

2019 International Stewardship Awards: Events Award

2019_Event_Award_Reeves_Jacksonville University

Entry Title: Jacksonville University ASPIRE Campaign Celebration Event

Application Prepared by: Robyn Reeves, Sr. Director of Donor Relations & Advancement Communications

Team responsible for event success:

- Caroline Busker, Jacksonville University Events
- Robyn Reeves, University Advancement
- Mary Anne Jolly, University Advancement
- Kimberly Jones, University Advancement

1. Brief Description of Entry:

The ASPIRE Campaign Celebration Event was held on September 25, 2018 and honored Jacksonville University leadership donors and volunteers. The event featured a unique showcase offering interactive experiences and a look into the dramatic progress made possible through philanthropic partnership. Students and faculty from across University disciplines demonstrated project collaborations that brought together investors, parents, board members, alumni, community leaders and members of the JU Family in a way that let them experience the transformation and their investment first hand.

2. Overall Entry Budget:

This event was the perfect example of how years of cultivated and developed relationships come together in multiple ways. We were in a unique situation where we had a donor couple think of our University when they were in a position to offer to donate a portion of the event cost through a generous contribution offsetting a significant portion of the actual venue and catering cost. This was a result of years of cultivation and stewardship and came at a time when we were looking to host an event that exceeded capacity of any of our on campus venues. Not only was this an example of the donor relationship assisting with the budget, but also the venue/vendor relationship. The venue is one of the most prestigious in the region and is world renown for their event space. They were more than willing to accommodate our unique requests and were flexible with our usage based on the relationship we have built with them over the years. Total event budget was kept under \$50,000, which included components that were re-purposed for the second and third prong of the campaign celebration with other audiences on campus (alumni donors and corporate partners in subsequent events).

3. Event Size: 120 of the University's top donors and volunteers

4. Event Type: Reception, Gala

5. Target Event Audience: VIP and transformational University donors and volunteers

6. Purpose of Event:

The purpose of the event was to celebrate the spirit and success of the historic and unprecedented philanthropic effort- the ASPIRE Campaign at Jacksonville University with our most generous donors and volunteers. This allowed us to showcase innovation made possible by ASPIRE and pave the way for future campaigns.

7. **What made this event innovative? How was it above and beyond the traditional event?**

Rather than simply inviting our donors to attend a gala where they would hear remarks about how great the University was at the end of the campaign, we truly made this event about the donor, their generosity, and the impact they made on our students and faculty. That sentiment of gratitude was carried out on everything from the wording on our invitation to the event design and interactive experience to the remarks and video messaging at the event. Our donors experienced a celebration that left them with a greater understanding that their philanthropic partnership is what made this campaign a success and what is creating the future for Jacksonville University students.

This campaign itself was unique which lent itself to a celebration event that was equally unique. We surpassed our original goal of \$120 million raising over \$121 million for the first time in our University's history. Many in our community did not think that this was possible, so celebrating this success together with our donors and entire city was huge. Our event was off-site, taking place at the world famous Players Championship Sawgrass Clubhouse (TPC). TPC is a partner of our University in many ways and a leader in our local community. However, moving off-site for this celebration meant we had to consider a way to highlight the impact our donors made through their giving in an innovative way and essentially bring the campus to the event. We transformed a traditional event ballroom space that most of our guests have experienced numerous times before into a visit to our campus through creating a space where they would be interacting with four of our Colleges during the celebration event. In one area, donors were able to test their wings flying the School of Aviation's flight simulator and drones. In other spaces, they could roll-up their sleeves to try out the new 3D printers and view samples from our local St. Johns River under high power microscopes. In a life-like hospital setting, guests were able to see moulage brought to life in a unique collaboration between our art students and nursing students where lifelike wounds and emergencies are replicated for firsthand experiences in the classroom. If studio and fine arts were of more interest, donors and guests could visit yet another space to add their talent to a mural that is now living on campus permanently. Each area not only allowed our donors to experience the hands-on outcomes of ASPIRE, but also the chance to interact first-hand with the students and faculty who directly benefit each day from their giving.

Our donors and guests were treated with the respect their generosity deserves and together with our University leadership, they toasted the progress achieved and the future to come and concluded the evening under a magnificent fireworks display. This event was brimming with symbolism important to our University's history and future. The acorn symbol was intentionally branded throughout the ASPIRE Campaign and throughout this celebration event. The acorn signifies the mighty oaks adorning our beautiful campus and the strong roots we have planted during this campaign. In addition to the visual on the save the date, invitation, event collateral and the remarks in the video surrounding the acorn and oak, the acorn symbol was weaved throughout the event design itself. The centerpieces included subtle acorn adornments and a life size oak tree was up-lit in the center of the event space on top of the round bar projecting oak leaves on the ceiling and creating a statement in the room. Hi-top tables throughout the space were covered with linens that whimsically nodded to the oak leaf while four of our

colleges branched out in the four corners of the ballroom like the strong branches of our campuses mighty oaks. At the end of the magnificent evening, each guest was able to take home a custom poured candle by two of our own staff members with the campaign's acorn logo commemorating the occasion and a chocolate acorn box. In addition to the acorn's symbolism, the light of the candle references the generosity that is illuminating our future while nodding to our school's moto of *fiat lux* or "*let there be light.*"

8. Event Outcomes: How did you determine the event was a success? How did you measure engagement post-event?

While this was a purely stewardship event, our guests have been invited to take part in conversations with our leadership team since the event as we look to form our priorities moving forward into our next campaign and solidify our volunteer leadership. High interest and response to these conversations is a direct result of their engagement. Additionally, we had donors who had not yet committed for the year sign significant gift agreements following this event including a multi-year, multi-million dollar pledge.

9. Did an event participant sign up for another event on the spot or soon after, or did you get more volunteers from the board/participants to join the committee that runs the event

This event is not an annual stewardship event like other of our events are, but we did look at event attendees to participate in conversations with campus leadership surrounding giving priorities as we plan for the next campaign and as we look to solidify volunteer leadership moving into the next fundraising initiatives.

10. A leadership team contact, so we may notify your team if submission is selected as Best in Class:

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Jacksonville University
2800 University Blvd. N.
Jacksonville, FL 32211

11. Any additional documents or files related to your entry:

a. WAVE Magazine Article on the Event:

<https://wavemagazineonline.com/end-of-aspire-sparks-new-beginning-for-jacksonville-university>

b. ASPIRE Celebration Event Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFr0Uc7BQsQ&feature=youtu.be>

ASPIRE Campaign Celebration Event

Jacksonville University

2019 International Stewardship Awards: Events



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration Media

- [Click Here](#) to view the ASPIRE Celebration Event Video
- [Click Here](#) to read the WAVE Magazine Feature on the ASPIRE Event



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration Invitation



ASPIRE
CAMPAIGN CELEBRATION

SEPTEMBER
25
2018

6-9
PM PM

TPC
SAWGRASS CLUBHOUSE

TPC SAWGRASS CLUBHOUSE - 110 CHAMPIONSHIP WAY, PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FL 32082

PLEASE RSVP TO EVENTS@JU.EDU OR 904.256.7045 BY SEPTEMBER 14.



PRESIDENT AND MRS. TIM COST INVITE YOU TO CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT AND SUCCESS OF OUR UNPRECEDENTED PHILANTHROPIC EFFORT - THE ASPIRE CAMPAIGN.

PLEASE JOIN US AS WE TOAST YOU, OUR MOST GENEROUS DONORS, AND THE PROGRESS WE HAVE ACHIEVED TOGETHER FOR OUR STUDENTS. PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERACTIVE SHOWCASE OF INNOVATION MADE POSSIBLE BY ASPIRE, AND ENJOY AN EVENING OF LIVE MUSIC PERFORMED BY JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration: Event Entry



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration: Thank You Gift Presentation



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration: Thank You Gifts



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration: College of Arts & Sciences Interactive Opportunity



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration: Keigwin School of Nursing Interactive Opportunity



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration: Staging and Program



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration: President and Mrs. Cost Toasting our Donors



ASPIRE Campaign Celebration: Fireworks display



“Remember,
**JACKSONVILLE
UNIVERSITY**

is a growing, living,
breathing organism, and
if we treat it right,
invest right, nurture it, feed it,
and spend time here, this
University will grow in ways
that will make all of us
proud for a lifetime.”


— President Tim Cost '81

9,140 new JU grads
joined the ranks of the Dolphin Network
more than 31,000 strong



ASPIRE CAMPAIGN

14,045

DONORS

44,811

GIFTS

THANK YOU!



Jacksonville University • Office of University Advancement • 2800 University Blvd. N., Jacksonville, FL 32211 • 904.256.7045



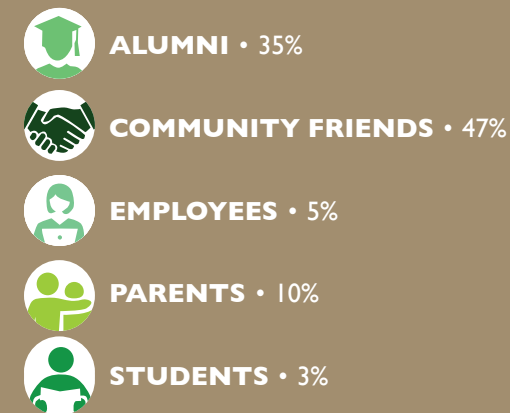
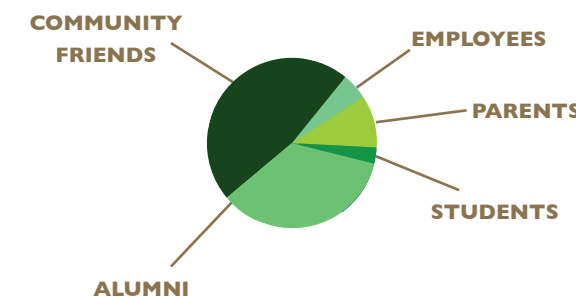
THE CAMPAIGN FOR JU



We ASPIRED and you answered.

Thanks to your generous philanthropy, ASPIRE has brightened our future.
Our students now have the opportunity to flourish across academic disciplines,
experience multiple campus upgrades and engage in enhanced programming.
Just as the mighty oaks on campus grew from tiny acorns, our future is rooted in you.

THANK YOU for being a part of this historic collective effort which surpassed our goal,
raising **\$121,439,861** for JU students, strengthening our future.



\$121,439,861




ASPIRE
Total Dollars Raised

The JU Family came together
and created unprecedented
progress for our students, campus
and community. **Thank you!**

**ASPIRE
Campaign Upgrades**

- Brooks Rehabilitation College
- C.P. Cost Pavilion & Cost Trail
- D. B. Milne Field
- Dolphin Green & Kurzius Beach
- Dolphin Plaza
- Endowed Professorships
- Florida Blue Student Center
- Jacksonville Lacrosse Center
- Keigwin Gate & Keigwin SoN
- Nelms & duPont Plazas
- River House
- R/V Larkin
- Student Scholarships
- Shircliff Healing Waters Garden
- STAR Center
- Swisher Splash Zone
- Terry Concert Hall
- Williams & Weatherford Halls
- W.W. Gay Employee Pavilion
- and so much more.

