



CASE STUDY

UUP FAST Fund at Stony Brook University



Believe in Students
Empowering college student for success

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



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If students can complete their degrees without financial bumps in the road, they will have opportunities for social mobility that maybe a year or two ago they didn't even think was possible...and that [FAST Fund] investment into them will eventually trickle back to students' morale here on campus.

AMANDA FLANAGAN • STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY



In the fall of 2021, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) announced its landmark \$100,000 investment in Believe in Students, with some of those dollars earmarked to expand the FAST Fund to new campuses. A press release and call for applicants made its way to the United University Professions (UUP) in New York, and the state-wide union disseminated the information to their affiliated chapters. After being asked by the campus president if there was bandwidth for the opportunity, Amanda Flanagan worked with a recent retiree from her campus on the application and now leads the FAST Fund at Stony Brook.

Amanda was directly involved in determining the scope for the FAST Fund program at Stony Brook, but did not want to “reinvent the wheel.” In fact, she credited access to the national network of peers leading FAST Funds as critical for helping her determine what ideas would work best at her institution. Additionally, to best prepare for the volume of requests from applicants, their team proactively reached out to different departments on campus and engaged in listening sessions via Zoom. They requested about 10 minutes during these department's regularly scheduled meetings to give a brief presentation about the FAST Fund.



Cross-Functional Partnerships Expand Capacity

Amanda’s creative approach to raising awareness about the FAST Fund yielded two unanticipated but positive byproducts. First, the Stony Brook FAST Fund received financial donations from listeners who were endeared to the mission. Second, their approach led to what is now an active, bi-directional partnership with the Dean of Students office. In particular, the Dean of Students office sees a range of emergency cases (i.e., a student has a family death and needs financial support for a plane ticket home), and the office also has its own emergency support program through the Student Support Team. However, like many university-administered aid programs, they are more restrictive about what constitutes an emergency. Nonetheless, in instances where the Dean of Students office is unable to help, they directly connect students with the FAST Fund (and vice versa).



#1

THE STONY BROOK FAST FUND RECEIVED FINANCIAL DONATIONS FROM LISTENERS WHO WERE ENDEARED TO THE MISSION



#2

THEIR APPROACH LED TO WHAT IS NOW AN ACTIVE, BI-DIRECTIONAL PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

Stony Brook’s partnership strategy has led to important outcomes for students. For example, a first-generation student in her senior year at Stony Brook was two semesters away from completing her degree. At no fault of her own, she encountered an unexpected financial emergency, was unable to receive any assistance from her family, and did not qualify for any private loans. Fearing that she might have to drop-out, she was connected to Amanda who told her about the FAST Fund. While the FAST Fund was only able to cover a portion of the student’s need, because of the bi-directional pipelines of support that the Stony Brook team developed, the student was connected to the university’s Finish in 4 team and received the remaining financial assistance needed to cover her balance. Amanda then brought her on as a student worker, and she graduated with her bachelor’s degree shortly thereafter.

Amanda also added that without UUP, the FAST Fund at Stony Brook would not exist, and the anecdote above may have had a different outcome. Further, she explained that because of the union’s backing, she has been introduced to collaborators across campus that she may not have known otherwise. Additionally, UUP provided the FAST Fund at Stony Brook with an official email address to augment brand legitimacy, they share updates about the FAST Fund in their bi-weekly newsletter, and they covered the expenses for a recent fundraiser where the proceeds went to the FAST Fund. In Amanda’s words, “The FAST Fund at Stony Brook University is a site that truly embodies “Faculty, [Staff] and Students Together.””



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