

94. Giving Day 2024: Shining a Light

Gavin Kelly

Hey everybody, you're listening to beyond 1894. This is the official podcast of Louisiana Tech University. My name is Gavin Kelly from the Office of University Communications. And I'm joined today by our dear friend Lindsey Murray from University Advancement. She's the director of annual giving. Lindsay, how are you?

Lindsey Murry

Hello. So glad to be here.

Gavin Kelly

Good to see you. Again. You've been on the podcast before we had you with the Lagniappe ladies to talk about that a couple years ago. But this one's focused on Giving Day. We got Giving Day coming up in April, right?

Lindsey Murry

It is April 18. What 21 days from now. The ticker. The countdown we just looked at.

Gavin Kelly

yes, by the time this episode comes out, by the time you're listening to this will be a little bit closer.

Lindsey Murry

Yeah.

Gavin Kelly

But that's still plenty of time for to be a part of Giving Day and get those gifts. And so just for someone who may not know, even though it's implied in the name, tell us what Giving Day is.

Lindsey Murry

So Giving Day is a 24 hour fundraising period that really shines a light on the university. So in many facets, what we're doing spotlights our faculty and staff spotlights our students who are the heart and soul of the university, but we really get to shed shine a light on the things that they're doing every day that may or may not go unnoticed. You know, athletic teams get noticed all the time for their... they are really are front porch to our university, but the stuff that goes on beyond the athletics, the research, the innovation, entrepreneurship, the just the just the the things that go on every single day, that is what Giving Day is all about shining a light on those on those programs, those people. And ultimately this year, our theme was fulfilling our potential. We took a cue from Dr. Henderson's podcast a few couple of weeks ago, or maybe months ago.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah. You know, time

Lindsey Murry

Yeah, yeah, sure. But we took cues from his podcast, and we really just really cast the net with fulfilling our potential Giving Day. 2024 really means to us. Everything that we can do to help students achieve their dreams. That's really what Giving Day is about. Now, obviously, we do that in a very public way. We, you know, there's lots and lots of emails that go out. There's lots and lots of email that goes out. There's a platform all its own with a ticker and matches and challenges and all those cool things, but it boils down in its very simplest form is allowing our students to achieve their dreams and fulfill their potential.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, and it's, you know, there's always sort of giving going on behind the scenes, in different amounts, and it's all contributing to a larger goal. But the point of Giving Day is, like you said, to kind of make it a big public hurrah for 24 hours, and make a big deal out of it so that everyone can kind of be a part of the same team for that

Lindsey Murry

It's a big pep rally the university as a whole. Yeah, that university advancement, our whole division, we are... we exist to financially augment the university. That's our role we do that day in and day out. But to have all hands on deck for this event, hyping our university, both publicly and privately, among our very own people in our own backyards to across the globe, it's really telling the good things about what's going on here on our campus.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, and it's a like you said, all hands on deck, meaning that it probably will be a long and potentially stressful day, but it's a good thing, right? The busier The phones are in the busier that ticker is that it's a good problem to have.

Lindsey Murry

Yep, was so we go live that, you know, midnight on the 18th that night, and then we go all the way to the next midnight, it's 24 hours, and it's a tiring day, I will be honest, this is our sixth year as a university to do it my fourth time to be involved with Giving Day. But it it's rewarding work and ultimately allowing a donor to connect with a meaningful way to the university that they love and give back to, to really help propel the next generation to help achieve their dreams in the same way that they did. Or maybe in a little different way. But the ability to give back in whatever way shape or form that a donor wants to do that and connect with the university is a really special work for us to be a part of.

Gavin Kelly

For sure. And you know, like you said, six Annual Giving Day coming up. It's kind of built upon itself every year. To the point like, you know, how much bigger can we get, but I know last year was a record breaking one. So kind of talk about the growth of giving them over these last several years, especially from what you've seen.

Lindsey Murry

Yeah. So yeah, last year, we had a record year \$2.4 million. In previous four years, we'd only raised, well I say "only raised", like it's nothing, but right at a million dollars each year. So last year, we had a single gift of a million dollars that came in about 8pm that day, and so we were so excited. We really didn't know what to do with ourselves. And you know, we weren't quite prepared for that great of a success. But I hate to say that we weren't prepared. Of course we were prepared but

Gavin Kelly

It's just a pleasant surprise.

Lindsey Murry

Yes. But so Giving Day evolved, it's kind of an industry thing among advancement,

Gavin Kelly

right, because it's this is, every school everywhere kind of

Lindsey Murry

every university across the nation does a Giving Day in some way shape or form it very, you know looks different. Some people do it for weeks. Some people do it for two weeks. Some people do it for a whole month, we choose as a university to do it for 24 hours. And in 2019, when it first started was right after the tornado came in cut through our campus. And it was a very responsive way for our university very publicly, to give back to student emergency relief funds and things like that were kind of the most given to funds in those years. But as it went on and progressed, it became an opportunity that we realized was to shine a light on on various things that maybe didn't always get spotlighted throughout the year. And so we have worked really hard with our faculty and staff. We've worked hard with our partners and our donors to really make this really a focus day but a meaningful day in a way that we are able to just cheerlead and hurrah all things Louisiana Tech that day.

Gavin Kelly

it's cool to think about the way that people give on Giving Day because obviously, gifts of every size make an impact, you know, that million dollars or that \$2 million, it doesn't happen without adding up those 20, 10 and 30 dollars gifts. You know, so everything's important, but a person who gives I mean, not just on Giving Day, but on Giving Day because that's what we're talking about can be as generic or specific with their gift as they'd like. Right?

Lindsey Murry

Right.

Gavin Kelly

So what's the process like for somebody who would like to give on Giving Day.

Lindsey Murry

So I always tell somebody, if you don't really identify with a specific program that you want to give back to university excellence is really a great, a great fund to give to. That's really the unrestricted dollar,

right? So when we're in a state budget, in a state legislature, we have line items that we have certain dollar amounts appointed to each and everything on our campus, that unrestricted dollar is very much the unicorn, right? So that's a great way to start. If you just know you want to give back in some way, shape, or form, but not really sure why or you're maybe not connected to a specific program, or whatever university of excellence is one university scholarships, especially if a student or an alumni even has had a scholarship or knows what kind of impact a scholarship had on their educational experiences. University scholarships is exactly what it is it goes right back into scholarships for students. But beyond that, if you have a particularly affinity for a program, student organization, even those things are all available to make gifts to. And you're right, those 10, 20, 30, 100 and 250 dollar gifts are really the bread and butter of what the majority of that 2.4 That I obviously aside from that 1 million. That's what it's comprised of, I have a couple of numbers from last year. So 814 donors gave through our platform last year, there was over 1500, total gifts, all day when they called in, or we got a check or whatever. But 814. So that was an opportunity for our people to go on and engage with our university and give to a way that was important for them any any gift, any size, it doesn't matter. What we're doing is, is we're empowering our community. We're driving innovation, and we're shaping the future leaders of tomorrow. That's what it's about.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, it'd be great if we all just had a million dollars to rally to the cause. Yeah, it takes it takes all those to add up. I think that you in this role, have had a unique perspective on not just Giving Day, but the concept of giving here at Louisiana Tech. So talk to me kind of about how your perception of, you know, maybe giving and what Alumni Relations, and that sort of thing has been like to you over these last few years.

Lindsey Murry

Yeah, well, I came into this role. I worked in human resources when I first was hired here on on campus. And then my skill sets aligned with just some prior work that I had done in nonprofits for 13, about 15 years prior. And I knew that I knew that I can make a difference with relationship building. And that's really what fundraising is about, establishing relationships with people and connecting with ways, first and foremost is great in any job, but then when you get to connect people with things that they love, that's where magic happens. And so for me, it's been extremely rewarding to not only take Giving Day from where it was to where it now is, but also it's been a way for me to give back. I am a grad student here on campus, I did my undergrad at ULM 20 years ago, it's been very interesting to go back as a 43 year old woman with, you know, a full time mom and full time employee. But even in the, in the small time that I've been here, both as a as a student and as an employee, I always knew that there was something special about Louisiana Tech, my husband is a Tech grad, like baseball here and undergrad. And I knew that there was something tangible and special about Louisiana Tech before I ever even came to work here. But now being a part of that, and seeing the passion and the drive and commitment from our faculty and staff on a daily basis, and what they pour into our students just makes it that much easier to do what I do. And I'm really excited that Giving Day is just kind of like the Super Bowl of all those efforts throughout the year.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, you, you know, people may tend to think of, you know, fundraising as asking for money, but you kind of alluded to it, it's more building friendships and relationships and then the money kind of just is second nature at that point, right?

Lindsey Murry

It's yeah, the loyalty that ever loyal be is more than just our motto, it really is transcends through everything that we do on campus, whether it's in a class, or in a meeting or making a gift. It's really part of who we are, as a university, I'm really excited to be a part of it. Not many people get to come to work and do what I do every day. And, you know, Some days are hard, but they're all rewarding. And when I get to be a part of a day like this, it really reminds me of how fortunate we are to be really at the forefront of a lot of things that are going on for the state and for the nation in that matter. The disciplines that we have on this campus, the the different degree programs that are not offered anywhere else, or maybe started here and now are being replicated nationwide. It's really, it's really a unique place to be.

Gavin Kelly

So a day like this Giving Day, April 18, what's that day going to be like for you and the team?

Lindsey Murry

Well, it's usually pretty quiet, you would think that it would be just crazy with the phone's ringing off the hook. But the the system and the platform that we use is very automated, all the work is really done beforehand. So once we have everything loaded into our platform, the platform really does a lot of the work for itself. So I'd like to say or like for people to think that I'm just you know, running myself ragged, but that's really not the case I troubleshoot problems, obviously people are having difficulty locating different fund that they want to you know, supply or gifts that they want to make. That's really my my my role there. I might do some status updates every now and then on social media, or some videos even but really, I just really get to enjoy the fruits of the labor and the work that we put in.

Gavin Kelly

because you spend a whole year from one given to the other laying that groundwork.

Lindsey Murry

Yes. We started planning this back in. We set the date probably in September last year. And then so it's just been a steamroll. Ever since then.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah. So on Giving Day, someone decides they'd like to give the main given a site is louisianatechgivingday.org. Right?

Lindsey Murry

Correct.

Gavin Kelly

And that's, by the way, whether you give or you don't and obviously, we hope you do. But whether you give or you don't, that's a fun site to look at throughout the day, because you can see the names rolling

in the amounts, and you can watch that number get higher and higher. So I think if you're just looking for some excitement on that day, it's a fun website to check out.

Lindsey Murry

Yeah, definitely. And when you make a gift, if you decide that that's something that you want to do you share that online use, we're using the hashtag Tech Giving Day to really track our momentum, and have that you know, in share, be proud of the fact that you made a gift. There's some really cool features on the website, there's some social media assets and logos and stuff that you can say I that say I gave and you can download one of those and, and share on your social posts to really to spread the momentum publicly.

Gavin Kelly

Yeah, yeah, let people know, let people know that you're you're part of the cause. Is the website the best way where some other ways that people want to give on Giving Day. You they can call in?

Lindsey Murry

You can call in. I'll be happy to take a credit card over the phone, but the easiest way is through the Louisiana Tech Giving Day dot O-R-G and if for some reason that's a really long hashtag or website and you don't want to remember that or you can always just go to latech.edu and there will be a hyperlink from the very main homepage of the text website so you can get to it really easily. But yeah, or the latech alumni dot O-R-G, too. We'll have a hot link there, that Foundation's website so it should be pretty easy. You should be able to see stuff on social media be looking for videos, there's some really cool video that are on Harley Price did that is on YouTube. So it's pretty cool to see a couple of students given their wise about why they are involved and hope that you are too. So, we're really excited. Yeah.

Gavin Kelly

And chances are, you know, especially for Tech alums that they have already received some kind of communication, some kind of email, some kind of text or something, getting them ready for Giving Day. So when that Giving Day comes, one last thing before we let you go, talk about sort of matches and challenges on Giving Day, because that's a good way to kind of stretch your dollar further because there's some gifts that are kind of pledged if x fund reach x amount, right? So talk about those,

Lindsey Murry

Yeah, every single college, all five of our colleges have at least two sometimes three matches and challenges. So basically, it gamifies their gifts, so they've pledged a certain seed amount of money, and that money is unlocked when 20 or 25 gifts are made and that money is added to the pot in extra so it's a fun way a competitive way for for your dollar to release or for those donors dollars to stretch even further beyond just their gift, but then it also creates that that competitive within that competitive gamification within a college like you know you got some colleges wanting to outperform other colleges and friendly competition doesn't hurt anybody. But yeah, there are quite a few of those will be right under the on the homepage right underneath the main scroll down there'll be right there all the matches and challenges. There's one for every college there's quite a few of them. This year, we don't have any athletics matches and challenges. They're all education based. So it's just taking advantage of an

opportunity that's likely to provide an immediate impact on the lives of our students and faculty and our alumni get that and so they want to to they want to allow us to leverage their money to raise even more money

Gavin Kelly

Yeah if you were in the you know, on the webpage and kind of typing your your your gift in and you see one of those matches, and you're already going to give to it anyway. Yeah, make it go make it go towards Giving Day by the time you're listening to this by the time this comes out, we'll be very near very on the horizon. So we hope that if you're listening you're looking forward to that and being a part of that again, louisianatechgivingday.org is the place to be on April 18th. Be a part of the cause. Lindsey, good luck to you and the team on Giving Day. Thank you for being here with us today to talk about it.

Lindsey Murry

Always glad to have have you have us come over and chat us up and talk about Giving Day it's it's it's fun to do.

Gavin Kelly

Good to see you and go dogs!

Lindsey Murry

Heck yeah, go dogs!

Gavin Kelly

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