

TEN QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU GIVE

Giving to a university should be an uplifting opportunity to improve the lives and learning of students, as well as to support the academic mission of an institution you care about. Making a meaningful gift, however, takes time. Before rushing to write a check, consider asking yourself the following questions to ensure that your gift accomplishes everything you hope it will.

1. What difference do I hope my gift makes?

Be clear about your purpose from the start so that you can communicate your priorities to the university.

2. What is the state of education on campus today?

Find out what is really happening at your preferred university. Has it made the news recently, and if so, why? What are its graduation rates? What values do its leaders emphasize?

3. Whom do I know and trust on campus?

Meeting people outside the advancement office can provide a more thorough perspective of day-to-day life at the school. Building on-campus relationships, particularly with faculty, is one of the best guarantors of your intent.

4. Is there a significant difference if I give the amount in full or in installments?

Giving on a year-to-year basis, rather than in one lump sum, allows you to see your gift in action and may allow you to make changes as you go. It can also provide greater incentive for the university to honor your intent.

5. What kind of recognition do I expect for my gift?

If you are making a named gift, be sensitive to the possibility of changing circumstances. Spell out naming rights in clear terms, including both the permanence of your naming and your right to revoke the use of the name. If you prefer to remain anonymous, ensure that the university will respect your privacy.

6. How can I stay involved with my gift without violating academic freedom?

Donors must walk a fine line to balance their intent and institutional autonomy. You may wish simply to attend events, or you may be inspired to serve on an advisory or selection committee. Clarify university policies with the administration to determine an appropriate level of involvement.



7. How will the university report on the use of my gift?

You can stipulate in your agreement that you must receive regular reporting on finances as well as other metrics for success that you define. Spell out what kind of information you would like to be included in the reports, who should receive them, and how often.

8. What fees will the university charge to my gift?

Many universities charge advancement fees on endowment gifts. Understand what fees the university charges, how often they are charged, and how they may affect the totality of your gift.

9. What happens if I believe the university has failed to honor my intent?

Research your rights as a donor and add provisions to the gift agreement that might allow you to pursue legal action, such as a reverter clause. For long-term gifts, consider naming an alternate recipient who can sue to recover funds if the terms of the agreement are violated.

10. Does the gift agreement encapsulate what matters most to me and give me confidence that the university will honor my intent?

The gift agreement is your opportunity to spell out—in writing—the terms of your restricted gift. It can be unpleasant to strategize about potential problems when making a gift, but it is far better to have those conversations before the gift is officially finalized.

If you struggle with answering any of these questions, or simply want a second set of eyes, we can help. Schedule a free consultation with the Fund for Academic Renewal today by calling (202)-467-6787, emailing us at info@AcademicRenewal.org, or going to our [contact page](#). Let us help you make a gift with enduring impact.

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