

“What is The Oberlin Alumni Fund? ... And what does it do?”

The Oberlin Alumni Fund is one of the main sources of operating capital for Oberlin College. While significant revenue is generated through tuition and housing fees, much of the funding required to keep Oberlin operating comes from our generous alumni and other donors.

Each year thousands of you make contributions that go towards funding numerous areas in need. Some of the areas that receive Oberlin Alumni Fund assistance include:

Scholarship Support

Building Maintenance

Special Speaking and Performing Guests

Budget Assistance for Student-Run Organizations

And many more!

Thanks to you, Oberlin will be changing lives for generations to come!

300+
alumni volunteer as
class agents

Over 40%
of seniors
participated in the
2008 Senior Gift

More than
250 students
wrote
1,200 postcards
thanking donors on
Appreciation Day

From the Director's Desk

As I enter my fifth year at Oberlin, I continue to be amazed at the incredible generosity of Oberlin College's alumni/ae. I have little doubt, though, that this philanthropy is directly related to the wonderful experiences offered through an Oberlin education.

The Alumni Fund is driven by the efforts of dedicated alumni volunteers (class agents) and hard-working staff members. Class agents enjoy the opportunity to reconnect with classmates, while in the process helping Oberlin raise critical budget relieving dollars. As you may very well know, tuition only covers a fraction of the cost of an Oberlin education. The rest of the cost is covered thanks to the work of our volunteers and the support of our alumni. Volunteering is a tremendous way to give back to your alma mater. Please follow this link to learn more about the exciting opportunities available at the Alumni Fund: www.oberlin.edu/giving/volunteer

**“The Alumni Fund raised over \$5.6 million
courtesy of gifts from 12,500 generous donors.”**

2007-2008 was a year of many successes. The Alumni Fund raised over \$5.6 million (well above our goal of \$5.04 million) courtesy of gifts from 12,500 generous donors. Our phoning software received a much-needed upgrade, now allowing our student callers (current Obies) to be more successful in their fundraising and thank you calls to alumni (Obies for life). Also, “Oberlin Appreciation Day” was a big hit, as our alumni received personal messages from current students in appreciation of their gifts to Oberlin College.

Inside this report, you will find numerous stories which demonstrate the amazing potential Oberlin has when students and alumni/ae work together to make their school the best it can be. Please enjoy these stories – and, thank you so much for your continued support of Oberlin College.



Sincerely,

Tip Hosack
Director

Nipun Nanda '03 Issued a Challenge - And Received an Encouraging Response



Nipun “Nick” Nanda '03 is making an investment in Oberlin, and proving that every donation counts - regardless of size.

In an effort to increase participation in his reunion cluster (classes of 2002, 2003 and 2004), Nanda made a unique pledge. For each member of those classes who contributed any amount in honor of their upcoming 5th reunion, he pledged to donate \$50 up to a total of \$20,000.

“This [challenge gift] should help encourage those alumni to give who haven’t contributed because they feel like they don’t have very many resources.”

Each year, gifts of every size to The Oberlin Alumni Fund are put to work immediately to benefit Oberlin students. More than 85% of that \$5 million total becomes scholarship dollars – just like the support Nanda received as a student here.

The idea of this cycle of philanthropy was not lost on Nanda, and he looked forward to the chance to give back so that a future Oberlin student would have the same opportunity he did.

Ever the student of economics, Nanda hoped for an added return on his reunion pledge. His goal is to not only raise money, but also to help increase participation among young alumni.

Nanda emphasizes, “My real hope is that we create a culture of giving amongst recent graduates that perpetuates itself.”

Nick’s investment has certainly yielded a good return: participation for his reunion cluster marked an increase of 32% over the previous 5th reunion group – the classes of 1999, 2000, and 2001.

“My real hope is that we create a culture of giving amongst recent graduates that perpetuates itself.”

With the help of an anonymous gift of \$100,000, the classes of 2003, 2003, and 2004 raised a total of \$134,431.88 – a new record for 5th reunion giving. And even without that incredible single gift the classes exceeded the total raised by the last 5th reunion cluster by almost 39%.

Raising Funds for Oberlin Becomes a Grabill Family Tradition

Since he graduated in 1972, Vincent “Vin” Grabill '71 hadn't been very involved with Oberlin. But he started to realize what he had been missing when he brought his daughter, Lillian “Lily” '11, then a high school senior, to campus in the spring of 2007 for an admissions interview.

“Lily was accepted and decided to enroll this past fall '07. As she set out to initiate her experience as an Oberlin student, I thought it would be a great opportunity if I renewed my own involvement with Oberlin,” recalls Vin.

The opportunity soon presented itself when Vin received an email from the Alumni Council inviting him to become a class agent. As an agent, Vin has been able to reconnect with many of his old friends while helping secure contributions for the Alumni Fund.

“It feels good to be able to play a small part in moving the Alumni Fund to higher levels, and in doing so, to speak with classmates about renewing their own connections to Oberlin,” says Vin.

Only a few months after that auspicious visit, Lily arrived on campus as a first year student in August, 2007. After taking a job with The Oberlin Alumni Fund as a student phoner, Lily began to feel the same type of fulfillment her father was finding as a class agent.

“I love that every phone call represents a completely different person willing to share with me their individual take on Oberlin,” says Lily of her job. “Each call is like a brand new adventure that usually ends with positive feedback on Oberlin’s account.”

Through their work as fundraisers, Vin and Lily keep alumni informed and connected, all while helping to keep contributions coming in to support students, facilities, and much more.

If you would like to become more active as a fundraiser for Oberlin, please contact Zach Pretzer in The Oberlin Alumni Fund for more information.



Lillian “Lily” '11 and Vincent “Vin” Grabill '71

Senior Gift Program Raises Funds and Cultivates Future Philanthropists

You may not know it, but not all gifts to The Oberlin Alumni Fund come from alumni and other outside sources. In fact, some of the gifts come from a group with their thumb on the very pulse of the College: graduating seniors.

Each fall, Oberlin seniors form a committee to drive the Senior Gift program. The committee – typically around ten students – is initially aided by The Oberlin Alumni Fund staff, but is ultimately responsible for determining how funds for the Senior Gift will be raised and designated.

This past year the 2008 Senior Gift Committee polled their fellow seniors to determine how any funds raised should be spent. Through such close contact with their classmates, the committee was able to decide on supporting two programs: MENA (Middle East and North African studies), and SITES (Spanish In The Elementary Schools).

To support the fundraising effort and keep seniors informed, the committee encouraged participation in a variety of events – most notably the Senior Supper, which has now become an Oberlin tradition. Taking place at the very end of the school year, the Supper is one final push to convince seniors to participate in the gift, and also serves as a way to thank those students who have already given.

When the final totals for the 2008 Senior Gift were tallied, over 40% of all graduating seniors had played a role in raising \$14,534.09.

Such successful fundraising represents not only crucial financial support for campus programs each year, it also introduces students to Oberlin's culture of philanthropy.



2008 Senior Supper in the John W. Heisman Field House

Ben Klebanoff '09, chair of the Student Development Committee, is already active in planning the 2009 Senior Gift and offers his perspective on the importance of the program.

"[It] provides a unique opportunity to inform graduating Oberlin students of the importance of fundraising, and it provides students an opportunity to give back to the institution which has been a dramatic aspect of their life for the last few years."



2008 Senior Gift Committee members Nancy Nguyen and Marinella Boyadziev at Senior Supper

Students Show Their Gratitude Through Appreciation Day Cards and Phone Calls

On April 14-16, 2008, the Oberlin Alumni Fund staff held the first "Appreciation Day." A new event, Appreciation Day was planned as a way to thank Oberlin Alumni who contributed to scholarship support during 2007.

Over 250 students gathered in three locations on campus to hand-write personal messages of thanks on more than 1,200 postcards that were then mailed to donors. In addition, the student phoning staff and the varsity athletics program were busy delivering the same message via phone calls to hundreds of alumni and John W. Heisman club members, respectively.

Response from alumni who received a call or a card has been overwhelmingly positive. Most were pleasantly surprised by the acknowledgment and seemed to enjoy the personal contact with a student.

In addition to thanking Oberlin's generous alumni, Appreciation Day also served as an opportunity to educate current students about Oberlin's culture of philanthropy. Prior to writing

their notes or making calls, student volunteers were given information about the Oberlin Alumni Fund, its donors, and the generosity of Oberlin alumni.

The two most eye-opening statistics for students were: \$41 million in financial aid awarded during the 2007-2008 school year, and 12,000 contributions from alumni during that same period.

Oberlin Alumni Fund staff were encouraged by the turnout, and look forward to a 2009 Appreciation Day and finding new ways to thank donors while engaging students in the cycle of philanthropy.

250 students
Hundreds of phone calls
1,200 postcards

Alumni “Pay It Forward”

Oberlin alumni John and Mary (Sawyer) Picken '56/56 wanted to give back to Oberlin, but wanted to do something *different*. In trademark Oberlin style, the Pickens found a new way of giving to the College: the “Pay It Forward” grant.

Unlike some other forms of financial aid, the Pay It Forward grant is just that – a grant. Technically it requires no repayment. But the idea of “paying it forward,” notably endorsed by Benjamin Franklin, is that the recipient will in turn become the donor in future years.

**“ (Paying it forward)
Is a trick of mine for doing
a deal of good
with a little money.”
- Benjamin Franklin**

The Pickens hope that the student who benefits from the Pay It Forward grant they have funded — four years at \$5,000 each— will return the favor to another student at Oberlin in the same way.

They are also hopeful that this new method of aiding students catches on, inspiring their classmates and other fellow alumni to create Pay It Forward grants of their own.

If you'd like to “pay it forward” by supporting an Oberlin student through a scholarship grant like this, please contact The Oberlin Alumni Fund office.

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Inspired? Here's How You Can Help!

Gifts to The Oberlin Alumni Fund can be made with cash, check, or credit card. In addition, stock/property transfers and estate planning, including retirement assets, annuities, and bequest intentions, can be arranged through the Office of Gift Planning.

In addition to financial assistance, Oberlin also needs volunteers. One of the most exciting and rewarding ways you can help is as a **class agent** (see Vin Grabill's comments on page 2). You can also offer your time and energy by becoming a **career mentor, winter term internship sponsor or housing provider, regional coordinator, or Alumni Council Committee member.**

If you would like more information on volunteering or would like to make a gift, please contact The Oberlin Alumni Fund:

OBERLIN

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