

# Fairfield University modernizes operations and meets donors where they are using GiveCampus

## THE CHALLENGE

### Replace antiquated software with tech that's modern, scalable, and user-friendly

Fairfield University, a private, coeducational, Jesuit institution located in Fairfield, Connecticut, was founded in 1942. Initially, the University served a population of 300 male students. Today, 80+ years later, more than 5,000 undergraduate, graduate, and continuing studies students from around the U.S. and across the globe are enrolled in the University's five distinct schools.



In December of 2022, Fairfield issued a request for proposal (RFP) seeking Advancement software solutions to support the University's increasingly robust fundraising initiatives, and to better engage their growing alumni and donor communities. The ten-year contract with their existing software provider was up for renewal and the Advancement team wanted to explore whether or not the platform they were currently using was still the best solution for their needs.

As a member of the team exploring the RFP, Megan Rajski, Assistant Vice President of Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving, was looking for opportunities to modernize, with tools that could empower the annual giving team to be more thoughtful and strategic about how they engage donors. "Our industry is constantly changing, and the way that donors gave 10 years ago is vastly different from the way they give today. I'm always shopping for the next big idea, or the next best way to reach that donor."

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Her colleague Lisa Sabia, Assistant Director of Financial Services Advancement, has been a member of the Fairfield team for eight years. Responsible for receiving, processing, and reporting on gifts, Sabia felt that the technology they had in place had grown stale over time.

The vendor hadn't made changes to the software for the entire length of the contract. Additionally, reconciling PayPal and Venmo gifts was cumbersome, they couldn't accept ApplePay, and giving day reporting was often a lengthy manual endeavor that required toggling between platforms.

## THE SOLUTION

### A slick giving experience that's easy to implement on the backend and streamlines workflows for everyone

Full disclosure: Rajski had demoed **GC Social Fundraising** years earlier for a giving day at another institution and felt, at the time, that the solution was not a good fit. So, when GiveCampus came knocking again in 2023, she was skeptical.

This time around however, GiveCampus impressed the RFP team with a comprehensive platform that delivered on key requirements across the board.



**Megan Rajski**  
AVP of Alumni Engagement  
and Annual Giving

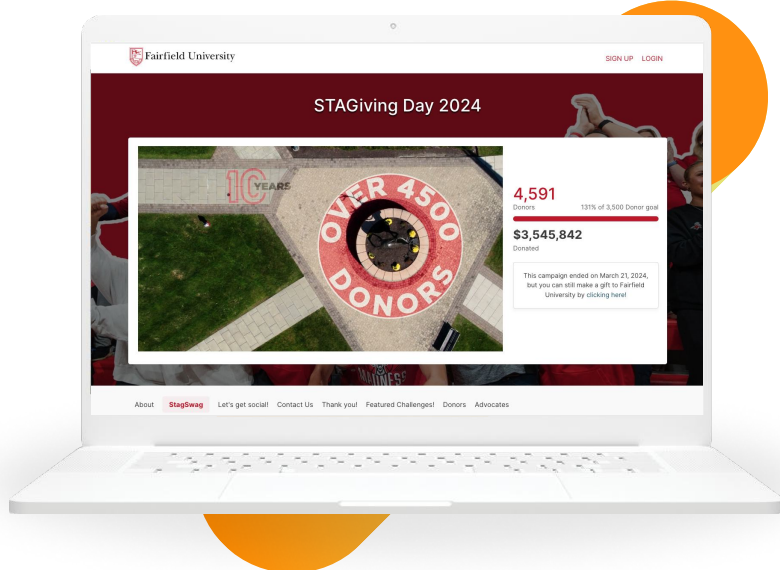
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"I think the amount of work that GiveCampus did in three years from my initial demo to the RFP last year spoke volumes for what you were doing to listen to your clients, and bring in product updates that were necessary to handle complex giving days. GiveCampus has always been great at **giving forms**, but the way that you've expanded the platform is incredibly impressive," Rajski commented.

Fairfield University went on to sign with GiveCampus in June of 2023 and had their first giving form in place by October 1st. Everyone on the Advancement team cited a smooth onboarding experience, solid support, and an intuitive interface for the seamless transition. Rajski commented, "That I could build a giving form, and coordinate that with all the other responsibilities that I have on my plate, speaks to the ease of use of GiveCampus."

Five months later, the team was able to launch its 10th Annual STAGiving Day, an important milestone event for the University, and their first big campaign hosted on the GiveCampus platform. Because the Annual Giving team invites all of their campus partners to participate in STAGiving Day, they have to create campaign pages for some 65+ funds—which is no small feat, but was especially challenging to execute using their previous fundraising software.

# GIVECAMPUS



Prior to using GiveCampus, they had to build everything manually. It was difficult, time-consuming, and required coding expertise to do simple things like move an image.

Mary McCullough, Associate Director of Annual Giving, said that building the campaign was easier with GiveCampus. "If we were unsure about something, we'd reach out to **GiveCampus support** and the response was almost instantaneous.

And we learned some things along the way—especially from our build for giving day—about how we can help not only our donors, but Lisa's team when they're importing gift data."

## THE RESULTS

### Proof of ROI, time savings for staff, and unsolicited accolades from peer institutions

**STAGiving Day 2024** was a resounding success, achieving 131 percent of Fairfield's goal. More than 4,500 donors collectively raised over \$3.4 million to support student scholarships, innovative research, athletics, diversity and inclusion, spirituality, service, and other important University initiatives.

Rajski said GiveCampus delivered a thorough and timely post-giving day debrief, serving up a "giant year-end type of report within 24 hours."

"I was able to walk in with that report to the VP of Finance and show him that 50 percent of people who made their gifts online made them via digital wallets, which we did not have available a year ago.

Furthermore, half of that 50 percent made a gift using ApplePay which was not available through our old payment processor. That report was incredible and it helped to solidify and validate the case to leadership that we made the right choice and the right investment when we chose GiveCampus."

Sabia agreed, noting that the addition of **GC Wallets** was a big time-saver, too. "With the old software, we had workarounds to get PayPal and Venmo transactions in, but it took us twice as long because we had to pull it from different places."

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**Lisa Sabia**  
Assistant Director of Financial  
Services Advancement

"I could have written queries in Raiser's Edge for months to try to compile that report—and we had it in 24 hours from GiveCampus."

The giving day report also revealed surprising metrics that the team simply hadn't been able to track in the past, like the fact that the biggest spike in online giving occurred at 10 p.m. or that the largest gift made via credit card was a staggering \$40,000.

"That's something we never had access to before and it blew me away," said Sabia. "I could have written queries in Raiser's Edge for months to try to compile that report—and we had it in 24 hours from GiveCampus."

There were other wins, too. Ten percent of Fairfield alums are married to each other, and often make joint gifts. For the first time, the University was able to easily represent both partners in the donor count. Rajski explained, "With GiveCampus, we went from counting gifts to counting donors—and we were able to do that the same day, and not six weeks later, like with our previous software."

Sabia chimed in, "And I didn't have a line out my door waiting for me to finish processing gifts."



**Megan Rajski**  
AVP of Alumni Engagement  
and Annual Giving

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Perhaps most importantly, it was a seamless giving day on the donor side as well. Rajski says the slick new donor experience even caught the eye and envy of colleagues at peer schools. "We had presidents of other institutions reaching out to ask how we made our giving day look and feel so easy."

Rajski summed up Fairfield's partnership with GiveCampus like this, "GiveCampus is allowing us to say yes to a lot of things. We're excited about launching **crowdfunding** this year—that's a brand new initiative. And that's not something we'd be able to do with our former vendor, easily or at all. It's been really nice to have a partner, someone who is a couple of steps ahead of the industry instead of lagging behind."



Discover how GiveCampus can help your school raise more dollars from more donors with less effort.

To schedule a demo, please visit:  
[info.givecampus.com/schedule](https://info.givecampus.com/schedule)