**Suggested Outline for a Proposal   
UW Medicine Advancement**

**Use a proposal when:** You are ready to ask a specific person to support a specific goal.

**Before you write, some guidelines:**

* KEEP IT SIMPLE: Prioritize your core ideas. Be an information snob and only include the best, most powerful information.
* AVOID JARGON: Does it sound like a regular person talking? Can an intelligent layperson (no science background) quickly understand the text without a lot of effort? Target writing for a 9th grade reading level or lower (or reading ease: 55 or higher).
* PRIORITIZE CONNECTION: Find ways to validate your donors’ thoughts and feelings about themselves and the issue. Avoid including a lot of statistics and data, which create emotional distance. Speak directly to the donor (use the “you” pronoun a lot).
* BE DONOR CENTRIC: Write for your donors, not for internal audiences. Emphasize how donors can help solve a larger problem. Start with the donor need for meaningful impact and work backward to reveal how we can help meet that need with a specific program, center or initiative.

**DIRECT ADDRESS / PERSONAL LETTER**

* If applicable, thank the donor for their previous generosity to UW Medicine or to the field/issue.
* Recognize their personal connection to the issue and their dedication/commitment to the issue.
* Acknowledge shared values and commitment.
* Ask them to consider this new philanthropic opportunity — highlighting the potential impact of their support.

**THE BIG BOLD VISION (e.g., “The end of – insert disease -”)**

* Define the enemy (disease, health inequities, etc.).
* Convey the impact of the issue on real people (instead of stats, think emotional stories).
* Consider adding a story that can be told in a couple sentences or a quote (either in the body or in a sidebar). It could be a patient who has benefited or who could potentially benefit. It is even better if your story isn’t resolved — there is room for the donor to provide resolution with their gift. [Browse online](https://www.acceleratemed.org/stories/) for story, anecdote and quote ideas.
* Set the big, bold vision (e.g., end of a disease) and ask for a commitment right away — invite the donor to help us achieve that vision.

**UW MEDICINE / WHY US?**

What are we doing that’s so uniquely wonderful?

How does this project work to correct or increase understanding of healthcare disparities?

Keep the focus on what will happen when the work is done (**IMPACT**) — not on what we do or how we do it.  
(Need help? Pretend the project, program, idea disappeared tonight. What will the world lose?)

**THE URGENCY / WHY NOW?**

What’s the big hurry? What changed? Why is this URGENT?

**AN URGENT PHILANTHROPIC OPPORTUNITY / WHY YOU?**

* Why is this donor specifically perfect for the opportunity at hand? How does this giving opportunity speak to their sense of self and align with their values?
* Explain the opportunity:
  + Give the donor a big job to do: We’re at point A, we need them to get to point B (our big, bold vision).
  + Give them a purpose: What is at stake for people in our community if they don’t give?
* Frame specific giving opportunities within the context of the big, bold vision (how will each investment get us closer to point B). You may want to include request amounts after descriptions or use a budget table, but try to avoid inserting a laundry list of items with corresponding price tags.
* Consider talking about recognition opportunities, as appropriate. (Donor relations can help.)

**JOIN US IN THIS BIG BOLD VISION (e.g., “Help us end cancer”)**

* Call to action: How they are needed to reach our big, bold vision.
* Include contact person, email and phone.
* Thank them for their consideration of the opportunity and for being an amazing human (e.g., for their “resolve,” “leadership,” “commitment to improving lives,” etc.)

**FACULTY MEMBER (OPTIONAL)**

* List the person’s name, degrees, titles and a little about their relevant-to-the-proposal interests.
* Put in a head shot.

**STORIES, ANECHDOTES and QUOTES (OPTIONAL)**

* Tell a story related to the project. It could be a patient who has benefited or who could potentially benefit. Consider “unresolved” stories that leave room for the donor to provide resolution with their gift.
* Consider using part of a story or a quote.
* [Browse online](https://www.acceleratemed.org/stories/rapid-response-to-covid-19/) for story, anecdote and quote ideas.

**ANNEX (OPTIONAL)**

* Detailed scientific information, statistics, launch timelines or any other details that are important to your faculty to convey can go here.