

Division of Advancement

Recommendations: Wingspan Gala

Strategy:

The Wingspan Gala in April 2016 will be a celebration and recognition event focused on UNT's excellence, launched in honor of UNT's 125th Anniversary as the first Gala to be held in the new Union. It is not specifically intended to be a fundraising event, however, it is recommended that there be an opportunity on the invitations to donate to the Inspire UNT Fund. The Wingspan Gala will become an annual event whose purpose may evolve slightly from year to year (for example, one year possibly serving as the campaign kick-off, or could eventually become a fundraising event as the identity and brand of the event is established).

Donor Recognition Recommendations:

Members of the McConnell Society (\$1M and up lifetime donors, currently totals 20 households) and/or the President's Leadership Board will receive a special personalized communication (letter or email) from the President inviting them to Wingspan and offering one complimentary table in recognition of their support of UNT. If they are unable to attend, they will be given the opportunity to "donate" their table so that students may attend (award winners, National Merit Scholars, student leaders).

Recognition in the program should include members of McConnell Society (*expand to include Founder's Circle and above?*). In addition listing of the 2015 Alumni Award winners is recommended.

Since there are many other awards events at UNT, we don't recommend that awards be given at Wingspan. However, if the President's Award is given at this event (which recognizes a faculty or staff member), based on the audience present, it is recommended that an award be given that recognizes an alum and/or donor.

Alumni Engagement Strategy:

Since Wingspan represents an opportunity for alumni to attend a high-level event in the new Union, celebrate the 125th Anniversary and build alumni pride; it is important that we utilize Wingspan as another engagement opportunity which could help build on the momentum achieved this fall through the regional events. In order to accomplish this goal, a specific strategy will be developed by the Division of Advancement to market the event to target groups of alumni including those who attended a fall event. In addition, it will be important to keep the ticket price affordable in order to encourage this group to attend.

Ticket prices:

A budget model is currently being developed. The goal of the proposed prices is to cover as much of the expense as possible. Accordingly, the following is recommended:

Table Price: \$1,250

(Reserved table)

Single Ticket: \$125

(Open seating)

Sponsorship Opportunities

Wells Fargo has committed as a sponsor of Wingspan Week and as such will receive a table and recognition at the Gala.

The overall appeal of sponsorships for this event is limited since it is not intended to be a fundraiser. However, Advancement recommends that a specific targeted effort be made to the vendors and companies who have been involved with the new Union, since this will be the Official Opening and first Gala in the Union. Recommended ask: 2,500 – 5,000, will receive program recognition and a table.

It is not recommended that sponsorships be pursued from the current donors and sponsors to UNT as most are suffering “sponsor fatigue” due to the large number of sponsorship asks that are made by various UNT units. It is preferable that fundraising is focused on major gifts and specifically priorities such as Academic Excellence. If relevant, complimentary tickets could be given to any new top donors who might support academic excellence in the months prior to the Wingspan Gala.

Recommended hard copy invitation list:

Lifetime donors of \$25K and above.

Selected, targeted alumni demographics (attendees at fall events, new regional volunteers, etc.)

Foundation Board

Alumni Association Board

College and Unit Advisory Boards

BOR, President’s Cabinet, UNT System, UNT leadership in Dallas, Law, HSC

Deans (Faculty chairs)

Union vendors and companies

President’s community list