff giving hit its highest mark in history.

"Overall, we saw a significant increase in the number of alumni giving," said Dave Harper, vice president for advancement. "There's a passion for the University among our base of supporters, but we still have a tremendous opportunity to engage more alumni."

Here are other highlights from the fiscal year:

• 3,690 first-time donors

• 716 gifts from faculty and staff, representing a 26 percent participation rate, the highest ever. Last year, 20 percent of faculty and staff supported the campus campaign.

• $5 million in new scholarship endowments, including two large anonymous gifts — a $2.7 million bequest and a $1 million commitment.

• A 10 percent increase in giving to athletics through the Champions and Scholars Fund.

In February, the University of Dayton set what some thought to be a crazy goal — 2,800 gifts in 28 days.

In the final days, alumni, students, faculty and staff stepped up with nearly 1,000 gifts to put the monthlong "I Love UD" engagement campaign over the top by 216 gifts. Donors supported their passions — from scholarships and study-abroad opportunities to new books in the library. In all, the University received more than $1.7 million in February.

Harper called "I Love UD" month "an experiment in the margin." The campaign focused on engagement, service — and gratitude. Scores of alumni reached out through Facebook to thank professors who made a difference in their lives. More than 1,000 performed random acts of kindness. Alumni chapters throughout the nation used social media to share a heart gauge monitoring progress toward the 2,800 gifts.

"We used a simple consistent theme," Harper said. "Alumni could create a porch sheet. They could perform service. They could make a gift. It was all about connecting our community."