



PACE UNIVERSITY



GRAVITY CASE STUDY

Fundraiser Enablement Powered
by Artificial Intelligence



GRAVITY CASE STUDY: PACE UNIVERSITY

 **GRAVITY**

WWW.GRAVITY.COM



Ranked as the #1 private, four-year college in the nation for upward economic mobility by Harvard University's Opportunity Insights, Pace University has a proud history of preparing a diverse student body for a lifetime of professional success. Pace has grown to three campuses, with 13,000 students enrolled across 150 majors and programs. Its signature campus is newly renovated and located in the heart of vibrant Lower Manhattan.

PACE'S GOAL: Expand the Workforce, Build Major Gift Pipeline

For much of Pace's history, it was a commuter school. Most students held full-time or part-time jobs, and often juggled family responsibilities. Many did not have the kind of affinity-creating experience provided by a more traditional residential college. These former students now make up the bulk of the alumni with major gift capacity. Also, alumni outreach had been inconsistent over the years. This adds up to a donor base that requires more touchpoints than most to inspire giving.


PACE
UNIVERSITY

- **Location:** New York City, NY; Pleasantville, NY; White Plains, NY
- **Founded:** 1906
- 9,000 undergraduates; 4,650 graduate students
- 150,000 alumni in the advancement database
- 30,000 alumni rated with \$100,000+ giving capacity

WWW.GRAVITY.COM



While major and annual giving is healthy for Pace, Craig Hyland, Executive Director for Major Gifts, describes the traditional donor pyramid as the shape of a martini glass, making it a challenging major gift pipeline.

“

We had a significant number of alumni making gifts at the top of the giving pyramid and a lot at the bottom, and we needed Gravyty's help to qualify and reach out to those in the middle. That was where we saw the opportunities to help the University make up for lost revenue and build a stronger advancement function.

”



Craig Hyland,
CFRE
*Executive Director
of Major Gifts
Pace University*

To build the major gift pipeline, Hyland knew he would need to increase personal outreach and expand his 14-person fundraising team. However, the question was -- how does one build greater capacity amid the restrictions of a global health crisis?

His solution would be to quickly adapt, embrace artificial intelligence (AI), and break traditional silos.

STRATEGY: **Break Traditional Silos, Increase Outreach**

In March of 2020, while other fundraising leaders hit the pause button on donor outreach and considered moving staff out of fundraising roles, Pace's president challenged fundraisers to reach as many alumni as possible. This meant breaking traditional silos by bringing more staff members into fundraising roles (joining the existing 14-person staff) and requiring advancement leadership to assume larger discovery portfolios themselves.

"Increasing major gifts is a numbers game, and we knew that outreach would be critical in the pandemic. Not just any outreach though; it had to be personalized. We began emphasizing its importance at every meeting. As individual fundraisers began reporting successes stories, those became infectious, and the team's enthusiasm grew," explained Hyland.

Using Gravyty's fundraiser enablement tools, powered by AI, development assistants and alumni relations personnel also began to reach out to the alumni base with specially-created discovery pools, known to the team as auxiliary portfolios. These auxiliary portfolios include donors who meet specific criteria set by Hyland, such as those who made a gift of \$250 or more over the past five years, made five or more gifts in their lifetime, or attended an event in the last five years.



STRATEGY

In March, the entire team combined to send 278 personalized emails to donors. However, when they leaned into Gravyty First Draft and AI, which self-writes suggested messaging for each specific donor that the fundraiser then edits and sends, Pace quickly established fundraiser capacity like never before. In April, the team sent 1,100+ personalized emails to donors. In May, that number jumped to nearly 3,000. And, in June, it was more than 3,500. In four months, the team sent 8,074 personalized emails to donors.

AI changed the way Pace could run advancement. Now, development and major gift officers could establish 100 personal donor touchpoints per week, while directors could manage 25-50, and often more, per week.



FUNDRAISER SPOTLIGHT

Lori Kanner

Lori Kanner, a development officer at Pace, was early to embrace the power of AI. Lori's auxiliary portfolio consists of 900+ donors. With AI and Gravyty, she recently completed outreach to individuals in the portfolio, sending 1,600 First Draft messages in four months.

“Gravyty has allowed me to create more personable, relatable messaging to prospective donors regarding the causes that align with their interests. And with Gravyty's tools I save time and gain efficiency, because they pull all necessary background and contact information, and then automatically record each touchpoint into the University's database. Because Gravyty tracks my progress, it's exciting to see if I can reach out to more donors than the week before, which is easily tracked on a bar graph that Gravyty provides at the top of each First Draft in my inbox.”



Lori Kanner
*Development
Officer
Pace University*

Lori's real goal is to use this impressive outreach to build relationships that grow the major gift pipeline, and AI is doing just that. For example, one Gravyty prompt helped Lori personally connect to a donor with whom the University had lost touch. That donor was thrilled by the personal outreach, made an immediate \$500 gift, and asked to take on a Pace intern. Lori is now building the relationship and working to inspire a scholarship gift.



PACE UNIVERSITY AI-ENABLED SUCCESS

By marrying AI technology and strategy, Pace has expanded its workforce and increased fundraiser capacity, while seeing a remarkable upward trend in advancement's efforts and results.

"It's been a great year working with Gravyty, and I'm proud of my team, which has been working hard, and it feels like it is four times larger than it is," explained Hyland.

In fact, Hyland's estimate is spot on. With Gravyty and AI, the Pace team is expected to send 32,000 personalized touchpoints to donors this year, representing a workforce expansion of more than 4x. As other advancement shops attempt to maintain efforts that resemble the outputs of typical years, Pace breaks records and establishes a new normal.

The University also sees the reward. For example, Gravyty helped Pace discover a new major gift prospect who recently sold a multimillion-dollar business. The strategy is also paying off at scale, as the average gift size of alumni in Pace's auxiliary portfolios has increased by 15 percent with Gravyty.



AVERAGE GIFT SIZE

Increased by 15%



MAJOR GIFT PROSPECTS

Qualified 50+ *new*
major gift prospects



DONOR VISITS

100+ *additional*
face-to-face visits



WORKFORCE EXPANSION

Expanded workforce
by 4x, team of 14
operating as team of
56+

WHAT IS WORKFORCE EXPANSION?

Workforce expansion is a critical aspect to the outcomes that AI produces. By creating efficiencies in some of the most challenging and time-consuming aspects the work that goes into inspiring donors, Gravyty's AI has been proven to grow advancement workforces at scale, without organizations having to make any additional hires.

Because of workforce expansion, created by Gravyty, Pace's team of 14 fundraisers is operating as if they were a team of 56+, a 4x increase in the output of the workforce. This efficiency empowered Pace's fundraisers to personalize 8,000+ touchpoints to donors in just four months, and set a "pace" to send 32,000 personalized touches each year.



THE NEXT EVOLUTION IN FUNDRAISING BEGINS WITH AI.

TRANSFORM YOUR FUNDRAISING OUTCOMES WITH GRAVITY.

Every nonprofit is unique, yet most have common fundraising challenges, especially in this unprecedented moment. To learn more about how Gravyty and AI can transform fundraising by expanding the workforce and building the major gift pipeline, [request a free demo](#).

ON-DEMAND WEBINAR:

Pace discusses how Gravyty expands its workforce and builds a major gifts pipeline.



LEARN HOW FUNDRAISER ENABLEMENT, POWERED BY AI, PRODUCES RESULTS IN RECORD TIME. [REQUEST A DEMO HERE](#).

 **GRAVITY**



WWW.GRAVITY.COM