# PGSS ALUMNI GIVING STUDY

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# Abstract

According to sources reporting Online Charitable Giving statistics, response rates have dropped as low as $0.06\%$ as of 2017. Top strategies for increasing response rates and donation amounts include personalizing messages, including use of the subject's name as addressee, including information about past donations, suggesting personalized donation amounts and offering matching donations. For this study, we worked with PGSS, an organization that conducts STEM based summer enrichment programs with talented high school students. Two strategies that were compared were messages with a more emotional plea expressing a strong need, versus those with a newsletter-style message focusing on camaraderie and description of current group activities with pictures of PGSS engaged in current activities. Treatment comprised of an original plea letter followed by two reminders, one mid way and another 24 hours before the end of a 24 hours fundraising campaign. Donation response rate and amounts were analyzed. The study found evidence to support the hypothesis that plea letters and continued reminders provide better response rates and generated a total donation amount of $11,780 for PGSS.


# Introduction

The Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Sciences (PGSS) organization, based in Pennsylvania, conducts summer enrichment programs in the sciences and mathematics for talented high school students and provides instruction in biological sciences, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and computer science. The program is intended to encourage the students to pursue careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering or mathematics and to promote the involvement of under-represented minorities in STEM fields. The first PGSS session was held in year 1982.

The program, after being cancelled by the state in 2008, was reinstated by a group of PGSS alumni and parents in 2013. Currently the program is largely funded by the co-sponsor PGSS Campaign, Inc., and alumni, parents, and friends of the PGSS through an annual fundraising around November of every year. Without state funding, the program now supports about 56 students per year instead of about 90 students earlier.

Alumni engagement is key to the success of this program. According to the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (2013), engagement is defined as providing financial support to institutions as well as connecting alumni to institutions beyond graduation.

The alumni group is about 2,100 people. In accordance with fundraising the potential donors are classified in these ways:

1. LYBUNTs: donors who donated Last Year But Unfortunately Not This Year
2. SYBUNTs: donors who donated Some Year But Unfortunately Not This Year
3. TY donors: donors who donated this calendar year until the campaign (until 24th July 2018)

4. Never donors: alumni who have never donated before

PGSS conducts an annual fundraising challenge every year in November. It runs for 14 days where each alumni class competes against other classes. A class champion is assigned from each class and this agent reaches out to the group on a daily basis, updating about money raised so far, additional needed, tidbits about the competition, etc. PGSS management has explained that reminders are essential for donation encouragement and that most of the donations for the annual campaign come in the first or the last day. This is also line with other research on fundraising that adding a personal touch (contacted by someone in your own class) and sending reminders encourage donations.

As there were no similar experiments run in the past, this initiative is a first and there were no past studies to reference nor past outcomes to observe. There were many aspects that were interesting to research, but the team narrowed down on effectiveness of treatment messages as the main topic after evaluating feasibility of other related topics. Some assumptions were made and these will be stated as and when relevant and feedback from PGSS on previous non-experimental fundraising campaigns were taken into account in this experimental design.

# Experimental Design

The experiment is an A/B split test implemented through a one-week long fundraising campaign from 7/25/2018 4PM PST to 8/1/2018 midnight. The entire alumni group of about 2,100 alumni will be split into 2 groups: split A and B. The treatments are fundraising email messages with differences in attitude: one of the messages will make a personal appeal and express a need for funding while the other message would be more 'positive' and will request contributions but without explicitly expressing a funding challenge. The content of the message and the subject lines will differ. Each group will also get a reminder message half way into campaign as well as 24 hours before the end of the campaign. These reminder messages have the same email subject and content for both splits and do not provide separate treatments.

Although timing of the messages were key, research outcomes on whether weekdays or weekends or mornings or evenings vary, and these also change as browsing pattern change with devices. While desktop users typically checked their emails in the mornings or evenings, with tablets and mobiles the browsing patterns are changing. Some research suggests that while there are higher open and click rates on weekends, the conversion rates are much lower. However, as there has been no study on this particular alumni group or other alumni organizations, we decided on the following approach:

1. Send first original message on weekday evening (two splits get different messages)
2. Send reminder 1: weekend morning (both splits get same message)
3. Send reminder 2: weekday evening (both splits get same message)

### Split A original message:

This treatment group will receive an email with a detailed message from Benjamin Campbell, Alumni, TA and faculty for many years (1997 and 1999+), VP of PGSS Campaign on how the program benefited him and how the program is now unable to support as many students due to lack of funding. The email will encourage the alumni to donate so that the program can run at full capacity again. As he has been a faculty in 1997 and every year since 1999, most of the alumni know him personally.

Subject of the email was "PGSS Funding Needs: Request for your help" and the sender of the email will be "Heidi Malin", Executive Directory of PGSS. At the end of the email is a call-to-action donation

button with the text “Secure the future of PGSS now”, clicking on which would take the donor to a donation page. Each email was addressed to the first name of the recipient. Actual email contents are in Appendix A.1.

### Split B original message:

This treatment group will receive an email with an update on the program and some highlights from this year from PGSS Executive Director Heidi Malin. The email was in a newsletter format included an update about the current PGSS session that started first week of July 2018 and also about the launch of a new summer fundraising aimed at making PGSS self sufficient without crisis fundraising. Subject of the email was “PGSS Program update: Request for your help” and included a picture of students actively working on projects. At the end of the email is a call-to-action button named “Donate Now” that took the recipient to the donation page. Each email was addressed to the first name of the recipient. Actual email contents are in Appendix A.2

### Reminders messages:

The content of the reminder messages are the same for both splits.

First reminder text:

Firstname,

We had a goal of at least 50% alumni participation in this campaign, but we are not close to that number yet. Please donate today, to help us reach this goal and fund our next students in the PGSS program. Please note that this donation will count as AAC participation as well.

- All of us at PGSS Campaign, Inc.

Actual email contents are in Appendix A.3

Second reminder text:

Firstname,

Our current fundraising campaign ends in the next 24 hours. If you have already donated during this campaign, we thank you for your support. If you have not already donated this week, please consider making a donation before EOD 8/1/2018, when this campaign will end. Your donation will help support and fund our next students in the PGSS program. Participation in this campaign will be counted as participation in AAC 2018.

- All of us at PGSS Campaign, Inc

Actual email contents are in Appendix A.4

# Implementation

This section talks about the specifics of the implementation.

## Timeline

Below is the timeline of the study:

| **Milestone** | **Estimated date** |
|---|---|
| Sign NDA, get access to data | 7/19/2018 |
| Analyze existing data and prepare for experiment (compose emails, calculate volumes for each group, availability of covariates in the data) | 7/23/2018 |
| Approval from PGSS management on prepared material | 7/24/2018 |
| Pre-production test (email content, randomization, missing values in DB). May require test subjects to be created in the DB | 7/24-7/25/2018 |
| Experiment launch: Send emails to potential donors of both groups | 7/25/2018 4PM PST |
| Send follow up email to all potential donors | 7/29/2018 7AM PST |
| Campaign end | 8/1/2018 midnight |

PGSS uses Salsa, a fundraising software tool to manage its database of donors (Salsa CRM), send emails and track responses (Salsa Engage). Access to this environment was provided to us, enabling us to create and publish email messages and to view outcomes of these emails. The PGSS team supported with any requests on donor profiles like previous contributions and other covariates required.

## Randomization:

Salsa has a built-in splitting algorithm used for a Split test to randomly split a population into two groups and send two separate emails. When such a split test is performed, this randomization will be used to split the entire SYBUNT population into two groups

## Messages and audience:

Original messages were composed in Salsa, approved by PGSS management and published using the split test functionality to all donors who were not unsubscribed to fundraising emails. Salsa did not have an automated facility to send a reminder email to a campaign audience based on their splits, so reminders were composed separately and sent to the donor list.

### Separating experiment outcomes from other donations:

A separate donation page was set up by PGSS to track the outcomes of these emails and to segregate any other contributions that may come in during this time.

### Outcome data and PII considerations:

The Salsa platform provides two CSV reports after each email. The first is a file with list of all recipients and includes fields such as demographics, when they opened the email, whether the email bounced, etc. The second CSV file is of conversions that include only alumni who donated and will include click date, donation date, amount, frequency (one time or recurring, etc). Any reports generated including PII such as name and email address and these were deleted from the data prior to our analysis. A constituent id was used to analyze the data and join multiple datasets.

# Data Analysis

Below sections contain data analysis and distributions.

### Randomization checks

Of the 2,110 alumni, 1055 were placed into each split. Due to email bounces , the Split A emails were delivered to 1,053 and split B to 1,054 alumni. Note from the below table that the main pre-treatment variables of interest are well-balanced across the two splits. The randomization is successful.

| | **Split A** | **Split B** |
|---|---|---|
| # Emails | 1053 | 1054 |
| Average # donations (historic) | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| Avg prev donation | $86.08 | $89.64 |
| # LYBUNTs | 298 | 289 |
| #SYBUNTs | 226 | 214 |
| # Never donators | 522 | 542 |
| #TY donations | 7 | 9 |

## Definition of outcome and treatment variable

We define treatment as 1 if the message received is split A (Ben's message) and as 0 when the message received is Split B (newsletter). As the email subjects differ, delivery of an email (without bouncing or unsubscribing) is considered as a treatment delivered.

The key outcome variables of interest are:

1. Donation response (1/0): whether an alumni donated any time during the campaign
2. Donation amount ($): total generated gift amount

## Outcome distributions

In the sections below we look at the outcomes: from how often emails were opened to how much money was raised.

### Email open, click and conversion rates:

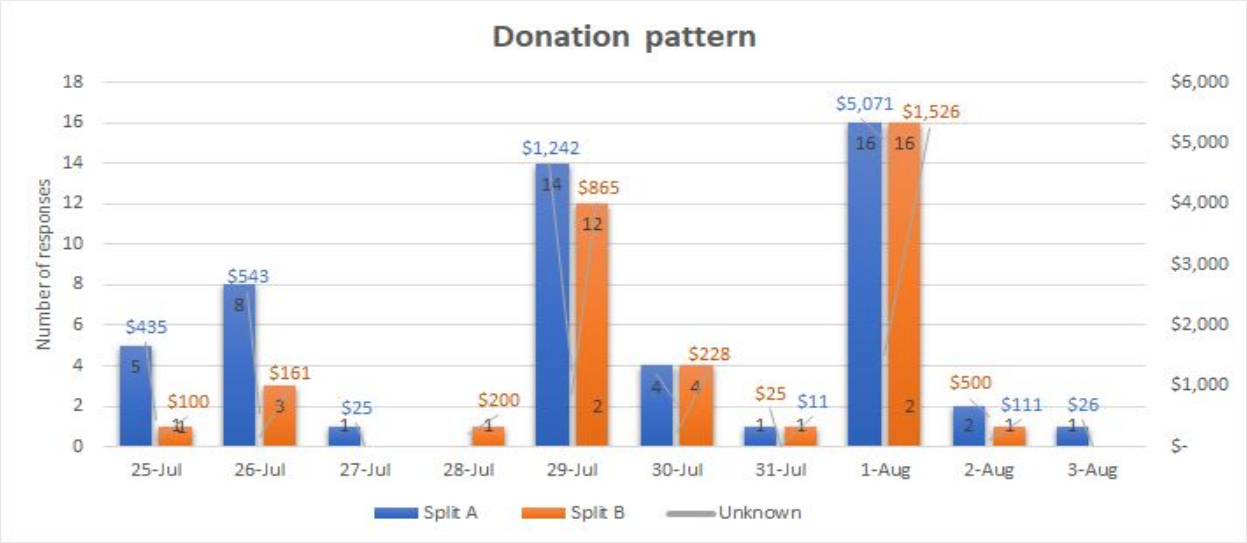
We define that a delivered email is a treatment delivered. Less than 50% of the audience opened any given email. Split A original message is opened slightly more often than split B (44% vs 39%). However with only 7 and 17 emails opened from each split, the outcome volume is not very high.

| **Name** | **Open rate** | **Click rate** | **Conversion rate** | **# Donations** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Split B | 38.18% | 1.23% | 0.57% | 7 |
| Split A | 44.10% | 3.14% | 2% | 17 |
| Reminder 1 | 44.41% | 3.00% | 1.76% | 37 |
| Reminder 2 | 32.3% | 2.52% | 1.62% | 34 |

### Donation amount by day:

This experiment generated a total contribution of $11,780.61 from the alumni.

Donation amounts spike with each email trigger but the effect of each trigger fades off quickly. Initial donations started falling off after 24 hours, peaked again when first reminder was sent and then peaked again when second reminder was sent. This indicates that reminders also have a significant role in promoting action and response and possibly a good predictor to add in later regressions.




As we can see, on 8/1/2018 while the donation volumes are the same (16 donations per split), the amount collected is over $5,000 for split A while it is $1,526 for Split B. This is because of two higher $ contributions from split A (one for $2000 and another for $1500). Thus modeling only for donation amounts alone is not sufficient as it can possibly be overstated due to the effect of outliers.

## Check for bad controls

As reminders are activities post the original email, adding indicators for opening reminders may be post outcome variables and thus bad controls. A regression analysis on an indicator for whether a person opened the original email against whether they opened one or more reminders is conducted to check whether the reminder controls are bad. The outcomes shown in the table below show that there is no significant impact of the message itself in opening any reminder and reminders are determined to be not bad controls.

| | Dependent variable: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Opened Reminder 1 | Opened Reminder 2 | Opened any reminder |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Split | 0.017 | -0.002 | 0.015 |
| | (0.022) | (0.020) | (0.018) |
| Constant | 0.429*** | 0.306*** | 0.225*** |
| | (0.015) | (0.014) | (0.013) |
| Observations | 2,104 | 2,099 | 2,099 |
| R2 | 0.0003 | 0.00001 | 0.0003 |
| Adjusted R2 | -0.0002 | -0.0005 | -0.0002 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Residual SE | 0.496 (df = 2102) | 0.461 (df = 2097) | 0.423 (df = 2097) |
| F Statistic | 0.634 (df = 1; 2102) | 0.012 (df = 1; 2097) | 0.663 (df = 1; 2097) |
| Note: | | *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 | |

## Non-compliance

As the two treatments in this study were e-mail messages presenting requests for donation with different attitudes or perspectives, compliance was expected to equate to opening and reading the received message. However, given that the subject line of these two different messages were actually different, and upon receiving a message our test subjects presumably read these subject lines prior to opening the messages, the subject lines themselves constitute a partial treatment. As such, it will not be possible to classify subjects who did not open the treatment messages as non-compliers.

## Treatment effects

### Regressions

We calculate the treatment effects through multiple regressions. Since we have two types of outcome variables, a 0/1 donation response and a continuous donation amount, we use a logistic regression and a linear regression. Below is the set of variables defined as potential covariates to be used in our regressions.

Regressions are conducted manually instead of an automated stepwise regression. Below are the effects of interest:

1. Effect of the original message on donation response
    a. This is the effect prior to sending reminders and is captured through a logistic regression without any other covariates and is captured in the first column in the table below
2. Effect of combined treatment and other covariates on donation response
    a. This is the effect of original email and the reminders together on donation indicator captured through a logistic regression. Other covariates that may influence donation or response to treatment are included and is captured in the second column in the table below.
3. Effect of combined treatment and other covariates on donation amount
    a. This is the effect of original email and the reminders together on donation amount captured through a linear regression. Other covariates that may influence donation or response to treatment are included, and is captured in the third column in the table below.

As seen in the below summary table, original treatment email has a significant effect on response. As shown from the **Donated anytime** logistic regression column, the most significant effects on donation response were the indicator of opening at least 1 reminder, the **SYBUNT indicator** and the **LYBUNT indicator**. Of these, the largest effect, 2.344 (0.397) is associated with the **LYBUNT indicator**, followed by that of the **SYBUNT indicator**, 1.449 (0.448) and finally the **Opened at Least One Reminder** indicator. The **Donated this year pre treatment** indicator has a larger effect than these others, 2.424 (1.446), although it is less statistically significant.

The effects associated with the two donation history indicators (LYBUNT, SYBUNT) and the one indicating prior donation this year, far outweigh the effect associated with the treatment, and give a indication that alumni response to fundraising is most strongly dependent on past behavior. This points to a potential opportunity in segmented fundraising campaigns, with different types of messages per donation segment, each designed to trigger the greatest response from each segment.

The **Opened at least 1 Reminder** indicator, with effect 1.688 (0.243), is a demonstration of the known behavioral tendency of donors, to make their donation toward the end of a fundraising campaign. While the reminder messages in this experiment were not segmented across the two treatments, the above donation history indicators are clearly the strongest effects, and might suggest additional gains to be made with reminders. In the case of a segmented fundraising campaign it may be worth sending reminder messages that include some content to tie them back to the original, segmented fundraising email message.

In this regression, the **Treatment** is shown to have an even stronger effect, 0.696 (0.332), than in the regression for immediate donation, with no other indicator variable terms, and finally donors' **PGSS age** or how long ago they participated in the program has a less functionally significant and less statistically significant effect, 0.029 (0.015). The **Treatment** effect shows that a fundraising nudge or trigger has a positive effect, which is good news for fundraising since it supports the value of reaching out to donors. The **PGSS age** effect is one that, along with the **SYBUNT** and **LYBUNT** indicators, shows that donation response is dependent on attributes of donors, which might be used for segmented campaigns.

The final column of the below table lists effects on the donation amount. By far the largest of these is the indicator that a donor **Donated this year pre treatment**, 97.684 (37.167). This would suggest that the donors who will make the greatest contributions are those who have contributed within the recent past. Other terms characterizing donors' prior donation effect on current donation amount, **Gift Count** and **Last Gift Amount**, have smaller but significant effects -1.488 (0.646) and 0.064 (0.006). The first of these suggests that donors who contribute regularly, perhaps via scheduled donations, are less likely to respond to fundraising campaigns. These are the donors who may be best counted on for continued support, so there may be less need to reach them with a fundraising campaign. Finally, the effect associated with the **Last Gift Amount** indicates that those donors that do contribute will contribute an amount proportional to their last gift. This is a much smaller effect than any other in this regression.

One set of effects that are not significant but still worth examining are those for the **Treatment/{Ben Years}** interaction term. This term captures the interaction between the treatment and the indicator of Ben Campbell's association with PGSS. This interaction shows a small but negative effect on response, -0.581 (0.404) and a much larger negative effect on donation amount, -10.612 (6.940). Again, these effects are not significant, but might suggest that there are gains to be made with emotional appeals to those who pre-date Ben's time with PGSS.

**Response / Donation Amount effects**

| | Immediate donation | Donated anytime | Total donation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | OLS | logistic | OLS |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| **Treatment (A)** | 0.009** | 0.696** | 10.299* |
| | (0.005) | (0.332) | (5.271) |
| **Opened at least 1 reminder** | | 1.688*** | 9.830** |
| | | (0.243) | (4.713) |
| **PGSS age** (year-1982) | | 0.029* | 0.119 |
| | | (0.015) | (0.255) |
| **Last gift amount** | | -0.00001 | 0.064*** |
| | | (0.0002) | (0.006) |
| **Treatment/{Ben Years}** | | -0.581 | -10.612 |
| | | (0.404) | (6.940) |
| **SYBUNT Indicator** | | 1.449*** | -4.260 |
| | | (0.448) | (5.255) |
| **LYBUNT Indicator** | | 2.344*** | 6.946 |
| | | (0.397) | (5.434) |
| **Donated this year pre treatment** | | 2.424* | 97.684*** |
| | | (1.446) | (37.167) |
| **Gift count** | | 0.021 | -1.488** |
| | | (0.022) | (0.646) |
| Constant | 0.007** | -6.141*** | -5.749 |
| | (0.003) | (0.493) | (5.254) |
| Observations | 2,110 | 2,098 | 2,098 |
| R2 | 0.002 | | 0.068 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.002 | | 0.064 |
| Log Likelihood | | -291.085 | |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | | 602.171 | |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.106 (df = 2108) | | 89.116 (df = 2088) |
| F Statistic | 4.219** (df = 1; 2108) | | 17.050*** (df = 9; 2088) |

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

## Additional tests

As treatment is a combination of original emails and reminders, in addition to the regressions above where treatment was shown to be significant, we can also perform additional tests to confirm the effect of just the original emails.

### T-test for treatment effect

A t-test comparing donation rates after the first original email prior to reminders between split A and B shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the response rates of the two splits. This is a two-sided test and tests whether the response rates are different. The results show that the difference of 0.0113 response rate is statistically significant and has a rather wide 95% confidence interval of [0.007 , 0.016]. Below is the formatted t-test output:

| **Component** | **Value** |
|---|---|
| t | 4.9259 |
| df | 2109 |
| p-value | 9.05e-07 |
| Alternate | true mean is not equal to 0 |
| 95% Confidence interval | 0.006846063 , 0.015902752 |
| Estimate (mean of difference) | 0.01137441 |

#### *An alternate approach: excluding never-takers*

An alternate way to look at the effect of just the original response is to analyze only the alumni who opened the first email. This requires a temporary view of compliance as opening the first email, and this is a test to see if excluding never takers increases power of the test. Our hypothesis that Split A message from Ben has a higher response rate effect is confirmed with this approach as well.

| **Component** | **Value** |
|---|---|
| t | 4.9659 |
| df | 859 |
| p-value | 8.249e-07 |
| Alternate | true mean is not equal to 0 |
| 95% Confidence interval | 0.01687701, 0.03893694 |
| Estimate (mean of difference) | 0.02790698 |

### Proportion comparison test

We can also run a two sample proportion comparison test to see if split A has a higher response rate than B. We do this using ‘prop.test’ in R. Output below confirms that split A shows evidence of higher response rate than B with statistical significance.

2-sample test for equality of proportions with continuity correction

| **Component** | **Value** |
|---|---|
| data | Success:(17, 7), Pop: (1053, 1054) |
| X-squared | 3.4225 |
| p-value | 0.03216 |
| Alternate | greater |
| 95% Confidence interval | 0.0009547021 , 1.0000000000 |
| Estimates | prop 1: 0.016144349 (split A)<br>prop 2: 0.006641366 (split B) |

## Limitations

### Sampling Bias

The research question in this study involved the comparative response rates and donation amounts by PGSS alumni in response to two different types of treatment messages. Based on this, the subject population to receive a treatment were all PGSS alumni who were registered in the Salsa CRM database and had not opted out of receiving email. As such, the study did not include supporters who do not receive fundraising email. Also, there are some supporters who donate via postal mail and as such may not have been as engaged by an email message with a online “donate” button as much as others. But, given the need for donor support and the Salsa system as the primary vehicle for reaching supporters, these main objective of this study was to evaluate the best type of message for motivating a donation by those alumni registered to receive such messages.

### Design

We define treatment as delivery of an email. However, do not have a way to check if a subject actually read an email’s subject line. A possible workaround for a future experiment is to keep the email subject consistent between the two messages so ‘open rate’ of emails could be used as a proxy for being treated. There could still be subjects who do not open the original email but open the reminders but keeping the subjects same can be a better placebo design so that the subject does not likely influence the open rate.

### External events

There was other communication from PGSS right before the campaign and during the campaign. Although they were not related to fundraising, the effect of other messages or frequency of messages have been not considered for this study.

### Power, sample size

As mentioned in www.benkuhn.net, donation response rates without matching can be assumed to have a $\mu = 0.01$. In this study we have a sample size of $n = 2100$. Given those figures and an example $\sigma = 0.002$, the available power to detect an increase of $0.001$ is $5.5\%$, which is not sufficient. For a power of $80\%$, we would need sample size $n = 6182559$.

Based on this limitation, there was insufficient power for estimation of the heterogeneous treatment interaction effects for the different covariates. An example involves the interaction between the treatment and the indicator for Ben Campbell involvement. Notice in the table above that this term does show an effect, but it is not statistically significant. It would be worthwhile to explore possibilities for experimental design to capture these sorts of HTEs, since this could provide valuable insight for fundraising strategy.

### Generalizability

The specific purpose of this study was to explore two different types of email messages for generation of donation responses via Salsa Engage. The treatment was randomized across alumni registered with Salsa Engage and opted-in to receive email messages. As such, alumni who have unsubscribed from receiving email were not included, nor those who may not be registered with the system at all. In order to generalize the results of this study across the entire alumni donor population, it would be necessary to support other types of fundraising messages that may be used by PGSS.

### Spillover

It is expected that potential spillover may result from interactions between donors who received treatment messages, when perhaps a treatment message was forwarded to another donor, who then clicked on the "donate" button of the forwarded message. Given the fact that the data analyzed above was generated specifically in reference to hyperlinks in the two treatment email messages, it is assumed that any resulting spillover would have reduced the estimated treatment effect.

### Long term effect: potential cannibalization

This study analyzes only immediate short term effect of this campaign. As participation in this study is considered as participation to the November annual fundraising campaign, the longer term effect and potential cannibalization (if any) can be seen only later this year after the end of the campaign.

# Future steps

The PGSS organization is excited about the possibilities of experiments that may be conducted in the future. Below are a few ideas (not exhaustive):

1. Repeat this experiment with same subject lines for split A and B (better placebo design)

2. Repeat this experiment but block by year or cluster by class (reduce spillovers, better suited for the hypothesis that older alumni may contribute higher than younger alumni)
3. Repeat the experiment next year when the alumni expects a summer fundraising (they are used to a November fundraising)
4. Experiment comparing personalized donation amounts based on previous donation vs standard amounts (vs none)
5. Experiment comparing rounded donation amounts vs non-rounded
6. Experiment that compares social media platform with traditional email/phone gift requests

# Appendix A. Treatment E-mail Messages

The email messages sent to subjects randomly selected to receive Split A or Split B are as follows.

## A.1 Split A: Ben Campbell Message

Email Subject Line:  PGSS Funding Need: A request for your help

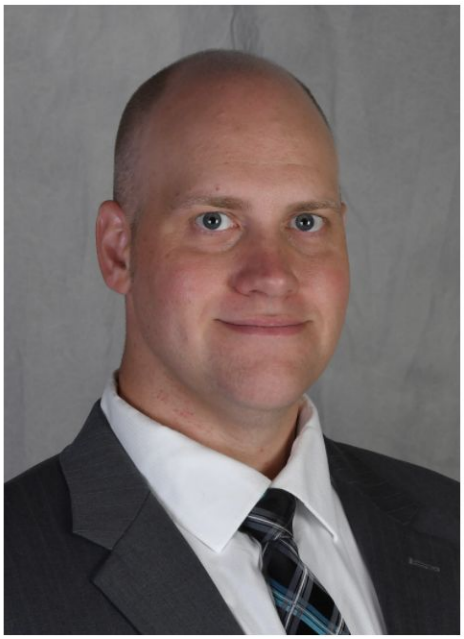
PGSS
Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Sciences

Walter,

In a world where scientific and technological advances have changed the way we live, communicate, interact and even think, young people need all the learning and growth opportunities we can give them. Since 1982, PGSS programs have been helping provide these opportunities and increase the future success of many students. Unfortunately, economic pressures of recent years have reduced the total number of participating students, further limiting the number of students experiencing the long-term impact of PGSS on their lives.

We need the total number of participating students to increase, not decrease.

For a perspective on this need and why it matters, please read the below message from Ben Campbell, PGSS Alumnus, TA and faculty for many years, VP of PGSS Campaign:



**Numbers inspire me.**

**The numbers 2676 and 648 inspire me to work for the PGSS Campaign. I am one of the 2676 PGSS alumni and know deeply how much the program impacted me. I've published research on the alumni and recent students, so I've personally seen the evidence that I was not alone in this life changing experience.**

**At the time of program cancellation in 2008, PGSS was serving 100 students each summer. In the four years it was shut down, 400 students were denied this life changing academic experience. In the six years it has been back, 248 more have been denied access due to underfunding holding our class size to 60 or less. I was nearly one of the 648 who will never know how close they came to being a Govie. I was an alternate. Out of the 90 students accepted in 1997, I was number 90+, and only made it into the program through the misfortune of someone ranked above me declining the academic opportunity they had been awarded.**

**I can't imagine how my path would have been different without PGSS. I often**
**think about the person who gave up their spot for me, and wonder if I ever met them what I would say beyond profuse thanks.**

**Every summer those two numbers change. I gauge the success of my efforts with the PGSS Campaign by them. This summer we are adding 56 to the alumni ranks, and 44 to list of lost opportunities. Those 44 students will never have**

**another chance to experience PGSS. I dream of a day when we once again run at full capacity, and only add to the alumni number. But that doesn't happen without support.**

*Ben Campbell, Ph.D.*
*Vice President of the PGSS Campaign*
*PA Governor's School for the Sciences 1997 PGSS TA 20002003*
*PGSS Faculty 2005  2008, 2013present*

If even 50% of our alumni helped support the program, we could offer opportunities to at least 44 more students next year. The picture to the right shows a past opening ceremony, with students quite happy to be accepted in the program. Let's commit to working together on offering opportunities to more students next year, so that in the future we can show a picture of a larger group, with 40 or 50 additional PGSS graduates.

This is a one week fundraising campaign, from 7/24 through 8/1.
Make a contribution that matters, today.

Secure the future of PGSS

**PGSS Campaign, Inc.**
161 West Hills Dr. | Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701
7245415828 | info@pgssalumni.org

# A.2 Split B: Newsletter Fundraising Message

Email Subject Line: PGSS 2018 Update and "Sunny Week of Giving" fundraising

PGSS
Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Sciences

## PGSS 2018

The 2018 Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Sciences Program is in full swing, having kicked off Sunday, July 1 with the traditional Opening Ceremony.

We are excited to share a few "firsts" in PGSS history with this year's Program.

For the first time, we have a mother / daughter faculty duo teaching biology - Drs. Carrie and Lynley Doonan. While Dr. Carrie Doonan has taught biology for quite some time, this is Dr. Lynley Doonan's first year. Those of you from PGSS 2006 may remember Lynley as a classmate; she also recently received her PhD from the University of Pittsburgh in Molecular, Cell and Development Biological Sciences. Carrie has been teaching biology and coordinating the Biology Team Projects at PGSS since 1998.

Also this summer, we accepted our first PGSS legacy student. Allison Chang is a rising high school senior at Upper Dublin High School. She is the daughter of Dr. Alan Chang, a 1988 Govie, who received his medical degree from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and is a physician with Doylestown Health Gastroenterology. Allison succeeded in her acceptance to PGSS just like all the other Govies, through a blind application process. It was only after Dr. Luokkala (and the committee) completed the application review that he was informed of her legacy status.

## SUNNY WEEK OF GIVING!

We need your continued philanthropic support to make PGSS self-supporting and to eliminate "crisis-fundraising" every year. We can no longer count on any substantial funding from the Governor's Office or the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide financial support and we seek the contributions from alumni, parents and friends to support at least half of the program's annual costs (approximately $150,000).

The "Sunny Week of Giving" is a special summer fundraising effort we are running this year, so the program can build self-sufficiency. We invite you to show your support by making a gift donation to us any day in the **next 7 days before the fundraiser ends on midnight 8/1/2018.**

Participation in this campaign will be considered as participation towards the Annual Alumni Challenge. Please click on the "Show your support for PGSS" link below to make your tax-deductible contribution now to continue this remarkable, tuition-free experience to current and future students. Every dollar helps.

DONATE NOW

DONATE NOW

# A.3 Mid-Week Reminder Message

Email Subject Line: We need your support


First Name,

We had a goal of at least 50% alumni participation in this campaign, but we are not close to that number yet. Please donate today, to help us reach this goal and fund our next students in the PGSS program. Please note that this donation will count as AAC participation as well.

- All of us at PGSS Campaign, Inc.

DONATE NOW

# A.4 Final Day Reminder Message

Email Subject Line: Fundraising campaign ending in 24 hours…


First Name,

Our current fundraising campaign ends in the next 24 hours. If you have already donated during this campaign, we thank you for your support. If you have not already donated this week, please consider making a donation before EOD 8/1/2018, when this campaign will end. Your donation will help support and fund our next students in the PGSS program. Participation in this campaign will be counted as participation in AAC 2018.

- All of us at PGSS Campaign, Inc.

DONATE NOW