

Florida State University wanted to raise \$1 billion. They've exceeded that goal.

Byron Dobson, Tallahassee Democrat Published 8:08 a.m. ET July 5, 2018



(Photo: Bill Lax, Bill Lax/FSU Photography Services)



From the new Jim Moran School of Entrepreneurship downtown to renovations of the men's and women's basketball locker rooms, Florida State University is reaping the benefits of reaching out to private donors and philanthropists.

Much of the money is part of the university's eight-year "Raise the Torch: The Campaign For Florida State."

Among the major donations are the \$100-million gift from Jan Moran and the Jim Moran Foundation, Brian and Kathryn Ballard's donation of the downtown building to house the new school, DeVoe Moore's nearly \$25 million contributions for new academic programs, and Albert and Judith Dunlap's \$5 million pledge toward the Champion's Club.

That most recent donation brings the couple's total FSU contributions to \$20 million, which gets their names on the Champions Club at Doak Campbell Stadium.

The Raise the Torch campaign – which had an announced closing date of June 30th – has surpassed its \$1 billion goal.

By how much and when it was surpassed is a closely guarded secret – for now.

The total will be announced on Sept. 21 when FSU celebrates with an invitation-only bash at Ruby Diamond Concert Hall for the campaign's largest donors.

But that's not the only reason, says Tom Jennings, vice president for university advancement and president of the FSU Foundation.

Donations mailed to the university still are being processed.

And, there's time to close some major appeals.

"I have development officers traveling right now and the Boosters are traveling right now, to try to close some six-and-seven-figure gifts next week," Jennings said recently.

While \$1 billion still is an impressive figure, it's symbolic of the pressure faced by public universities to raise outside money to make up for dwindling state dollars and to help underwrite advancements in student outcomes, hiring top-ranked faculty, supplementing athletics and faculty development.

Charitable contributions to colleges and universities increased 6.3 percent in 2017,

according to the Voluntary Support of Education survey, conducted annually by the Council for Aid to Education.

At \$43.60 billion, that is the highest level reported by the council since the survey's inception in 1957.

Across state, universities raise billions in campaigns

Big spending is evident in Florida.

University of Florida completed the first public university billion-dollar campaign in 2012, Jennings said.

"FSU's eight-year \$1B campaign and University of South Florida's 12-year, \$1B campaign were both scheduled to end on June 30. Both universities will exceed their fundraising goals, Jennings predicted.

UF's Florida Tomorrow campaign ran from 2005-2012 with a \$1.5 billion goal. It raised \$1.72 billion.

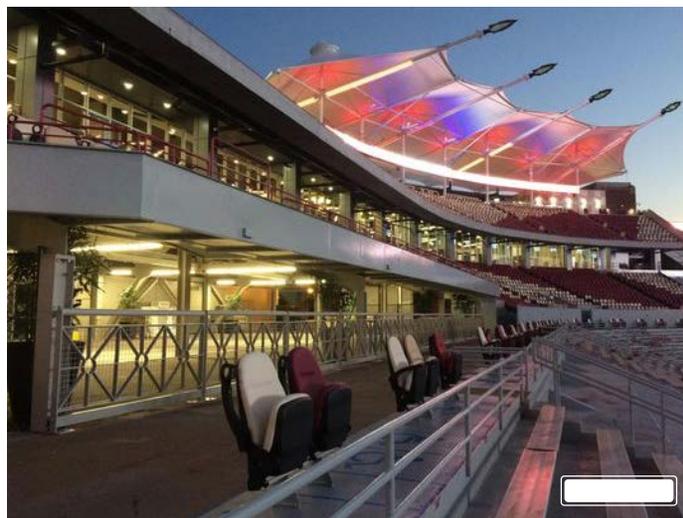
A new Go Greater campaign at UF was announced in October 2017, with a \$3- billion goal. Nearly \$1.6 billion has been raised. The campaign ends in 2022.

University of South Florida's Unstoppable drive was launched in fiscal year 2007 with a \$600-million goal, which was reached in 2013, and then increased to \$1 billion.

That figure was reached during the 2017 fiscal year.

"At FSU, we celebrate all of this philanthropy for higher education in Florida, and we are grateful for the commitment of so many people who support learning, research, innovation and public service at our campuses," Jennings said.

Laying the groundwork



A view of the Albert J. and Judith A. Dunlap Champions Club at Doak Campbell Stadium. FSU trustees, at the suggestion of the Seminole Boosters, voted to name the new addition in honor of the Dunlaps who pledged an additional \$5 million to the Boosters in November 2016. Also on campus is the Albert J. Dunlap Athletic Training Facility and the Al Dunlap Football Practice Fields. (Photo: Seminole Boosters, Inc./Democrat)

Discussions about a \$1 billion campaign started during the presidency of T.K. Wetherell, who announced his retirement in 2009 and Jim Smith, former trustees' chairman.

It was a challenge to then President Eric Barron, who helped lay the groundwork by making sure development officers were on board at each college.

"He wanted to make sure there was at least one development officer in each college," Jennings said. "Some have more because they have more donors."

By July 2010, the campaign was in its "leadership phase" when potential donors in the "half-million-dollar and above" level were sought.

Between July 2010 to October 2014, the foundation had received gifts and pledges totaling \$565 million.

When the university made it public in October 2016, it had \$568 million in cash, pledges, bequeaths, and gifts-in-kind such as art, Jennings said.

In 2010 and afterward, the university was raising \$80 million to \$90-million a year. In the last few years, that has jumped to \$120 million to \$125 million annually, Jennings said.

"And that's what you want to sustain and even increase over time," he said.

That places FSU second to the University of Florida in total gifts received annually.

But it places FSU lower in the ranks of ACC schools like Duke, Notre Dame, University of North Carolina, University of Miami.

"For FSU, we are a relatively young institution for fundraising," he said. "A lot of our peers in the ACC started decades before we did."

The Thrasher factor



Since he took over as FSU president in 2014, John Thrasher has been a driving force in the \$1 billion campaign. (Photo: Joe Randone/Democrat)

The hiring of John Thrasher in 2014 has been a major factor. During his interviews for the job Thrasher said repeatedly that the \$1 billion fund drive would be among his top goals. He told the presidential search committee he wanted to see the campaign "get on steroids."

"Four of the top five fundraising years in Florida State's history have come under John Thrasher. Alumni and other business leaders respond very positively to his leadership," Jennings said.

More FSU news:

- [Florida State's iconic Suwannee Room dining facility gets makeover](#)
- [Former Seminole Louis found alive](#)
- [FSU invests in the future of fine arts museum](#)

"He's a tireless traveler to tell Florida State's story. He can talk to large groups or one person to talk about a significant financial commitment to Florida State."

Another key factor, Jennings said, is each dean takes the lead in fundraising for programs within their departments.

"It's critical," he said of the practice. "Someone who wants to support a program at a high level wants to meet the dean and feel comfortable in that dean's leadership."

Thrasher said he's "excited" about what he described as "a successful campaign." He said it goes beyond alumni, noting that neither Jim or Jan Moran are graduates of FSU.

"It's been a broader reach other than our alumni," he said. "It's building relationships. It's creating confidence in what we are doing."

He said it's important to show donors what value their gifts will have to students attending the university.

Athletics rules in fundraising



The three-story stairwell in FSU's new Jim Moran Building, 111 S. Monroe St. The former Guaranty Bank Building, valued at \$1.1 million, was donated to Florida State by Brian and Kathryn Ballard. (Photo: Hali Tauxe/Democrat)

Since 2010, the FSU Foundation has processed 570,000 gifts, ranging from \$5 to \$100 million, Jennings said.

That includes 189 gifts of \$1 million.

The top four areas designated for giving are:

- Athletics, \$300 million
- College of Business, \$181 million
- The Jim Moran School of Entrepreneurship, \$100 million
- The Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, \$95 million

In 2000, the Florida Legislature granted FSU administrative control over the museum's operations.

"That means of all the colleges and units on campus, these three areas received the largest dollar amounts," Jennings said, adding the \$100-million Moran gift represent the largest gift ever to an institution in the State University System.

The colleges of arts and science, law and medicine also rank high in money raised.

Examples of how donor money has been spent includes:

- The College of Law: 30 new scholarship funds; three named professorships
- Marching Chiefs: The purchase of all new brass instruments and the purchase of new Sousaphones
- School of Nursing: A simulation lab for training

Over the eight years, \$2.5 million has been earmarked for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), with \$2 million coming from the Bernard Osher Foundation and

\$500,000 from local OLLI members.

In turn, the FSU Foundation has increased its annual giving to the university from about \$28 million in 2010 to \$42 million in 2017.

That money goes toward academic programs, scholarships, professorships and other needs.

Seminole Boosters, Inc. forwards about \$20 million each year to athletics.

"I think we have improved in the amount of gifts we receive every year," Jennings said. "I think we're headed in the right direction."

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Top six fundraising years in FSU history:

FY 16 \$225 million

FY 08 \$129 million

FY 17 \$128 million

FY 18 \$107 million (through May)*

FY 15 \$115 million

FY 14 \$108 million