Philanthropy *company*

CASE Europe Annual Conference 2026

Welcome to CEAC26.

It's a pleasure to join colleagues and friends working to create opportunities for students, advance research and strengthen educational communities. At Philanthropy Company we support schools, colleges and universities to build relationships and fundraising strategies to bring institutional ambitions to life. A commitment to education and the difference made through teaching, research, student experience and outreach sit at the heart of our work. The coming days of the conference offer us all an opportunity to share experiences, explore ideas and learn together. We look forward to the conversation with you.



Credit: Binns Tower - National Trust for Scotland

Highlights

01 Family philanthropy

02 Schools & Universities

03 University of Glasgow

04 Philanthropy in Place

Where to find us at CEAC26

We would love to see you at the sessions featuring our clients and consulting team (including alumni). You can also find us at Booth 18, so do come and say hello.

Key Track - From Campus to Common Room: Lessons in Development Across Sectors

Speaker(s): Frances Wheare, Director of Development and Social Impact, The Dragon School, Ed Margetson, Director of Development, Gresham's School, Emma Lacroix, Director of Development, George Watson's College.

Tuesday 10 November 2026 | 2:45pm - 3:45pm

Campfire - Overcoming Principal and Major Gift Challenges: 5 Lessons We've Learned from Leading Major Campaigns, and How You Can Apply Them to Your Fundraising

Speaker(s): Francesca Hewitt, Senior Campaign Advisor, Courtauld Institute of Art, Tess McCormick, Development Director and Fellow, Mansfield College, University of Oxford.

Tuesday 10 November 2026 | 4:00pm - 5:00pm

Roundtable - Principal Giving in Emerging Contexts: Building Big Gift Culture at Newer Institutions

Speaker(s): Victoria Kent, Director of Alumni & Philanthropy (Strategy, Governance & Engagement), Northumbria University Newcastle; Heather Gelles-Ebner, Senior Consultant, Philanthropy Company.

Tuesday 10 November 2026 | 4:00pm - 5:00pm

Roundtable - From Playing Fields to Philanthropy: Unlocking the Power of Sport in Education

Speaker(s): Andrew Thomas, Development Director, St Hilda's College, University of Oxford, Sarah-Kate Roberts, Head of Philanthropy and Communications, Cambridge University Boat Club, Gordon Cox, Director, Academic & Education, Philanthropy Company.

Wednesday 11 November 2026 | 9:30am - 10:30am

Elective - Endowment as a Forever Gift: Reframing Donor Relationships for Education

Speaker(s): Robert Fleming, Director of Development, University of St Andrews, Glen Whitehead, Development Director, St John's College, Cambridge, Gordon Cox, Director, Academic & Education, Philanthropy Company, Frances Shepherd, Director of Development and Alumni at the University of Glasgow.

Wednesday 11 November 2026 | 3:30pm - 4:30pm

Elective - Guardians of Heritage: Fundraising for Arts, Museums and Historic Collections in Universities and Schools

Speaker(s): Margaret Clift, Assistant Principal (Advancement), Heriot Watt University, Caroline Underwood OBE, CEO, Philanthropy Company, Ali MacLeod, Head of Fundraising, National Trust for Scotland, Eléonore de Sibert, Director of Advancement, The Courtauld Institute of Art.

Thursday 12 November 2026 | 9:30am - 10:30am



Family philanthropy, fresh perspectives

Family philanthropy is changing, but personal connections remain at its heart. Drawing on a Mansfield College roundtable, Gordon Cox, Director, Academic & Education, explores how family offices, younger generations and women are reshaping giving. Behind every structure are people whose values and ambitions shape their decisions. As structures become more sophisticated, how can fundraisers build trust, engage families and prepare for transformational support? His reflections offer practical advice on developing family donor relationships, understanding motivations and creating partnerships that last across generations.

Read article



Philanthropy Company Team



Schools and Universities: What can they teach each other about fundraising? Gemma McPhail, Associate Director

UK education fundraising is increasingly defined by two contrasting dynamics. The IDPE (advancement association for schools) has just released its 2026 Benchmarking Report. This shows strong development delivery despite operational pressures. Schools are achieving £3.6 raised for every £1 spent; philanthropy now contributes 6% of total income. Giving days continue to outperform traditional events. Donor behaviour is shifting: 72% of offices now have more than 10% of donors giving monthly. Leadership engagement is rising. The best-performing schools are strengthening recurring giving and participation while recognising the ROI of major gifts.

Universities are delivering high-value but concentrated growth. CASE's latest Insights report shows £1.55bn in new philanthropic funds committed in 2024–25. Yet this is less than 3% of total income to the sector, and success leans heavily on principal gifts: the top three donations account for 31.6% of new funds, fewer than 1% of alumni gave, and advancement teams face capacity pressures.

The challenge ahead lies in bigger universities finding a way to adopt the agility, community resonance and donor experience focus you might also find in smaller communities like Oxbridge colleges and specialist institutions, and for schools to learn from universities' track record in higher-value transformative giving.

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The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Fundraising Feasibility Study

Scotland's oldest public museum wanted to understand its readiness for significant philanthropic support.



01 Feasibility study

Our feasibility study tested donor appetite and organisational readiness.

02 Cases for support

Two connected cases for support: one for internal institutional priorities and one to inspire external donors.

The result was a realistic picture of the opportunity, with clear recommendations and next steps to guide future decisions and donor engagement.

Read the full case study



Confident Fundraising

How can charities build fundraising confidence when resources are stretched? Flora Craig, Director, Charities, draws on her experience in charity leadership and grant-making to explore the value of practical support, honest conversations and strong partnerships. She highlights why clear purpose and good governance remain essential foundations for successful fundraising.

Read the full article



Philanthropy in Place

What inspires people to give back to the places that shaped them? Caroline Underwood OBE, CEO, explores how philanthropy rooted in place can bring universities, donors and communities together. From civic partnerships to local regeneration, she considers the role higher education can play in creating meaningful, lasting change led by communities themselves, building on their local strengths.

Read the full article

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