Volunteering for Amherst

Amherst prepares our students to use ideas to make a difference in the world. Since its founding in 1821, the College has demonstrated steadfast confidence in the value of the liberal arts and the importance of critical thinking. Today, Amherst's financial aid program is among the most substantial in the nation, and the student body is among the most diverse. Small classes, an open curriculum, and a singular focus on undergraduate education ensure that leading scholars engage daily with talented, curious students, equipping them for leadership in an increasingly global and complex world.

An education like this is reliant on philanthropy. Amherst would not be the institution it is without the past, present, and future support of alumni, parents, and friends. In particular, we absolutely depend on the generous support of our alumni. They exemplify the belief and investment in the College that has helped make American higher education the envy of the world.

We are truly grateful for your help and your generosity with your time. You are part of a team of over 1,100 alumni volunteers who make the Amherst Fund one of the most successful in the country. Thank you for making Amherst a priority!

Raising money for Amherst is not hard, and it’s a way to be better connected to the College and your class. You get in touch with friends, and you raise some dollars for an amazing place that you value. But there may be some tricky questions along the way. Like someone asking, “But why does Amherst need my money?” Here’s where this guide will come in handy. We’ll give you step-by-step instructions on how to be the most successful Amherst Fund volunteer of all time!

Knowing that we rely on you, we want to make sure you are supported in everything you do for the College and the Amherst Fund. Besides, we love to talk about raising money from your friends and classmates. So please let us know if you have questions or suggestions—we always love hearing from you.

Thank you!
The Case for Amherst

Amherst has a lot of nicknames—we are the Singing College, the College on the Hill, and the Fairest College. But we are also the Giving College—we give light to the world, and we give back to our communities and to Amherst.

We aren’t raising funds just for the fun of it (although we do like to say that we put the “fun” in Fund). We rely on you to support outstanding students, faculty, and programs at Amherst. Every dollar we raise is leveraged 20 times, and almost six percent of Amherst’s annual operating budget comes from the Amherst Fund every year. That represents an endowment of $200 million, and that’s a powerful thing by any measure.

Reasons for Alumni Support

1. Pay it forward. Amherst has influenced our lives through the education we received and the bonds we share with friends and classmates, and it is doing that for many others who are succeeding us. We want to recognize its gifts to us by being generous in return.

2. Participation matters. Every Amherst Fund gift makes a difference, and they all add up. Corporations, foundations, and families all use Amherst Fund participation rates to judge the College’s strength. Although Amherst does not promote rankings, participation rates are often a way alumni satisfaction is determined in national liberal arts colleges rankings in the last 30 years.

3. Amherst Pride. There are approximately 23,000 people in the entire world who have a degree from Amherst. Each graduate experienced the unique intensity and rigor of an Amherst education. Many alumni appreciate how they draw on what they learned on campus every single day in their careers and other endeavors. The demands and rewards of graduating from Amherst are ours to champion. We ask that you join us in putting Amherst among your philanthropic priorities this year.

4. A Great Need. Amherst needs your support to continue providing the exceptional education from which you benefitted. Under our need-blind admission policy, a family’s financial circumstances will never affect admission. In our financial aid packages, we’ve replaced all loans with scholarship grants, making Amherst one of the few colleges and universities in the country that do not require students to take on student loans in order to pay for their undergraduate educations.

5. Class Pride. Where would we be without each other? Each year, classes compete for trophies for both Amherst Fund participation and dollars raised, and who doesn’t like to a little competition?

Getting Started in a Few Easy Steps

Ready to get started? The beginning of anything can be tricky, and we’re here to help. Here are seven quick steps that will make you one of the best Amherst Fund volunteers of all time:

Step One: Give a Little (A Lot)

By making your own gift, you set a strong example for your classmates to make their own commitments. Plus, you get to say, “I’ve already given,” or “Please join me.” That’s powerful, trust us.
Step Two: Get Organized

You can find your list of assigned classmates and their contact information on ClassLink. If you want or need to change any assignments, please let your Class Agent or your class manager at the College know.

Step Three: Say Hello and Smile While You Do It

Get in touch with your classmates. Give them a call, or send an email, a Facebook message, or one of those classic thingamajigs—ah yes, a handwritten letter. Let them know you’re volunteering for Amherst College. Maybe you’ll catch up in the process! And as silly as it may sound, smile while you talk. It makes a difference.

Step Four: Make the Ask

After you chat about kids or grandkids or the lifespan of the gypsy moth (to each his own), it’s time to get down to business: Will your classmate contribute to the Amherst Fund? Feel confident knowing that you’re building a strong network of support for your alma mater.

Step Five: Update the Details

Once your classmates say, “Of course! Here’s one trillion dollars,” you’ll want to make sure we can track them down later to get said trillion dollars. Please confirm their mailing addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses so our records are up to date.

Step Six: Close with Our Website

Before you end your conversation, please send your classmates to our website where they can easily make a gift. Or, you can tell the Amherst Fund team to follow up, which we are happy to do. Remember our website is engage.amherst.edu/give.

Step Seven: Celebrate and Say Thank You

We recommend celebrating each gift you secure for the Amherst Fund because we do. It’s a big deal and you’ve done something great! And please don’t forget to say thank you to each of your friends who makes a gift. We are grateful for every donation, and it’s important that donors know that.

Having the Conversation

It’s helpful to remember that when differences in viewpoints arise, we sometimes (and naturally) try to correct the other person’s perceptions immediately or to respond with our own opinions. Of course, this approach often doesn’t work, so it’s good to try the following:

Start by listening. Let your classmate speak and feel they’ve been heard. Don’t try to interrupt faulty arguments or correct facts immediately. Of course, it’s helpful to obtain insights ahead of time into the interests and sensitivities of the people with whom you’re going to speak and to educate yourself about these issues whenever possible. See the Amherst Information section for additional resources.

Look beneath the surface to identify deeper issues. Listen closely to your classmate’s grievances. Do they feel they have been overlooked or disrespected? Once you identify the deeper issues, it’s a little easier to address the problem.

Look for an identity or goal you share. Begin a conversation by highlighting our common goal (love of Amherst or a shared desire that Amherst remain a leader among liberal arts colleges).

Redirect the conversation to your shared goal. The more points of connection you can identify, the more collaborative and productive the conversation can be.

Get more information. No one expects you to know the answer to every question you get asked about Amherst. If you’re not sure of how to answer, no worries! Just
tell your classmate that and be in touch with the Amherst Fund team (contact information is in your packet and online). Better to get back to someone or have someone from the College do that than to improvise.

Sample Questions and Answers

**Classmate:** “The College seems like it has more than enough money, so does Amherst really need my gift?”

**You:** “Yes! Last year’s gifts under $100 added up to nearly $350,000 and provided scholarships for seven students to attend Amherst, and all gifts help our participation stay strong.”

**Classmate:** “I don’t want to give because I support other causes. (I have kids in college, other expenses, etc.)”

**You:** “I understand. Even a small gift helps, and we welcome whatever you can contribute in honor of your time at the College. Remember, your gift—no matter its size—helps you determine the shape and future of the College’s future.”

**Classmate:** “I’m concerned with recent decisions/direction of the College.”

**You:** “I understand your concern. I’m happy to share your reactions with the College because Amherst values alumni input. I still hope you will (continue to) give because you value your own experience and all it’s given you in your life. Making a gift is like casting a vote—you need to stay involved and (one of our favorite expressions) “keep skin in the game.” You don’t get to complain about the election results if you didn’t vote. Amherst is a family, and we don’t walk away from family, especially not when we’re concerned.”

**Classmate:** “My child was not accepted.”

**You:** “That’s certainly disappointing. I know how tough college admissions has become. I hope your child has found a good fit elsewhere and you will remain open to giving back in the future.”

Amherst Information

There are a lot of questions and opinions about higher education, and Amherst alumni are paying attention to (and are involved in) many of those issues. Here is some information that you might find helpful as you discuss some of these questions with your classmates.

**Academic Excellence**

- 1,800+ students from 48 states, plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico
- 8:1 student-to-faculty ratio
- 45% U.S. students who self-identify as students of color
- 13% admission rate, all applicants
- 96% first-year retention rate
- 55% students receiving financial aid
Divestment and the Climate Action Plan

In 2015, the Board of Trustees released a far-reaching declaration committing Amherst College to sustainability in its operations, investments, and life as a community. In May 2016, the College released a Sustainability Report on actions taken since the Board’s statement. Significant progress was made in four areas: building projects, the Office of Environmental Sustainability, campus energy use, and investment policies. The full report is available on the College’s website.

Current investment-related actions:
- Working with investment managers
- Being vocal shareholders
- Participating in the Investor Network on Climate Risk

Climate Action Plan

Amherst aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2030 through the transformative modernization of our energy system from fossil fuels to renewable electricity. By focusing on eliminating fossil fuel combustion, the College will not have to rely on carbon offsets to meet our goal. In addition, Amherst aims to go beyond just carbon neutrality on campus, inspiring graduates who will lead change on a much larger scale.

Current Climate Action Plan:
- Transition the campus's heating and cooling systems from steam to low-temperature hot water.
- Create low-temperature hot water through ground-source heat pumps.
- Procure zero-emission renewable electricity to meet all our heating, cooling, and electrical needs.
- Reduce our energy load and reap greater benefits from our new energy system.
- Provide deep engagement and experiential learning opportunities related to climate action.

Young Alumni Support

The Advancement Office supports several programs to raise awareness about alumni generosity and how the College works financially:

- Senior Gift: This is the first opportunity for the senior class to participate in the Amherst Fund as alumni. The program began in the 1930s and is still going strong. The Class of 2019 had a 60% participation rate.
- Phonathon and student callers: During the academic year, 30 to 50 student workers, who are taught the importance of the Amherst Fund to the College’s finances, make calls to alumni asking them to make their gifts this year.
- Student workers: Alumni and Parent Programs hires more than 100 students each year to work Reunion, Homecoming, and Family Weekend as well as in the office.

Intellectual Diversity

- The College is firmly committed to providing opportunities for different viewpoints to be presented and discussed on campus. Freedom of inquiry and freedom of speech remain the fundamental principles on which the best colleges and universities operate, and those principles are not negotiable at Amherst. The right of faculty and students to think independently and to dissent is not only upheld but encouraged.
- In a variety of ways and formats, we continually bring in distinguished visitors with many perspectives from the world of public affairs—judges, diplomats, journalists, and veterans—to give talks on major issues. Recent speakers include two-term Ohio Governor John Kasich (January 2019), Pulitzer-Prize winning novelist Jennifer Egan (February 2019), finalist for the National Book Award for Fiction Min Jin Lee (September 2019), U.S. Supreme Court Justices Sonia Sotomayor (September 2015) and Ruth Bader Ginsburg (October 2019), columnists Charles Krauthammer (March 2016) and Ross Douthat (November 2016), National Book Award winner Ta-Nehisi Coates (September 2016), and editor of the National Review Rich Lowry (March 2017).
We believe that a diversity of intellectual traditions, ideas, and perspectives is fundamental to a liberal arts education. That principle also underlies the faculty’s approach to teaching. Their goal is to prepare students to think critically and independently, not to reproduce in their students other people’s points of view. The aim of instruction at Amherst is to develop students’ capacities for reason, identifying problems, asking good questions, thinking “outside the box,” and making cogent and persuasive arguments.

Amherst’s first priority is hiring the best teacher-scholars. Faculty hiring is a highly competitive and intensive process that involves many members of the campus community. Final hiring decisions fall to the faculty and academic departments.

The College’s leadership insists on protecting, in all aspects of Amherst life, the bedrock values of freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression. Open, reasoned, and informed give-and-take based on a wide variety of faculty viewpoints is strongly encouraged. There is no political “litmus test” whatsoever in faculty hiring.

Social Life/Student Life

Our students run some 100 clubs and organizations. They jump into everything from community engagement to political activism, from student publications to affinity groups (cultural, religious and more).

Long-term initiatives are underway to integrate and strengthen health and wellness services at Amherst. These include assuming management of Keefe Health Center (formerly managed by UMass) in 2016, which has led to extended hours and more accessible services during school breaks. In addition, we’ve expanded the College’s Counseling Center services and personnel.

Our Counseling Center strives to promote positive mental health and well-being in the student body as a whole. Our vision is to create a campus environment that actively encourages and supports all students to learn and grow academically, socially, and emotionally, and to create a vibrant community in which every student feels a sense of belonging and value.

Financial Information

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<tr>
<th>Source of Revenue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>Other</td>
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<th>Endowment By the Numbers: Fiscal Year 2018</th>
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<td>Return on the endowment</td>
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<td>Endowment distribution</td>
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<td>Endowment per student</td>
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Words from the Wise
(Because No One Says it Better than Our Volunteers)

Ali Armour ’07: “I firmly believe that maintaining genuine relationships is the key to a smooth Annual Fund drive. I’m honored that many classmates on my assignment may not give a lot of money but consistently give, even in situations where money can be tight. And I have to guess that relationships—with me, with the College—are a significant factor.”

Hal Thayer ’74: “I put a timeline together for the campaign, identifying some key dates and responsibilities. I find making a plan gets me going. I key in on rallying the associate agents to get started then reminding them every month (April 1, May 1, June 1, and June 15th). For myself, I do a direct email campaign to my assignments in May. Those who do not respond get a call in early June. Those still lagging in late June get a Last Chance/Desperate-for-Your-Help call as the Fund closes. Prepare a script, put a plan together, and then execute. Do some homework on your assignment (LinkedIn, College database) then contact them directly by email and phone. It becomes very manageable and not daunting at all.”

Elena Sparling ’05: “Be yourself and be genuine. If you share your love of the school or why you donate, it’s infectious.”

Cristian Navarro ’16: “I usually speak of giving back as a way to join a proud, long-standing legacy of generosity. For some reason that resonates very well with people who feel the College has lost its direction or identity, and who are potential donors concerned with the idea of ‘tradition.’”

Michael Mercurio ’92: “Don’t get discouraged; not everyone can (or will) give. Polite persistence tends to tip things in one’s favor. Just because someone won’t give in September does not mean they won’t give in April. But you have to keep in touch between September and April to build some credibility.”

John Meegan ’81: “I usually don’t make any calls or send any emails until I make my gift. I always want to make sure my classmates are aware that my gift is in. Not that I am trying to get a pat on the back, but rather that I am not asking them to do something that I have not done.”

Anabela Perozek ’90: “I’m pretty methodical about it. Starting in December, I give myself the goal of emailing a certain number of people on my list. At this point, my list is about 60 people, so I can’t hit everyone at once and I just focus on five emails, once a week. I try to do it in the evening when I’m, otherwise, watching TV or just relaxing. I try to do one call a week from December to April, then I pick up the pace. I never think of it as anyone who makes a donation is doing me a favor, so I don’t feel awkward/bad if someone doesn’t give. I tailor the message to the person as much as possible. I try to remember something personal about the alum (a new job, a relocation, a new baby, a kid going off to college, for former athletes, I know how the team is doing this year). The ask is always tailored to the individual and how much he/she can give.”

Volunteer Roles (or who does what)

Class Agent: Class Agents, in partnership with the 1821 Chair, provide leadership for all class fundraising and participation efforts including goal setting, communication, Associate Agent management, and individual classmate outreach. In this role, you will be close with Amherst College and the Advancement Office, working regularly with your class liaison to set goals, design strategy for the annual campaign, and recruit and lead Associate Agents. This leadership role is shared typically across one to four people and provides the backbone of the class giving structure and the critical current-use annual support for Amherst.

1821 Chair: This is a leadership position within the Amherst Fund, with the primary focus of increasing your class gift through increased participation in the 1821 Society, which begins at $1,821 ($500 for classes one to five years out and $1,000 for classes six to ten years out), and includes the Noah Webster Circle at the $10,000 level and above. The 1821 Chair works closely with Amherst Fund staff and the Class Agents to help set the dollar goals for the class and to design giving strategies around achieving these goals, particularly in Reunion years and around leadership giving.
**Associate Agent**: Associate Agents are the army behind the Amherst Fund’s success. Class Agents will work with a team of 10-20 Associate Agents to strategically assign a group of classmates for outreach throughout the fiscal year. Associate Agents are called upon at key periods throughout the year, specifically the calendar year end, Giving Day and challenges, and the year-end wrap up in June. This role is supported by the Class Agents and your class liaison in the Amherst Fund office.

**Amherst Fund Co-Chair**: There are three Amherst Fund Co-Chairs who work with the Amherst Fund team to set policies, review materials, and solicit alumni who are being asked to join the 1821 Society.

**Amherst Fund Committee (AFC)**: This committee is responsible for assisting the Amherst Fund Co-Chairs in leading the Amherst Fund. Alumni from across decades serve on the committee for one to three-year terms, meeting on campus three times a year as part of the Executive Committee of the Society of Alumni (the EC).

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**Campaign Priorities**

**Attracting and Supporting Outstanding Students and Faculty**: Amherst will continue to bring together faculty dedicated to the highest standards of intellectual inquiry and instruction, and the most promising students, whatever their financial need. Giving opportunities include endowed funding to name professorships in the humanities and humanistic social sciences and to support financial aid.

**Meeting Student Need in the Sciences and Math**: Over the last decade, student interest and enrollment in STEM fields have surged at Amherst. With the opening of the College’s new Science Center, we aim to achieve an 8:1 student-faculty ratio by expanding the faculty. Giving opportunities include endowed support for new faculty and increased funding for research.

**Promoting Innovation in Teaching and Learning**: Amherst faculty are redesigning courses Amherst faculty are redesigning courses and majors, considering more shared intellectual experiences, emphasizing writing and oral communication, and providing students with more opportunities to learn by doing: through research, field-based projects, international travel with faculty, career exploration, and internships. Giving opportunities include support for these programs through a mix of endowment and start-up funding that will allow all students to take advantage of more than one of these opportunities.

**Providing Critical Facilities**: Some of our aspirations for Amherst’s third century depend on adjustments and expansions to our built environment. Giving opportunities include named spaces in the new Science Center, the Greenway, and the Greenway Residence Halls, the construction of a new student center and new athletic and social spaces on campus. In addition, Amherst remains committed to funding our Climate Action Plan and reaching true carbon neutrality by 2030.

**Creating a Stronger Sense of Community and Belonging**: Amherst seeks to create a diverse intellectual community in which all three terms in that phrase are as meaningful as the middle one has always been. Giving opportunities include endowed funding support for student leadership and programming, athletics and wellness initiatives, speakers series and environmental sustainability initiatives.

**Supporting the Amherst Fund**: The Amherst Fund has been key to the College’s excellence over time, allowing Amherst to apply resources as needed across campus. The Amherst Fund will continue to play a vital role in our philanthropic health and, for most alumni, parents and friends, will remain one of the most popular ways to support Amherst.

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**Your Impact to Date**

- Created 28 new scholarship funds totaling $59.9M for financial aid. Financial aid allows Amherst to identify and develop promise wherever it exists, knowing that it exists everywhere.
- Funded three Greenway Dorms, five Greenway outdoor spaces and eight named spaces in the new Science Center.
- Funded 10 Professorships, including the one now held by Jyl Gentzler, the R. John Cooper ’64 Presidential Teaching Professor of Philosophy.
Glossary of Terms

Alumni Fund/Amherst Fund/Annual Fund: We use these terms interchangeably at Amherst. All of them reference unrestricted annual giving that allows the College to apply funds wherever the need is greatest. The Amherst Fund represents nearly six percent of the College’s operating budget—roughly what an additional $200 million in endowment would provide in interest each year.

ClassLink: This is where you will find your class’s Amherst Fund, information about the classmates assigned to you, and other helpful resources. You will need to log in to the system using your Amherst ID and password. Not sure what that is? Contact the Amherst Fund team, and we’ll help. In ClassLink, you can email your assigned directly, using sample language provided or writing your own.

Designated Giving/Amherst Fund buckets: Donors can designate their gifts within the Amherst Fund. These “buckets” include academics, the arts, athletics, scholarships/financial aid, student life, and sustainability. Funds designated to the buckets are spent in those areas.

Fiscal Year: Amherst’s fiscal year runs from July 1 until June 30. This can be confusing to donors who give in the spring and then are asked to give in the fall. Think of the fiscal year as the academic year.

Irradient Society: The Amherst Fund relies on consistent giving. Donors that give every year are the backbone and foundation of the Amherst Fund and the philanthropy on which the College relies. The Irradient Society honors consecutive giving to the Amherst Fund.

Lybunt: Donors who made a gift to the College during the last fiscal year but have not yet renewed their support in this fiscal year (last year but unfortunately not this).

Phonathon: Students make phone calls on behalf of the Amherst Fund in the fall, the spring, and the last two weeks of June each year. They serve as ambassadors for the Amherst Fund and the College. Please be nice to them when they call.
Restricted support: Gifts that are made to a specific purpose and do not count toward the Amherst Fund. They do count toward participation totals, but not toward dollar goals. We also refer to these gifts as “designated gifts.”

Sybunt: Donors who made a gift at least once in the past five years but not in the last fiscal year or in this current year (some year but unfortunately not this).

Unrestricted support: Gifts that support the College's highest priorities, which are vital to Amherst's financial strength and flexibility.

1821 Society: The Amherst Fund’s leadership giving society begins at $1,821 ($500 for alumni one to five years out and $1,000 for alumni six to ten years out). These donors give 85% of the total Amherst Fund dollars raised each year (see the back of this guide for donor levels).

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<td>Noah Webster Circle (alumni 1–10 years out)</td>
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General Information

Smith House
22 Hitchcock Road
Amherst, MA 01002
413-542-2313; amherstfund@amherst.edu

- Log on to ClassLink using your Amherst username and password at http://engage.amherst.edu/classlink
- Find a webinar and user guide, as well as instructions for resetting your password at http://amherst.edu/give/volunteer

Ways to Give

Checks payable to Trustees of Amherst College and mailed to:
The Amherst Fund
Amherst College
P.O. Box 5000
Amherst, MA 01002-5000

Online: engage.amherst.edu/give
Phone: 413-542-2313
or toll-free at 866-542-GIFT (4438)
Venmo: @AmherstFund

For more information about donating securities contact:
Rose LeVay
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
413-542-2325; rslevay@amherst.edu