



# **Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project: The Fundraising Option**

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*A special thanks to Cady-Short Thompson, Danielle McDonald, Stephanie Klatzke, and other faculty who have contributed to these Mayerson documents.*

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## **Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project: The Fundraising Option**

**Courses/Concept:** This project could be applicable to any course; but this particular example works best with persuasion. This project allows students to apply course content via a service learning project. Faculty are encouraged to be creative with applying this to their own courses.

**Objective:** To illustrate a "learning by giving" approach that allows students to experience philanthropy firsthand by being grant makers (via a class fundraiser) in the classroom, while at the same time engaging in real-world application of course concepts.

**Rationale:** Many universities are asking professors to incorporate more real-world/community application into lesson plans. This project allows students to research community problems and nonprofit organizations, evaluate and discuss them, and ultimately select nonprofits in which to invest the money from the class fundraiser. The goals include engaging students more fully in the course curriculum, teaching them about community problems and nonprofits, and encouraging them to be involved with nonprofit organizations in the future, as philanthropists, volunteers, and staff.

**Time:** 16-week semester (can be condensed to fit into a 10-week quarter)

### **Materials:**

- Letterhead, envelopes, and postage for fundraising letters;
- Project overview memo, RFP (Request for Funding Proposal) template, and non-profit verification form;
- Fundraising/accept/reject/confirmation letter templates;
- Group critique form

**Instructions:** This project involves many steps. For simplicity, they are listed by week.

Note: the documents listed below are attached to the back of this packet. These sample documents will greatly assist with implementing this project. Please feel free to alter them to fit the needs of your own class.

**Week 1 and 2:** Assign the project (split the class into groups of 4 or 5 students); prepare fundraising letters. It is best to work with the university foundation or fundraising arm to write the fundraising letter template. Provide students with letterhead, envelopes, and postage (via departmental funds, if possible) and have each student submit 10 letters\*. Students should type up and submit a list of recipients for credit.

\*While this particular sample uses a letter writing campaign as a fundraiser, there are many other types of fundraisers that can be used to raise money – including coin jars, dunk the President, fundraising dinners, sporting events, and more. Fundraising ideas are best if they relate to the class content in some way.

**Week 3 and 4:** Each student (or pair of students) within each group should visit two (or more) non-profit agencies that interest/appeal to him/her. The purpose of these visits is to learn about

the non-profit agencies, explain the project to the agencies, and ask the agencies to submit a RFP, if interested. Provide students with a project overview memo to provide to the non-profit agency, as well as a RFP template. To earn credit for their visits, students should submit a non-profit verification form (or questionnaire) pertaining to their visits.

**Week 4 and 5:** RFPs should be received from the non-profit agencies. In their assigned groups, have students work together to review the RFPs (a sample selection rubric is available in the Mayerson Handbook), and select the top two non-profit agencies from each group (four groups at two non-profit agencies per group, for a total of eight). Invite each of the top eight non-profits to speak to the class. Students should contact all non-profits (whether top eight or not) to inform them they were selected to move on (or not). It is best to provide students with a template for this correspondence (usually email).

**Week 6 and 7:** Send confirmation letters to the top eight non-profits (include day, time, directions, etc.). Allow this time for the non-profits to prepare their presentations. The goal of each non-profit's presentation is to persuade the class why the money raised should be donated to them.

**Week 8, 9, and 10:** The non-profits present to the class. Students should take extensive notes on the content of the presentations, as well as how the non-profits are using various persuasive concepts/techniques during the presentations.

**Week 11 and 12:** Students should meet in their groups and decide which of the top eight non-profits is most deserving of the class funds. Additionally, they should prepare a group oral presentation in which they will persuade the rest of the groups in the class why their chosen non-profit is the most deserving. The presentation should be filled with information about and supporting the non-profit agency, as well as apply persuasive concepts/techniques as learned in class.

**Week 13:** The class should vote and determine the winning non-profit(s). All eight non-profits should be notified of the final decision. It is best to provide students with a template for this correspondence (email or letter).

**Week 14:** Schedule a class ceremony where the money is awarded to the winning non-profit agency(ies).

**Week 15 and 16:** Students should submit an analysis paper discussing the ways persuasive concepts/techniques were used by the non-profits throughout the semester. Additionally, a portion of the final exam should be devoted to testing the application of course concepts as they relate to the project.

*Although this project involves some work every week, there should still be plenty of time to lecture over textbook material.*

**Debrief:** As the project progresses, take time to discuss how various persuasive concepts/techniques are being used.

**Evaluating/Assessing:** Students should be evaluated/assessed during their group oral presentation, after submitting their analysis paper, and by adding questions to an exam. Additionally, each student should submit a group critique form indicating how each member of the group contributed to the success of the project. This allows students to openly comment on group dynamics and ensure social loafers are not given unearned credit.

**Attachments:** (see table of contents to for corresponding page number)

1. Fundraising Letter
2. Request for Funding Proposal (RFP)
3. Mayerson Overview Memo
4. Non-Profit Verification Form
5. Round 1 Acceptance Email
6. Round 1 Rejection Email
7. Non-Profit Presentation Confirmation Letter
8. Final Acceptance Letter
9. Final Rejection Letter
10. Group Critique Form

**Student Testimonial:**

*It has been a privilege to be a part of the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project as part of the Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement and my course, Strategies for Persuasion. I have been able to apply many concepts that were discussed in class, giving me the opportunity to employ a real-life application to the coursework, which is difficult to do in other classes. The experience has given me a better understanding of the logistics and behind the scenes process that any philanthropic organization has to take on to be successful, as well as how complex and challenging it can be to choose how the monies will be distributed. Finally, since I have been involved in every aspect of the task of determining who would benefit from our fundraising campaign, from letter writing and choosing the finalists, to eventually voting on the winning non-profit organization, I feel like I have made a real difference in my community.*

~Shonda Justus, CMST 340, Fall 2011

<First Name> <Last Name>  
<Address>  
<City>, <State> <Zip Code>

<Date>

Dear <Name>,

At Northern Kentucky University, we believe in the motto “quality-made, community-driven.” That is why our faculty, staff, and students place such an emphasis not only on quality education but also on serving our community.

One way we are doing that is through the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project. This series of classes excites students about philanthropy and educates them about the inner workings of nonprofits. Students raise and award funding to various nonprofit groups, which has given over \$500,000 to more than 200 organizations. By working as a philanthropic foundation, the students see the power of their decisions and the importance of stewardship. The Mayerson model has spread to campuses in 34 states, instilling a love of civil service in many students.

My <Name> class, part of the Mayerson project, will award money to deserving organizations this semester, and you can help. All donations, up to \$1,000, collected by our class will be matched by NKU’s Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement. You or your company is welcome to match the total or contribute to the overall gift. To find the best candidates for our charitable gifts, we will visit area nonprofit agencies and invite them to present their program’s mission and their funding needs to our class.

Please consider supporting our efforts to better our community. Any amount is welcome and is tax deductible. **Return your check, made payable to the NKU Foundation with Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project, <Class Number> in the memo line of the check,** in the enclosed self-addressed envelope by <Date>.

If you are interested in seeing which charities receive your donation, you are invited to attend the award ceremony at <Time> on <Date>, in <Room>.

Thank you for your consideration. For more information about the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project, please visit <http://civicengagement.nku.edu/involved/mayerson.php>. For more information about this project, contact our professor, <Name>, at <Phone Number> or <Email Address>.

Sincerely,

<Student’s Name> &  
<Professor’s Name and Title>

**REQUEST FOR FUNDING PROPOSAL**  
**NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY**  
**Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project, <Class Number>**  
**<Professor's Name and Title>**  
**<Address>**  
**<Phone Number and Fax Number>**  
**<Email Address>**

Date:

Name of Organization:

Address:

Federal Identification Number:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Name of Contact Person:

Telephone Number for Contact Person:

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Give a Brief Description of Your Organization (History, Population Served, & Purpose).

Describe the Project/Program for Which Funding is Requested.

If funded, what is the expected outcome of this project/program?

How will you spend \$1,000 (please give an itemized budget)? (\*Note if awarded money, the donation may be more or less than \$1000; please indicate rough plans for more or less money.)

What is the expected time line for this project (if applicable and as related to the previous question)?

What is the Total Organization Budget (for the current year)?

Additional Comments or Information: (Please also attach a copy of your most recent 990 form or annual financial statement.)

**This RFP must be received no later than <Date>, for consideration!**



To: Community Leader/Non-Profit Organization  
From: Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement and <Class Number> <Class Name>  
RE: Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project

Students in <Class Number>, <Class Name>, have identified your non-profit as one they would like to learn more about. The students are participating in the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project.

With this particular project this semester, this class of students will award money collected through a class fundraiser to local community organizations. Students request and evaluate RFPs, and determine awards through a competitive process. In the process they learn about community needs and the efforts of local organizations to meet those needs. Students also gain key civic responsibility skills as they participate in this project—all while learning the subject matter of their course.

This entire effort is made possible by the generous funding of the Manuel D. and Rhoda Mayerson Foundation in Cincinnati, Ohio, as well as the Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement at NKU. More information about this project can be found on the web at: <http://civicengagement.nku.edu/involved/mayerson.php>.

If you choose to participate, we appreciate the time you take to work with our students and hope that this is a good experience for you.

For your convenience, we want to provide the following information to you.

Name of Student(s) contacting you: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of NKU Professor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Please feel free to contact the student and/or professor if you have any questions about the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project.

Thank you again!

## Student Non-Profit Visit Verification Sheet

*Using the space below, please fill out the appropriate information about your non-profit visits for the NKU <Class Number> Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project. If you visited more than two, please print and fill out an additional sheet. Remember no more than two students per visit.*

### **Non-Profit Visit 1**

Name of Non-Profit Organization (and location): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Non-Profit Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Profit Representative Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Profit Representative Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Day and time of Non-Profit Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why did you choose to visit this non-profit?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. After visiting this non-profit, do you feel they should be selected to present to the class?  
Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Additional comments:

### **Non-Profit Visit 2**

Name of Non-Profit Organization (and location): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Non-Profit Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Profit Representative Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Profit Representative Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Day and time of Non-Profit Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why did you choose to visit this non-profit?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. After visiting this non-profit, do you feel they should be selected to present to the class?  
Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Additional comments:

<Date>

Dear <Name>,

Congratulations! Our class, <Class Number>, <Class Name>, has selected your agency as one of the eight agencies to speak to our class as a part of the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project. If you are still interested, I would like to invite you to NKU to speak to our class. Your time slot is 20-30 minutes and we'd appreciate it if you'd allow time at the end of your presentation for student questions. Your main goal will be persuading the class to fund your agency for the project described in your RFP. My professor will send you a formal invitation very soon. This will include your speaking day and time slot, as well as directions and a campus map.

Our classroom is a smart classroom, equipped with PowerPoint capabilities (computer, projector, and screen), internet access, and DVD. You may use this equipment, but you certainly are not required to do so. Additionally, it's appropriate to bring other objects (e.g., brochures) and items (except live animals) if you believe they would enhance your presentation.

You are welcome to contact my professor via telephone <Phone Number> or email <Email Address> if you have questions or problems.

Sincerely,

<Student Name>  
<Class Number>, <Class Name>  
Northern Kentucky University

<Date>

Dear <Name>,

I want to thank you for your participation in the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project. I am sorry to inform you that our <Class Number>, <Class Name>, did not select your organization to continue on to the next phase of the Mayerson project. Please know that this was not an easy decision. We recognize the importance of what you do, and we wish we had more funds to distribute.

We thank you for the time you spent working with us on this project and allowing us to learn about your organization and its important cause and excellent programs.

Again, thanks for participating in the Mayerson project. It has been a pleasure to learn about your organization.

You are welcome to contact my professor, <Name>, via telephone <Phone Number> or email <Email Address> if you have questions.

Sincerely,

<Student Name>  
<Class Number>, <Class Name>  
Northern Kentucky University

<First Name> <Last Name>  
<Agency Name>  
<Address> <City>, <State> <Zip Code>

<Date>

Dear <Name>,

Congratulations on being selected by <Class Number>, <Class Name> as one of the eight agencies to speak to our class as a part of the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project. We have scheduled you to speak to our class on <Day>, from <Time>. Your time slot is 20-30 minutes and we'd appreciate it if you'd allow time at the end of your presentation for student questions.

To provide more information about our class, here are a few particulars:

- WHAT: 20-30 minute presentation persuading the class to fund your agency for the project described in your RFP.
- WHY: Our class has money we have collected through a class fundraiser to donate to what the students determine to be the most worthy and effective agency in our Mayerson class project.
- WHO: 24 undergraduate students (mostly juniors and seniors) enrolled in <Class Number>, <Class Name>.
- WHERE: <Classroom Location> at NKU (see enclosed map/directions).
- WHERE TO PARK: There are several visitor garages on the map which you'll be authorized to park in. Please be sure to bring your visitor's parking pass with you to the class so it can be validated.
- WHEN: <Day>, from <Time>

Our classroom is a smart classroom, equipped with PowerPoint capabilities (computer, projector, and screen), internet access, and DVD. You may use this equipment, but you certainly are not required to do so. Additionally, it's appropriate to bring other objects (e.g., brochures) and items (except live animals) if you believe they would enhance your presentation.

You are welcome to contact me via telephone <Phone Number> or email <Email Address> if you have questions or problems.

Sincerely,

<Professor Name and Contact Information>

<First Name> <Last Name>  
<Agency Name>  
<Address> <City>, <State> <Zip Code>

<Date>

Dear <Name>,

Congratulations! The Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project at Northern Kentucky University (NKU) has decided to award your organization a grant of <INSERT amount here> to help fund the project outlined in your proposal. Please know that we were very impressed by the quality of your proposal and the level of commitment your organization has for the community.

The Mayerson project is possible with the generous funding of the Manuel D. and Rhoda Mayerson Foundation of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement at NKU.

There will be a special **Mayerson Awards Ceremony** to recognize the nonprofit organizations selected for awards this semester as well as the funders of the project. It will be held on **<Date>, from <Time>, in <Room>**. Please send a representative to accept this award on behalf of your organization. An NKU student that evaluated your proposal will speak for a few minutes about your organization and present the award to you. You are welcome to say a few words.

We ask that the representative of your organization and any other interested parties **arrive by <Time>**. You can park at one of the parking garages on NKU's campus; please bring your ticket to the Awards Ceremony, and it will be validated. The following is a web site with a campus map:

[http://www.nku.edu/campusmaps/includes/pdf/NKU\\_2DMap.pdf](http://www.nku.edu/campusmaps/includes/pdf/NKU_2DMap.pdf). The garage that is closest to the Student Union is the one on Kenton Drive (#42 on the map). But there is also a parking garage at the new Welcome Center, which is at the corner of Nunn and University Drives, across from the new Bank of Kentucky Center.

In addition, we wanted to let you know that NKU's Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement, which manages the Mayerson project, continuously evaluates the project. As part of this process, the Scripps Howard Center will be sending you a survey to get your perspective and feedback. We ask that you take a few minutes to complete this survey so that we can identify the strengths and weaknesses in order to continue to improve the Mayerson project.

Again, I congratulate you and thank you for participating in the Mayerson project. It has been a pleasure to learn about your organization. We look forward to seeing you or another representative at the upcoming Awards Ceremony.

You are welcome to contact me via telephone <Phone Number> or email <Email Address> if you have questions or problems.

Sincerely,

<Professor and Title>

cc: Danielle McDonald, Director  
Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project

<First Name> <Last Name>  
<Agency Name>  
<Address> <City>, <State> <Zip Code>

<Date>

Dear <Name>,

My students and I want to thank you for your participation in the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project. I am sorry to inform you that my students did not select your organization for a Mayerson grant this semester. Please know that this was not an easy decision. We recognize the importance of what you do, and we wish we had more funds to distribute.

All of the organizations that my students considered showed a high level of commitment to their cause and their communities. We thank you for the time you spent working with us on this project and allowing us to learn about your organization and its important cause and excellent programs.

In addition, we wanted to let you know that NKU's Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement, which manages the Mayerson project, continuously evaluates the project. As part of this process, the Scripps Howard Center will be sending you a survey to get your perspective and feedback. We ask that you take a few minutes to complete this survey so that we can identify the strengths and weaknesses in order to continue to improve the Mayerson project.

Again, thanks for participating in the Mayerson project. It has been a pleasure to learn about your organization.

You are welcome to contact me via telephone <Phone Number> or email <Email Address> if you have questions or problems.

Sincerely,

<Professor and Title>

cc: Danielle McDonald, Director  
Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project



### Group Member Critique Form

Use this sheet to critique the members of your group. Don't critique based on speech performance (e.g. Susie had too many fillers). Critique based on: attendance to group meetings, preparation, amount of work done, attitude, or whatever else you think is relevant. Then, provide a short description of why you gave that score. *You will critique yourself.*

You have a total of 100 percent. You may give each member anywhere from 0-100 percent as long as they add up to 100 (and not more). So, if you have 4 group members (including yourself) and think everyone did an equal amount, then you'd give everyone 25%.

**Critique submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_

Group Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Percentage: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reasoning:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Group Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Percentage: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reasoning:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Group Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Percentage: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reasoning:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Group Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Percentage: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reasoning:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Group Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Percentage: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reasoning:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Group Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Percentage: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reasoning:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL PERCENTAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

*Your grade will be calculated by adding the percentages others gave you. If you ended up with 90%, then you will receive 90% of 50 points for a total of 45 points.*