

Making 'Moo-lah'

A creatively conceived fund-raiser at the Tippie College of Business combines a bovine theme with an alumna's school spirit.

With b-school budgets bursting at the seams

to accommodate new programs, quality faculty, and top-notch facilities, it makes sense for a business school to get creative in its fund-raising efforts. The University of Iowa's Tippie College of Business in Iowa City, for one, has tapped an unusual source for a fund-raising campaign: a cow named "Tippie."

The idea for the campaign came about when Valerie Miller, a local artist and 2003 marketing graduate of the school, had an unusual idea: Search nearby pastures for the perfect cow, dub the cow "Tippie," and use the bovine as the inspiration for art prints to be sold to benefit her alma mater. As the owner of Steel Cow Gallery in Waukon, Iowa, Miller uses cows as her primary inspiration, painting them individually in acrylic and setting them against brightly colored backgrounds.

The lighthearted campaign suits not only the school, but also its benefactor, says Curt Hunter, dean of the Tippie College. "Considering that Henry Tippie grew up on an Iowa dairy farm, it seems appropriate that we have this opportunity," he says.

Miller created one of her "Mini Moo" seven-inch-square prints specifically for the campaign. "I wanted to give something back to the University of Iowa and the Tippie College," says Miller, who is donating 50 percent of the sale price of 5,000



Valerie Miller, a 2003 graduate of the Tippie College of Business, painting "Tippie," which is being sold as a limited edition print in a campaign to benefit her alma mater.

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cow-inspired limited edition prints to the Tippie College. She is selling the limited editions through her gallery at www.steelcowgallery.com. Prints on paper sell for \$39; prints on canvas sell for \$59.

So far, more than 50 prints have sold. More valuable than the proceeds of the print may be the buzz the campaign has generated so far—publications such as the *Des Moines Register* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* have covered the cam-

paign on a local and national scale.

Some may fear that such a whimsical campaign may have negative consequences for a business school, in that its programs may not be taken seriously. Hunter, however, isn't worried. He believes that the Tippie College has already established itself and its programs. The "Tippie" campaign adds a sense of humor to that reputation.

Such a promotion also highlights the value of alumni support to a business school, Hunter adds. After all, he says, it's the goal of every business school to have its alumni use the skills they acquired during their educations to succeed. It's even better when those alumni want to apply that same savvy to give back to their schools. 