

VOLUME 1

SOLUTION *of the* MONTH



Pledgemine is very pleased to introduce to you, our valued partners, the Solution of the Month Program. With the support of a rapidly growing and highly innovative group of participating clients, Pledgemine's Solution Library has become a vital resource for many colleges and universities. The Solutions Library provides these institutions with cutting edge ideas, inspiration, and execution of high quality communication solutions to promote and facilitate strong engagement with alumni, parents, and friends. The outstanding examples provided in the Solutions Library ensure your college or university's message is unique, personal, and memorable.

Each month, an exemplary solution will be selected for inclusion in the Solutions Library, and will be granted the title of Pledgemine's "Solution of the Month." These monthly examples are chosen to highlight the quality and creativity of an innovative solution, as well as its success in connecting with an intended audience.

We are pleased to award **February 2016's Solution of the Month to Ross Imbler and the Annual Giving Team at the University of Alaska**. On behalf of Pledgemine and the Solutions Library community, we'd like to express our appreciation to Ross and the team for sharing the process and results of a highly collaborative and successful campaign.

VOLUME 1 SELECTION

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA



TRIFOLDED LETTER

FLAT: 8.5" x 12" FOLDED: 8.5" x 4.25"

Stock: White 80# Cover Super Smooth

CREATED BY:

Ross Imbler: Director of Annual Giving — University of Alaska Fairbanks
 Samara Taber: Annual Giving Coordinator — University of Alaska Fairbanks
 Seanna O'Sullivan-Hines: Photos — University of Alaska Southeast
 Dixon Jones: Design — University of Alaska Fairbanks



AN INTERVIEW WITH ROSS IMBLER

DIRECTOR OF ANNUAL GIVING — UAF

Ross has worked for the University of Alaska Fairbanks since 2010 and joined the Development Office in 2011. In his current role, Ross oversees the Annual Giving Program, which utilizes a variety of communication strategies to reach out to alumni and friends to gain annual support for UAF. Ross is a member of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and currently serves on the *Alumnus* editorial board for the UAF Alumni Association.

Q Is this a new design/concept/format or have you utilized it previously?

A This is a new design and format, however we've used the concept of a two-student feature and chancellor's letter in a previous fall appeal.

Q What were your objectives for this particular campaign?

A This appeal was the first of many planned to increase philanthropic awareness for the University of Alaska Southeast's alumni and friends. We wanted to get UAS' story into the hands of its alumni and donors; something that had been difficult to do in the past due to staffing. By teaming up with the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Annual Giving team, it became more cost-effective for UAS to send AG appeals. Additionally, this appeal would be UAS' generic leave-behind for the year. The main goal of the appeal was to thank donors for their previous gift, and ask them to support the annual fund.

Q What factors influenced your decision to use this solution format? Did you have any constraints or challenges?

A I wanted to avoid an outer envelope because #10s can be so boring. More importantly, this is our flagship appeal, as well as our leave-behind for the year. I wanted a design that would lend itself well to this purpose. The design needed to be sturdy, pretty, and persuasive; effectively utilizing ethos, logos, and pathos. Our biggest challenge was making sure the gift processors knew who each gift was from. We were limited in our remittance space, and we wanted to add a variable text mention about past giving, so we opted to include the constituent ID within the variable segmentation coding. By including the ID, we could save space by omitting the name and address information on the remittance.

Q What was the size of your intended audience? What percent of your entire database was the send?

A This appeal was mailed to about 1,000 current-year, LYBUNT, and SYBUNT donors. This is about 15% of UAS' mailer database.

Q Was segmentation an important part of your strategy? If so, how?

A This appeal is the first major appeal of the fiscal year-end. It is also the only appeal that contains an update from the Chancellor. Traditionally, this appeal is one of the more expensive pieces to produce; therefore, we segmented in anticipation of a higher ROI. We know the more personalized an appeal is, the more successful it can be. Keeping that in mind, this appeal was very data dependent, and was an attempt to steward the donor as much as possible by referencing their last gift, as well as how long they have been giving to the university. The ask amount was dependent upon the donor's giving history. The data for this was manually examined and cleaned to ensure their appeal would make sense once the data was poured into the variable fields within the copy.

“Donors and dollars are up between 200 and 300 percent compared to this time last year, due in part to the success of this appeal.”

Q Did you achieve your objectives for this mailing? Can you share results to date?

A Yes. I know there has been a strong positive ROI for University of Alaska Southeast. As of mid-January, this appeal has brought in more than \$12,000 – 12 times our total production cost. Donors and dollars are up between 200 and 300 percent compared to this time last year, due in part to the success of this appeal.

Q Do you have any other noteworthy insights or conclusions in relation to this campaign?

A This was our first major direct-mail appeal utilizing Pledgemine's services. I am very happy with the quality of work and professionalism provided by Pledgemine. Their product is high-quality and very cost effective. I have no doubt this appeal would have cost twice as much utilizing our previous print house.