1. What makes the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma different from other schools (other than its long name)?

USAO operates from the belief that the best path to a meaningful and purpose-filled life is an education that integrates knowledge from many disciplines to prepare individuals for the 21st century.

Therefore our teaching is focused on an interdisciplinary core required of all graduates. We teach a traditional science and arts curriculum designed to develop reasoning, problem solving and communication skills necessary for home, work and citizenship. We are committed to a time honored undergraduate residential environment where students stay the course and receive the full benefit of their educational investment.

This interdisciplinary approach has been at the heart of our educational mission from our beginning as the Oklahoma College for Women, through the 1965 legislative mandate that created a coeducational Oklahoma College of Liberal Arts and to our present status as Oklahoma’s nationally ranked public liberal arts college.

2. How is the University funded?

USAO receives most of its support from Oklahoma taxpayers in its annual share of the state system of higher education budget. Approximately 36% of USAO’s annual budget comes directly from students in the form of tuition and fees.

3. How does the University spend its annual budget?

The majority of our annual budget (56%) goes to pay faculty salaries and to support student learning. Another 10% is spent to provide services to our students. Fourteen percent of the budget is needed to run the school with the balance (20%) required for operating and maintaining campus grounds and buildings.

4. Why are additional funds needed?

In 2002 state appropriations covered more than 75% of our annual budget. Today that figure is 64%. In addition, legislative cuts to higher education in recent years have reduced USAO’s annual state allocation by one million dollars. We work to maintain the buying power of our budget and minimize tuition and fee increases by prudent management and a focused commitment to our core mission. This strategy barely meets operating demands and leaves no funds for additional student scholarships or upgrades to the campus and to teaching facilities.

5. How will additional funds be used?

Additional funds will be used to increase scholarship aid to current and future students, upgrade the Austin Hall science building and labs, modernize the Nash Library, and implement a comprehensive campus grounds master plan.

6. What does the Campaign theme refer to?

The campaign theme, Ready, Set, Now expresses the principles of preparation, confidence and urgency so critical to advancing the University. The University is Ready—made ready by its deep tradition of rigorous academic quality and affordability. The University is Set—a fact affirmed as a current reality by many state and national observers. The time to move forward on the strength of these long traditions and current realities is NOW.

7. Who authorized the Campaign?

The campaign was authorized by the USAO Board of Regents upon the recommendation of the University administration.
8. What are the Campaign goals?

The overall campaign goal is to raise $4,850,000 from private sources to fund five projects determined to be most critical to advancing the mission of the college.

Current Student Scholarships $1,500,000
Future Student Scholarships $1,000,000
Austin Hall/Science Labs $900,000
Nash Library $750,000
Campus Grounds Master Plan $700,000

9. How were these projects selected and the dollar goals determined?

The current campaign projects and dollar goals were determined through a process that combined long-range strategic planning with practical market analysis. The USAO administration reviews the University strategic plan on a routine basis and during this process identified eight projects from among 30 to test for inclusion in the current fundraising campaign. These eight projects were considered most important for the advancement of the University’s mission. The eight projects ranged in scope from student scholarships to the upgrading of essential academic buildings and athletic facilities and reflected a total estimated cost of more than $8,000,000.

These priority projects were then tested in a feasibility study conducted by Cargill Associates, a national fund raising firm located in Fort Worth, Texas. Through a combination of personal interviews as well as mail and email surveys, the University’s top donor prospects were asked about their interest in the school, their capacity to give, and their willingness to give to the projects identified by the University as needing immediate attention. Cargill’s final report revealed the greatest interest in the five projects and willingness to give at the levels reflected in the campaign goals.

10. How will the Campaign goals be achieved?

The campaign goal of $4,850,000 will be raised through a series of constituency or group campaigns beginning with those most familiar with and most committed to the University mission and extending to those who do not know us as well. Each group has a dollar goal consistent with their level of interest and their capacity to give identified in the feasibility study. Planned gifts will come from individuals in the various constituency groups.

Boards (Regents, Foundation, Alumni Association) $1,350,000
Faculty/Staff $75,000
Alumni $800,000
Friends (Includes planned giving of $1,000,000) $2,025,000
Foundations and Corporations $600,000

11. Is the campaign for cash gifts?

Cash gifts are important for the success of the campaign but our focus will be on gifts given over time. By concentrating on multiple-year pledges alumni and friends of the University may be able to make a greater gift commitment and thus have a greater impact on achieving the critical mission goals. In addition to immediate and pledged gifts of cash some may find an advantage in giving appreciated real estate or stock. Planned gifts are also encouraged, especially to fund endowed scholarships for future students.

12. What is the suggested pledge period?

The suggested pledge period is three years. This time frame may help donors give a larger gift than they might in a single year while providing funding for the scholarships and needed upgrades to the campus and academic buildings in a timely manner.

13. What is a planned gift?

A planned gift is arranged in advance and actually given at some later time. These “deferred” gifts are often pledged through a donor’s will or in a trust. Certain trust options may provide tax advantages at the time the trust is established and income to the donor for one or more lifetimes. The most common planned gift is a provision in a donor’s will to give a specific amount or a set percentage of an estate to the college.

14. Has solicitation already begun?

Yes, gift solicitation began early in the planning phase of the campaign and has continued through the quiet phase presently raising more than $3,100,000 toward the overall campaign goal.

15. How long will the campaign last?

The balance of the campaign goal—$1,750,000—will be raised over the next year. During the first year—the Quiet Phase—campaign leadership was enlisted and both the Boards campaign and the Faculty/Staff campaign were conducted. The quiet phase also saw the beginning of the Alumni and Friends campaigns. By the end of the first year 65 percent of the goal has been raised. The Public Phase begins with a major “kick off” event in November 2013 and will conclude the Faculty/Staff and boards campaigns. Over the next year, the Alumni and Friends campaigns will be concluded and solicitations will be made to state and national foundations and corporations. We anticipate reaching or exceeding campaign goals by the end of the 2014 calendar year.