

Solicitation Tips (For Fundraisers)

- ◆ Make your own gift or pledge first – this truly does make it more comfortable to ask your classmates to do the same.
- ◆ Select and set aside at least two days to make your calls. Classmates are often not available on the first try.
- ◆ Some volunteers choose to send a note to classmates first to let them know to expect a call.
- ◆ Believe in your cause! Remember and share your passion for Smith and your reasons for contributing to the Smith Fund; giving back, remembering faculty, helping to provide financial aid or innovative programs to today's students.
- ◆ Practice. Sometimes it helps to rehearse your key points with a real person.
- ◆ Jot down a few notes prior to the call. Having details handy will help you remember how to direct the conversation. Use talking points if you find them appropriate.
- ◆ Make the contact. If you are calling, just picking up the phone to make that first call will help you get the ball rolling. Your contact with classmates is important.
- ◆ Talk about your volunteer role or a recent visit to campus.
- ◆ Bring up the need for annual giving, and the importance of widespread alumnae support.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to start the gift conversation, your classmate is expecting it!
- ◆ Thank your classmate for past giving, and note if she is a Smith Star.
- ◆ Tell your classmate the ask amount; ie. "Smith so appreciates your consistent generosity. This year, we would like to ask you to demonstrate your support with a commitment of \$XXX."
- ◆ Pause. Wait for your classmate to comment. She will tell you her thoughts on the ask amount. If she wants to counter it, that is fine. You can then ask "What amount would you like to contribute to the college?"
- ◆ Remember you may also suggest that your classmate break her gift into installments. Our phone forms and web site offer ways for donors to do this.
- ◆ If your classmate balks entirely at supporting Smith, don't be afraid to ask "Why?" Most will be happy to share their thoughts and experiences. Their comments can stimulate great discussions that will help them feel better about Smith. If you think that a classmate may benefit from staff contact, please ask – we regularly hold fundraising conversations, and we are here to help support you in your efforts!
- ◆ Remember that participation can be as important as the amount of the gift: a gift of any size is an indication of support, and an investment in the future of your alma mater.
- ◆ Confirm the gift amount. If your classmate wants to make a pledge, confirm the amount and any requested payment schedule. If the gift is outright, confirm the amount, and request the appropriate credit card information (including expiration date and the name that appears on the card).
- ◆ Thank your classmate before ending the conversation. Let her know how much her support is appreciated, and that her gift will count toward class totals. Also mention that she will be hearing from you (and the college) in the near future to formally acknowledge her generosity.