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"It's like a big freaking fake circus": An exploration of intersectionality and women's experiences in higher education fundraising

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"It's Like a Big Freaking Fake Circus":

An Exploration of Intersectionality and Women's Experiences in Higher Education Fundraising

by

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Dedication

For my dear Auntie J… it's finally done!

Acknowledgements

My doctoral education was both a labor of love and the greatest test of self-discipline in my life to date. I somehow managed to get married, build a house, change jobs four times, and travel to numerous countries. I'm apparently really good at distractions. I don't recommend that approach. I thought about giving up. I got lost inside my own head and frankly didn't know if I could find my way out. There were lots of people in my life that offered encouraging words through this process, my husband, family, and friends. A special thank you to my husband for sharing the burden of paying for this degree. I think you would have rather traveled somewhere warm with those tuition dollars, but this project, for me, is genuinely a personal and professional triumph. I think I am better for it.

Thank you to my committee members and especially my chair and advisor Dr. Rema Reynolds. I think I'm officially a broken record when I say, "You came along at exactly the right time." You really did. You pushed me, you opened my mind, and you pointed me in new and interesting directions. When I was lost, you helped me find my path forward. I am eternally grateful for your guidance, friendship, candor, and critical approach to scholarship. The world is better because of the work that you do for children, always fighting for their best interests.

Last, but definitely not least, thank you to the women fundraisers that partnered with me on this project. I hope I did your stories justice. In the rough and tumble world of higher education fundraising, you bring humor, professionalism, political savvy, and friendship. Your commitment to making higher education more accessible to students from all walks of life re-emphasized my purpose for doing this work. Your energy sustained me throughout the writing process. I am thankful for you.

Abstract

Women in higher education fundraising navigate the broad forces of sexism and racism in society and their profession, a profession in which they are being paid less than their male counterparts and are under-represented in leadership roles, despite being the majority of fundraising professionals. This study provided a platform for women in higher education fundraising to tell their stories and to explain, in their own words, how they navigated a traditionally White patriarchal system of philanthropy, interacted with fundraising prospects and donors, and experienced the fundraising profession. The research questions included:

- What do women say are their lived experiences as higher education fundraisers?

- What are the perceptions of access to professional advancement (pay and promotion) amongst women in higher education fundraising?

- What do women see as their advantages and barriers in higher education fundraising practice?

- How do women perceive race as a mediator of the experiences of women in higher education fundraising?

Tenets of feminist research and a conceptual framework rooted in intersectionality framed the lived experiences of women in higher education fundraising. Of a qualitative design and utilizing the portraiture approach, this study explored the interplay of power and privilege as women navigate the landscape of higher education fundraising. This context included their institutions, colleagues and supervisors, and interactions with fundraising prospects and donors. Five individual portraits revealed women fundraisers that were tenacious, hard-working, and committed. They were savvy about their identities and disclosed frank observations regarding the possibilities of fundraising in higher education as well as the

unique challenges they faced as women in the profession. Women fundraisers described

feeling motivated by the difference they could make for their institutions and students, shared

the ways in which they tailored their personal performances and strategies to engage

prospective donors, and revealed the complexities of navigating fundraising organizations.

Advancement organizations, the researcher concluded, were encouraging women fundraisers

to fit a prototypical standard. The results of the study inform the strategies employed by

institutional advancement leaders as they support women in fundraising.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Historically, the practice of philanthropy in the United States of America was rooted in wealth, privilege and power. The ability to be philanthropic was a position of privilege often influenced and understood through the lens of White, wealthy cisgender men exercising their financial resources to support institutions and structures that replicate a beneficial social order (Drezner, 2011). While most communities regardless of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status have been philanthropic, the magnitude of influence varies greatly by who does the giving and the amount of money contributed to specific causes and initiatives within society (Drezner, 2011 & Zunz, 2012). In an era of declining resources for public universities, higher education institutions in the United States have turned greater attention to accessing the American colonial tradition of philanthropy to support their operations (Drezner, 2011; Drezner, 2013; Chan, 2016).

Interestingly, women make up the majority of the expanding workforce of fundraisers on campuses across the country charged with securing financial resources for public universities. While they are the majority of the workforce, they are paid less than their male counterparts and are less likely to ascend into leadership roles (Nathan & Tempel, 2017). As do women in broader society, women in fundraising experience racism, sexism, and a host of other "-isms" that affect their professional fundraising practice, relationships with colleagues and superiors, and opportunities for promotion (Conry, 1998; Gasman, Drezner, Epstein, Freeman & Avery, 2011). In this context, women in the profession must apply their own power and privilege to navigate a traditionally White, patriarchal model of fundraising to accomplish institutional fundraising goals.

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of women working in higher education fundraising and to understand how power and privilege impact their professional practice. What do women say are their lived experiences as higher education

fundraisers? What are the perceptions of access to professional advancement (pay and promotion) amongst women in higher education fundraising? What do women see as their advantages and barriers in higher education fundraising practice? How do women perceive race as a mediator of the experiences of women in higher education fundraising? Using a qualitative design, the portraiture approach, I applied a phenomenological lens to the lived experiences of women in higher education fundraising. Tenets of feminist research and a conceptual framework grounded in intersectionality, the recognition of multiple interlocking identities defined by relative sociocultural power and privilege, guided the collection and analysis of data collected through interviews with five women that work or have worked as major gift fundraisers at public, predominantly White institutions in the Midwest United States.

In the study, the stories of women fundraisers are depicted in individual portraits in which they share, frequently in their own words, the joys, challenges, and opportunities associated with their profession. They discussed the ways in which they leverage their various identities to succeed in fundraising. A thematic analysis revealed that women fundraisers were motivated by making a difference in the lives of others, found themselves conscious of their performances to cater to the perceptions and beliefs of prospective donors, and illuminated that navigating the advancement organization, even when dominated by women professionals, required challenging organizations grounded in patriarchy. An intersectional analysis underscored the marginalization that women of color faced at the intersection of race and gender in fundraising. It also revealed a set of prototypical and often contradictory standards for women fundraisers complicating their work both inside and outside of their organizations. Issues of race, gender, and politics with prospective donors were rarely discussed in formal strategy sessions and with supervisors. The results of this study provide higher education leaders, advancement

administrators, and fundraisers with a critical perspective on the higher education fundraising profession. The findings challenge the profession, leaders, and fundraisers to center women's experiences in order to think differently about the commodification of women fundraisers, lack of diversity amongst frontline fundraisers, interactions with prospective donors and donors, and the role of men to achieve women's equality.

Problem Statement

As we know it, the practice of philanthropy in the United States of America was rooted in privilege and power, meaning that, historically, White, wealthy cisgender men exercised the greatest amount of financial resources to support institutions and structures that replicate their own beneficial social order (Drezner, 2011). The scholarship around giving and volunteering in higher education has historically been devoid of identity, thereby focusing on White, heterosexual men, often wealthy donors and there has been no research on the philanthropy of non-normative gender identities, with cisgender being focus of prior research (Drezner & Huehls, 2015). Meanwhile, in the past few decades, women, people of color and LGBT individuals (and the overlapping intersections of these identities) have increasingly exerted more influence over philanthropic resources and challenged the replication and dissemination of wealth. This presents opportunities for fundraisers that are underexplored and under-researched.

Higher education fundraising is situated within this broader context of philanthropy in the United States. And, as external support of higher education decreases and the cost to educate a student rises, the need for private giving to maintain higher education's eminence and to increase access heightens (Drezner, 2015). To support fundraising efforts, a vast network of fundraising professionals has developed at higher education institutions across the country. The professional organization that represents educational fundraising professionals, the Council for the

Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), boasts a global membership of over 81,000 including fundraising, alumni relations, and communications staff all engaged in the act of securing resources for their institutions (2017). Demographically, the "feminization" of the fundraising and non-profit sector has resulted in a dramatic shift in the workforce with women holding the majority of fundraising positions (Association of Fundraising Professionals, 2017; Scott, 2017; Nathan & Tempel, 2017).

In higher education, women are the clear majority of campus fundraisers, while men hold most top fundraising leadership positions at colleges (Fundraising, 2010). The construct of a "glass ceiling" helps to conceptualize this phenomenon faced by women as they strive to assume formal leadership roles, though the concept is normed on White and middle-class standards (Dale, 2017). The phrase "glass ceiling" was coined to represent the "transparent but real barriers, based on discriminatory attitudes or organizational bias, that impede or prevent qualified individuals, including (but not limited to) women, racial and ethnic minorities, and disabled persons, from advancing into management positions" (Gibelman, 2000, p. 251). As in other professions, these barriers include explicit discrimination, perceptual biases, and family demands that have led women to opt out of the pursuit for formal leadership roles (Sampson & Moore, 2006). These same barriers have created an environment in which women are paid less in comparison to their male counterparts (Gibelman, 2000; Sampson & Moore, 2006). In 2015, the Association of Fundraising Professionals found the average salary of men in fundraising was $88,169 and for women the average salary was $69,134.

Women in fundraising navigate a traditionally patriarchal, racist system of wealth and philanthropy. In doing so, they are involved in a complicated exchange with this system wielding their own privilege and power to successfully raise funds for their institutions. It is not surprising

then that those realities have shaped inequities along the lines of pay and promotion within the fundraising profession. In her dissertation, Cleveland (2003) argues that higher education must now decide how to promote and pay women equitably or risk demoralizing the majority of the fundraising workforce. Fundraising managers, in particular, must assume responsibility for equity in the field if change is to occur (Kozobarich, 2000). The pay and promotion gap that exists between men and women, and the impact of these inequities on women, must be critically examined to ensure fair and equitable treatment in the practice of higher education fundraising. We must understand how women accomplish their work as fundraisers within this system, with donors and prospects, and within the context of broader society as the problem at hand is not simply one of fairness in the workplace. This study extended our understanding of the complexities faced by women when accepting, maintaining, exploiting, and/or challenging the nature of philanthropy to higher education and the system that supports that work.

Purpose & Nature of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of women working in higher education fundraising and to understand how power and privilege impact their professional practice. The study's primary research questions were as follows:

- What do women say are their lived experiences as higher education fundraisers?

- What are the perceptions of access to professional advancement (pay and promotion) amongst women in higher education fundraising?

- What do women see as their advantages and barriers in the practice of higher education fundraising?

- How do women perceive race as a mediator of their experiences in higher education fundraising?

A Definition of Terms

Development. A component of institutional advancement, development refers to the specific activity of raising funds and encompasses the process by which fundraisers secure private financial resources for use by the institution.

Development officer/gift officer. A development officer or gift officer is a professional charged with raising funds to support specific causes or organizations (Ryan, 2006). In the context of higher education, development officers are often assigned to academic colleges and departments, while some development officers are assigned regional or central assignments and raise funds for the entire institution's fundraising priorities.

Institutional advancement. Institutional advancement can be viewed as a cultural state of mind and a practical, operational structure in higher education. Worth (1993) described institutional advancement as an attitude of optimism and ambition that drives an institution's desire to grow and improve in a competitive environment (p. 5). Practically and within the context of this study, institutional advancement was defined as the inter-related functions of development/fundraising (used interchangeably in this dissertation), advancement services (donor records, gift receipting and prospect research), alumni relations, public relations, publications and, often times, marketing within a university operation (Acebo, 2008; Chan, 2016). This department acts as the primary interface with the institution's external constituency groups: alumni, parents, individual donors, corporations, foundations, and media outlets with the main purpose of raising funds from private sources in support of the institution and its operations (Acebo, 2008). This term was used interchangeably with university advancement.

Major gift fundraising/individual giving. Major gift fundraising is defined differently for organizations of different sizes and fundraising maturity (robust & wealthy prospect and

donor base and history of fundraising). Generally, an appropriate threshold for defining major gift fundraising is to determine the amount approximately five percent of the organization's donors can (and are likely to) give (Eisenstein, 2014, January 21). Another important distinction is the focus on major gift fundraising from individuals, primarily alumni, but also parents and non-affiliated individuals, referred to as individual giving. Fundraising from corporations, foundations, and other entities, and the professionals that do this work, was outside the scope of this study. Executive-level and major gift work are valued above all else, whereby fundraisers work with leadership volunteers and donors (often wealthy individuals and/or those with public prominence) to secure contributions ranging from the thousands to millions of dollars (Dale, 2017, p. 6).

Philanthropy. Philanthropy is a broad term that has shifted in meaning over time. Early definitions focused on philanthropy as a *motivator* of benevolence, whereas modern definitions of philanthropy signify *acts* of benevolence, generally understood to be the act of giving resources for larger public purposes (Sulek, 2010; Chan, 2016). Merle Curti first defined philanthropy as the love of man, charity, benevolence, humanitarianism, and social reform (Chan, 2016, p. 6). For the purposes of this study, philanthropy was conceptualized at its basic level: a reallocation of resources, often from an individual, corporation, or foundation to a population with less wealth than the donor or donors (Drezner, 2011).

Power & privilege. Using an intersectional lens, this study explored how the multiple, interlocking axes of identity of women in fundraising impact their fundraising practice by shaping their power and privilege. Power refers to the ability to influence or outright control the behavior of people (French, Raven, & Cartwright, 1959). Privilege is conceptualized as unearned benefits or advantages ascribed to individuals based on social identities.

Transgender/cisgender. Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from the cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth (Human Rights Campaign, 2017). The term cisgender is used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth (Human Rights Campaign, 2017).

Woman/women. At the outset, I believed it was important to operationalize the terms woman and women. Simone de Beauvoir (1949) challenged our understanding of woman; "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." This quote has been interpreted a number of different ways, but generally underscores the distinction between biologically assigned sex and socially constructed gender (Butler, 1986). In this study, when I referred to women, I considered individuals that identify as women in the workplace.

Whiteness. As racial categories are socially constructed, so are the identities of those being categorized. For White Americans, the set of assumptions, privileges, and benefits that accompany "being White" have become a valuable asset that Whites have sought to protect, to the degree that Whiteness is affirmed, legitimated, and protected by the law (Harris, 1993). Whiteness as property has taken on more subtle forms; but retains its core characteristic-the legal legitimation of expectations of power and control that enshrine the status quo as a neutral baseline, while masking the maintenance of White privilege and domination (Harris, 1993, p. 1715).

White patriarchy. The term patriarchy refers to an organization, institution, or society in which power, social control, material wealth, and high social status accrue predominantly to men rather than to women (Hill, 2009). Patriarchy is not simply a historical phenomenon, it refers to patterns that are present and pervasive throughout major social institutions including politics,

religion, and education (Hill, 2009). In this study, I used the phrase "White patriarchy" to depict a set of forces from which men, specifically White, heterosexual, cisgender men, derive power and privilege and leads to the marginalization of women, people of color, and LGBT individuals in society.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope of Study

The researcher. I am a White, educated upper middle-class development officer and doctoral student carrying an "invisible knapsack" with an immense amount of privilege (McIntosh, 2000). I am a beneficiary of the White patriarchy I seek to challenge and am, in many ways, in the position to conduct this study because of the unearned privileges provided to me throughout my lifetime. I am also the son of a farmer and grew up in a small, rural town in Michigan surrounded by White people that, generally, feared difference and preferred to remain in their bubble. It was not until I pursued my college education that I felt I found a place to stand, to explore my own identity, make friends that did not look like me, think like me or worship like me.

Throughout my four years of college, on a journey of what felt like self-discovery, I was trapped in a lie about myself. I thought I could convince myself, through denial and elaborate charades, that I was straight (heterosexual). I was fearful of what "being gay" would mean and the impact it would have on my life. In my reality at the time, it would limit my opportunities. I would go to hell. My family would reject me. A short while after I graduated from my undergraduate institution, emboldened by a percolating relationship with my first boyfriend, I started to reject these notions and came out–as his boyfriend, not as gay. I was still scared and convinced myself I could take it back. Headed to graduate school to study higher education and work in college admissions, I kept experimenting with the phrase, "I'm gay." Could I say it? Could I be it? Could I own it? I will never forget when a colleague, whom I confided in, said to

me, "You know, 'admissions' is an old boys' network. You should probably keep it [being gay] to yourself." It was a truly stunning moment that confirmed all my fears at the time, particularly at that stage in my own identity development. Luckily, parallel to this disheartening professional experience, I was coming out to my family and they were loving me harder, embracing me, and encouraging me to be myself. Our relationships were more genuine and authentic. And, as a I have said many times, the colors of my life became brighter and brighter.

I think it is important to share this story because it represents why I am writing this dissertation and why I am determined to help others feel safe, purposeful, and included in the workplace, particularly in higher education. Broadly, I am convinced that higher education institutions are of benefit to our society and can be transformative in cultivating the next generation of leaders and scholars. That said, I also believe they continue to replicate and manifest White supremacy, sexism, and heterosexism. After all, every human endeavor possesses imperfection and weakness (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016, p. 20). I write this dissertation from the vantage point that the status quo can be changed, that we can increase the capacity of higher education to be an engine of social justice. That we can create institutions that value diversity and inclusion, not in mission statements only, but in everyday practices and being. In this context, please accept this dissertation as a critique from its very inception. It was an attempt to challenge existing paradigms in institutional advancement, an aspect of higher education that is growing, important, transformative and yet under-researched. These were my biases upfront. I endeavored not to impose these views on or bracket the experiences of the women I interviewed, but I was not a distant researcher.

Considering positionality, gaze, and "mansplaining." In my professional life, I was familiar with some of the fundraisers interviewed for this study, while others I was meeting for

the first time but through a referral. This familiarity helped me gain access, build trust with the

participants, and sustained a deep passion for this project. Underlying this study was a sincere

belief that we, professionals in institutional advancement, can be champions for and generate

support for transformational change that makes higher education more accessible, inclusive, and

impactful. I want this profession to be better at fulfilling this purpose. It was important to

recognize my own position, the place that I occupied within this set of social relationships

(Leistyna, Woodrum, & Sherblom, 1996). As a professional peer of the women I interviewed, I

leaned heavily on our common understanding of fundraising practices to build trust and, in some

cases, existing relationships to facilitate open, trusting dialogues. There was risk associated with

this this strategy;

> As insiders it is easy to take-for-granted one's social proximity and the advantageous
>
> consequences this may have. It is important, however, to temper this with the realism that
>
> such status gives us, and our participants, greater access to our private selves. (Gangas &
>
> Scott, 2006, p. 2)

It was possible interviewees withheld some experiences for fear of being identified in the study,

even given every attempt to ensure anonymity. If they disclosed too much or shared critical

thoughts on specific leaders or donors, it could have threatened their livelihoods and professional

careers. Every reasonable effort was made to moderate these risks, up to and including removing

data and perspectives at the request of the interviewees, viewed as research partners. All

participants reiterated throughout our research partnerships that they understood the risks and

they were worth it to elevate the discourse around the experiences of women in higher education

fundraising.

Another limitation involved the intersection of my own social position and role as interviewer;

> One's position is the result of combining various social factors or identifiers including, but not limited to, race, sex, class, gender, ability, age, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, physical stature, education, occupation, relational status, language, etc. (Hearn, 2015, p. 6, 2015)

While I am a gay, I am also a White, cisgender man. I have simultaneously benefitted from the White patriarchy that I am exploring in partnership with the women I interviewed. In many ways, I leveraged my position as a member of the LGBTQ community, a marginalized identity, to build common ground, but strived never to equate marginalized experiences or make assumptions about those commonalities. This is the crux of intersectionality which I will discuss in greater depth in Chapter 2.

As a White man, the beneficiary of a social system that affirms my identity and imbues me with unearned privilege, it was particularly important for me to carefully consider *what I explain*, *why I explain it, and who I explain it to* within this dissertation. American novelist, editor, and teacher Toni Morrison expressed this notion in relation to what she calls the White gaze, the idea that the experiences of people of color only have meaning if told within the master narrative defined by White male life (hierospace, 2016). To speak to the essence of the Black American experience, Morrison consciously shed this imposed ideological script in her novels and focuses on the centrality of her race (hierospace, 2016). In the portraits that emerged from my research, I considered what scripts I imposed on the women's stories, recognized them, and challenged White gaze as well as the male gaze. In 1975, Laura Mulvey (1989) introduced the concept of male gaze to describe the way in which cinema simplifies women to be objects of

male pleasure. Acknowledging the societal scripts I might impose, I focused on co-creating with the women I interviewed multi-dimensional, nuanced depictions portraits of their lived experiences. The audience for this work included men and, at times, I shared details, concepts, and feelings that tend to be commonly understood between women, but not necessarily by men. The intent was by no means to condescendingly explain or "mansplain" the experiences of women in fundraising to women. It was to present their stories in enough detail to challenge common ways of knowing and experiencing the fundraising profession.

Assumptions & limitations. At the outset, I made three decisions that narrowed the scope of this study and should be disclosed. First, I strategically chose to conduct in-depth interviews with a relatively small group of participants, five women in higher education fundraising. The goal was to capture the nuanced richness and depth of lived experiences the women shared throughout the project (Reynolds, 2009). Second, all of the women I interviewed worked or have worked at predominantly White, public institutions in the Midwest, meaning there are inherent cultural similarities in their experiences. Given the small size of the sample, the findings are not generalizable to other women in fundraising at institutions across the United States (Miner-Rubino & Jayaratne, 2007). However, the study generated questions, future research directions, recommendations, and critiques that should be considered by institutional advancement leaders and scholars of all genders. Furthermore, this study operationalized tenets of feminist research and intersectionality as a lens to understand the experiences of women in higher education fundraising, a first in the field.

Finally, I used purposeful sampling techniques to ensure that the voices of women of color will be included in this study. The large majority of fundraisers are White, thus a random, snowball, or other sampling technique may have resulted in the exclusion of women of color.

Purposeful sampling allowed me to ensure that women representing a diversity of axes of

identity, specifically race, are included in this study. With purposeful sampling, researchers

deliberately seek to include "outliers" conventionally excluded by other techniques (Barbour,

2001). This was difficult. Scouring my professional network and asking for recommendation

from peers, quickly revealed how few women of color work in major gift fundraising in higher

education. Despite my best efforts, the study centered the experiences of cisgender women, with

no "out" transgender women or gender non-conforming individuals interviewed.

During my doctoral program, I took a very helpful course in qualitative research

methods. In that class, I conducted three interviews with women in higher education fundraising

to learn about their lived experiences, practice interviewing, and apply a phenomenological lens.

The voices of the women I interviewed, Dominque, Lisa, and Sharon (pseudonyms used in my

paper), spoke to me on this journey, guided me through the literature, pushed me to go deeper on

certain issues, and emboldened me to chart a course that has not been explored in this way

before. If not for Sharon, I probably would not explore "age" in as great of depth in the literature

review in Chapter 2. Lisa's story of battling for a comparable salary to her male predecessor

replayed in my mind over and over. Dominique's experience as a Black woman in higher

education fundraising was one of the reasons why race and racism were central to this work. I

would do a disservice to the purpose of this dissertation if I did not acknowledge them, thank

them, and share the influence they had in shaping the theoretical underpinnings, methods, and

practical implications of this research.

Rationale & Significance

In an age when the American government's support for higher education is dwindling,

the need for committed groups of fundraisers is critical for universities, since fundraising is an

essential tool for generating revenue for American colleges and universities (Jo, 2008, p. 578).

Women have been and remain the majority of campus fundraisers and are less likely than men to

ascend into leadership roles (Conry, 1998; Cleveland, 2003; Fundraising, 2010; Association of

Fundraising Professionals, 2016; Nathan & Tempel, 2017). Despite positing core values of

diversity and inclusion, pay and promotion gaps for women in higher education are the reality

and threaten to demoralize the majority of the fundraising workforce (Cleveland, 2003).

Studies on the experiences of women in higher education fundraising are limited. To

date, this research is found within dissertations, not peer-reviewed publications. A trend that is

well documented in the field of institutional advancement research (Caboni & Proper, 2007;

Proper & Caboni, 2014). The foci of these dissertation research studies include voluntary

turnover (Jo, 2008), characteristics of women that achieve leadership positions in advancement

(Acebo, 2008), perceptions of barriers that limit women from entering and ascending into

leadership (Cleveland, 2003), and the impact of gender bias and personal choice on career

progression (Owen, 2009). These studies help to identify the difficulties and opportunities faced

by women, but lack a connection to the social processes that created them in the first place. In

addition, they lack a theoretical lens to explore multiple aspects of identity and how those axes of

identity interact with the work of fundraising.

Most relevant to this work, Titus-Becker (2007) conducted a narrative inquiry exploring

the experiences of eleven women development officers in higher education. She found that

women in fundraising re-appropriate gendered skills such as subservience, listening,

acknowledging others, and the dutiful daughter role to their advantage when working with

donors (Titus-Becker, 2007, p. 142). She observed that sex and gender were at play as the reason

why women in fundraising were subjected to degrading, marginalizing behavior such as

ostensibly innocuous comments, feigned appreciation, and sexual harassment (Titus-Becker, 2007). Women used strategic silence, traditionally a sign of the marginalization of women, to succeed in fundraising by ignoring many of these marginalizing behaviors and staying focus on closing major gifts. She also took note of the imbalanced relationship in terms of power between women fundraisers and donors (Titus-Becker, 2007). Women fundraisers disadvantaged in donor relationships when dealing with men in particular (Titus-Becker, 2007). In addition, she found this to be the reality in the relationships between women fundraisers and the men over-represented in leadership roles (Titus-Becker, 2007).

In her work, Titus-Becker (2007) centered the construct of "gender" as the focal point of her research questions. As her study took place at one institution, she was unable to speak to many specific details of the women interviewed for fear of disclosing their identities. Of the eleven women interviewed, one of them identified as a woman of color. At the conclusion of her work, one of Titus-Becker's (2007) recommendations for future research included;

> A critical theorist approach to this topic would explore in depth the power relations that exist between the fundraisers and donors, and the Development leadership. It would also examine power relations that exist in race, age, sexual orientation and other characteristics that this study did not examine. Further research on fundraisers of color, in particular, might illuminate ways in which to attract more individuals of color into the profession.

Building on this foundation, I investigated the stories of women in fundraising, applied critical theoretical lenses, and, understanding the roots of philanthropy as a practice shaped by White, assumedly cisgender & heterosexual, industrial philanthropists, offered a look inside the interplay between privilege and power in the fundraising profession. While we need to reduce

turnover, remove barriers to promotion, and provide equal pay, institutional advancement leaders

and scholars must simultaneously understand how these phenomena in the institution are birthed

from the same White, patriarchal forces that have defined philanthropy and philanthropic work.

In particular, the experiences and voices of women of color were essential to this effort.

The results of this study inform the strategies employed by institutional advancement

leaders of all genders as they attempt to support women in fundraising. The study presented an

opportunity for women in fundraising to tell their stories and capture their critique of the

philanthropic status quo. A perspective and set of experiences that should be taken seriously as

institutional advancement operations, and higher education more broadly, strive to become more

equitable and inclusive to match an increasingly diverse student body, alumni base, and society

(Prince, 2015). It was also a vehicle through which to introduce a critical perspective absent in

the research on the experiences of higher education development officers.

Summary

Every day, women in higher education fundraising negotiate demanding institutional

expectations as well as intersectional axes of marginalization in their work. Developing an

understanding of these complex, nuanced lived experiences required encapsulating the women's

voices in research by listening to and valuing their stories and situating those experiences in a

broader social context. In the following literature review, I depicted the roots of philanthropy in

the United States of America and for higher education, the feminization of the fundraising

profession, and attempts to challenge the status quo for women in the profession. Furthermore, I

demonstrated the power of intersectionality as a tool to understand power, privilege, and

marginalization and conceptualize this theory in higher education fundraising.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The literature review that follows sought to integrate a fairly disparate body of research to illuminate the context in which women in higher education fundraising conduct their work. Within their roles, successful higher education fundraisers become experts in philanthropy and strategies for extracting wealth from individual donors (Worth & Asp, 1994). Historically, women as a group have navigated distinct experiences in the fundraising profession due to the effects of sexism and gender bias intersecting with multiple dimensions of marginalized identities. These effects are still felt even when the presence of women in the fundraising workforce has increased drastically, leading to a phenomenon described as the feminization of fundraising (Mixer, 1994; Dale, 2017). Parallel to these developments in the past 50 years, women have made great strides in their progress toward economic and social equality with men leading toward increased control over philanthropic resources (Dale, Osili, Mesch, & Ackerman, 2015). As donors and fundraising professionals, women continue to grow in number and influence.

Four intersecting bodies of literature, both scholarly and professional, helped to set the stage for understanding the lived experiences of women in higher education fundraising. First, a critical understanding of the evolution of American philanthropy and philanthropy in higher education revealed how the phenomena began as an outgrowth of the dominance of White male industrial philanthropists. Second, I depicted the dramatic shift from a male-dominated non-profit sector to one with a majority of women in fundraising roles, while the system retained many inequities and biases toward women in the workplace, all while fundraising became increasingly professionalized. Third, in the act of fundraising, women interact with men as donors and colleagues and exercise varying degrees of privilege and power to accomplish institutional fundraising goals. For women of color, in particular, this process is challenging and

distinct. Women of color tend not to be represented within the discourses either of feminism or

antiracism because of the intersection of their identities as women and "of color" (Crenshaw,

1991). Thus, intersectionality and feminist thought helped to frame these interactions and bring a

new perspective to higher education fundraising. And, I conclude by describing attempts to

combat inequities, discrimination, and pay and promotion discrepancies by both women in

higher education fundraising, professional organizations, and higher education institutions.

Philanthropy in the United States of America & Higher Education

The concept of philanthropy in definition and in practice is full of contradictions,

distinctly so in the context of the United States of America:

> The power of philanthropy is great and rarely disputed. It can open doors for opportunity,
>
> save lives, and allow lives to be enriched. Like everything, however, it has the potential
>
> for harm, and it is necessary to critique the actions, motives, and outcomes of individual,
>
> foundation, and corporate philanthropy. (Drezner, 2011, p. 79)

The act of giving, financially, to express "love of mankind," an early definition of philanthropy,

depends greatly on the donor's beliefs and values (Sulek, 2010). Where donations are directed,

the charity, cause, organization, people, is a political act. Philanthropic giving is at its basic level

a reallocation of resources, often from an individual, corporation, or foundation to a population

with less wealth than the donor or donors (Drezner, 2011, p. 80). In the free-market system, a

neoliberal economist views philanthropy as an intervention or disruption in the allocations of the

free market (Drezner, 2011, p. 80). Through this lens, philanthropy disrupts what the free market

should resolve, situating the act of philanthropy in the political nexus of American society.

Philanthropy is not a phenomenon associated only with the super-wealthy in the United

States. Broad participation gave philanthropy its democratic imprint in America (Zunz, 2012, p.

295). The rise of volunteer associations and the centrality of philanthropy in American churches

are signs of this overarching pattern in the history of the United States (Zunz, 2012). Most

Americans believe they can impact a cause or challenge both for the betterment of society as

well as frank level of self-interest (Zunz, 2012). For example, donors gain when their

contribution leads to a cure for a common disease (Zunz, 2012). However, some critics have

pointed to ulterior motives underlying philanthropy (Gasman, 2002). These include that the gift

helped the philanthropist more than the recipient, that unethical business practices produced the

donated funds, and that some philanthropists give money just to extend the reach of their power

(Gasman, 2002). Though philanthropy is consistently described as having a positive impact in

the literature, whether it is a young person making a small contribution of $25 to an ovarian

cancer charity or the work of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, it cannot be viewed

without criticism through the lens of power and privilege.

Many historical and contemporary examples exist where philanthropic giving resulted in

perpetuating or increasing inequality (Drezner, 2011). In the 1920's, for example, both the

Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations, named and funded as result of two prominent White,

male, assumedly cisgender industrial philanthropists, funded research used to support changes to

the course of study for Black students from the liberal arts to "realistic and industrial" subjects

(Drezner, 2011). The belief being that Black students should be prepared for their "place" in

American society. In this regard, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) existed at

the nexus of philanthropic and political tension, simultaneously a space of liberation and

subjugation. While the motivations of these philanthropists were and remains a debate, no one

can refute that it was White, industrial philanthropists wielding their resources to influence the

lives of Black Americans (Gasman, 2002). The representative power and wealth described in this

example has been re-distributed to some degree in the United States, but a pervasive unequal

distribution of resources, which impacts the intent and influence of philanthropy, remains along

the lines and intersection of race and class in America that benefits White elites (Feagin, 2014).

Knowingly and unknowingly, White Americans invest in Whiteness, through public policy and

private prejudice, in ways that create "all-too-real" consequences for the distribution of wealth,

prestige, and opportunity (Lipsitz, 2006).

      Another tension, the acceptance of philanthropy as a means for funding higher education

is different for public and private institutions. In the 1600's, the first private benefactors of

collegiate education emerged in the British Colonies in New England. John Harvard's bequest to

what would become Harvard University initiated a pattern of private giving that would have

implications for the growing colonial colleges, William & Mary, Yale, Dartmouth, Brown,

Columbia, Rutgers, Princeton, Pennsylvania, and Delaware (Drezner, 2011). These private

institutions, and their modern-day iterations, do not receive state funding, thus their financial

structures look different in comparison to their public counterparts. Public colleges and

universities grew out of a belief that education was a public good of societal benefit (however

narrowly defined at the time). In the 1990's and 2000's, increased calls for privatization, market-

like ideologies, and demands for imposing business principles on public education forced higher

education institutions to accept the premise that state-funding will continue to decrease because

education is no longer a public good (Chan, 2016). Accepting private gifts and investing in

institutional advancement activities meant that public colleges and universities were complicit in

this shift and needed to re-evaluate how to fund their original public mission (Chan, 2016).

      Adopting the principles, ethos, and strategies employed in fundraising by private

institutions, public colleges, and universities are racing to develop fundraising campaigns, recruit

fundraising talent, and educate their campus communities about the need for philanthropy.

Facilitating individual giving, the primary focus of this study, is critical to higher education

because it is significantly and consistently higher than other sources of fundraising dollars

(Drezner, 2011). For all colleges and universities, this means their respective alumni bases are

not only a reflection of the institutional experience, but also a source of potential revenue. For

this reason, a rich body of research has emerged exploring the motivations of alumni donors

(Monks, 2003; Lee & Chang; 2008, Mann, 2007; Weerts & Ronca, 2007; Weerts & Ronca,

2009; McDearmon & Shirley, 2009; Shari, 2014).

As women and other marginalized groups have exerted more control of philanthropic

resources, researchers and practitioners have started to invest more time and resources in

understanding motivations and philanthropic behavior of sub-groups with differing experiences

and affinities on college campuses. Foundational studies on the philanthropic intents and

motivations of women, people of color, and LGBT individuals are becoming more commonplace

(Cohen, 2006; Dale et al., 2015; Garvey & Drezner, 2016). As a response, higher education

institutions across the country have concentrated their efforts to expand fundraising programs

focused on women and diverse groups, developing giving circles and person-to-person giving

focused on specific motivations, interests, and common experiences (Dale et al., 2015). For

women, the myriad ways to be engaged in philanthropy expands exponentially the number of

women across generations who seek the niche best suited to them to put their values into action

(Mesch & Pactor, 2016, p. 93).

The fundraising profession. The practices of institutional advancement and fundraising,

specifically, have become increasingly professionalized. (Carbone, 1989; Worth & Asp, 1994;

Kozobarich, 2000; Caboni, 2003; Caboni & Proper, 2007). In comparing fundraising behaviors

to the markers of true professions as suggested in sociological literature, Caboni (2003) concluded that fundraising is an emerging profession, one with the potential to again greater professional stature. Hallmarks of the professionalization of fundraising included increased numbers of trainings and certificate programs, formation of professional associations, existence of a code of conduct, and a degree of autonomy (Caboni, 2003). Despite increased professionalization, the scholarly study of fundraising within doctoral programs remained limited (Caboni & Proper, 2007). Most of the research conducted focused on the institutional characteristics that led to successful fundraising and donor motivations with little focus on the role of the fundraiser (Caboni & Proper, 2007).

Worth and Asp (1994) described four distinct roles for development officers, a "salesman" role that emphasizes solicitation of gifts, "catalyst" role characterized by coordinating and accelerating the fundraising process, "manager" role that focuses on tasks associated with international organization and direction of resources, and "leader" role that encompasses expansive responsibilities across the institution and views development as a comprehensive enterprise. In a quantitative study, Ryan (2006) found support for existence of the factors postulated by Worth and Asp (1994). It is worth taking note of the gendered term, "salesman," even at a time when women were already emerging as the majority of campus fundraisers. Another study uncovered the ways in which higher education fundraisers resolved tensions surrounding their occupational identity, essentially how they described themselves to others (Meisenbach, 2008). Fundraisers framed their occupational identities as financial, relational, educational, mission-based, coordination, and magical (Meisenbach, 2008). Neither study, nor Worth and Asp's monograph, looked critically though the lens of gender, race, other axes of identities, or any intersections to explore the experiences of women.

Prevalence of Women as Fundraisers in Higher Education

Focused on women in the higher education fundraising profession, three dissertations surfaced concerns about a glass ceiling in advancement, pay equity and promotion gaps (Acebo, 2008, Cleveland, 2003, and Owen, 2009). An essential foundational study, Titus-Becker (2007) found that women development officers strategically use silence to succeed in fundraising and demonstrate incredible resiliency in the face of degradation and sexual harassment from men donors and superiors. Despite these challenges, women fundraisers felt connected to their cause and viewed their work as important to institutional success. The increased presence of women would be shocking to the first fundraisers in colleges and universities: "…the college agent of old would likely be astounded by the number of women who are working in the field and who hold positions of leadership today" (Thelen & Trollinger, 2014).

The profession of fundraising was full of contractions and paradoxes for women. In the United States, most charitable agencies in the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries were led and controlled by men (Odendahl & O'Neill, 1994). At this same time, women demonstrated a long-standing commitment to volunteerism, religious charity, combatting poverty, and education, all of which aligned with emerging segments of the growing non-profit sector. In the 19th century, women created "parallel power structures" within philanthropic and voluntary associations, which allowed them to develop and maintain public identities while adhering to traditional gender roles and family obligations (Dale, 2017, p. 2). The rise of the feminist movement and growing social and economic equality led women to enter the non-profit workforce in droves, ultimately becoming the majority of the workforce (Odendahl & O'Neill, 1994; Dale, 2017).

Similar to other feminized professions, such as teaching, nursing, and social work, questions have emerged about whether "feminization" has led to a loss of occupational status and comparably lower salaries to male-dominated professions (Bolton & Muzio, 2008). In fundraising, salaries for both men and women have outpaced inflation, but gender pay disparity persists (Nathan & Tempel, 2017). The relationship between status decline and feminization is not entirely clear, but studies have shown that the same profession can be practiced differently along the lines of gender (Adams, 2005). Within teaching, law, and management, Bolton and Muzio (2008) found a paradox: the increase of women in professions has been linked to improved performance and productivity, as well as broadening a company's customer base, while studies of the workplace reveal "obstinate persistence of patterns of gendered exclusion, segmentation, and stratification" (p. 294).

Larger proportions of women have not necessarily translated into increased power, positions of leadership, or salaries in the non-profit sector (Odendahl & O'Neill, 1994):

The nonprofit sector plays a major role in the lives of American women, and they play a large role in and throughout the nonprofit sector. As to the shape, force, and extent of that role, the news is both good and bad… (Odendahl & O'Neill, 1994, p. 15)

In a 2011 White House commissioned report, women made up 45% percent of the chief executive officers (CEOs) at nonprofits, but only 21% of CEOs at nonprofits with budgets of $25 million or more (Detroit Young Professionals, 2011). Even in 2016, Mesch and Proctor argued that women have yet to achieve significant prominence as leaders of major philanthropic organizations worldwide (p. 94). Progress is being made, particularly in smaller organizations, but nonprofits with budgets larger than $50 million see a pervasive gap in pay between men and women and more men in leadership roles (Detroit Young Professionals, 2011). Despite these

odds, or perhaps because of them, more women across the globe and at all income levels are

vocal, visible, active, and telling the story daily of their philanthropic involvement around the

world (Mesch & Proctor, 2016).

In higher education, women in the institutional advancement profession comprise a full

two-thirds of the population, but it is men who are nearly twice as likely to serve as the head of a

major department with direct reporting responsibility to the president or board of directors of the

institution (Acebo, 2008, p. 9). On their path to increased opportunities for fundraising success

and leadership, women have navigated sexist attitudes and behaviors (Titus-Becker, 2007).

When women were hired for major gift fundraising positions, they frequently found that men

hoarded the good fundraising prospects and turned entry-level donors over to women staff

members (Conry, 1998, p. 11). The language of fundraising reveals the centrality of patriarchy, a

fundraising "campaign" has roots in the military and to "solicit" someone has been used in a

context derogatory toward women (Conry, 1998; Dale, 2017).

The voices of women employed as higher education fundraisers have been missing from

the fundraising literature. In 1998, Conry made the call for more focus groups, case studies, and

personal histories to delve deeper into what qualitative factors are now influencing the work life

and compensation of fundraising practitioners-roles increasingly being filled by women. This

appeal was mostly ignored across the industry and by higher education scholars. Since that time,

the stories of women in fundraising have been limited to anecdotal stories, professional magazine

profiles, and a handful of dissertations (Titus-Becker, 2007; Acebo, 2008; Cleveland, 2003; Jo,

2008; Owen, 2009). With a few exceptions, there remains a lack of research directly exploring

the experiences of the majority of employees in higher education fundraising. I found two

examples of qualitative research involving higher education fundraisers that included women but

did not specifically inquire about their experiences as women in the profession (Meisenbach, 2008; Croteau & Smith, 2012).

What was true in 1998 holds true today, whether their motivations are altruistic, economic, academic, or value-driven, in the rapid rise from minority to majority, women have taken a foothold and established a notable presence in the fundraising arena (Conry, 1998). To answer Conry's call for more qualitative research and honor the progress of women in the fundraising arena, required the application of a theoretical framework and critical methodological tools that situated women's lived experiences within broader social forces. Furthermore, it was essential to extend Titus-Becker's (2007) research to uplift the voices of women of color and to explore the interplay of privilege and power in their work as fundraisers.

Conceptualizing Privilege, Power, and Marginalization in Fundraising

To shape this study as emancipatory and critical, in the feminist tradition, it was imperative to apply theoretical orientations that elucidated the complexity of intersections between women as fundraisers, philanthropy, and larger social processes affecting women. For women, the interplay of power and privilege undergirds the fundraising process, particularly in the relationship between fundraisers and donors:

> This is not my first experience with a donor using his position to win companionship. The power dynamic between donors and the fundraisers assigned to them is akin to the arrangement between manager and employee. My career success is partially measured by dollars raised, leaving my fate, to an extent, in the donors' hands. (Lathrop, 2016, February 29, p. 38)

To conceptualize privilege and power in higher education fundraising, I turned to the concept of intersectionality as a dynamic theoretical lens to ensure understanding of the crossroads of

identities brought to the higher education fundraising workplace and philanthropic process by

both fundraisers and donors. In 1989, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, a scholar of law, critical

race theory, and Black feminist thought, coined the term intersectionality to better explain the

experiences of Black women whose intersecting axes of identity, race, gender, and class,

exposed them to exponential forms of marginalization and oppression (Mitchell, Simmons, &

Greyerbiehl, 2014). Crenshaw (1989) underscored the importance of exploring multiple

dimensions of identity because "single-axis" frameworks, specifically gender as an identifier,

erased the experiences of Black women.

As an analytic tool, intersectionality underscored the power relations of racism and

sexism, as well heterosexism, and class exploitation (Collins & Bilge, 2016). One must go

beyond an analysis of a single identifier to multiple identifiers that interact simultaneously

(Hearn, 2015, p. 43). Subsequently, I described the interrelated social processes of sexism,

ageism, and racism to bring greater depth and perspective to the intersectional framework

employed in the study and to weave in the limited research on philanthropy and fundraising

through these lenses. In this context, I shared examples of how social forces and fundraiser

identities shape power and privilege to impact the professional practice of women in higher

education fundraising:

> When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a
>
> given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division,
>
> be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each
>
> other. Intersectionality as an analytical tool gives people better access to the complexity
>
> of the world and of themselves. (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 2)

Fundraisers and donors are complex individuals. They bring a variety of values, beliefs and assumptions to their interactions with one another as well as numerous "axes" that work together and influence one other. A development officer who is young, middle-class, female, African American, and a lesbian navigates and experiences the world differently than a donor who is an extremely wealthy, White, heterosexual, corporate CEO in his 60's, for example. Through an intersectional lens, each of these individuals would enter the events, meetings, and visits associated with the fundraising process with preconceived ideas and assumptions concerning others, money, power, relationships, and philanthropy. Though a person carries a variety of identifiers simultaneously, several may take primacy in any given context (Hearn, 2012). In this example, the CEO's class and wealth give him power. The young development officer is in a position, given the demands of her organization and role, to convince him to commit his substantial financial resources to her representative institution. If he does donate, the CEO would gain even greater power at the institution itself and, corresponding with the size of donation, receive privileges and access within the college or university given his new status as donor.

In this scenario, how do the development officer's race, gender, class, sexual orientation, age or some combination of these identifiers and the CEO's perceptions of her interact to impact the fundraising process? The answer is complicated and raises more questions than answers. Did the gift cultivation process take longer than it would have for a male fundraiser because the CEO wanted a female companion to keep visiting him (Lathrop, 2016)? Did the donor hold any racist views about African Americans? Mixer (1994) interviewed a prominent African American woman fundraiser and consultant that expressed "difficulty in soliciting endowments and planned gifts because of donors' stereotypical views that African Americans have not had

experience in managing large sums of money" (p. 225). Is the CEO married to a cisgender

woman? Did he ask the development officer about whether or not she had a husband or children?

Did she have to disclose she was a lesbian and did she offer a detailed response about a wife or

partner? Entering this interaction, the development officer could carry an immense amount of

fear of being misjudged and cast out of a context in which male values are tantamount (Stenger

& Roulet, 2016). These hypothetical interactions represent only a few ways in which the

intersection of varying axes of identity could impact the fundraising process.

Many individuals inhabit both privileged and oppressed identities (Wijeyesinghe &

Jones, 2014, p. 16). This is no different for higher education fundraising professionals.

Generally, despite inequities along gender lines, higher education advancement officers are well-

compensated in relation to their campus peers, receive a comprehensive benefits package, and

time-off allowances. In comparison to their major gift fundraising prospects and donors,

development officers have far lower salaries and, generally, less power and privilege when

viewed through the lens of access to financial resources. On campus, amongst administrative

staff, faculty and students, development officers are perceived in complex and often paradoxical

ways, sometimes revered and sometimes despised (Meisenbach, 2008). Campus fundraisers are

envied because they are well-compensated in relation to other university roles, often travel, and

have access to campus leadership and high profile individuals in the process of their work

(Meisenbach, 2008). They are "despised" because of their association with asking for money,

seen as "money grubbers" and begging people for money (Meisenbach, 2008). On and off

campus, development officers navigate this tension inherently within their professional roles

(Titus-Becker, 2007; Meisenbach, 2008).

The privileged and oppressed identities of women in higher education fundraising collide within their professional practice, a strong example being the prevalence of sexual harassment in conflict with demands to "court" male donors:

> Nearly two-thirds of the 66 female frontline fundraisers at organizations big and small who agreed to answer questions in an informal survey I conducted said that donors had crossed the professional line with them because of gender or appearance. (Lathrop, 2016, p. 38)

Many fundraisers say that it is not unusual for donors, board members, and other supporters to subject fundraisers to inappropriate comments and unwanted advances, with women receiving the brunt of this behavior (Hall, 2010). In the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, Caren Goldberg, an assistant professor of management at American University, shared, "In the world of philanthropy, the donor has all the power" (Hall, 2010). In the same article, the author insinuated that the increased presence of women in fundraising is because they are "appealing to older, more powerful men for large donations" (Hall, 2010). What is the implicit message to women in fundraising from their managers and leadership? Is it to leverage their looks and play the role of charming girlfriend to succeed in fundraising and ignore sexual harassment? A University-sanctioned fundraising escort? To be fair, men in fundraising describe some similar experiences, but as is the case in broader society, women are far more frequently harassed and expected, either explicitly or implicitly, to submit to, indulge, and/or tolerate unwanted advances to succeed in their chosen profession (Weitz, 1998). Citing the results of her informal survey, Lathrop (2016) found that nearly 50% of women who indicated feeling discomfort as a result of relationships with some donors continued to work with the donors, either by choice or at the request of a supervisor.

The belief that men are superior to, and often owners of, women's bodies has long pervaded the interactions between men and women in society (Weitz, 1998). Women fundraisers may wittingly or unwittingly leverage this societal construct to develop relationships with heterosexual male prospects or donors, by replicating traditional notions of femininity. Feminine movement, gesture, and posture must exhibit not only constriction, but grace and a certain eroticism restrained by modesty (Weitz, 1998). If a conscious strategy, women are simultaneously leveraging their privileged and oppressed identities to advance their relationship with male donors. Relatedly, women are channeled into a narrow box of appropriateness as it relates to attire and physical appearance. Today, massiveness, power or abundance in a woman's body is met with distaste (Weitz, 1998. p. 28). Thus, in a fundraising context, women are forced to simultaneously concern themselves with their appearance, posture, movement, and tone of voice while attempting to do their jobs. In these interactions, whether with male or female donors, women in fundraising commit to a story about themselves, one that they presume will help to facilitate fundraising. In those interactions, adjustments or "defensive practices" are employed to preserve the story being projected (Goffman, 1959).

The politics of appearance and beauty, go beyond the interactions between one woman in fundraising and a potential donor. In the workplace and across society, approximating beauty can be essential to a woman's chance for power, respect and attention (Chapkis, 1986, p. 14). It is another example of when women, in a time and place dominated by White male desires, must decide if they want to use beauty and sex as a channel for power (Chapkis, 1986). However, this can generate another damaging dynamic in the workplace. Women that explicitly leverage physical beauty to "wrestle power from men" are vulnerable to "the problem" of younger, more beautiful competition (Chapkis, 1986). An increasingly unobtainable beauty standard for women

exists, demanding women be young, thin, toned, healthy, White, with a suntanned body, flawless

and wrinkle-free skin, perfectly coiffed hair, little or no body hair, artfully applied makeup, and

the latest fashion trappings (Clarke, 2010). And, interestingly, attractiveness seems to have an

impact on fundraising. Though not specifically in a major gift fundraising context, a recent study

of online giving found that men were more likely to contribute and contribute more, if a man was

the last to donate and the fundraiser was an attractive woman (Raihani & Smith, 2015). The need

to impress attractive women and compete against male peers served as motivators for giving

(Raihani & Smith, 2015).

As women age, the politics of appearance and ageism, discrimination against the elderly

manifesting beliefs that older adults are unproductive, sickly, depressing, or cognitively impaired

become increasingly burdensome (Narayan, 2008). Older women are subject to negative

stereotyping and discriminatory behavior because of their simultaneous membership in the

categories of "old" and "woman" with the resultant combined impact of ageism and sexism

(Clarke, 2010, p. 30). Whereas men, later in life, can be viewed as "distinguished older

gentlemen," women are deemed old, irrelevant, and socially invisible (Clarke, 2010). In

interviews with women in their 50's and 60's, Clarke (2010) found that women were acutely

aware of ageism and actively engaged in stressful strategies to remain relevant:

> Beauty work became the one weapon that the women had to fight against their gradual
>
> and inevitable social annihilation. Thus, the women noted that in order to fight being
>
> rendered or considered invisible nonpersons, aging women had to tend to their
>
> appearances, particularly when on the dating scene or at work. (Clarke, 2010, p. 120)

For Black women, the reality of self-monitoring, appearance politics, and focusing on the role of fundraiser is even more exaggerated given the intersection of the marginalized axes of gender and race:

> Intersectional subordination need not be intentionally produced; in fact, it is frequently the consequence of the imposition of one burden interacting with pre-existing vulnerabilities to create yet another dimension of disempowerment. (Crenshaw, 1995, p. 359)

Black women fundraisers work in an environment in which most wealth is held by the White majority (Drezner, 2013). Of the 50 most generous alumni donors in higher education, all of them, with the exception of two Asian Americans, are White and most are men (The Best Schools, 2017). Meaning, in most instances if Black women in major gift fundraising want to be successful, they will need to adjust to, connect with, and perform for White men. No matter if there is a casual racist remark, a subtle racist undertone, or, perhaps a refusal to meet, a Black woman in fundraising, to paraphrase Goffman (1959) is forced to suppress her emotional response to her private problems, to mistakes, and to the prospect or donor if they induce untoward affection or hostility in her. To quote W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), "One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (p. 3). What does the donor or prospect think of her? What are his assumptions about her based on her race? Does that shape his perceptions of her capabilities, knowledge, and expertise? And, who is she at her core and how does she alter her performance to succeed? The complexity and nuance of being a Black woman in higher education fundraising can only truly be understood by talking to the women doing the work. One can draw a conclusion that it not an easy journey for Black

women (or any gender) simply by noting the small percentage of Black Americans in higher education fundraising. Unpublished results from the 2016 CASE Compensation Survey of 3,256 CASE members, obtained through reaching out to CASE staff, revealed that only 3.4% of members identified as Black or African American (CASE, 2016). Similarly, when it comes to other dimensions of racial and ethnic diversity, higher education fundraising seems to have diversity issues, 88% of respondents identified as White; 0.1% as American Indian, Alaskan Native, or First Nations; 2.1% as Asian; 2.5% as Hispanic; 0.3% as other race/ethnicity; and 3.6% as mixed race/ethnicity (CASE, 2016).

White women in fundraising seem to have an upper-hand in comparison to women of color. Their Whiteness serving as an unspoken bridge to the majority of their fundraising prospects and donors, even though the prospect and donor base is diversifying to a degree. Whiteness has helped to position most fundraising prospects and donors to have the financial means to contribute to their institution in the first place:

> Whiteness has a cash value: it accounts for advantages that come to individuals through profits made from housing secured in discriminatory markets, through unequal educational opportunities available to children of different races, through insider networks that channel employment opportunities to the relatives and friends of those who have profited most from present and past racial discrimination, and especially though intergenerational transfers of inherited wealth that pass on the spoils of discrimination to succeeding generations. (Lipsitz, 2006, p. vii)

Do White women realize and intentionally leverage their Whiteness and White privilege in interactions with prospects or donors to deliver on fundraising goals? Or, is it, as it often remains, an unspoken and unrealized advantage? McIntosh (2000) described White privilege as

an invisible package of unearned assets which can be cashed in each day, but about which a

White person is meant to remain oblivious. "Meant to remain oblivious" is the key phrase,

exercising Whiteness could be a part of the deliberate performance given by White women in

fundraising. White women are, by definition, practitioners of White culture and Whiteness

continuously shapes their experiences, practices, and views of self and others (Frankenberg,

1993, p. 228).

Across a variety of axes of identity, women in higher education fundraising experience

their work distinctly from one another and from their male counterparts. Power and privilege,

leveraged and circumvented at different times and in different ways, impact the fundraising

process and relationship building with prospects and donors. Intersectionality provides a lens

through which to interrogate the fluidity of power and privilege, explore the mutuality of axes of

identity, situate them in broader societal forces, and understand their impact on philanthropic

work. Across the fundraising profession and within higher education, development officers,

advancement leadership, and professional organizations are grappling with these distinct

experiences of women identifying ways to better supporting women in fundraising with mixed

results.

Attempts to Challenge the Fundraising Status Quo

Women face a persistent pay and promotion gap, sexual harassment, appearance politics,

and shifting power and privilege based on varying intersections of identity in the practice of

higher education fundraising. They experience these complexities and challenges both within

their institutions and outside of them in interactions with donors and fundraising prospects:

Every day, the realities of past inequalities impose themselves on the lives of people of

color and women in the workplace; how these individuals respond to the different hand

they have been dealt has a profound effect on their career trajectories. (Gasman et al.,

2011, p. 34)

What is an effective response to inequalities? Are women encouraged to work within the existing

system or break it? The strategies, policies, resources, and scholarship on these varying dynamics

seem to be lacking in direction and often place the burden of change on the woman in the

fundraising role.

Regarding pay and promotion inequities, the advice to women seems to be "work

harder." Phyllis Fanger, a founder of Women in Development Association, encouraged women

to choose jobs and training carefully and wisely, invest in one's own career, negotiate for a

meaningful title, network, learn from knowledgeable people, and be known by others (Conry,

1998, p. 89). Conry (1998) pointed out that this perspective advocates considerable personal

action and assertiveness in achieving career success, implying that it is on the individual woman

in fundraising to fight her own battles. Similar to Fanger's viewpoint, Taylor (1998) encouraged

women to stay focused on top fundraising prospects and to pursue major and planned giving. She

argued that if a woman "proves herself" and her ability to ask for money, she will advance in the

field of fundraising. In these examples, the burden to break the glass ceiling of development was

placed squarely on women as fundraising practitioners, not the system or leadership. Based on

more current research, the pay and promotion gap, while narrowing slightly, remains a very real

construct in fundraising (Hale & Schumaker, 2017, March 22).

Reaching true equity in pay and position for women in fundraising will require more than

personal commitment and vigilance on the part of practitioners (Conry, 1998). Likewise,

Kozobarich (2000) argued that strategies similar to the ones attributed to Taylor (1998) and

Fanger (Conry, 1998) may be helpful career strategies, but it is up to fundraising managers to

assume responsibility for equity in the field if change is to occur. In her dissertation, Owen (2009) outlined three recommendations to enhance current advancement practice related to the pay and promotion gap. First, she concluded that institutions must explore flexible working arrangements as a means to attract and retain staff to reduce large-scale female self-selection into lower paying back office roles (Owen, 2009). Second, institutions should develop better internal career paths and corresponding "salary bands" that encourage longevity in the organization (Owen, 2009). Finally, make information about position descriptions and salary bands more readily available (Owen, 2009). While these conclusions, grounded in the experiences of women in fundraising, seem practical enough, they are also limited. They fail to challenge the system of inequity and barriers uniquely constructed around women, particularly women of color.

The study of the interaction of power and privilege, appearance politics, sexual harassment, sexism, racism, ageism, and other "isms" in the practice of fundraising is extremely limited. Most of the resources available to fundraisers and advancement leadership on these topics come in the form of opinion pieces in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* and on the AFP and CASE websites. These articles call for increasing the visibility of women fundraisers and donors, encouraging women to serve as mentors and role models for other women, seeking out leadership positions, and standing up for yourself. Again, all important strategies, but they do not help us understand or alter a context riddled with pervasive, systemic inequality. Solutions, dialogue, and strategies for change must be situated in a broader context at the intersection of philanthropy, privilege and power.

There is a very real tension around the path forward in the fundraising profession. In 2017, the Association of Fundraising Professional published an article that framed the lack of men in fundraising as a challenge; "Should we be worried there aren't more men, and is there

anything the profession can do to change that ratio?" This spawned dialogue across Twitter and

spilled over on to the blog of a fundraiser, Vanessa Lockshin. Lockshin (2017) pointed out the

underlying sexism of AFP's arguments and challenged several of their assumptions: that women

need to make space for men, that women need to do emotional labor to welcome and include

men in fundraising, and that reverse sexism is real. Furthermore, she pointed out the extent that

women, despite being the majority of fundraisers are facing many issues including a pay and

promotion gap, bullying, and sexual harassment (Lockshin, 2017). Similarly, on her blog, Beth

Ann Locke succinctly articulated the paradox for women in fundraising. Locke (2017) noticed:

- Non-profits seek to be change agents yet are confronted with archaic systems, dominant
  culture power dynamics and tyranny of bureaucracy.

- Non-profit causes fight for dignity, yet fundraisers often find themselves demeaned by
  peers, funders, and leadership.

- Many charities champion equality and equity yet do little to support women in
  fundraising.

- Non-profits advocate for a better world, yet women in fundraising experience abuse,
  bullying, or harassment in workplaces.

- Much of fundraising work is around diversity, and yet there is often a lack of diversity in
  workplace and among boards and volunteers.

Locke (2017) encouraged women to disrupt the status quo, voice their concerns, and use her blog

as a forum for dialogue and shared learning. On International Women's Day, March 8, 2017, her

guidance to women in the profession was to sponsor or mentor a woman in fundraising, donate

to a woman-focused cause, and to contact legislators to voice concerns about causes that they

care about (Locke, 2017). Underscoring the need for this research study, spaces to challenge the

status quo, to support and build a fair and equitable reality for women in fundraising begins by actually addressing the issues at the core of the experience.

Summary

        In this literature review, I integrated a disparate body of literature to depict the context in which women in higher education fundraising conduct their work and to operationalize intersectionality as a lens for understanding their lived experiences. Situated in the colonial tradition of philanthropy, which emphasized the generosity of White, male, cisgender industrial philanthropists, women became the majority of employees in the non-profit sector and higher education fundraising. Despite representing the majority of the workforce, women were paid less than their male counterparts and were less likely to ascend into leadership roles. Through an intersectional lens, the experiences of women in higher education fundraising were understood in more complex and nuanced ways. Gender, race, age, sexual orientation, and other axes of identity impacted the power and privilege available to women as they negotiated a philanthropic context traditionally dominated by men. This intersectional, contextual approach was underexplored in the literature and nearly nonexistent in discussions of how to challenge the fundraising status quo for women.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

In this study, I explored the experiences of women fundraises in higher education because they make up the majority of professionals in the field, because they have received little attention in the research literature, and because inequality along gender lines is still pervasive in the field. Previous scholarly work in higher education fundraising has lacked a focus on the intersecting identities of women, their relationship to power and privilege, and how that dynamic impacts the professional practice of women in fundraising. A qualitative research design was used to hear the voices of women in the profession and to explore the richness of their experiences. It allowed me to probe deeply and explore each woman's unique set of intersecting identities and experiences facilitating philanthropy in higher education. The approach was appropriate because this study was exploratory in examining relationships that are largely ignored in previous studies and because the phenomena that will be examined involves complex interactions among individuals and institutions that are not easily captured through quantitative analysis (Reynolds, 2009, p. 56).

Within this chapter, I discussed the feminist tradition in which I chose to conduct the research and operationalize intersectionality as the study's conceptual framework. I discussed the research design deployed to elevate the voices of women in fundraising, ensure authenticity, and manage the biases and male privilege I brought to the project as the research instrument. Furthermore, I shared the strategies by which I identified the study participants within the chosen research context and described how I collected, analyzed, and presented the researching finds. In closing, I outlined the limitations of the research study.

Research Questions

In a feminist tradition and through the framework of intersectionality, I explored the lived experiences of women in fundraising and the interplay of power and privilege as they navigated

a traditionally White, patriarchal system of philanthropy; worked with donors and fundraising

prospects; and interacted with colleagues and institutional leaders. Partnering with the women

that participated in this study, I explored the following questions:

- What do women say are their lived experiences as higher education fundraisers?

- What are the perceptions of access to professional advancement (pay and promotion) amongst women in higher education fundraising?

- What do women see as their advantages and barriers in the practice of higher education fundraising?

- How do women perceive race as a mediator of their experiences in higher education fundraising?

In the Feminist Tradition

Understanding the gender inequality within the fundraising landscape and historically

White patriarchal nature of philanthropy, I decided to examine the experiences of women in

higher education through a feminist perspective that presumed the importance of gender in

human relationships and orient the study accordingly (Schram, 2003). Applying feminist

research traditions ensured that the interview process and dialogue surrounding the experiences

was emancipatory in nature. I openly discussed the intent of the research with the interviewees,

shared findings, and allowed for a "cross-pollination" of ideas. Women are knowers and their

experiences are a legitimate source of knowledge (Wuest, 1995). A feminist tradition anchored

the research approach through the creation of a critical and emancipatory inquiry framework to

prompt dialogue about fundraising performance, donor and colleague relationships, and power

and privilege.

Acker, Barry and Essevald (1991) provided three principles underlying feminist research that support this intent: (a) knowledge produced by the research should be useful for the participants, (b) the research method should not be oppressive, and (c) the research method should be reflexive allowing for reflection on both the intellectual traditions and the progress of the study (p. 35). Through this research, I believe that we, researcher and participants, were able to surface the lived experiences of women in higher education fundraising and, in the context of the interviews, inspired a greater awareness of the various influences affecting the success and satisfaction of women in the profession, challenges associated with navigating a traditionally patriarchal system of philanthropy, and the interplay of identity, power and privilege. Wuest (1995) argued that feminist research studies should be *for* women, not *on* women and provide information that women want and need to change the conditions of their lives.

During the execution of the study, I attended to seven key ethical practices for feminist researchers described by Bell (2013):

(1) Do no harm (beneficence); (2) confidentiality, privacy and anonymity; (3) informed consent; (4) disclosure and potential for deception (e.g. related to overt or covert research practices); (5) power between researcher and subject; (6) representation of ownerships of research findings; (7) ensuring respect for human dignity, self-determination, and justice, including safeguards to protect the rights of vulnerable subjects (Bell, 2013, p. 85).

There was one important caveat to these practices. I never used the term "subject" in the study, as Bell (2013) does in the quote above. The women featured in this study were partners, collaborators, and colleagues. If the research was to be *for* women, not *on* women, then the term "subject" had no place in the project (Wuest, 1995, Fontana & Frey, 2003).

Operationalizing Intersectionality as a Conceptual Framework

As a conceptual framework, intersectionality helped to operationalize the inquiry process by placing individual experience and identity within a macro-level analysis that tied individual experience to a person's membership in social groups, during a particular social and historical period and within larger, interlocking systems of advantage and access (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2014, p. 11). Intersectionality theory, by virtue of its description of multidimensional nature of identity, made investigation through qualitative methods seem both natural and necessary (Shields, 2008, p. 306).

For women in higher education fundraising, this meant an exploration of lived experiences within, across and beyond three central contexts: personal and professional identities and experiences (including social group membership), inner-workings of the university and institutional advancement operation, and boundary-spanning activities that engaged them with prospects, alumni and donors in the execution of their fundraising work. Critical to this work, intersectionality attended to how power and power relations were maintained and reproduced across these dimensions and interlocking axes of identity (Iverson, 2014). In this study, intersectionality was used to illuminate how differing aspects of identity and the intersections of axes of identity impact power and privilege as women engage in fundraising work. For example, a White lesbian may be disadvantaged because of divergence from the heterosexual norm and standard, but relative to other lesbians she enjoys racial privilege (Shield, 2008, p. 302).

Research Design

Phenomenology. To conduct this research, I employed a phenomenological approach as I believed it would be most illustrative. The purpose of the phenomenological analysis was to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of lived experience of a phenomenon for

a person or group of people (Patton, 1990, p. 482). Given that there was very little research about the experiences of women in higher education fundraising, a phenomenological approach initiated the conversation surrounding the experiences of women in higher education fundraising for future research, extending our knowledge beyond structural inequities such as pay and promotion.

Through the lens of intersectionality, phenomenology served as an approach to surface numerous critical, consciousness-raising discourses about gender, race, class, and other social hierarchies (Langellier, 1994). Some researchers believe that phenomenological research should seek to refrain from infusing the approach with any preconception or bias; feminist and humanist scholars refute this possibility (Lester, 1999). These scholars argued that it is more reasonable to make known the "frame" of the researcher and acknowledging the research as a subjective actor (Lester, 1999). After data collection, the task of phenomenological interpretation was to reflect on the description and reduction in order to explicate meanings not immediately apparent in the phenomenon (Langellier, 1994, p. 70). Essentially, how was higher education fundraising situated within women's lives and how were women situated within higher education fundraising? Within these intersections, I described the experiences of women and began the process of interpretative analysis. Direct quotations were utilized as the primary means of revealing respondents' depth of emotion, the ways they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions (Patton, 1990, p. 24).

Phenomenology has four distinct but interrelated components: description, reduction, essences, and intentionality (Ganeson & Ehrich, 2009). Description refers to portraying lived experiences as they are, as they are lived, and places a person's experience at the center of any

investigation (Ganeson & Ehrich, 2009). As mentioned, direct interview quotations were used to portray the lived experiences of women in fundraising. Second, reduction or bracketing means that researchers must challenge taken for granted assumptions presuppositions so that lived experience can be explored (Ganeson & Ehrich, 2009). Essences refers to the core meaning of an individual's experience of any given phenomenon that makes it what it is and intentionality refers to consciousness and that individuals are always conscious of something (Ganeson & Ehrich, 2009, p. 65). Importantly, the "essence of experience" may be an emotion, relationship, job, program, or culture (Patton, 1990). The goal was to let women in fundraising speak for themselves, represent them authentically, and discuss my own biases when I believed they may be affecting the research process.

Portraiture method. With roots grounded in phenomenology, I selected the portraiture method as the primary means for telling the stories of women in fundraising. The goal was to blend art and science to capture the complexity of human experience (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) described the aim of portraiture:

> To combine systematic, empirical description with aesthetic expression, blending art and science, humanistic sensibilities and scientific rigor. The portraits are designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of the people who are negotiating those experiences. The portraits are shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each participating in the drawing of the image. The encounter between the two is rich with meaning and resonance and is crucial to the success and authenticity of the rendered piece. (p. 3)

Using this approach was critical to this study for a number of reasons. First, portraiture gave me license to embrace both analytic rigor and community building, allowing for intimacy

and connection within the research process with the participants (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Secondly, the portraitist's (the researcher) standard is one of authenticity, capturing the essence and resonance of the actors' experience and perspective through the details of action and thought revealed in context (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 12). Third, it justified the presence of me, the researcher, being more evident and visible than in other research forms while underscoring the need to look for both the intuitive and counterintuitive during the research process (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The researcher participates in the research process as the principal research instrument (Ngunjiri, 2006).

Participants & data collection. After receiving Institutional Review Board approval (Appendix A), I conducted five in-person, two-hour-long interviews with development officers at public, predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the Midwest. The women fundraisers were identified by evaluating my personal network of fundraising contacts on LinkedIn and asking trusted colleagues at several institutions for referrals. From the 18 potential participants identified, I sent an introductory email explaining the purpose of the study and inquiring about their willingness to participate to eight racially diverse women. Five women agreed to participate in the study. The five participants varied in age and years of fundraising experience, as well as race and ethnicity. A feminist lens implored this attention to multiple and diverse perspectives (Wuest, 1995). As the motivation for selecting interviewees with specific interlocking identities was guided by the theory of intersectionality, I argue I used purposeful sampling, specifically theory-based or operational construct sampling (Patton, 1990). Using this sampling technique, a researcher samples incidents, slices of life, time periods or people on the basis of their potential manifestation or representation of important theoretical constructs (Patton, 1990, p. 177). For this project, the participants were chosen to ensure representation across a diversity of axes of

identity including race and age, with specific attention paid to those identities that intersected with gender to impact the participant's power and privilege and lead to greater advantages or increased marginalization.

According to Tesch (1984), the number of participants in a phenomenological study depends upon the nature of the phenomenon to be researched. Tesch (1984) explained that the typical number of participants is 10 to 15 in phenomenological studies, but also mentioned that some studies may include as few as six and as many as 25 participants. For my purposes, five participants allowed me to ensure a diverse representation of women and give space to each woman's story as a portrait. The data was rich and complex. Limiting the number of participants created the time and space to explore the nuances and complexities within and across each woman's lived experiences.

During the interviews, I collected information about each participant's professional history and listened intently to their reflections on the meaning of their experience (Seidman, 2013). Each interview was conducted in an office or setting familiar to the participants. My goal was to identify a location for each interview in which the interviewee felt comfortable. My interview protocol (Appendix B), consisted of seven questions, and guided the data collection process (Creswell, 2002). Semi-structured interviews allowed me to explore a consistent set of questions across the interviews, while I remained open to new questions that emerged during the interviews (Hesse-Biber, 2014). Each woman's story was unique, and I needed the freedom to explore, probe, and ask questions that would elucidate and illuminate their particular lived experiences (Patton, 1990).

To create a robust dialogue, I practiced empathetic regard by listening and responding to the participants to develop an understanding of their perspectives (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis,

1997). I attempted to imaginatively put myself in each participant's place and witness their

perspectives, ideas, emotions, fears, and pain (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). This meant

that in addition to the pre-planned research questions, the conversations were personal, at times

quite emotional, and involved self-reflection and self-analysis by both the participants and the

researcher (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Beyond the prepared research questions, we

discussed the women's families, relationships with colleagues, specific examples of challenging

and demeaning interactions with donors, and how we could improve the fundraising profession.

The researcher. As the researcher in this study, I was a unique research instrument.

Undoubtedly, my identity, personal biases, values, and assumptions impacted the questions I

asked, how I interpreted the interviews, and how I was perceived by the interviewees (Creswell,

2002; Fontana & Frey, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). As a White male, educated and upper

middle class, I brought an immense amount of privilege to this research project. I also, from the

outset, believed that I would uncover some challenging situations and unsavory dynamics within

the practice of higher education fundraising that impact women. I kept an open mind, however,

and pushed the boundaries of my own understanding, challenged my own position, and let

women in fundraising speak for themselves. The shaping hand of the investigator is

counterbalanced by the skepticism and scrutiny that is the signature of good research (Lawrence-

Lightfoot, 2005, p. 11).

Gaining trust and establishing rapport are key elements in successful interviewing

(Fontana & Frey, 2003). Once the interviewer's presentational self is "cast," it leaves a profound

impression on the respondents and has great influence over the success (or lack of it) of the study

(Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 77). Understanding the professional context in which the women

work, I presented myself as a caring colleague with a mind for change in the profession. I

believed an authentic approach was most likely to succeed in this environment and to ensure

ongoing, collegial relationships with the interviewees. It was also imperative that the

interviewees understand my sincere commitment to the confidentiality of the interviews and their

anonymity (Appendix C).

Traditional interviewing strategies have been inherently masculine with an emphasis on

maintaining a power differential that views the interviewer as in control and the interviewee as a

subject that obeys commands (Fontana & Frey, 2003). It was my goal to allow the development

of a closer relationship to minimize status and power differences, to be human, express feelings,

and answer questions (Fontana & Frey, 2003). When participants asked about my motivations

for my dissertation topic, I shared my passions and assumptions. While my own experience as a

White cisgender man cannot be equated to the experiences of women in fundraising, I have

learned from my own experiences as a member of the marginalized LGBT community. I believe

this has made me more empathetic, open-minded, and aware, a mindset that allowed me to

continually address my positionality during the research process.

Data Analysis

The data derived from the interviews was recorded and transcribed, with pseudonyms

assigned to all participants to ensure anonymity (Appendix C). Some personal details were

changed in consultation with the participants to protect their identities. The data analysis

unfolded in two distinct, but highly inter-related processes. First, I developed each woman's

portrait independent from one another. Second, I conducted a thematic analysis to explore the

lived experiences of all interviewees, looking for commonalities and divergent ways of knowing,

thinking, and fundraising. The data analysis was not a linear process; it involved re-visiting and

revising the portraits and themes frequently. In reality, it was much more of cyclical process

resembling a spiral of data management, reading, memoing, interpreting, classifying, describing, visualizing, and representing (Creswell, 1998).

Creating portraits. I began the process of creating portraits by reviewing the literature and developing a set of guiding questions (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). During that time, I carefully documented my own "preoccupations" and interrogated the lens I was bringing to the field (Lawrence-Lightfoot & David, 1997). I conducted the interviews over many months, critically reflecting on each one, keeping a journal of my impressions, and developing more discerning questions. The process of developing the portraits involved a convergence of interpretative insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order, drawing out the refrains and patterns and creating a thematic framework for the construction of each narrative (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). I documented emerging, repetitive themes by listening to interview recordings and reading (and re-reading) the interview transcripts. From this process emerged a flexible outline to structure each portrait involving (a) an introduction to the woman fundraiser, (b) emergent themes, and (c) a lasting impression.

For each participant, I created a readable picture, a portrait, of each woman in fundraising (Patton, 1990). The portraits included a discussion of varying aspects of each woman's identities as described by them, including age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other ways in which each woman described herself. Regarding their professional careers, I shared their years of experience, relative positions within the organizational hierarchy, and path to their current roles. Using direct quotations and rich description, to explore the meaning and essence of each woman's experience, I presented each woman's story in detail to ensure their voices are heard throughout the dissertation: What do women say are their lived experiences in higher education fundraising? What are their perceptions of professional advancement? What do they see as

advantages and barriers? Do they feel race is a mediator of their experience? Using the lens of intersectionality, I examined the ways in which multiple aspects of their identities interact to create power and privilege in the context of their work. The goal was to embroider paradoxical themes into the inquiry and narrative (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005).

Thematic analysis. The second component of the data analysis involved a broad thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report themes within the data to describe information set in rich detail. Coding served as a means to surface the meanings of the experience for the individual described, the essence of their experience (Patton, 1990). I engaged in open coding in which I took a segment of text and gave it a "name" that allowed me to develop an understanding or interpretation of what each participant said about their lived experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2014). From thematic analysis, patterns or themes develop that should be combined and catalogued (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Themes came from both the data through an inductive approach and from prior theoretical understanding of the phenomenon via the deductive approach (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). After open coding, I returned to the transcripts to conduct axial coding to connect related codes and identify emerging trends that allowed for information to be connected across interviews (Ginsberg, 2004). Finally, selective coding was completed, which provided for the opportunity to analyze the date in a systematic approach of comparing the categories to each other and of relating the emerging themes to relationships of the factors being taken into consideration (Ginsberg, 2004, p. 40).

Summary and Limitations

This study, situated in feminist research traditions and utilizing intersectionality as a conceptual framework, explored the lived experiences of five women working in higher education fundraising at Midwestern public, predominantly White institutions. The portraiture

approach ensured that the voices of women in fundraising were articulated clearly and authentically in the research findings while providing me the flexibility to address my own biases, male privilege, and positionality within the research.

The study had several limitations. First, no matter how carefully I addressed my positionality and biases, I remained a White cisgender man that benefited from the patriarchal nature of our society. The prevailing social order imbued me with an immense amount of privilege and it undoubtedly impacted this research. It is possible that in my attempt to surface the essence of the lived experiences of women in fundraising, I misrepresented or misunderstood their experiences given my perspective. Second, since I decided to capture the depth and complexities of being a woman in higher education fundraising, I limited the size of my study's sample. This means the findings are not generalizable to other institutions. Third, I strategically chose research participants that represented a variety of axes of identity, particularly along the lines of race and age, to maximize the opportunity to explore shifting power and privilege in fundraising work. In this regard, the study did not reflect the "average" experiences of women in higher education fundraising. If I conducted random or snowball sampling, this study would be dominated by White women and serve to further marginalize women of color in the fundraising profession.

Chapter 4: Research Findings/Portraits of Women Fundraisers

The women fundraisers I met during this research project were brave and tough, intentional and bold. Without exception, they exuded a commitment to the betterment of the world around them and the enterprise of higher education. They had a lot to say about their experiences, thus heavy emphasis was placed on their actual words to tell their stories (Titus-Becker, 2007). The women's stories are presented in two ways, through portraits and thematic analysis (Ngunjiri, 2006). In this chapter, I focused on creating vivid, authentic portraits of each individual woman fundraiser interviewed. In subsequent chapters, I provided a thematic analysis of the interviews and applied intersectionality to better articulate how compounded marginalization influenced the experience of women in higher education fundraising.

The women fundraisers that participated in this study worked at public, predominantly White institutions throughout the Midwest United States. I chose to share few details about the institutions represented in order to protect the identities of the five women fundraisers. While institutional context and culture undoubtedly shaped the experiences the women described, the focus of this research is the women and their lived experiences, how they have experienced the fundraising profession and personally came to make sense of it. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect their identities. In addition, some personals details, changed with the approval of each participant, have been altered to protect their identities. It was my privilege to partner with Madeline, Ivy, Hillary, Vivian, and Hailey to tell their stories and I thank them for their trust and candor.

Madeline
"Friend to some, mentor to all."

At the time of our initial interview, Madeline was a major gift fundraiser assigned to a specific region of the United States at a large public university in the Midwest. In addition to her fundraising responsibilities, Madeline oversaw a training program for entry-level development officers at the institution. During our nearly two-hour conversation, we met in her office where we exchanged pleasantries and I reiterated the focus of my dissertation. Madeline found the topic engaging and subsequently, we continued to communicate about my research findings and the implications of this work. Following that interview, she shared an email with me that she sent to a superior regarding her experience being sexually harassed in the organization. This email also informed the creation of this portrait and was used, with feedback from Madeline, carefully as to protect her identity.

To paint the picture of Madeline, it was critical to understand her connection to family, her husband and two sons, as well as her childhood, all of which came up repeatedly in our conversation. This portrait explored ways in which Madeline viewed her professional role as a fundraiser and her identity as a mother. Roles, she posited, that are not always compatible in the high pressure profession of major gift fundraising. What's it like to be Madeline, a mother that works as a professional fundraiser? Madeline's portrait revealed the rewarding dimensions of her profession including authentic relationships with donors that led to scholarships and research funding. In Madeline's experience, the role she played as "uber-mentor" within the organization was a source of great joy, in particular when her mentees succeeded, but this emotional labor was often dismissed and valued less than fundraising performance. Madeline described herself as a compassionate, hardworking, and ambitious fundraiser, but she was also a whistleblower---a salient identity that we explored in greater detail within her interview and portrait.

Family and Fundraising

For Madeline, her personal identity at home and within her family superseded her professional roles. She explained, "If I think about the roles I play now as an adult, I first and foremost identify as a mom." This isn't without tension, she shared:

There's always the struggle of back and forth and there's traditional roles. I like working. I enjoy it. It is a means to an end for me, it allows me to do things I want to do with my family and my job is never more important than that. I guess I would say I identify ethnically as a Hispanic woman, but if you were talking about roles how would I describe myself? I'm a mom. I'm a wife. All of these family relationships, I'm a sister. I'm a daughter. Oh, and then by the way I do this for living.

The importance of family was central to Madeline's lived experiences. She offered descriptions of both her childhood and raising children, about the personal opportunities, and professional risks that can be associated with prioritizing family in the fundraising profession.

A middle child, Madeline looked up to an older sister and served as "care-taker" for her brother with autism from an early age. She possessed a "dream" to help not only her brother, but others with "special needs":

My whole goal growing up was I was going to win the lottery and then I was going to open this clinic. It was going to be a clinic that employed special needs people but also had doctors, and therapists, and physical therapy, and outpatient therapy for anyone who had special needs.

She did not have formal training, but her compassion and interest in other people's perspectives guided her forward, leading her to serve as a research assistant exploring the impact of music therapy for people with autism. As a college student, she stayed home to help take care of her

brother, never living in a dorm or on-campus while completing her bachelor's degree. Madeline described her identity at the time: "For me, I was the middle kid making sure I was taking care of everybody."

After graduation from college, Madeline gravitated to the non-profit world, initially working for an educational organization as a recruiter and subsequently as a gift officer at her alma mater for 15 years. Citing her experience in her hometown's school district, Madeline noted her motivation for taking her first job recruiting urban teachers:

> Wherever you're born should not determine your educational opportunities. Going to [my first job as a teacher recruiter] I'm learning that and then being exposed to education and the lack of opportunities for students here in the U.S. made me think, "Oh, higher ed, well that makes sense. If I can be a part of that change then clearly I'm still doing the work that I had set out to do in the non-profit world.

While fundraising was a departure from her first professional experience as a recruiter, it presented a new opportunity to make an impact:

> I think, I feel like it's a responsibility for me. I received an opportunity because parents and scholarships and I think I want someone else to have that. When I fundraise, I feel like there are so many people who I can help and impact. If it wasn't for those folks or someone giving back I probably wouldn't have the same opportunities.

Family, Madeline shared, was her number one priority, over fundraising. However, there was a balance that she struggled to find, pushing her to "compartmentalize" her worlds. She confessed, she's "not very good at compartmentalizing at the workplace" and that her inability to separate her personal and professional identities was a "double-edged sword." She explained,

I think [its] an asset because, I think I really do, I do try to put myself in someone else's

shoes. I try to relate. I think it's the relationship piece of it that I really like and then it

might be because I'm pretty open to having that and wanting an authentic relationship

with my donors. Yeah, I think it can be an asset, but I also think it's very like at the end

of the day when I go home do I want to be on the phone talking and tending to my

relationships [with donors] outside my nuclear family? That's a struggle.

Striving for "authentic" relationships with donors, Madeline, articulated a willingness to

cautiously share information about her personal and familial life with donors; "I think sometimes

I hold back on my personal experience because, first off, it's not about me, but the best

relationships I have and the best donors I have want to know about me and my family and have

really a relationship." Relatedly, Madeline drew on her appreciation of family when working

with elderly donors:

I love older people [donors]. They will meet with you. They will talk to you. You pretty

much have to kind of limit their time. Yea, I was a granddaughter to someone… I have a

donor who lives in a retirement home here in town that I get toilet paper and soap for her

every two weeks. I take her on her visits, or her appointments, I shouldn't say visits. I

take her to the doctor and dentist.

This was not simply a transaction for Madeline; it was an expression of family; "I have adopted

her and that's just how it's gonna be."

For Madeline, family was a set priority and familial structures of which she is familiar

shaped aspects of her fundraising practice. However, Madeline determined that family and

fundraising do not always mix in the workplace, an experience that Madeline recalled vividly:

When I was having children I decided I wasn't going to travel. It's really interesting to me and I've always wondered and questioned, we have so many alumni living here. Why is it a requirement for everyone to have to travel outside of the state? It doesn't make sense to me financially and I thought and I… opportunities pass me by because I wasn't willing do that.

Even having that conversation with an executive manager at one point after I had my second child, so that's almost 10 years ago about where I wanted to be. I said, "I have kids and I want to be home every night. If that means I'm going to be an Assistant Director for the long haul, that's okay."... It was internalized by that management, that person in a higher position as my somehow saying she was a bad mom because she traveled. I was like, "What?" Then of course it got all over and that, "You got to be careful about what you say."

I grew up in a house where you just said what you needed to say and you figured it out. You knew I was coming from a different perspective and that's okay. I just didn't understand that. I guess navigating this world, I wish I wasn't as open in the beginning. I think that hurt me, I think that really did. I see people have gotten a lot farther than I have in the 15 years that I've been here by just doing what they're told. It's a balance but I mean that at the end of the day I think I've done well here. I just think I wish I wouldn't have been so open.

In Madeline's life, trust was central to a feeling of safety both personally and professionally. As a child, she and her sister took care of her brother with autism while her parents worked and through the challenges associated with her father's alcoholism. There was a concern for her dad and his well-being, but she forged ahead entrusted with her brother's care. Her nuclear family

and their home were pivotal to her story and these bonds were shaped by care-taking. Professionally, she only kept a few close confidants; "There's only a few people that I really trust and it's because I've been burned." Interestingly though, and it harkened back to her childhood experiences, Madeline found a way to compartmentalize her colleagues, encapsulating her motto, "Friend to some, mentor to all." She feels a need to help "if someone asks me I have to help them. I was afforded a lot of wonderful advice and support like that's part of being a professional person." But this was quickly followed by an observation: "I've learned not to befriend a lot of people [in the workplace]."

Reflecting on changes in the development profession, increasing professionalization, and the steady drumbeat of fundraising goals, Madeline utilized "family" as a metaphor. She explained,

It [the fundraising profession at her institution] has changed from a family to this is business. I operate better in a family environment so I try to… I'm trying to make it here. This is big business, you're in or you're out. You produce, or you don't. It's not about taking care of people anymore and when I started it was all about that, if you got a gift it was celebrated. Not it's like, "That's all you got? Hm. Okay."

A care-taker all her life, for her brother, her children, her donors and mentees, Madeline faced ongoing tension as the pressure on her and fellow fundraisers increased and seemed at odds with her desire to create a supportive work environment. For the associates in her program, this means "to ensure that they understand that they were special and chosen for a reason because this job can be really tough."

The "Responsible" Fundraiser

Madeline found the fundraising profession by accident. She shared, "I never thought about growing up and asking people for money." After living and working in a large Midwestern city, she returned to her hometown after her husband received a new job. Looking for a new opportunity, she leveraged connections at her alma mater to explore careers in admissions and institutional advancement. At the time of our first interview, Madeline determined that she had worked in fundraising for 15 years.

Over and over, Madeline used the word "responsibility" to describe her fundraising work; "I feel like it's a responsibility for me." This sense of commitment was defined by her perception that philanthropy could provide opportunity where there was a lack of it; "When I fundraise I feel there are so many people who I can help and impact." This, however, would be an oversimplification of the responsibility she felt in her professional and personal life. At home, she was responsible for the finances and the kids' appointments. At work, in addition to fundraising, she was responsible for mentoring new fundraisers. A dimension to her work that she described as her "responsibility to build them [the new development staff] and make them feel confident in asking for money and that's what I do on a daily basis." In her youth, responsibility shaped her:

> My sister and I were, you should know, we were overachievers. My sister went [away to college] when she was 16 on a full ride and became a chemical engineer and is doing her thing. For me, I was the middle kid making sure I was taking care of everybody. I wasn't going to go away to school because there were so many responsibilities.

While she might try to "compartmentalize" her work and personal life, it was clear that a sense of responsibility cut across her life contexts manifesting as a deep loyalty to those she cared about, her children, family, staff, and donors.

Making Donors "Comfortable"

Madeline styled herself a "networker connector" a fundraising professional that facilitated a connection, a match, between donors and their interests at the institution; "I love solutions and I think when someone says, 'Well, I think I might be interested in this.' I like finding that." Having a regional fundraising assignment, cultivating prospects and donors within an assigned geographic area, Madeline underscored the importance and joy in collaboration with colleagues:

> I think I'm a collaborator working in a regional position. It works for me because I can worth with all of my colleagues and it's funny because I actually have more fun when I'm working with someone so the regional based composition works for me.

In her fundraising practice, Madeline perceived one of her core responsibilities as helping donors feel comfortable with her, building rapport so that prospects and donors will open up, discuss their philanthropic interests, make a gift, and continue an ongoing relationship with her and the institution. For Madeline, the process was also personal and, she recalled, something she learned in her childhood:

> I think I'm a pleaser and I've always been accommodating because I like things to be pretty even keel. Some things could be chaotic growing up, right? We didn't know about what was going to happen with [my brother]. We didn't know if my dad was going to come home drunk. Okay, so I like my environment to be pretty calm, but I like people to feel good. I like people to like me and so when I'm meeting with them I want them to feel

comfortable with me. I feel like it's an amazing happy coincidence that I get to talk for a

living and make people feel good. I feel like I've been probably doing that for my whole

life.

I asked Madeline to describe her advantages and challenges in fundraising, what she revealed

highlighted racial undertones not often openly discussed in the fundraising profession:

I think advantages, I think I build rapport pretty quickly. I think that's an advantage. I talk

a lot. I hope I listen a lot too. I think I put people at ease. It's interesting because I thought

about this…. I was thinking about a challenge and about looking the way I look, people

would probably not identify me as Hispanic, or Mexican, or whatever you want to say. If

you saw my dad's picture you'd be like, "Oh yeah, 100% Mexican," but I look more like

my mom.

As a Hispanic woman, as she identified, Madeline took note of her ability to "pass as White, so I

make people feel comfortable" and indicated that this ability was an asset with many prospects

and donors. She acknowledged that her portfolio consists of "primarily White Americans."

Within the organization, she described feeling as though she "checks a box" of diversity, while

simultaneously not being "diverse enough" acknowledging that "physical diversity" is what the

organization was looking for, though she personally defined diversity much more broadly.

Madeline portrayed the organizational pressure to consider her personal presentation

while working with donors. She concurrently acknowledged that if she "looks better" it has an

impact on her own self-esteem:

I think there's a look. I think about the attractiveness. I feel like my presentation, how I

present myself. It used to be kind of a joke I would never do my hair. I'd put it up in a

bun or whatever. You knew when I had meetings because I would wear my hair down

and it was curled and I was looking a certain way. I do think there is a presentation. I

think there's an expectation with women specifically. I can't speak to a man, I can't. I feel

a pressure to represent the university so I have to look a certain way and I have to act a

certain way. There's a responsibility in that but there also is that whole idea if I look

better, I feel better and I'm gonna ask for more money because I'm so competent.

Considering the drive to make donors feel comfortable, I asked Madeline to reflect on whether

her performance in the act of fundraising caused her stress. She disclosed,

You know what? I guess I've never really thought about it but, yes. I don't know if it

creates stress for me but I'm pretty aware of it. This person needs something different

from me. Again, I think that's in every part of our lives. You [sic] need something

different than my son, my youngest son, or my oldest son would need from me, my

children. I guess I never really thought of that as being bad or have a negative. I think it's

just the roles we play and every person needs something different. I think that can be

stressful just because it's exhausting. When you have to meet 15 to 20 people and have

face to face conversations about who they are, what they're doing. You have to make sure

you're remembering all of the stuff about them because they know you and [the

institution] and they remember all of your stuff. They think they're the only one, right?

They're the only one that you care this much about.

I have to remember, "Oh, I have to go and prepare. I have to remember, "Oh, their

dog is Skeeter and this is ..." All of those things because you need to project that they're

so important to who you are and what you do that it's not really [the institution] anymore.

It's a relationship and, "Madeline's going to tell me some cool things about [the

institution]," but she's just gonna make me feel this way. "I feel good about giving to [the

institution]." I don't know how you cannot tailor to them.

While we all perform, Madeline acknowledged, being a fundraiser required her to consider her

performance and recall stories and personal details about donors, all of which can be

"exhausting."

Overcoming Intimidation

Growing up, Madeline "didn't know people could give this much money" and she has

consciously learned to navigate conversations and interactions with extremely wealthy prospects

and donors. At this point in her career, she shared she feels "desensitized" to money. She

revealed an inside look into her thought process; "You know what? They're just people and if

they have a desire to give to MSU, I'm the expert in that. You can be the expert in whatever you

do, but giving back to MSU, that's my job." Layered with the challenge of relating to individuals

wielding financial power and privilege, she still struggles with a level of intimidation along the

lines of gender:

I will talk to any woman, any female, but I still get intimated by men. I think there's

something growing up, and who I am, and cultural perspective, and how that plays into it.

I have to suck it up and find a way to just, they're just people, anyway.

Madeline elaborated further on the power struggle inherit in fundraising profession. That as a

result of building relationships, her goal was to secure financial support for the institution:

I think there's an intimidation in the power struggle too, because sometimes being a

fundraiser can feel very noble. I try to focus on that. I also have thought to myself it's not

a service. I'm not on a date. It can feel very date-like. I've been hit on. I've been made to

feel demeaned. It's interesting. It's interesting [sic] how you act because at the end of the

day, I need to get this money so there's sometimes you feel like a prostitute. I'm not

surprised it's a female dominated field, because we are really, we're asking for money

and I've had people say, "Do you ever feel like a whore?" I don't know, I think the line

has to be defined by you and what… Can you sleep at night? Do I feel a pressure to get a

gift and kind of use what I got some time? Yeah, I have. I have. There have been people

who have made me feel that way, yea.

"Can you sleep at night?" A question from which I inferred Madeline's belief that ultimately it

was an expectation of each fundraiser to understand their own moral code and ethical standards.

Madeline's unease with these "intimidation" factors have decreased over time, specifically after

two life milestones:

I think my confidence totally increased after becoming a mom and getting my master's

degree. I'm just a different person. I'm older and I have more experience at this, so of

course my confidence is different.

Overcoming intimidation at various points in her career, Madeline prepared for one of the most

difficult roles she would play in her life, the role of whistle-blower.

The "Whistleblower"

Madeline faced challenges in her fundraising practice, including men in positions of

power that could not demarcate the boundaries of personal and professional relationships.

Madeline experienced outright sexual harassment from both donors and a senior administrator

within her own organization. The latter pushed her to file an official complaint within the

University system. While she did not consider herself a hero, she boldly spoke out to protect

students working within her organization.

Like many women in fundraising, Madeline was "hit on" and "demeaned" by men during the fundraising process. If she decided to persist with those prospect and donor relationships, she made a calculation about the best way to manage the situation. What could she tolerate? In one example, Madeline determined it was best to take a colleague because of how uncomfortable the situation made her:

> I'm thinking of a guy and this sounds so bad too because then I almost joke about it because I'm uncomfortable. I'll call him the Silver Fox, right? I'll go, "Oh, the Silver Fox." I try to downplay it. He is harmless. He likes my attention, and you know that. I can call him up right now and get a visit. I could get any kind of time I wanted with him because he thinks I'm cute or he thinks ... Whatever I make him feel, he likes my company. Now I usually go with a colleague because I'm like, "Eh, this feels gross."

While she traversed challenging and inappropriate behaviors from prospects and donors, it was the actions of a male supervisor that would push her to a breaking point. Madeline was objectified and harassed at work in front of her colleagues and behind closed doors, causing her "endless anxiety." Five years after the experience, she expressed her feelings in an email which she shared with me. She wrote,

> Over the last five years, I have been a bad actor. I have pushed down my feelings of rage, disappointment and disgust with what happened to me and several of my colleagues. I was groomed by a predator who unfortunately decided I was available prey. The idea that I had to attend mandatory meetings at this man's home because of his position of power provided me with endless anxiety because at the end of the event, he wanted to ensure I hugged him. Being labeled an "up and comer" and feeling as if this person took WAY too much interest in my personal life while pretending he wanted to elevate me

professionally was a gross abuse of power. I had lived a charmed professional life up to

that point and was confused and appalled that I would be the target of such inappropriate

actions in the workplace. I often would analyze my behavior, what I wore, and the

amount of time I would have to interact with this him in order to appear fine, and dubbed

a good employee-again, I was such a bad actor. When this man decided to touch me

every chance he got, I tried to validate him, until he pulled my ponytail in front of

witnesses. The bad actor in me wanted to ignore it happened, but real, wonderful

colleagues would not let me. It took so much energy out of me and I felt extremely alone

in bringing this inappropriate behavior to light. There were times I was made to feel like

a "drama queen" or having an agenda.

Experiencing immense pain, Madeline tried to dismiss the behavior to manage the situation as

she had managed inappropriate prospects and donors in the past. Around the same time as

Madeline's harasser pulled her ponytail in front of her colleagues, she also learned that he was

harassing a student working in her organization at which point she filed a sexual harassment

claim. It was not until she mentioned that the student was being harassed that the institution took

her claim seriously:

I'm not a hero in that because I didn't do anything until I found out a student was being…

I mean, we all have our breaking points, I get it. But there is a part of me that was like,

"You didn't think I was worth enough? I was telling you what was happening.

In the end, Madeline's harasser left the organization on his own accord, but the wounds he

inflicted on her remained raw as she saw members of the organization that down-played or

dismissed the behavior, haunted by the question one manager posed, "Don't you think you

probably misunderstood?" The identity of "whistle-blower" now permanently a part of her sense

of self, an identity that she believed some within her organization associated with casual
complaining.

"Uber-Mentor"

Through the pain and hurt, Madeline endured. She fundraised. She mentored her staff and
newcomers to the profession:

> I also think I'm a professional cheerleader in that sense. It's my job to make people feel
> good whether I'm asking them to give money to the university or I'm asking them to do a
> job because I want them to stay here. I want them to love this job. It's been really good to
> me.

Madeline's decision to be an "uber-mentor," though undoubtedly developed over time, seemed a
direct response to her own mistreatment:

> My responsibility, and where I'm at, and where I sit is to make sure people feel valued
> and they can go on and they don't need to be in this training program for the rest of their
> career because they're good.

I inquired about the legacy that she would like to leave at her institution. Her response had
nothing to do with the dollars she raised; it was all about people:

> I hope people say I was kind and that I treated them well and I helped them, and when
> they sought out my help that I gave it because other people helped me. I hope that's what
> people think of, maybe they don't. Maybe they, well it was my hope anyway.

She was quick to remind me how she kept her role in perspective and reiterated her focus on her
most important mentees: "I know why I'm doing what I'm doing. I work so that my kids can have
opportunities just like anybody else. This job is a fulfilling job, but it is a job."

Lasting Impression

Madeline's worldview was shaped by loyalty to family, her brother, her alma mater, and to the belief that the fundraising profession could be better for women. Giving her all at work and at home, she was driven to improve the lives of those around her, whether her children, donors, or mentees. She adeptly exposed the contradictions present within the higher education fundraising landscape and many of the unwritten rules for women that hope to succeed as major gift officers. Madeline may have faced breaking points, but they did not break her. They, in many ways, clarified her beliefs and reinforced the centrality of family as her main priority in life.

Ivy

"You give a little of yourself so that you can ask that of them as well."

I met Ivy late on a Friday afternoon. Ivy was rocking a t-shirt branded in her alma mater and employer's logo and jeans. Her youthful energy filled the lobby of the apartment complex immediately upon her arrival. A Black woman with a bubbly personality and knack for "fast talking," Ivy worked for a large public university as a regional development officer. At the time of our interview, she had been in her role a little over a year. Prior to that, she worked for a company that provided fundraising services for a variety of non-profit entities. A tenacious fundraiser, Ivy's professional and personal experiences were influenced by her identity as an adoptee into a White family. We explored how she learned the impact and importance of philanthropy through her family as well as her challenge to find a supportive professional network.

In complete transparency, I visited Ivy's city for two reasons: to visit friends and to conduct the interview with her (in that order). Thankfully, she was able to meet with me around my already established plans. When I inquired about finding a private space to meet, she suggested a few mobile office locations. Finding they were quite pricey and limited in availability, she agreed without hesitation to meet me at my friend's apartment while he was out for drinks with my husband. I was struck by Ivy's willingness to meet at an apartment in which she (nor I) had ever been. She had no fear of visiting in private with a man she had never met in person. Noting my own anxiety and her potential discomfort during the interview arrangements, I made a point to emphasize I was married to a man and the apartment belonged to my friend (also a man) and his husband. She would share with me later in our conversation how she managed her fear about similar situations meeting "solo" in private homes with prospects and donors who were, she assessed, mostly White men.

"A Second Chance at Life"

Ivy was born in Haiti and adopted by a White family in the rural Midwest at a young age. She described her adoption as a "second chance at life" for which she felt incredibly grateful. Her desire to "give back in some way" was shaped by her adoptive family's service to others:

We always volunteered growing up. Christmas we would hand out gifts to the local shelter, we worked Thanksgiving. We would serve a local soup kitchen, and we were part of a church that did when I was in youth group growing up. We did a lot of volunteering and yeah, and ministries, we'd do mission trips every summer. So, we go all across the US for a week at a time doing mission trips. So, yeah. I would say it was pretty well bestowed upon me.

In addition to service, Ivy was always "in the know" of her family's charitable giving. For birthdays and other holidays, donations were made in her name to a variety of charitable organizations, including the agency which her parents employed to adopt her. Ivy "was always aware of the actual monetary part of giving back as well as gifts of time and service."

Ivy found her family's commitment to service and philanthropy in natural alignment with her own personal values and the community in which she grew up. When it came to her personal identity as an adoptee, however, she expressed some dissonance:

For me, it's very complicated because I always say I can't just check a box, you know. With being adopted from Haiti, it's really funny, my mom is always pushing Haitian-American. She is very adamant this is my box and I don't really feel that. I feel just American because I've been to Haiti once and I definitely found it was not my culture now.

Navigating her undergraduate experience, Ivy intentionally explored her identity. She studied the

language of her country of birth. She tested different labels, but resolved, there will always be

"friction between the two sides":

> I would say it's much like a mixed individual who has that, where each side kind of wants
>
> you to claim them wholly but you can't, right. So, I can't give up who raised me and who
>
> developed me but I also can't not represent the Black woman that I am.

The Bubbly, Tenacious, Fast-Paced, Efficient Fundraiser

Ivy described herself as a "bubbly," "tenacious," "fast-paced," and "efficient" fundraiser.

She identified a tension between her need to create a "pre-plan" for donor meetings and her

inclination to simply "go out and do it." She shared, "I create a beautiful plan and then it

somehow unravels, and then I'm stuck just having to go with the flow, which I kind of hate." In

the process, she quickly described her favorite part of the work, hearing the stories of alumni and

donors. She offered,

> I just love their stories. I just love their stories more. I think I love people's stories more
>
> than my own, and that's where I get into wanting them to share. I just love when other
>
> people share.

Ivy felt more comfortable listening to donors than she did sharing insights into her life with

them. Donor meetings typically involved her asking some questions, allowing donors to talk, and

providing them with just enough information about herself to ensure a personal connection:

> It's not really a skill, it's whatever. I found that kind of my entire life complete strangers
>
> will just tell me things and I'm like, why are you telling me this? I'm shocked because I
>
> don't share anything with anyone, so I'm shocked and horrified, they feel comfortable

sharing. Now in development, I feel like I can use that for good. Instead of strangers, I

can be like, "Hey, why don't you tell me the crazy things and it doesn't feel as weird."

Navigating Racial Differences in Fundraising

While it felt natural to prompt donors to share their stories and protect the details of her

own experience, she acknowledged that this dynamic might look different if she encountered

more donors she could identify with. In most cases, her meetings take place with "White males"

between "30 and 60":

I get really excited every once in a while, like when I stalk someone and I'm like, I know

it's terrible, but I'm like oh my gosh, he's gay. This is at least a more interesting person to

meet with than my typical. Or a woman, I'm like oh hey, it's another woman. That's really

exciting. I would say, in my year and a half with [my institution], I think I only met with

one other Black individual and it was a male. I think that's it. I feel like I'm being ... We'll

say maybe two because in the moment my memory is probably eluding me. I think for

me, sometimes it's like oh, it would be just nice to sit down and have a development

conversation with someone that you just feel instantly a little more connection to.

Managing relationships with donors of color presented its own challenges given, Ivy cited, her

up-bringing in a White family: "I've had issues when I've met with minority, and especially

Black, donors, that I'm not who they expect because my culture doesn't reflect what they expect

from me." Ivy posited that the primary dimension of this disconnect initially centered on "how

she speaks" and her proclivity to "talk like a White person" rather than employ, or feel

comfortable using, "Black English":

… I think that's where I'm able to connect and build that trust with White donors because there is this level of comfort and then I do miss out on it sometimes with Black donors. I think it's just about being your authentic self and people in all spectrums respect that.

Ivy saw the advantages of her upbringing manifested in fundraising. She proclaimed, "White people love me!" and "Midwest people just love me":

I speak in a way that is comfortable for them and everything. So, for me, it's really different I think in that way. That's why I feel it's hard to wrap up exactly who I am. I am this conglomeration of many things.

Ivy recognized her complex identity as an asset, owned it as part of her work, and acknowledged that she consciously adapted to how she perceived the donor's preferences:

I think part of me does like that about development is getting to play a role in that it's kind of like an everyday acting. I do, I feel like should I kind of play up like who, which character, you know. Do they need me to be like the super "girl next door" or are they kind of enjoying having we'll say like the Black card, and meeting with this person that's giving them some diversity points today, and they're feeling really good connecting with this person.

In a previous role, Ivy visited many small, rural towns in the Midwest with predominantly White residents. She recalled an occasion when she hosted a public meeting for a client:

I would swear to you that the [meeting attendees] showed up because I was so intriguing to them. I would joke with my colleagues, but it was also very real to me. I think that they showed up to the meeting because they were like oh the Black girl's coming to town, and this is interesting and different for us and we don't have much else going on. I truly believe that that was it.

Attendees joined the meeting in droves and also verbalized their curiosity:

> They were just fascinated. All the questions. All the questions about my hair. All the
>
> questions about just everything. It was like I have a feeling that my little petite, blonde
>
> colleague would not get all these questions, right.

"Little Seed of Doubt" in "Podunk Towns"

For Ivy, being a woman in fundraising required balancing a sense of humor and a frank assessment of the risks of traveling to places which may not be safe for her as a woman, especially as a Black woman. Simultaneously joking and expressing a genuine concern, Ivy pondered, "Is there enough information on the calendar invite that the police will find this person? I hope." Meaning, could the prospect or donor be found if she did not return from her trip? If something went wrong, how long would it take for someone to notice she was missing? As a regionally based development officer, working out of a home office, she did not report physically back to the main development office for weeks at a time.

Ivy approached her visits to "podunk towns" with a genuine interest in the people she met and an acute awareness of her surroundings. She combatted the "little seed of doubt" in her mind by focusing on the advantages of meeting donors and prospects in their home, a space in which they tended to be more comfortable and willing to open up about their philanthropic plans. She rationalized her safety:

> People that are going to accept these meetings, they tend to be good people and I've never
>
> had an issue, but it's kind of always there in the back of your mind. Like well, it's on my
>
> calendar. Like, it's on my calendar so if I die and I don't make it out of this meeting, the
>
> police are going to look at my calendar and retrace my steps, right. That's all I can think

and it's kind of weird because I think other people, more than likely men, possibly don't

often think that when they're going into a meeting…

In her experience, these safety concerns were discussed to an extent by her teammates and

supervisors, often informally. Notably, she shared that it was easier to discuss them with her

current supervisor, a woman:

> My director is thankfully a woman as well, and so that makes a difference I think. Then it
>
> was easy. Yeah, and I didn't even think that if I'd had a male director, I probably would
>
> not have said anything. Honest to goodness, because how do you bring that up to a guy
>
> because it's just hard to make that relatable, like hey, have you had the experience where
>
> you're going to a donor's house and you're a little uncertain? I mean, you're a little like,
>
> okay, hopefully this is okay, like what's going to happen here.

Women supervisors, in Ivy's estimation, shared a common understanding of the risks of

fundraising, while men in leadership roles needed to be awakened to them. She recalled a male

supervisor that told a story about the company's transition from a workforce dominated by men

to one that consisted of a female majority. In this transition, women reported to him that they felt

uncomfortable staying in hotels that did not have restaurants on property, because they felt

personally unsafe going to restaurants off site. Ivy saw this heightened awareness positively:

> So now it's pretty much a requirement or we make sure that wherever we send you that
>
> there's a restaurant in your hotel or you can always ask for that. It was him
>
> acknowledging that they never thought about this as men, right, because they would go to
>
> these podunk towns, and they would just go to the local watering hole, and have dinner at
>
> the bar, and it was fine, right. They never would never think about what it is as a single
>
> woman trying to eat dinner at the bar, but it's very understandable when you travel, right.

I got used to it and I don't mind eating on my own at all, but it's true, you're just going to

have some potential barriers when you're going to a bar. I just mostly sit at the bar

because that's what I like, but yeah, when you sit at the bar you kind of know that you are

inviting a potential person to talk to you who may sit on either side of you. That's part of

fundraising. For men, it's really easy and you all are gonna hit it off and whatever.

Sometimes I'm like I don't really want to talk to this person that's really talking to me.

In these scenarios, she found she could choose one of two paths: "Either I have to be a bitch,

right, or suck it up and talk to this person."

Professional Growth as a Black Woman in Fundraising

Ivy identified herself as a young professional, someone with "boundless energy" that

fueled a desire for professional growth. However, finding opportunities for growth within and

outside her organization proved to be a challenge. She wrestled with whether or not she wanted

to become pigeon-holed as a "diversity expert" within her organization. This path almost seemed

expected of her as one of two Black women fundraisers. During discussions of diversity

initiatives, to engage donors of color, for example, Ivy often questioned, "…why are you looking

at me? You can do it, too. We all have a responsibility to do it." In one instance, after the

departure of a colleague that ran a giving circle for people of color, she conveyed,

Then part of me feels like I have to take that up. Now that he's gone, if I won't do it, who

will? Then part of me is like, I'm tired, right. I think it puts minorities or whoever into a

tough position where there is an expectation to take that on but you also kind of just want

to be like everybody else, too.

Ivy viewed this as the reality for the only other Black woman fundraiser in the organization as

well, a development officer several years her senior. Ivy considered approaching her to serve as a

mentor. She recalled finding the fundraiser to be:

> …just like so closed, so standoffish. And, I think that that comes from different areas,
>
> right. Having to have fought for yourself to get so far and to just feel like "I am here now,
>
> and I don't want more holding me back."

Ivy felt conflicted. She understood why this woman may not have an interest in playing mentor

to the other Black woman fundraiser: "So I get that it's a double-edged sword on that. I want it

from her but then don't want it from my colleagues. That's why I say I can understand. I can

understand her side."

Mentoring young fundraisers, like serving as diversity educator, did not result in greater

compensation nor was it explicitly rewarded within her organization.

With limited opportunities for relevant mentorship internally, Ivy turned her attention to

the broader community in her city. She viewed finding a relevant "networking space or a career

development area" as an important next step in her professional growth. Ivy shared,

> So I come to [large metropolitan area] and I'm like okay, well I have two areas I want to
>
> grow in anyway. I want to get a development network or nonprofit professional of some
>
> sort, and then yeah, I mean I finally just left White bread [Midwest state], I can finally get
>
> some diversity up in here and it has been hard finding a group.

Ivy turned to the internet to search for possible groups. Finding one of interest, she examined

their website and found photos that only featured White women. She ruled it out as they "can't

speak to some of the more specific challenges that I'm having." In addition to searching online,

she attended events with friends and colleagues, but did not find a professional development

home:

> So then I'm kind of back to the drawing board and looking for a group that is diverse
>
> enough. Then do I find an all-Black group and that's okay. It's kind of the struggle both
>
> within the [development] field but also professionally and how do you find a professional
>
> network that kind of speaks to you and can help develop you. It's a challenge.

Ivy's struggle to find supportive, inclusive, and relevant professional networks only reinforced

her belief that having a support network of professional women was critical to success in the

profession:

> [To new women in fundraising] I would say get a network because there are questions for
>
> women specifically in fundraising and it's nice to have it. I'm fortunate to have a female
>
> director who I can ask those weird questions of in those moments and also female
>
> colleagues. But if you're not comfortable with your colleagues, find someone because
>
> there's going to be lots of questions, and we as women tend to gut check ourselves a lot
>
> more. I've been working on that whole motto of "think like a man" and just go for it and
>
> be less apologetic. I think by having a strong network you can find the way to be without
>
> having to think like a man. Find your own way, but also to allow yourself to gut check,
>
> but not over do it.

Expressly for women of color joining the profession, she added,

> What I wish someone had told me is that it's okay to have your own journey and have
>
> different experiences. I think sometimes it's so easy to lump it into like women
>
> development officers, and like we're all going to have ... In some ways, it's almost like the
>
> whole getting pulled over while driving. Yeah, in some ways my White colleague is

statistically going to have a better opportunity in that situation and meeting with donors. Like yeah, 5'10" blondie over there is going to maybe connect with more of these donors in a way, and so it's okay that my journey is a little different. I may have to turn it on a little bit more and that's okay.

Lasting Impression

Ivy's bubbly personality was energizing. It was abundantly clear why, throughout her life, people in her orbit openly shared their stories, experiences, and feelings with her. As she confirmed, "People like me. Thank goodness." The subsequent imbalance in information sharing provided her a layer of protection, allowing her to conceal her own "complicated" identity and upbringing as a Black adoptee in a White family. Ivy enjoyed the "everyday acting" associated with fundraising and consciously decided to "play up" the character that would be most advantageous in establishing the relationship with a specific prospect or donor. While not frequently disclosing her identity as an adoptee into a White family, she recognized the advantages her upbringing afforded given most of the prospects and donors she worked with were White.

Hillary
"...I think this profession is a good balance of doing well and doing good."

Hillary was a major gift fundraiser dedicated to diversity programs at a large Midwestern research institution. Upon learning about my dissertation research and my search for participants from a colleague, she eagerly agreed to partner with me on this project. We met at her office and she spoke to me late on a Friday afternoon. This Friday meeting could have been a sign of her busy schedule, but I took it as a sign of her eagerness to share her experiences. The latter seemed to be true. Hillary opened up about her experiences as a Black woman working in higher education fundraising and provided me an extensive look into her feelings, experiences, and challenges. She was incredibly optimistic about the profession and was abundantly clear she enjoyed her assignment in diversity programs. Compared to many fundraisers, Hillary found the profession early on in her college career. She shared, "I got very fortunate I think in that I fell into fundraising early." Through a senior class gift program, she learned the development ropes at her undergraduate alma mater and subsequently worked at two other institutions, including her current employer.

Hillary's upbringing beckoned her to do good in the world. Both of her parents emphasized the importance of education, public service, and giving back. In our conversation, we explored the roots of these values as a platform from which she conducts her work as a fundraiser. She opened up about her fundraising style, identity as a young, Black woman, and some of the nuances of her experience navigating her organization as one of two Black women fundraisers. Hired to fundraise on behalf of diversity programs, Hillary was also charged with educating other fundraising professionals within the organization about diversity and diverse donor populations. This was a mutually agreed upon part of her job description and she was compensated for the educational work. She expertly described, however, how this form of

diversity work was the norm for people of color. Most of the time, like at her last institution, people of color were not compensated for this labor nor was it considered when evaluating performance and contributions to the organization. Hillary described herself as motivated, enthusiastic, dedicated, and caring.

Family Values

Hillary was born into a family engaged in the public sphere as politicians, journalists, and educators. In all of their various roles, they viewed themselves as public servants, and that's how Hillary saw her role as a development officer. She explained, "Service is definitely something that we always talked a lot about in my family." Hillary described leveraging different types of wealth, what she categorized as financial capital, social wealth, and social capital. Her family might not have the "financial capital" they wish they did, but their social connections provided them access and regard within their various communities. Hillary provided an example in which a family friend made a large donation to her college when she started working there:

> …when I got there, she was like, "I've been holding onto this gift for a couple years and I've been wanting to give, and I like you and I want you to get credit for it. So here you go, have that.

Hillary's family valued education and giving back. They communicated those values as expectations in various "mantras." Hillary elaborated,

> Education I think is one of the ... like it's a value, it's a value. But the importance of education and what that does in terms of economic mobility of opportunity that it can provide others. And the other's giving back. A phrase in my family that all of my grandparents drilled into my head was do as much, give as much as expected. For me, I

think this profession is a good balance of doing well and doing good. So that's what I

look for.

Hillary's parents did more than preach about education and giving back, they were role models

for Hillary and her sister. "Giving back" started in church:

We didn't necessarily call it philanthropy, I think for us philanthropy was this thing Bill

Gates does, but my parents were always active in their church, my dad, but we didn't

tithe, my dad was always very regular with his contributions.

For both Hillary and her parents, giving back was a central component of the family's

experiences in Black sororities and fraternities:

They're both involved in Black sororities and fraternities, which I'm in a Black sorority

too, which is always puts a big emphasis on giving back and so I think lots of small gifts

lots of places, he gives to [his alma mater], he gives to [another university], my mom

gives to [her alma mater] where she's an alum. So it was something that I did think about.

Rooted in these values, it was natural that Hillary gravitated toward philanthropic activities in

college. The first was a senior class gift campaign in which she was tapped to raise funds for a

bench to honor her class' graduation. This involved fundraising from graduating students and

trying to solicit major donors to match those funds.

The "Relational" Fundraiser

Hillary's warmth and humor were hallmarks of our time together. It was easy to imagine

her in a donor meeting, connecting and building personal rapport in a short period of time.

Hillary characterized herself as a "relational fundraiser":

I think I am a very relational fundraiser, I think. In that I know, I bring a lot of myself to

my fundraising. That's just how I, I bring a lot of myself to my life. I'm not very good at

putting myself totally back. I keep a ... So I think for example I know there are some

fundraisers who are like, "I hate," like my boss for example is literally like, "I hate small

talk, I won't do lunch meetings, I can't do it. In and out of somebody's office." I'm not

very ... That would feel weird to me so I don't mind a longer donor lunch.

Unlike her boss, Hillary's willingness to invest in "small talk" emphasized her genuine love for

working with people. She also attributed her style to the nature of her role, working for a specific

unit with a story, priorities, and a long history. Unearthing the donor's personal connection to

those dimensions of the unit, she shared, was essential to success:

In an ideal world, I think you learn more in particular fundraising for a unit like I do that's

a rather topic area, I think you get to the root of people's interest more if you give them

time to talk through their stories, to really dig deep about why it is that you're motivated

to support this area. And I think you end up with a bigger gift sometimes in that way. So I

try to be flexible, I try to be relatable, I try to be consistent.

That said, Hillary articulated that she has no problem with a brief meeting if that's what the

donor preferred: "I try to be a chameleon is really my guiding principle." She explained,

I think it means being adaptable. I think it means not being a pushover and not losing

whatever your, you can't just be completely changeable like the wind, but I think it's

being able to read the room or read the donor meeting, read them, read the donor to figure

out what it is that they're hoping for. Because I think at the end of the day, our job is to

represent the University. So it's what is this person hoping to get out of their experience

with the University. And trying where possible, to give them that within the confines of

staying true to the values of the University and ethics. If that makes sense.

While she may change her approach or strategy, adapting to the donor's style, Hillary remained focused on her own sense of right and wrong, values and ethics. In her work, they remained constant.

Being a Young Black Woman in Fundraising

Hillary candidly discussed with me her personal identity and the identities that felt salient in her work as a fundraiser. Asked to describe her personal identity, she joked, "I say I'm Black, 'cause I am." She proceeded to tell me how proud she is to be Black. She was more cognizant of this identity as she approached her wedding to a Kenyan-American man, providing a comparison of her and her family's experience to his family's story. Layering in her identity as a woman, she offered,

> I think my identity as a Black woman is very closely linked to specific examples of what
>
> being a Black woman means in my family. I was very ... So my dad's parents got
>
> divorced and remarried when he was young. They were re-married I think by the time he
>
> was four. So not a very long marriage. So I had six grandparents total. Five of whom I
>
> knew until the first passed [away]. So I got really fortunate 'cause I got to have really
>
> strong awesome relationships with them into adulthood. I think my three grandmothers,
>
> my first of the grandmothers just passed in January, have always been very, very strong
>
> influences in my life and I think, and my mother as well, but I think my mother in
>
> particular takes after her mother quite a bit. And, I think that's where I get a lot of my
>
> conceptualization of what it is to be a Black woman. I think it means being strong, I think
>
> it means being adaptable, I think it means being a chameleon. I think it means ... excuse
>
> me. I dunno, I think it means being very savvy about the space that you occupy within

womanhood. And the space that you occupy within Blackness and how you can find

those things and how they interplay with each other. And food.

Strong, adaptable, a chameleon, Hillary's description of a being a Black woman was similar to

her characterization of a successful fundraiser. To Black women joining the fundraising

profession, she encouraged them to, "have a sense of humor, be ready to laugh, or else you'll be

ready to look at people very sideways sometimes." She expressed the fundamental challenge for

Black women in fundraising are the same in other life contexts:

You live in a space of it's almost like you got two factors possibly working against you.

And so, be aware of that. Don't be naive to the fact that sometimes that's an advantage,

sometimes it's a major disadvantage. But don't shrink from it.

In addition to being a Black woman, Hillary described herself as young, "fairly young for what I

do," she offered. Categorized by those around her as young, she was confused as a student

worker and, far too often, dismissed, "Oh, I don't have to listen to you, you're like my

granddaughter." As we talked, depicting her professional identity became increasingly complex

as she grappled with the phrases "young Black professional," "young Black woman

professional," "woman professional," "Black woman professional." As a fundraiser, Hillary

found "that it's a constant balancing of all of those identities and leveraging of [them]. That

process takes time and required, as Hillary labelled it, "meta-cognition":

I think there's also a level of meta-cognition and always thinking, especially when you're

going into a donor meeting with a new donor and you're thinking about, "Okay, what

does this person likely think of me, and what do I have to do to position myself in the

way so that I can give subtle clues to who I actually am?" Or, do I want to?

Thinking about her performance for different donors, one outcome of meta-cognition was code-switching. Hillary explained,

> I think about the words I use, and the way I speak, and how that can be adapted one way
> or the other when I need it to. I'm a notorious code switcher, which I'm fine with. I think
> that language is something to be celebrated and it is important. Everything has a time and
> a place.

For Hillary, code-switching meant she adeptly and consciously switches between "Black English" and "Standard English" depending on her audience. Hillary learned to code-switch at an early age and it was something she has come to value as she navigates her professional and personal spheres:

> I grew up in a home where Black English was something that was really respected and
> was kind of like almost our native language so to speak. Which is not very different from
> the rest of language. It's just, I dunno. I believe very strongly that there is value in the
> language style that's, what's the word I'm looking for, lexicon of a culture I think is
> important, but we were always like, when you're out in the world, my dad's always like,
> "Use the King's English." You know when to use both. And I dunno, I think that that's
> something I've always found kinda fun in some ways.

Seeing it as an advantage, Hillary shared an experience walking into a group of Black alumni at a football tailgate. By using Black English, she established a rapport, breaking through barriers quicker:

> …I think it is helpful for me here and in all my roles because I think that there's a little bit
> of... Like when I first got here, and we had all the tailgates for the football games as well.
> I think when [the chief diversity officer] was introducing me to people, even [the chief

diversity officer] does it… I think it was like you would go into a group of Black alums

and it's like, "Are we all, oh, okay. You're good, okay you're in the club, you're good,

you're good. You're really in the club, really in the club. Okay." I think it does help build

those relationships. And like I said, I don't think that someone else can't do it. [My White

colleague] does it fabulously in [metropolitan area]. But I think it helps break down

barriers quicker, it's also relaxing for me.

Experiencing a Raced Workplace

Hillary was acutely aware of the racial dynamics within her fundraising organization.

Jokingly, she compared her organizational experience to a film. The 2017 movie *Get Out* told the

story of the characters Chris (Black) and his girlfriend, Rose (White), during a visit to meet her

parents for the first time as a romantic couple in their Upstate New York home. As the weekend

progressed, Chris learned the racist secrets of the family, including stealing the minds of the

Black men that Rose would, repeatedly and strategically, bring home for the family. The entire

community was in on the evil charade. On the surface, the White family in the story seemed

welcoming, but that illusion was carefully crafted to hide their sinister intents. Critically

acclaimed and a commercial success, *Get Out* was an eye-opening experience for many White

Americans, while feeling all too relatable for many Black Americans. In *Esquire* magazine,

author Steven Thrasher described how *Get Out* perfectly captured the historical and ongoing

belief, rooted in American slavery, that White people hold ownership of Black bodies. And that

Black bodies can be used for the purposes they see fit (Thrasher, 2018). Hillary used the movie

as a way to illuminate the "blind spots" in her organization, where the illusion of inclusivity was

believed by her White colleagues:

So I'm gonna make a joke and then we'll qualify it. So what I said to some of my friends

that I work at my [previous institution] with, they were like, "Oh, how's it going, da, da,

da, da, da." I started it about the time that the movie Get Out came out. And I always

said, first off when Get Out as a movie came out I was like, "I don't know that I wanna

see this." Like my White friends are great, I don't know what people this movie is like

talking about. Then I saw the movie when I started working here. I was like, "Oh, I get it.

I got it." But I'm qualifying them because I don't think anyone is stealing anyone's brain

and being… But I do think that there are definitely a lot of blind spots here. And there are

more blind spots here perhaps than other places. I genuinely do think that almost

everyone I've met, I feel is very well-meaning. But I do think there are some blind spots

and I think that it's… I think other places I've worked, there have been biases but the

difference between a bias in my mind, at least the way I think of it, is you can recognize a

bias. I think there are people who have blind spots but they cannot see their bias. And

then anyone who slightly point it out, they're really not trying to hear it. And so that's

been a little like, okay.

Navigating the blind-spots and biases, Hillary developed a relationship with a fellow

Black woman fundraiser whom she calls her "ally" and "survey partner in crime." While they

met at a previous institution, Hillary and Nora stayed close through their transitions into their

new roles at the same institution. Together, they supported one another, shared stories, and

engaged in "surveying the landscape":

I'm surveying the landscape. I think part of that frankly, I think if I were at [my previous

institution], I don't know that I would be surveying as carefully as I am now. And Nora is

my little survey partner in crime. We worked [together] so we've been friends since we

started [at our previous institution] at the same time, so we're close friends. We talk

through it quite a bit.

Hillary used "surveying" to describe the investigation of a specific fundraising priority at her

institution with many racial and cultural nuances and how her superiors and colleagues would

respond to her critique. The way in which the university was depicting the priority and its

historical context left Hillary feeling discouraged. She wanted to speak up, but needed to "survey

the landscape" first. This included intently watching the reactions of her fundraising peers and

superiors during discussions of the priority in meetings. Hillary was not afraid to speak up, but

was expressly cautious and thoughtful about her approach. When would she speak up? "I like to

focus on my communicational impact and so how can I get my message across in a way that's

someone's actually going to listen to it."

Nora was not only a survey partner in crime, she also provided meaningful support at a

time when Hillary was unsure about whether or not she could trust other members of her team:

I don't like being the only. Being the only can be very exhausting. The only anything. If

you're the only young person in a room, it's exhausting. The only Black person in the

room for too long, is exhausting. We're all gonna be the only at some point in our lives.

It has become a little exhausting, I won't even lie. On weeks like this where I'm

like, "Oh, how do I, you all are wearing me out. We had all day retreats, so many things

were said, and I just got to process this and I don't know who I can process with." I'm

conscious of the fact that I feel like I process these things with Nora, I don't feel like I'm

frankly close enough with the rest of my team yet to process some of these things with

them in a non-biased fashion and feel politically safe in doing so.

Hillary, with Nora's support, was cognizant of the stress associated with being "the only."

Explicitly and implicitly, this stress was compounded by the burden of educating her White peers

about the stress of being different, often simply because of her mere presence as a Black person

in the organization.

Acting as Diversity Educator

As a diversity programs fundraiser, most of Hillary's work was focused on racial and

ethnic diversity. From a young age, Hillary learned about the importance of diversity from her

"really, really diverse set of friends." However, her family did not have a formal "mantra"

around diversity in contrast to "giving back" and "education." The message from her parents was

essentially, "don't be a jerk to other people who are like you or who aren't like you." Hillary

saw her commitment to diversity and inclusion as a value that crystallized for her as she moved

into adulthood:

> But I think in particular as the world has become more polarized and as issues around
>
> diversity and inclusion and racism and profiling and all types of things have become
>
> more ... Either they've become much more prominent, which I think is true, but I think
>
> also just as an adult, you start to notice these things more. It's been something that I think
>
> has moved to the forefront in my life and it's been really important to me as something to
>
> advocate for.

In her professional life, Hillary saw the importance of educating others about diversity, but

recognized it could be a burden. Far too often, the education of White colleagues was an

expectation not rewarded with compensation. She explained,

I always joked that I was really excited for this job because part of what was built into, it says it in my job description, is to do training around diversity, equity and inclusion with our staff, et cetera.

I was so excited, so I was like, "Oh I finally get paid to do that? That's nice." 'Cause you end up doing that anyway I think. You end up being that person who people come to like, "I have this donor and like they said this to me, and I've never heard that phrase before, what does that mean?" regardless. And actually there was a fascinating article in the Chronical of Philanthropy last year, that talked about there seems to be this pervasive ... The Chronical of Philanthropy was hearing that there's this pervasive thought that, oh there aren't enough non-profit leaders of color to choose from in order to, in the work force to become leaders. So they did a survey to see is that true, and why might it be that there's a racial disparity in leadership of non-profits. And they were focusing mostly on foundations and higher ed.

And what they found was that a lot of times, there are enough in terms of numbers of us, but we spend like, the numbers was crazy, it was like 10 or 20% of our work days doing that type of work. Educating others or advocating for our communities. That is not in our job description. Perhaps it takes away from time we could be out asking for gifts, getting our numbers up and getting promoted faster. Which I thought was fascinating and very true anecdotally.

And that's the thing, I mean your metrics often don't measure that. Now my job description now does, but my metrics [at my previous institution] didn't advertise that, but I was on the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion]'s task force there and all that type of stuff but you know, it doesn't count. And luckily, I did not find that that held me back at

[my previous institution]. And some ways I find that it was helpful because I had

exposure to leadership that I don't think some people in my level had. But it can also

wear you out. It can wear you out.

As a young, Black woman in fundraising, a surveyor of a raced workplace, and a diversity

educator, Hillary's experience was full of contractions and opportunities grounded in her own

sense of vigilance and obligation.

Vigilance and Obligation

Hillary's sense of humor and ability to laugh off difficult situations represented strategies

by which she navigated her workplace and fundraising responsibilities. While acknowledging

those somewhat superficial strategies, she also underscored the sheer vigilance required of her,

women, and women of color, specifically, in the fundraising profession:

I don't think people realize like how much time you spend ... There was some article that

came out recently, I'm trying to think of where I've read it… about the time loss. And

there's more time lost, not necessarily because of discriminatory acts, but on the part of a

woman or a person of color, the vigilance it takes to prep yourself for okay, this could

happen. And the amount of time ... I don't think people think, I don't think people fully

understand the amount of time that you can think. I don't think that people who have not

necessarily lived with an identity that make you at times feel marginalized, fully process

how much time out of your day you spend thinking about, "Okay, if I tell this person this,

are we gonna have to talk about this? Like is this gonna be a thing? Is it not gonna be a

thing? And maybe it's fine if it's a thing, but do I really feel like having this conversation

with somebody yesterday, or something?"

The vigilance required of her and the burden of being "the only" could only be resolved, Hillary expressed, by recruiting more women of color to the profession. However, this was nuanced by the reality that some Black women have broken through the glass ceiling, to demonstrate a pathway forward:

> Just that something I take very seriously and I think is an important way to combat any of the challenges that women of color in this workspace is getting ... Well it's something I grapple with, is that I think a very effective solution to combating some of these issues that are having more of us as fundraisers. I also hesitate [because it is] difficult to sometimes feel like you want to recruit someone to an experience you know might not be pleasant for them. And so that's something I think about. Like there are days when sometimes I'm like, "I'm done with this, I'm ready to not be a fundraiser." And I do have days when I'm like, "But there's two of us." And I feel somewhat an obligation to stick around and to keep pushing forward and break down some barriers. And then I feel like the barriers have been broken. We've had Black female vice presidents, we've had Latinx female vice presidents of development. But has it become totally commonplace to a thing where it's not like, "Oh, hey she is a ..." or no? And so do I think that there's work to be done? Yes.

For Hillary, being a woman of color in higher education fundraising required vigilance, an ability to silence the noise and manage the time it takes to process the raced and gendered work environment. While some women, and specifically women of color, have risen to the top of advancement organization, Hillary still felt an obligation to push forward, rise through the ranks, and make sure that women and women of color, specifically, were consistently represented in leadership roles.

Lasting Impression

Hillary was funny, a fast talker, prone to tell stories with no shortage of enthusiasm or details. She was savvy and very aware of the space she occupied in the world as a Black woman fundraiser in higher education. While she was skeptical and cautious about some of the people and situations in her organization, she was also optimistic about the university and profession's future. As a fundraiser, Hillary was fully aware of her style and chameleon-like approach to the work. She identified her race and raced life experiences as informing some of her fundraising strategies, in particular when connecting with Black donors.

Vivian
"It's like a big freaking fake circus."

I met Vivian in her office on the campus of a Midwestern public university. A White woman in her 30's, she worked as a major gift fundraiser assigned to a specific region of the United States. As a graduate of the institution she worked for, Vivian was very familiar with the campus and connected strongly with the passion exhibited by many fellow alumni and donors. She learned fundraising "on the job" at non-profit organizations prior to working transitioning into higher education.

Unlike my other interviews, this conversation felt more like a "tell-all" exclusive. At the close of our conversation, Vivian exclaimed, "I didn't think I was going to get this heated. I got pretty heated!" Vivian spoke to her joys and enthusiasm while contrasting that with an honest assessment of the fundraising profession that, she posited, often times used women, felt like "dating" and, with few exceptions, centered on middle-aged, wealthy White men. During her fundraising career, Vivian welcomed two children, navigated a divorce, and battled ovarian cancer. During her battle with ovarian cancer, Vivian experienced the feeling of being ignored by colleagues, pitied by donors, and the fear of losing her job with children at home. At the end of our time together, it was clear that she was still wrestling with her place and purpose and whether her current employer aligned with where she wanted to be in life, especially after all she went through. Her steely determination to chart her own course palpable in her words.

The "Aggressive" Fundraiser

After college graduation, Vivian worked in communications and community relations. She found her way into fundraising by accident, but quickly found it was her niche. Vivian was not exposed to philanthropy growing up, so the idea of becoming a fundraising professional was

never considered. With several years of higher education experience under her belt, I asked her

to describe what it was like to be a higher education fundraiser. She shared,

> I'm going to be completely honest in this. Depending on what day you ask me, I would
>
> say probably one of two things. On a good day, where I'm feeling like the work that I'm
>
> doing is directly benefiting students and the good parts of the university, I would say that
>
> it's such a cool job. Especially doing it for my alma mater is really, really cool. On a bad
>
> day, where things are not going well or feeling a little icky, I do sometimes feel like I'm
>
> manipulating people into giving me their money.

Furthermore, Vivian noted the importance of psychology in her work with donors, as well as

"changing yourself and who you are to meet the person that you're trying to get money from."

She articulated that this can feel inauthentic. In her case, Vivian's clear sense of who she was

and the needs of many of her prospective donors informed her approach.

Vivian's fundraising style was direct and, as she described, "aggressive" in that she

centered her core responsibility as a fundraiser, asking for philanthropic support, in her meetings.

Whereas some gift officers take a more relational and stealth approach, Vivian tended to clearly

and directly inform prospective donors that she would be asking them for money in the future:

> My style of work and what I do is I'm very up front. In the fundraising world people talk
>
> about aggressive fundraisers and nonaggressive fundraisers. I think I'm an aggressive
>
> fundraiser because I also learned early on that when you're talking with the caliber of
>
> people that we meet with, CEOs, businessmen, they trust you a lot sooner if you can sit at
>
> the table and be direct and aggressive with them. They respect that. And I have that
>
> personality anyways. (laughs) I'm sort of an aggressive person in general.

Vivian's approach included laying out an expectation for an "ask" for financial support in the future, but also to indicate that the process takes place over time:

> I have no problem at all sitting down in a CEOs office, looking him in the eye, and saying "Thanks so much for taking this meeting. You know why I'm here. I'm eventually going to ask you to be very philanthropic to [the University]. But I'm not going to do it today. I want to get to know you today. I want us to talk about what might be a good fit. Just know that that will be coming down the line. I say it in a little bit of a humorous way, and I've been told by multiple people after the fact that they had so much respect for me for doing that. That's the type of fundraiser that I am.

Vivian's goal was to establish the foundation of the relationship early on, so as not to confuse it with friendship. A successful relationship between donor and fundraiser, she expressed, was built on clear expectations.

The "Dating" Metaphor

Vivian compared the act of fundraising, of going out and meeting donors and prospects, to romantic "dating." She explained,

> It's very much like dating. In the fundraising world we joke about that all the time. Everything that we do for our job you can attribute to dating. We stalk people online. We get to know them secretly behind the scenes before we sit down with them. Everybody I meet with, I'm on their LinkedIn. I look at their Facebook. I look at their Instagram if they have it. Just so I can see "What are their likes? What are their dislikes? What kind of person are they?"
>
> Then you sit down and you try to get them to like you over dinner. You hope that when you reach out to them another time that they want to "have another date with you."

But that can go on for a really long time. I think that the biggest mistake that fundraisers

make... Because I used to be that type of fundraiser. It was like "I hope they like me. I'm

going to keep meeting with them. Then maybe eventually they'll want to give."

That wastes so much time, so I got a little bit more aggressive with my strategy. I

think you can be likable and meet with somebody for years on end and still not ask them

for the big gift.

Vivian was very clear that while used a dating metaphor to explain fundraising, it was not dating.

She was on a mission to secure resources for the institution. She shared that often times she felt

the university invested resources in initiating these relationships, securing donations, and then

failing to meaningfully steward donors:

We pull out all the bells and whistles on the front end to get them to give, then we sort of

don't care about them anymore. That is not all the time, but there are days when that

happens. It's really disheartening. For lack of a better term, I sort of feel like sometimes

[this institution] is pimping me out for their gain and they're not really following through

on making the people feel really good about what they're doing.

For Vivian, being "pimped out" by her university meant she often times felt she needed to use

her charisma and confidence, as well as her physical attractiveness, to advance relationships with

male donors. The sense that the university was using her for its own gain was also reflected in

her experiences as a working, single mom and ovarian cancer survivor.

Off-Paper Strategy

Vivian described the ideal fundraiser as a chameleon, an actor that is in tune with what

the donor prospect(s) needs in order to feel comfortable. She explained, "You have to be able to

chameleon yourself to the person that you're meeting with. I think that is another absolute,

number one trait that a really good fundraiser has to have." She provided an example from her own experience:

> …I'm a very liberal leaning person in my own personal life, but I cover the Midwest. I cover [Midwestern state], for example. A very, very red state. So I have to go meet with people that sit across from me and they are diehard Republican. Super, big Trump supporters. I have to chameleon and I have to behave in a manner that makes them feel happy about the interaction.
>
> I cannot disagree with them. I cannot tell them how I feel instead or any of that. That was a big example. It could also be all sorts of different things. I think you have to be able to do that because the outcome is making them happy. Sometimes you have to change yourself in order to make that work.

She highlighted the precarious balancing act, however, by expressing that she finds herself playing a role and simultaneously trying to be herself to build trust, a pre-requisite for successful solicitation:

> You have to definitely be a people person. You have to have that charisma about you. You have to be able to smile and very confidently talk with all different kinds of people. It feels like acting sometimes, actually. You have to be able to do that. And it's about confidence too. Nobody's going to sit down and take you seriously. When you're talking about a large chunk of their assets, they're not going to give that to you if they don't trust you, if they don't like you.

How does this calculating her performance play into her strategy? Her planning? She described the "on-paper strategy" and, I inferred, an "off-paper strategy" rarely discussed in advancement organizations:

Certainly we have our strategy on paper. [managing my performance is] certainly not part

of that on-paper strategy. But, yeah, I would say I spend a decent amount of time. That's

how you prepare for a meeting. First you spend the majority of the time actually

preparing for the meeting. What are you going in talking about? Where are your next

steps in this conversation? And all of that.

Then I instantly think "Okay. Where are we meeting? Is this a daytime meeting or

an evening meeting? What should I wear to reflect that? What are we doing? What drink

should I order? I've met with this person before. I know that they drink very high-end

scotch. I need to do my homework on what is a high-end scotch. Maybe I should order

that too so that he's impressed by that" kind of thing. Yeah. I'm constantly thinking about

that kind of stuff.

The off-paper strategy included a mindfulness about her appearance, appropriate attire, and even

her drink order, when mapping out a visit with a prospective donor. Vivian was also keenly

aware of the advantage afforded her as a White person. She offered, "I'm the all-American girl.

I'm White as White can be. I think that helps. I think that if you're a minority out there doing this

role it's probably a lot different." Reflecting on her organization, she grappled with why so many

fundraisers were White:

Yeah. I'm White and it's an advantage. And I hate that. I can't change that I'm White. I

hate that I'm part of the group of population that has it easier just because of how I look.

Just because I am that doesn't mean that I don't try to understand what it's like for other

populations that don't have it as easy as I do. I don't think I ever can really understand.

But, yeah, definitely. Look around. The 100+ fundraisers, how many Black

people do we have? Two? Maybe three? And I'm being generous. I think it's just two. I

don't know if that is just because of the local population and who lives here or if that's

because maybe people doing the hiring know that numbers won't be as good out of a

person of color. I don't know. But I do think that it's a huge problem.

In Vivian's world, the "on-paper" and "off-paper" strategies were both necessary her success as

a fundraiser. The preparation of these strategies, in her estimation, was occurring constantly, but

often time behind-the-scenes and even unconsciously. In preparing her performance, Vivian

wrestled with how much to share regarding her family. While she was in a committed

relationship with a man whom she labeled her partner, for instance, the fact that they were not

married and have a child could be an issue for some prospective donors. In some cases, Vivian

found it easier to declare they were married rather than tell the truth and receive a flurry of

questions.

Motherhood & Fundraising

 Vivian exuded pride when speaking about her role as a mom. However, balancing her

family life and career in fundraising was not an easy feat. In a profession comprised of a majority

of women employees, she questioned why work-life balance seemed illusive:

> I think that in a profession that's 90% woman-led that the lifestyle of our jobs and the
>
> work-life balance is not at all conducive to a good work-life balance environment for
>
> women. Women have children. That is just what we do. That is what our bodies do. We
>
> cannot help it that we are the sex that has to have the children. Do you know what I
>
> mean? To further on our population.

Vivian cited the demanding travel expectations of her particular role and how, upon returning

from a trip, the rigidity of the workplace schedule inhibits work-life balance. She detailed an

example with precision, as though it had occurred only yesterday:

… Just because I have children, I don't want to limit it to that. You have a life. You have

other stuff in your life besides this job. There is no balance. There is no balance at all. We

are traveling constantly. When we aren't traveling enough, it's noticed right away. "Why

are you not on the road more? Why are you not in this state more and this state more?"

> For example, I travel a lot of the time about 50% of the time. My region is not in

the state that I live in. For me to travel, it's getting on an airplane and going somewhere

for a night to three nights at a time. That's me being away from life, my family, my kids.

Everything. Which is the job. It's what I signed up for. That's fine. Then when you come

back and you're in town, at least at this office, it's still expected that you will be in your

office at 8:00 a.m. And you will stay till 5:00 or even later if you really want to look like

you're working hard.

> They don't take into consideration three days ago I got on an airplane. I left for the

airport at 5:00 a.m. I had meetings all day long and a dinner meeting and an after dinner

cocktail meeting that went until 11:00 at night. And I did that three whole days in a row.

Now I would like to be able to drive my kids to school. Pick them up from school

because Mommy is back home kind of thing. We don't have that flexibility here. A lot of

people will tell you that we do, but we don't. I'm living it and we do not. That needs to

change, definitely.

Vivian pointed out superficial practices executed by her organization's human resources

department to, in theory, boost morale seemed disconnected from the experiences of women

fundraisers, especially mothers. In response to one practice, she declared,

We don't want that! I don't want that! I want you to be able to let me go take care of my

sick kid when he needs it, without any repercussions. That's what I want. Why don't you

devote some time and resources to things that are actually going to help working women, as opposed to a bunch of fluffy stuff that nobody cares about? You think you're doing all these great things and you're not. Mic drop.

Fundraising with Ovarian Cancer

 After only a few months working at her current institution, Vivian was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. At what seemed like a cataclysmic moment in her life, she was raising two children, attending chemo treatments, and meeting with donors. Whether she liked it or not, she was labeled "sick" by her new colleagues, prospects, and donors. And, no one knew what to do when they were around her. She shared, "People ignore you and run away from you because they have no idea how to treat you, what to say, what to do, so they just pretend like it's not happening." Some colleagues were able to "cut through the horribleness" and ask "how I can help?" but for the most part, her disease was ignored by her organization's leadership and most fundraising peers:

> I think internally I sort of became like an alien. They ignored me because they didn't
> know how else to approach me. I felt really left behind within [the organization]. That
> was really hard. I felt like people looked at me as somebody that was sick. They didn't
> look at me as one of their colleagues that they could work with. You know what I mean?

Without an open dialogue about her disease, Vivian was left guessing about her job expectations:

> Nobody ever came to me and said "We know what you're going through. Let's talk about
> your work responsibilities. Obviously, you're going to keep working because you need to.
> Maybe we'll give you more of a desk job." None of that ever happened. I came up with
> what would work for me.

Vivian developed a schedule that incorporated her chemotherapy treatments and included travel to donor visits. All the while, she was terrified that she would be fired for not meeting the established donor and prospect visit quotas and fundraising goals. She developed her work plan thinking, "Oh, my gosh. If I don't prove myself right now, they're going to let me go." She was unsure if the plan would work, but she felt like she had no choice:

> That plan was not something that was ever going to really work for me but I had to do it. You know what I mean? My plan came across like "Yes. I'm sick. I have chemos on Tuesdays and Fridays. I [work] eight hours a day. If you allow me to work those days I will. I worked through chemo. Sitting in the chemo chair I'm still doing contact reports and replying to emails because I'm terrified that if I don't then I'm going to get in trouble. Nobody said "You know what, Vivian, I know you're new. Why don't we give your territory to somebody else very temporarily? Why don't you focus on this? We'll have you do some computer work when you can."

While it would have been helpful for her work plan to be directly addressed, Vivian recalled the complete lack of empathy as the most frustrating part of her experience:

> I wasn't expecting "Now I need all of these people to be my best friend and take care of me." It's not like that. I'm spending 40, 50, 60+ hours a week at a place where everybody's pretending like I don't exist because they're uncomfortable. It's empathy. The [leadership] could have at least sent a card, could have at least took me aside in a meeting and said "You know, Vivian, I know what you're going through and I'm thinking of you." Just little things like that to make it feel human.

Working with prospects donors presented a different set of challenges. With her colleagues she was ignored, at meetings with prospects and donors the "elephant in the room" had to be addressed. She described,

> Externally it was also really difficult because how do you show up to a donor meeting with no hair and have that not be the main topic of conversation? You can't. You can't pretend. A donor can't sit down and pretend like there's not ovarian cancer sitting right in front of him.

The best strategy, she found, was to "get it out of the way" as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, this was easier said than done:

> I would try my hardest to just get it out of the way. We would sit down. They'd have that look of "She has a scarf on her head." They'd ask me what's wrong. I'd say "I'm going through this. I'm fine. Everything's going to be fine. Let's talk about this." I wanted people to still take me seriously, which they did not. And I don't blame them, but they did not. Meeting with donors, they didn't look at me like a strong professional for [my university]. You know? Because you're the ovarian cancer girl. I could have prevented all of that probably by just wearing a wig but I couldn't stand wearing a wig. It was the worst thing in my life so I just did not ever.

Working with donors and prospects many years her senior without ovarian cancer, Vivian faced challenges developing their respect and navigating their assumptions of a single woman with children. With ovarian cancer, these difficulties were exacerbated:

> … you meet with these people and they already look at you and speak to you like "You cute, little, young thing. Oh, honey. Oh, you're a mom. You got your kids." They're already treating you on that level. Then add ovarian cancer to it. Oh, my gosh. It

definitely affected how I was seen. I think it would have been different had it been a man

with cancer. … you can't really distinguish a man with cancer as well as you can a

woman. There's bald men all the time. You don't necessarily think all bald men are going

through chemo like you do a woman. Relating to me as a maternal, womanly person, it

sort of exacerbated that. Now I was the sick single mom or the sick woman that might

die. It made my job extremely difficult. In retrospect, I probably should have just quit. It's

hard.

In many ways, Vivian was treated as a tool that "broke too soon" when she entered the

organization as a fundraiser. She was treated as a tool that could easily be replaced. She survived

because of sheer will, an internal sense of pride and determination, and a community that she

developed outside of her work life of family and friends that sustained her.

"Big Freaking Fake Circus"

Given her trying experience, it was no wonder that Vivian, describing her workplace,

exclaimed, "It's like a big freaking fake circus." In her to day to day, she realized that ultimately

"it was all about the money" in determining performance and rewards. She saw the impact, the

possibility that fundraising could make a difference on her campus, but felt this was not used as

genuine motivating factor in the organization. She used another metaphor to help put the "circus"

in perspective:

This big machine that I think I'm an integral part of and if I wasn't there the machine

would be broken. Realize that the machine's not going to be broken without you. Leave

the machine every now and then. You know what I mean? There's this mentality of if you

don't work hard enough or if you take that day off to go on vacation with your family

then things are all going to fall apart. None of that is true. Take the vacations. Do other

things outside of work. Put your family as a priority. Because women that haven't in the past really, really regret it.

Lasting Impression

At a relatively young age, Vivian ascended the fundraising career ladder, raised two children, and battled ovarian cancer. Her survival a testament to her tenacity and inner strength. Despite formidable odds, Vivian flourished and shaped a future for herself on her own terms. She would not be confined to any boxes or categories, determined she would transcend them. From her vantage point, to succeed in fundraising, she was willing to play the man's game while staying true to her values. She used her perceived advantages, directness, race, looks, charisma, aggression, and people-oriented sensibilities, to raise funds. She also unabashedly demanded more of the fundraising profession. This included policies and practices that centered women's experiences, encouraged empathy for colleagues facing life's difficulties, and strengthened pathways for women into advancement leadership positions.

Hailey

"...there's a sense of community that I'm changing and helping, and helping this community develop and grow."

From an early age, Hailey was exposed to notions of philanthropy and service by her mother and grandparents. She listened to her mother make fundraising phone calls on behalf of a cancer charity, knocked doors with her to support the same cause, and witnessed her organize and motivate over one hundred church volunteers. It seemed natural for Hailey to become involved in her undergraduate alma mater's student philanthropy program and tele-fundraising efforts, calling alumni to ask for their financial support. As she explored the higher education fundraising profession, she learned that she enjoyed both data analysis and relationship building, leading to her role as a major gift fundraiser.

Hailey and I met on her campus, a space with abundant symbols of philanthropic commitments as evidenced by the prominent placement of donors' names on nearly every building, hallway, and classroom. A White woman in her 30's, Hailey was charged with working donors with a variety of affiliations to her institution including alumni, parents, and prominent, wealthy local community members. Energetic, optimistic, and friendly, Hailey viewed herself as someone who facilitated difficult conversations and could assist two sides when trying to see one another's perspective. As a fundraiser, she described a pragmatic approach to staying in control of the conversation to purposefully move relationships and gift conversations forward. Hailey underscored the importance of relationships with fellow fundraisers to develop donor strategies, navigate gender bias, and plan organizational change. It was clear that she was personally motivated by knowing many members of her campus community, including faculty, staff, and students, and feeling a strong bond with them and the institution's mission. Even on challenging

days, Hailey kept focused on how she could develop in her role and advance relationships with

prospective donors to make a difference.

Family and Philanthropy

Hailey grew up in a single-parent household with her mother who worked for their

church. After leaving school, Hailey would join her and spend time in the church office. If

children skipped their after-school sessions, Hailey enjoyed calling their parents and alerting

them. She quickly developed a knack for talking to just about anyone, a skill that certainly

influenced in her career, and generally made her "feel comfortable around people and talking to

people." In addition to the ability to talk to anyone, Hailey learned at a young age how to make

an "ask" to help the church:

> I grew up watching her go to the pulpit on a Sunday and ask for volunteers, and ask
>
> individuals to kind of give up their time, and then watched her make phone calls all the
>
> time and asking individuals to come and do that.

The "asks" related to financial support as well as volunteerism. She observed as her mother made

phone calls on behalf of a cancer charity and made regular donations to her alma mater. Hailey's

grandparents, both sets of grandparents, were also role models with their philanthropy, openly

discussing their pledges to their church's capital projects. It wasn't until Hailey entered college

and started working in the student philanthropy program that she realized how surrounded she

was by a desire to give back in her childhood:

> And I don't think I realized how exposed to philanthropy I was until I started to go to
>
> some of those conferences about how do you build that with some of your young
>
> students? It really was like, "Oh yeah, my mom did always do like the [cancer charity],
>
> and we would go door to door and talk to the neighbors, or she would make phone calls,

or she would always give to her alma mater." That was very natural and I knew that was a

thing, I just never really realized that that was this overall kind of term of philanthropy. I

think I had in my head that wealthy individuals do the philanthropy. You have your Bill

Gates and Oprah, all of those things. That's philanthropy. So it wasn't until probably I did

come here that I realized what that actually meant.

In her college years, the idea of philanthropy transitioned from more than just a positive and

inspiring phenomenon, to a possible profession. Hailey made connections between her role as a

student caller in the tele-fundraising program to her course work:

> …I took a psychology class, because my major was in psychology. It was a social psych
>
> class, and one of the sections was about sales and how you're talking to people and how
>
> you kind of see body language, or hear in their voice how you know that they're kind of
>
> buying into something. And it was funny, I remember taking that into then doing the calls
>
> that night and being, "Oh, wow. Letting them talk really did help more." Asking less
>
> questions, or asking the less questions and letting them kind of explain a little bit about
>
> what their interests might sort of led to being able to get a gift on the phone…

Hailey's up-bringing, student work, and growing knowledge of philanthropy led to her first

professional position in institutional advancement after graduation.

"Behind-the-Scenes" to "Forward-Facing"

Hailey's professional experience in institutional advancement involved exposure to a

variety of functional areas. Initially, she was "behind-the-scenes" making fundraising calls,

analyzing data, and developing solicitations via mail and email. She explained,

> So, I sort of got sucked into the whole world of advancement and development, in both
>
> the data side, especially in the beginning, and then more on the relationship side later on.

In my role, I was able to move from annual giving, annual giving more on the behind-the-scenes communication side, to then a forward-facing development officer, to then a major gift officer. That's currently what my role is now.

Hailey viewed her experience in these various areas as building her expertise over time as the lines between these various roles blurred regularly as fundraiser. She found blending the "behind-the-scenes" and "forward-facing" skillsets was both advantageous in fundraising and aligned with her personal passion:

…it's mixing the two things that I really love, which is kind of that data side as well as that relationship side, more than we did on the annual giving side. It was more data-driven over there than necessarily relational. But either way, it's kind of been fun to mix the two together and then be able to say, "Okay, so I can dig into a data and have that five minute time to go through and be like, I think here are the individuals I need to reach out to, or here is this group that we need for this project," whatever the case may be. And then I get to do it. I get to go out there and do, and contact those individuals, and meet with them and see and then be like, "Well, that didn't work," you know? Like, "Hold on. Let's go back to the drawing board. We need something else."

Hailey loved the opportunity to experiment and try new strategies to engage the prospects she identified in her research work. She described it as the "entrepreneurial spirit" of the fundraising work.

Working with "Founding Families"

While Hailey often had the chance to identify and engage new prospects and donors, including alumni and parents of current students, she also worked very closely with wealthy families in the local community that supported the institution for many years. The "founding

families," as she described them, were well-established, philanthropic, connected to one another, and perceived as integral to the region's economy:

> …it is interesting because it's a group of individuals that we're working with that aren't necessarily alums of the institution, but again have the community ties because our line here has always been at [the institution] we have been kind of behind the scenes or in the forefront, depending on who you ask, kind of generator of the [regional] economy. So if you have business in [the region] in any sense or any sort, then you have a business with [the institution] and that this, you want a seat at the table.

The influence and interest of the "founding families" at the institution has changed over time, with more and more philanthropic conversations occurring with financial advisors, rather than the philanthropists, and second and third generation family members. Many of the younger generations attended other institutions for college, so continuing to engage family members in addition to the traditional patriarch and matriarch figures required creativity.

Navigating Politics, Race, & Gender

Hailey's an optimistic person by nature, someone that strives to be positive and friendly on a daily basis. The eternal optimist, Hailey's worldview was shaped by a belief in fairness and that, through collaboration, any problem can be solved. In Hailey's fundraising experience, navigating conflicting political beliefs represented an exception to this rule. An instance when ignoring the tension might be the best strategy to move forward. For instance, Hailey recalled the experience of discussing LGBTQ issues with one of the founding families in her community:

> …sitting around the table with some of those family members who have flat out said like, "Well, it's a discussion that wouldn't be happening around my dinner table, but we need to do that." And you're like, "Oh my God," like inward, because I'm very liberal. I believe

wholeheartedly in some of these things that we do, so that's also an interesting place that

sometimes I have to balance. Because again in the community that I'm currently in, while

changing, is still at least for sure more conservative. Hearing those conversations,

sometimes you're like, "I just want to strangle you." I know that sounds bad. You're like,

"How do I nod and smile right now to this conversation?" You're like, "Huh? Okay, so

cool. My friend's taking over. Bye bye, see you later," and scooting away from the table.

But that's an interesting thing that's again kind of been changing over that time frame,

too.

Hailey found that navigating the conservative political and religious beliefs of her prospects and

donors was a challenge, something that she had learned to manage by carefully changing the

subject, extracting herself from the conversation when appropriate, and leveraging the personal

relationships between her donors to keep them engaged with the institution.

Hailey acknowledged that most of her donors were White, thus issues of race were not

central to her experience as a fundraiser. She explained,

I haven't found it to be. Again, especially because the majority of my fundraising

experience, this could be my own kind of bias in a way, but has been in a predominantly

White institution. So for me, race really has not been something that has been a topic, or

has been something that I've had to navigate around. That really hasn't been.

Reflecting on the race of the institution's donors, she explained that they were mostly White, but

that the university is working to change this dynamic to match an increasingly diverse student

body:

So, I would say they're mostly White but that has also been something that's been a very

purposeful movement within the past couple years, to diversify our donor pool. This

sounds horrible, but some of it comes from some of our bigger events, and having to

literally sit around the room and be like, "Crap, who can we feature? Who can we have

up there on the screen giving the talk about their philanthropy that they've done that can

represent some of these other populations that we just haven't really ingrained within our

community as much as we should have?"

Tensions around race may be limited within her everyday interpersonal relationships with

donors, but she made clear that the institution was investing in diversity and inclusion initiatives.

She shared that the institution has purposefully invested a division of "inclusion and equity" to

diversify their campus and ensure the success of diverse student populations. This, Hailey

posited, has started to impact the advancement work leading to greater focus on diversity

resulting in a naming gift for the campus LBGT resource center and the development of African

American and Latino alumni affinity groups. There is a misalignment, however, between the

university's traditional donor base made up of "predominantly White men" and major gift

fundraising for resource centers (women, LGBTQ, multicultural, etc.). Hailey felt that there was

a genuine effort within the advancement leadership to identify and diversify their prospect and

donor base, though it remained an ongoing challenge given their institution and region's history.

"Event Hailey"

Upon first meeting Hailey, I wondered if she ever tired. Her energy, seeming

extroversion, and bubbly personality welcomed me to her campus and into her world as a

fundraiser. However, as we talked, it became clear this was only a dimension of her personality,

a persona she referred to as "Event Hailey":

One of my colleagues used to joke, who actually is one of my very good friends, and we

used to travel together a lot, or we would do alumni events together and things like that.

We would joke we had like Event Hailey, and that's very different than necessarily like

one-on-one when we're just hanging out kind of Hailey, which I'm more reserved, more

like kind of sit in the background. I'm not the one who's necessarily going to talk the most

or be like, "Hey, what's happening in this area?" or "Let's talk about this thing."

Hailey's professional and personal spheres often intersected given the "community-driven"

nature of her fundraising role, leading to some confusion for "Event Hailey" and "we're just

hanging out kind of Hailey":

Because it is so community-driven and there is still an element of, what events are you

at? Who do you know? How are you staying connected in that way? So they do morph

together, but I think in the past couple of years I've been able to separate them more, just

because it gets a little complicated when it does morph a little bit too much together. It's

just exhausting on my end, like I have found I need that time to be able to kind of pull

back and charge, kind of recharge my batteries a little bit more. So that's been kind of that

learning curve on my side of how to do that.

In addition to sustaining and re-energizing her outgoing persona, Hailey reflected on the process

of maintaining her appearance, intentionally preparing for the expectations of donors:

I kind of joke sometimes that when I don't have visits I'm like, "Ha, ha, ha, guys. I'm just

rolling in. It's fine." On days I do have visits I'm like, "Oh, crap." You just have to put in

a little extra effort. It's fine. I also think it depends sometimes on who you're meeting

with again, and I think that's mostly because of the world that I work in right now, which

is if I'm meeting with someone that I know is of higher wealth in the community, and

they put a high emphasis on that appearance, that is something that then I'm like, I'm

making sure that I'm doing my hair that day, my nails are done, little things like that. And

there is a thought process that goes through that, for sure.

Hailey's attendance to her persona and appearance revealed conscious choices about strategies

she used to perform her role as a fundraiser. It also underscored some of the aspects of her

experience unique to her as a young, single, White woman.

"Are You Married? Do You Have Kids?"

Hailey recollected frequent questions from donors and prospects about her marital status

and age in her fundraising experience. She surmised it was probably a combination of her young

age and gender that led to this frequent line of questioning:

I used to have a struggle with individuals letting me pay for a meal, even though this is a

business expense and we're talking shop. We're trying to build this relationship, but this is

something that we're doing. It was something that I used to have to struggle with when

individuals, again especially on the parent side, would be like, "You're like my daughter,"

you know? "Oh, isn't this cute?" And I have a colleague who we used to joke, he always

ages himself and we worked together for the past like seven years or so. He'll always age

himself five years, so he's like, "I'm 40." I'm like, "You're 35, stop. You're 25. Stop it.

One day when someone thinks you're 40 you get pissed, so stop it."

Hailey described that normally these questions came up in her first meetings with prospective

donors:

So it's typically like an icebreaker conversation like, "Are you married? Do you have

kids? What school do they go to?" All these things, and I'm like, "I have a niece and my

nephew." So I pull out them a lot, especially talking with individuals who have kids,

because that's sometimes a great way to bridge that conversation. I'm like, "Oh yeah, my

niece just did this. We're going to Frozen at [performing arts center] this weekend. I'm so

excited," whatever. So it's like, that's that common language that you do end up deferring

and talking about quite a bit.

Leveraging her own experiences with her niece and nephew, she was able to find a common

language to re-assure prospects and donors that she understood their experiences as parents to

build trust in the fundraising process:

It can be a challenge. I mean, I think it's hard especially being a single woman.

Sometimes when someone's like, "Oh, are you married?" You're like, "No," and they're

like, "Oh, aww. It'll come. It'll happen," or whatever. I'm like, "Oh, thanks. I wasn't

asking for advice on that, in that area." So I think sometimes it can be, and I think again

this is probably a bigger picture conversation of our culture in general in terms of single

women and typically when I'll be like, "Oh, I own a house" or something like that.

They're like, "Oh, you and your husband bought a house?" I'm like, "No, I'm not married,

sorry." Little things like that, so navigating some of those conversations are interesting,

too.

These questions may have bothered her initially, but Hailey quickly learned strategies to

overcome them, whether making a joke such as holding up her left finger to show no wedding

ring or sharing stories about her niece and nephew:

So I think you do pick up on some of those tricks, in a way if you will, or ways to help

move the conversation forward even if it's like, how else can I use, spin my experience to

be able to get you out of this part of the conversation?

Hailey recurrently used humor to mitigate many situations that may have typically

produced stress or concern for women in fundraising. The experience of traveling alone to new

cities, for example, where she may have had a concern for her personal safety. She and her former colleague would share their experiences with one another:

> …we've both joked like, "Well, I'll text you after. I'll text you when I'm on my way back to my hotel" or something like that. So I think sometimes you find you do that with someone who at least understands the job a little bit. Or it's like, "Hey, I'm leaving here. If I don't text you in like an hour, here's where I'm at." Kind of joking thing, but I think there is a level of seriousness even when you're joking about it.

Hailey and her colleague found themselves in these situations often because of desire to "try and save money" for the institution by staying in cheaper hotels. They quickly ruled out many places as they became more familiar with the cities they visited.

Thinking about her personal safety on donors visits, Hailey acknowledged that she was "probably naïve in some ways." And that she is probably a still am naïve about it. She recalled only one instance in which she genuinely felt uncomfortable when a donor offered to drive her back to her hotel. In her example, however, she drew attention to a reality for many fundraisers, that you "never want to come across rude as a development officer." She elaborated,

> …it is an awkward professional issue because you're like, "Oh, but I don't want to seem rude, and I don't want to burn a bridge or burn this relationship or somehow ruin that, or make him think that I'm not super nice" or whatever the case may be. So that was an interesting kind of delicate dance, and I ended up just making up a reason that like, "Oh, well actually I was going to go meet a friend who lives here, and so I'm just going to take a Lyft actually to their location." He was, "Oh, okay. Sounds good. Anytime, I'll drive you to your hotel," kind of thing like that.

The delicate philanthropic dance she described underscored the power dynamics between

fundraiser and donor and that the best women fundraisers find ways to make a man feel like he's

leading when in reality she's controlling the direction of the relationship.

"Let's Tag Team"

Hailey described supportive relationships with many of her advancement colleagues, both

women and men. Her relationship with Josh, a 30-something, White man, for instance, helped

her traverse some of the potentially perilous gender dynamics at play in fundraising. She shared

some historical perspective:

> So some of the way the development office was run 20 years ago in terms of, this is like a
>
> Florida trip where the men go golfing and the women have lunch, you know? These are
>
> kind of the separations. It's been interesting to try and then cross over to that area where
>
> it's like, okay, maybe I'm at the lunch but we're talking to you right now as a couple, or
>
> we're talking to you as an individual and we're having these conversations, and taking me
>
> seriously in that way because they've kind of created this whole weird separation in a way
>
> too, if that makes sense.

Josh and Hailey collaborate on their donor cultivation strategies across these separations as well

as "tag-team" when, within a singular meeting, it seems likely being a man or a woman will

make advancing the relationship easier or more comfortable:

> Yeah, we work together, so [Josh] works in an area that is predominantly with women
>
> too, and so the interesting part is we'll kind of use each other. And so sometimes I'll come
>
> in, if it's someone who is a little bit more like, "Oh my gosh, it's so great to see you. Let's
>
> talk about X, Y and Z." He's fine with that and absolutely does, but then it's just this
>
> easier transition when they want to be like, "Oh my gosh, I love your outfit. I like your

purse." He's like, "I'm not into that talk. All right, hold on. Let's tag team." So, it's been

done very purposeful.

In this example, Hailey tackled the more traditionally feminine topic of fashion on behalf of

Josh. In other instances, Josh would, they jointly perceived, be better received by donors simply

because he was a man and they would use this perception intentionally:

…I think that being in a smaller shop where we talk constantly and are encouraged to go

on joint visits all the time, you find ways to play off of each other. That's been one way

that I think we've both found success when it's like, "I'm not getting anywhere with this

individual, because I think they're seeing me in a certain way." And even if I change the

way that I'm presenting something to them or trying to get at whatever their interests

might be, they need to hear it from a different perspective. Sometimes that is a male

perspective, or sometimes it's just because they want to do business with a male.

Personally, Hailey would never accept that a man's position or perspective would be better than

a woman's, but she recognized the necessity of playing with existing societal norms to succeed

as a fundraiser.

Advancing in the Advancement Profession

Hailey was excited by the prospect of growing a fundraising program. She enjoyed the

challenge of sorting through data, identifying prospects, developing cultivation strategies,

engaging prospects, testing her assumptions, and trying again if something didn't work. From her

view, more freedom to experiment and grow new programs was a reward within her

organization:

…it's kind of having that internal ability to be able to move something to the next level,

and what I mean by that is like drastically changing what our major gift program looks

like. That is sort of what my boss and I are working on in terms of our next goal and how

we're moving this forward.

For Hailey, the ability to create and experiment was very important to her personal happiness.

This aligned with her organization's philosophy, in which an employee's ability to "move

something forward" seemed to result in the most opportunities for pay increases and promotions,

though title changes were seldom.

Lasting Impression

Hailey's passion for her profession and institution were palpable. She represented the

possibilities of philanthropy with excitement and nuance, undoubtedly why she persisted and

succeeded in the profession. She seemed to have found her professional home working at her

alma mater, with a short tenure at another university to put it all in perspective. Hailey's bubbly

and outgoing personality, a strength in her role, was paired with an introspective awareness that

she needed time to re-charge her batteries, away from the networking and politicking of the

advancement role in her community. For Hailey, succeeding as a woman in fundraising meant

partnering with her male colleagues to navigate traditionally patriarchal roles within heterosexual

couples and founding families. While at times frustrating, she stayed focused on the impact of

philanthropic gifts on the student and faculty experience and the university's close-knit, family-

like community to motivate her.

Chapter 5: Research Findings/Themes

In the previous chapter, I introduced five dynamic women employed as higher education fundraisers. Their voices, amplified through individual portraits, demonstrated the optimism, passion, resilience, frustration, anger, and excitement that characterized their experiences of the fundraising profession. Declining public funds for higher education meant even greater pressure to produce fundraising results and changed the nature of the work, as one participated shared, from a "family to a business." Several women questioned whether the leadership of their organizations really cared for them as human beings, sometimes feeling like commodities. One fundraiser, an ovarian cancer survivor, felt as though she was a tool that "broke" too soon in her career at the institution, meaning that the leadership would rather throw her away than support her during her illness. Another woman fundraiser, after experiencing sexual harassment from a superior, questioned why it took a student reporting the same behavior for it to be taken seriously. Women fundraisers described a need to define their own boundaries for acceptable behavior from colleagues and donors, to be "chameleons" that adapt in meetings with donors, and to find ways to protect themselves from the exhausting performances often required of them.

In this chapter, I will present the thematic elements identified across the interviews, categorized into three sections: motivations for working in higher education fundraising, building relationships with donors, and the tensions faced within the modern higher education advancement organization. Throughout the coding and analysis, I continually circled back to the research question driving the creation of this work, "What do women say are their lived experiences as higher education fundraisers?" while also paying special attention to discussions of pay and promotional opportunities, advantages and barriers to success, and race.

Motivations of Women Fundraisers

Development officers working in higher education fundraising play many roles, often

acting as salespeople, catalysts, managers, and leaders in their work (Worth & Asp, 1994).

Fundamentally, the fundraiser's job is to identify values, wants, and needs of a potential major

gift donor and develop a marketing mix that is specifically tailored to that individual (Knowles &

Gomes, 2009). To that end, fundraisers carefully center the potential donor's motivations in the

fundraising process. However, there is little discussion about the fundraiser's motivations, their

wants and needs, and what drives them as they engage in a process that can often times be

stressful and, for women fundraisers, sometimes degrading. Motivation is concerned with what

"energizes human behavior, what directs or channels such behavior, and how this behavior is

maintained and/or sustained" (Steers & Porter, 1975). The "why" for the women fundraisers in

this study was revealed through discussions about entering the profession, making a difference,

using their identities as women to excel in fundraising, and advice for future women fundraisers.

Becoming a fundraiser. For the women fundraisers interviewed, their families played a

large role in shaping their views on philanthropy. Hailey watched as her mother made

fundraising calls for her church. Hillary witnessed both her parents engage deeply in community

organizations. Madeline viewed care-taking as essential to family life, helping raise her brother

with autism. Ivy's parents made donations to various charities in her name as child. Vivian,

conversely, described how her parents weren't philanthropic at all and grew to value giving back

at the start of her professional career in non-profit management. For each woman, becoming a

professional fundraiser wasn't really a thought until her college years or shortly after. Madeline

shared, "I never thought about growing up and asking people for money. It was an interesting

revelation that this was happening."

Whereas Vivian and Ivy learned about fundraising on the job in entry-level positions that morphed in development roles, Madeline, Hillary, and Hailey found their way into the profession through three different paths constructed by higher education advancement organizations for recruiting talent and generating involvement in philanthropy by students. Madeline made the transition from teacher recruitment to fundraising through an educational training program for full-time fundraisers at a university. Hailey and Hillary started working in fundraising as undergraduate students. Hailey was a student caller in her university's telephone outreach program for two years, making calls to donors to encourage them to donate to various causes. Hillary became involved in her university's "senior class gift campaign" to raise funds for a commemorative bench to mark the graduation of her class and encourage the future alumni to become involved as donors. She shared, "I got very fortunate I think in that I fell into fundraising early." For Hillary, "this profession is a good balance of doing well and doing good."

"Difference maker." While the women fundraisers may have entered in the profession in different ways, their sustained interest in fundraising came from the impact of their work on their respective institutions, in particular the creation of student scholarships. They described the impact differently, but reiterated a number of similar phrases:

- "Doing good"

- "Making a difference"

- "Seeing an impact"

- "Benefiting students"

Grounded in her up-bring, Madeline described her motivation succinctly; "When I fundraise, I feel there are so many people who I can help and impact. If it wasn't for those folks or someone

giving back I probably wouldn't have the same opportunities." Hailey's motivation, seeing the

impact of philanthropy, was intensified by her level of connection to the community she served:

> I think that being able to feel a part of an organization that you believe in I think is
>
> important, number one. But for me, what motivates me more is again seeing that impact
>
> and seeing that change that happens, and now philanthropic gifts really can make ... You
>
> know, I've talked about that transformative gift and how that could be a difference maker
>
> for not only just the institution, but the students then who are here at the institution, and
>
> the faculty, too. I think that's an important role, too. So for me, that really motivates me,
>
> being able to see that.

Hailey added some perspective based on her experience at two institutions, recognizing that she

was motivated more within a close-knit community:

> And then I think having been at [a larger institution] and then being at a smaller
>
> institution, there are things I liked about both, for sure. But here, I think I am motivated
>
> by the fact like I know I can walk on campus and pretty much know at least someone,
>
> and kind of have that connection. So there's a sense of community that I'm changing and
>
> helping, and helping this community develop and grow. I see that both firsthand with my
>
> donors and the impact that they're making, but then I also see it because I am a part of
>
> this community, so I think that helps to motivate me, too.

The interaction with donors was also a motivating factor for many of the women fundraisers. Ivy

shared, "I love working with people and getting to hear people's stories. I think that's my favorite

part of fundraising. I feel like if I was a writer, one day I'd love to just write a compilation of all

the incredible stories." Madeline underscored this point by emphasizing the necessity of

authentic relationships. For Hillary, she found motivation in expanding the existing network of

donors to include more people of color, to help them see the possibility and value of their

philanthropy:

> I'm always thinking about how to include more people, how could we reach more
>
> donors? How do we give more people the opportunity to be involved? Whether they take
>
> it or not is up to them. How do we make more people feel valued and feel like they are a
>
> part of a community that's valued?

This sense of "doing good" and involving donors in the betterment of their universities may be a

driving force, but Vivian was quick to point out that there are definitely "good days" and "bad

days" in higher education fundraising. She explained,

> On a bad day, where things are not going well or feeling a little icky, I do sometimes feel
>
> like I'm manipulating people into giving me their money. It's kind of part of our job. We
>
> use a lot of strategy. We use a lot of psychology. There's a lot of psychology behind it,
>
> changing yourself and who you are to meet the person that you're trying to get money
>
> from. Sometimes that can feel very inauthentic.

Furthermore, self-re-assurance that the fundraising profession has noble intentions can only

motivate for so long, when the size of the gift and its impact are put into perspective, she

expanded,

> We all work really hard to make the donors feel really good about the gift that they're
>
> giving. It's hard being on the inside sometimes, knowing that in reality this large gift that
>
> may seem very large to them is pretty minimal here and it's not really making that big of
>
> a difference. That's something that I struggle with every now and then, knowing that this
>
> $50,000 gift that they... To them that's a lot of money, but to us it's just sort of a penny in
>
> the jar.

Using "being a woman" to excel at fundraising. Overtime, women have come to make up a majority of campus fundraisers (Conry, 1998; Cleveland, 2003; Fundraising, 2010, Association of Fundraising Professionals, 2016; Nathan & Tempel, 2017). In addition to gravitating toward the impact of philanthropy, they are motivated by excelling in the profession. Women fundraisers in this study excelled by demonstrating tenacity, creativity, and grit in pursuit of their fundraising goals. Furthermore, similar to the participants in Titus-Becker's (2007) study, they found ways to re-appropriate traditional gender roles ascribed to women, thus enabling them to transform roles previously thought of as reproducing conditions of oppression into liberating strategies which ultimately facilitated their success (p. 109). Simply put, women fundraisers are excelling at fundraising because they are conscious of the ways in which women have been marginalized and dismissed by, primarily, White cisgender men. Women fundraisers altered their cultivation of prospects accordingly.

Madeline, for example, shared a time in her career in which she played the role of "surrogate or dutiful daughter" as defined by Titus-Becker (2007). Women embrace this role by spending more than ample time with older donors, often bringing treats or personal pictures while updating the alumnus on the latest news of the college (Titus-Becker, 2007, p. 95). Women feel more obliged to perform this sort of role, because they are socialized to believe caring for others is associated with being a good woman (Titus-Becker, 2007). Madeline illustrated this concept precisely:

> I love older people. They will meet with you. They will talk to you. You pretty much
> have to kind of limit their time. Yeah, I was a granddaughter to someone... I have a donor
> who lives in a retirement home here in town that I get toilet paper and soap for every two
> weeks. I take her on her visits, or her appointments, I shouldn't say visits. I take her to the

doctor and dentist. She's in her eighties. She doesn't have any kids. She was never

married. I have adopted her and that's just how it's gonna be. That's just it. Yeah, I'm

different with everybody. Some people I'm their friend, some people it's transactional.

Madeline was fully conscious of the role she played. She exercised her own agency by using the

role of surrogate/dutiful daughter to her advantage (Titus-Becker, 2007). In addition, this

relationship motivated her as she pinpointed family and familial connections as a primary driver

in her life.

Relatedly, Vivian was transparent in her re-appropriation of gender roles and,

specifically, the way in which she could manipulate her image to match the desires of the

prospective donors/White men she visited:

The majority of people that we meet with are middle-aged, wealthy White men. To be

honest that's just who the largest constituent base is that we meet with. I would assume

these go a lot better if you are what they like to look at. I don't know that for a fact. I

don't know. I've never really done the comparison or anything, but I've definitely been on

many, many, many, many meetings where if I look nice and I'm wearing nice heels and

my hair is good and I've got my makeup on just great and I'm not wearing super baggy

clothes, the meeting goes really well. They feel important that a younger attractive

woman is sitting with them.

Vivian, the other women fundraisers in this study, and Titus-Becker's (2007) participants stated

that their dress and appearance on any given day was influenced by factors such as the unit in

which they worked, the persons with whom they would meet, the geographic and physical

location in which they were located, and the type of meeting they had scheduled for the day

(Titus-Becker, 2007, p. 104).

Vivian, of all the participants, most bluntly and directly acknowledged her use of traditional perceptions of femininity and gender roles to succeed in fundraising. She warned, however, about how the socialization of women into these gender roles could make them vulnerable within the competitive, demanding fundraising environment:

> Women are people pleasers. It's like built in us where we have to please everybody. We think we need to be that type of person in order to move up. In this type of environment, where [the university] will use you up completely if you allow them to, you can easily get sucked into that. I think that there are women here, that have been here a really long time, that now look back and think "Oh, my gosh. Why did I give my everything to this? I ended up giving up other stuff in life because of this place."

The women fundraisers I interviewed were not solely motivated by re-appropriating gender roles. That said, many of the them recognized it was necessary to succeed and, to a degree, enjoyed the opportunity to assert their power by leveraging those roles and stereotypes. Being a "chameleon" or engaging in "everyday acting", as this concept was described, could be enjoyable and consisted of several other dimensions detailed later.

Advice for women fundraisers. During our conversations, I asked the women fundraisers to share their advice for women new to the fundraising profession. The responses that emerged were incredibly consistent, the need for a professional network and a supportive community. For the two women of color fundraisers, finding a professional network with fellow women of color that shared their experiences was very difficult, but viewed as imperative to better understand the organization in which they worked and process their experiences, unique from those of White women, in fundraising. A sense of belonging, it became clear, helped to motivate women fundraisers when they may question their own organization's direction, became

frustrated dealing with sexism and/or racism from donors or colleagues, or when the feeling of

"doing good" just wasn't enough.

Hailey summarized the importance of the building relationships within and outside of the

university:

I think relationships are key, both internal and external, so I think it's important to build

your network internally so you know who you can call on when you need help in certain

ways and certain issues, both with donors as well as figuring out something internally at

the university, and how the hierarchy works, and politics and all that jazz. So it's really, I

would say build your network.

Hillary underscored the importance of finding mentors to facilitate professional growth and

asking lots of questions:

Find mentors. Because they are like what, three graduate programs for this work in the

country. You know what I mean? Like you're not going to learn how to do this

effectively, I think in a book. So find mentors. Yeah, find mentors, find people who can

help you. Ask lots of questions. Learn as much from people's experiences as you can.

Ivy specifically urged new women fundraisers to build relationships with fellow women to ask

the "weird questions" about personal safety, harassment, and navigating pay and promotion:

…get a network because there are questions for women specifically in fundraising and it's

nice to have it. I'm fortunate to have a female director who I can ask those weird

questions of in those moments and also female colleagues. But if you're not comfortable

with your colleagues, find someone because there's going to be lots of questions, and we

as women tend to gut check ourselves a lot more. I've been working on that whole motto

of think like a man and just go for it and be less apologetic. I think by having a strong

network you can find that way to be without having to think like a man, find your own

way but also to allow yourself to gut check but not overly do it.

The lack of supportive relationships within the organization can be incredibly challenging,

especially in times of hardship. Vivian experienced this firsthand as a new fundraiser battling

ovarian cancer:

It was very hard internally because I felt like I was almost invisible as it pertained to my

job, as a colleague. I also felt that because I was so new I did a lot of pretending that I

was okay during those times. For my own personal growth and life experience, it's one of

the things I regret the most.

Vivian's story highlighted the importance a fundraising organization must place on facilitating

introductions, showing empathy in times of strife, and fostering a culture that values each

individual employee. Her own personal strength, commitment to her children, and relationships

with family members guided her through this difficult time. And, now, cured of her disease, the

way in which her co-workers reacted to her illness will forever cloud her experience in the

workplace.

Women fundraisers were primarily motivated by a desire to improve their institution by

facilitating the philanthropy of others. This motivation was often mitigated, however, by the

complexities of building relationships with donors and navigating gender roles. A supportive

network of peers with similar experiences within and outside the university helped to uplift

women fundraisers when faced with organizational politics, personal challenges, or when "doing

good" seemed impossible. Madeline may have said it best:

> This is big business, you're in, or you're out. You produce, or you don't. It's not about
>
> taking care of people anymore and when I started it was all about that, if you got a gift it
>
> was celebrated. Now it's like, "That's all you got? Hm. Okay."

Women fundraisers were expected to be compassionate (to appeal to donors), hard-working, and

ambitious to achieve the fundraising goals, while maintaining a thick skin in a competitive

environment.

Performing for Prospective Donors

The women fundraisers that participated in this study underscored the complexity of

building relationships with prospects and donors. The strategy to cultivate prospects and steward

donors involved a variety of components, including university events, programs, donor dinners,

and individual visits. Women fundraisers concerned themselves with the interests and passions

of donors. They thought about the spaces and places on their campuses in which specific donors

and prospects would feel comfortable and excited to provide the sort of experiences they

believed would better inform the donor's philanthropy and, ultimately, secure financial support.

Furthermore, women fundraisers thought intentionally about what individual prospects and

donors, many of whom are men, need from them interpersonally to trust the process and make a

gift. It's about making them feel like they are "the only one." Madeline explained,

> When you have to meet 15 to 20 people [a month] and have face to face conversations
>
> about who they are, what they're doing. You have to make sure you're remembering all of
>
> the stuff about them because they know you and your [institution] and they remember all
>
> of your stuff. They think they're the only one, right? They're the only one that you care
>
> this much about. I have to remember, "Oh, I have to go and prepare. I have to remember,
>
> "Oh, their dog is Skeeter and this is ..." All of those things because you need to project

that they're so important to who you are and what you do that it's not really [the

institution] anymore. It's a relationship and, "Madeline's going to tell me some cool

things about [the institution]," but she's just gonna make me feel this way. "I feel good

about giving to [this institution]." I don't know how you cannot tailor it to them.

Tailoring to prospects and donors, labeled "being a chameleon" by two women fundraisers,

meant to tune their individual performances as fundraisers to the preferences, identities, and

biases of prospective donors to facilitate the fundraising process. Women fundraisers identified

that "being a chameleon" took time and energy as well as sense of their own personal ethics and

values. They wrestled with various aspects of their performance: How much of who I am will I

need to hide? To embellish? To change? Am I willing to lie? Am I willing to flirt? In this

section, I share what it means to "chameleon" in greater depth and the questions of personal

ethics and values for women in fundraising.

Being a "chameleon." Without exception, women fundraisers described a conscious and

ongoing evaluation of each donor's beliefs, preferences, and idiosyncrasies and an awareness of

how their own personal characteristics and beliefs may advance or hinder the fundraising

relationship. Whether dubbed "being a chameleon" or "every day acting," women fundraisers

shared many examples of the ways in which they actively shaped the perceptions of donors

regarding their personal identities to their advantage. Vivian emphasized this point: "You have to

be able to chameleon yourself to the person that you're meeting with. I think that is [the]

absolute, number one trait that a really good fundraiser has to have." Hillary explained further,

declaring that being a chameleon "means being adaptable." She continued,

 I think it means not being a pushover and not losing whatever your, you can't just be

completely changeable like the wind, but I think it's being able to read the room or read

the donor meeting, read them, read the donor to figure out what it is that they're hoping

for. Because I think at the end of the day, our job is to represent the University. So, it's

what is this person hoping to get out of their experience with the University. And trying

where possible, to give them that within the confines of staying true to the values of the

University and ethics. If that makes sense.

Several areas emerged in which "being a chameleon" was perceived to be of value to building

donor relationships. These included political party affiliation and beliefs, racial and ethnic

identity, and gender norms and roles.

Conflicting political affiliations & beliefs. Across all five interviews, women

fundraisers recognized the challenge of working with prospective donors with different political

party affiliations and beliefs. Women fundraisers listened carefully to their prospective donors

for signs of their deeply held beliefs that could, unwittingly, come into conflict with their own.

And, sometimes prospective donor beliefs that could come into conflict with their institution's

stance on an issue or fundraising priority. Vivian described that these potential conflicts are more

likely in certain regions of the country:

> …I'm a very liberal leaning person in my own personal life, but I cover the Midwest. I
>
> travel to several very, very red states. So, I have to go meet with people that sit across
>
> from me and they are diehard Republican. Super, big Trump supporters. I have to
>
> chameleon and I have to behave in a manner that makes them feel happy about the
>
> interaction.

Vivian's experience acknowledged political differences around broad geographic borders. She

was prepared differently depending on where she traveled. In contrast, Hailey described an

example close to home, in the city in which she lived and worked. Referring to a campus

fundraising priority related to services for LGBTQ students and faculty, she shared,

> I believe wholeheartedly in some of these things that we do, so that's also an interesting
>
> place that sometimes I have to balance. Because again in the community that I'm
>
> currently in, while changing, is still at least for sure more conservative. Hearing those
>
> conversations, sometimes you're like, "I just want to strangle you." I know that sounds
>
> bad. You're like, "How do I nod and smile right now to this conversation?" You're like,
>
> "Huh? Okay, so cool. My friend's taking over. Bye bye, see you later," and scooting away
>
> from the table. But that's an interesting thing that's again kind of been changing over that
>
> time frame, too.

Hailey acknowledged that support for the LGBTQ community was expanding, but it was a topic

she cautiously approached when working with conservative donors in the area surrounding her

institution. While broaching this subject with sense of humor, she revealed that she had

considered asking a colleague to step in to these discussions in her place. This was a strategy

described by several of the women fundraisers, calling in back-up from a colleague that may be

better suited to "control the conversation" and keep it focused on the relevant philanthropic

discussion.

For Ivy and Hillary, two Black women fundraisers, the political conversations they

recalled involved the inclusion of conservative groups on-campus and issues of free speech. Ivy

explained,

> …I'm very liberal, [my institution] is thankfully really liberal within this very
>
> conservative state, but it's wonderful. So you have this donor who's like wow, [the
>
> institution] only allows one kind of opinion and it's only okay if you're of that mind and

I'm like, in my mind, I'm like yeah. I'm like, I like that. They were also pushing back

because yeah, we have young Republicans or young Libertarians, and we have all the

groups that other universities have. I didn't feel like I remember seeing their posters,

fliers, their call outs. So in my mind, it was like, I feel like they were represented and

they were fine. If they were a minority, that may happen around there. It's that give and

take where sometimes you do need to push back on those critiques, but sometimes you

just let them have it and you're like, whatever. It's personal, right, because I've

experienced that. Sometimes I'm like, it almost might be easier to do development at a

school you didn't go to because then you can just take it all in and just let it wash over

you…

Similarly, Hillary grappled with the inclusion of conservative voices on campus, specifically

speakers with White supremacist viewpoints. Unlike Ivy's situation, however, the institution was

considering ways in which to fundraise for a space to include those speakers and groups

alongside groups and speakers engaged in the civil rights movement, to demonstrate support for

"political diversity." Hillary found herself in a position in which she was scrutinizing her

institution's actions to determine their next steps and whether or not she would be asked to

involve donors supportive of the proposed approach. Could she support this fundraising priority?

Would she speak up? She was unsure how her critique would be received and planned to

continue her evaluation.

Madeline described an instance in which she couldn't "chameleon", she just needed to

leave the team of development colleagues working with the prospective donor:

It's kind of a weird thing because I had an individual that I was working with on a team

and he had mentioned to the team and to one of my colleagues that he wanted to make

sure this scholarship went to a domestically born [students]. He's like, "You know what I

mean. I don't want any of international people getting this." I was like, "I'm out."

Madeline and fellow women fundraisers were alert to the political affiliations and beliefs of their

prospective donors. They listened closely for cues that would indicate whether they were in

alignment and could leverage a shared affiliation or belief or if they had divergent opinions that

would impede fundraising process. In some cases, prospective donors held views that women

fundraisers simply did not agree with or they perceived ran counter to their institution's values

and priorities. In these times, women fundraisers had to make a judgement call whether to ignore

the issue and stay focused on the money or walk away and risk not meeting their fundraising

goals. Similar "breaking points" were shared around race, ethnicity, and gender.

Considering racial/ethnic identity. Women fundraisers consciously considered their

racial and/or ethnic identities as part of their fundraising personas, depending upon how they

perceived the prospective donors would respond either positively or negatively. As a Black

woman, Ivy found that the "the Black card" could be used with White donors, she explained,

I think part of me does like that about development is getting to play a role in that it's

kind of like an everyday acting. I do, I feel like should I kind of play up like who, which

character, you know. Do they need me to be like the super "girl next door" or are they

kind of enjoying having we'll say like the Black card, and meeting with this person that's

giving them some diversity points today, and they're feeling really good connecting with

this person.

Whether it was full-blown White guilt or simply the novelty of befriending a Black woman, Ivy

found that for some White prospective donors it was advantageous to be Black. She event

recalled, while visiting a rural town, that curious White constituents would ask to touch her short

afro! With other White people, she would rely heavily on her upbringing as an adoptee in a

White, upper middle-class household to connect with the donor's experiences, activating a

different dimension of her identity. Given her upbringing, she often felt a disconnect with Black

donors especially around language and the use of Black English. Conversely, Hillary was an

adept code-switcher. She voiced that she actively thought about the way she would speak with

White donors and Black donors:

> I think about the words I use, and the way I speak, and how that can be adapted one way
>
> or the other when I need it to. I'm a notorious code switcher, which I'm fine with. I think
>
> that language is something to be celebrated and it is important. Everything has a time and
>
> a place.

When speaking Black English, Hillary frequently found an instant connection with Black alumni

and donors, feeling part of the same "club." I will discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 6: At

the Intersection of Gender & Race.

Similar to Ivy, Madeline illuminated the experience of feeling like a novelty, in her case

checking a diversity box for the advancement organization as a Hispanic woman:

> I was thinking about a challenge and about looking the way I look, people would
>
> probably not identify me as Hispanic, or Mexican, or whatever you want to say. If you
>
> saw my dad's picture you'd be like, "Oh yeah, 100% Mexican," but I look more like my
>
> mom. I make people feel comfortable, but I totally check a box for folks, right?

She continued, "Because I don't look ethnic or whatever but also I'm really… I can assimilate

right? Like, "Oh you pass for White," so I make people feel comfortable." Unlike Hillary and

Ivy, Madeline could actively decide whether to be "White" or "Hispanic" at the beginning of a

donor relationship, adjusting her performance based on the response of that person throughout the fundraising process.

Unequivocally, Vivian declared that "being White" was an advantage in fundraising. She outlined the profile of the prospective donors she met with, middle-aged, wealthy White men. For this audience, the majority of donors, she didn't need to play up her Whiteness, she just needed them to see her:

> …I think race has, unfortunately, a very big thing to do with it. I'm the all-American girl. I'm White as White can be. I think that that helps. I think that if you're a minority out there doing this role it's probably a lot different.

Vivian enacted the "all-American girl" image grounded in gender norms and roles commonly understand within a patriarchal society.

Using gender norms & roles. Fundraising roles and responsibilities rely on key relationship-building and organizational tasks, which are commonly associated with stereotypical women's work and are, thus, valued less in a patriarchal society (Dale, 2017, p. 1). Women fundraisers re-appropriated gendered skills such as subservience, listening, acknowledging others, and the dutiful daughter role to their advantage when working with donors (Titus-Becker, 2007, p. 142). In some instances, claiming power over these roles was a source of motivation and inspiration in fundraising work. In others, it was viewed as a necessity to advance relationships with prospective donors, both women and men. The women fundraisers I interviewed highlighted a variety of ways they employed traditional notions of femininity and womanhood to successfully fundraise, simultaneously leveraging their privileged and oppressed identities.

In a patriarchal society, women's work has traditionally been in the home, taking care of children, being a dutiful wife, and care-taking. The women fundraisers that didn't fit into this

traditional mold found themselves developing strategies to a) conform to a donor's belief this

remained true and/or b) align themselves with this stereotype to relate to the donor's experiences.

For instance, Hailey, unmarried with no children, recalled connecting with donors by telling

stories of her niece and nephew:

> So it's typically like an icebreaker conversation like, "Are you married? Do you have
>
> kids? What school do they go to?" All these things, and I'm like, "I have a niece and my
>
> nephew." So I pull out them a lot, especially talking with individuals who have kids,
>
> because that's sometimes a great way to bridge that conversation.

She elaborated, "It's like, that's the common language that you do end up deferring and talking

about quite a bit."

> Vivian, a divorced mother of two children, found it easier, in some instances, to lie and

declare herself married, especially because her and her boyfriend have a child

> To make it even worse, I now have a new baby with somebody that I'm not married to.
>
> People see a young woman that they meet with. You would be surprised. You're meeting
>
> with a lot of older-aged people. They treat me like I'm their granddaughter. I sit down
>
> with them, they say "Are you married, honey?" And there's been times where I said
>
> "Yeah." What else do I say? Get into the conversation about how "No. I'm divorced. But
>
> now I'm in a relationship."

Vivian elaborated about the pressures she felt to conform to a certain way of being a woman, the

hurdles that she often had to jump to push forward a conversation about philanthropy:

> They don't see us as professionals like they do a man. They see us more as young women
>
> and mothers and wives. That dynamic goes into that. I don't think many men fundraisers
>
> have a problem of sitting down and being judged on if they're married or not, or if they

have kids or not. "You have two young babies at home? How can you do this job? What

are you doing here in [this city]? Do they make you come here?"

While many donors expected Vivian to be married with children, some older men blurred the

lines:

It's life in general. Older men look at you. They treat you sort of like a little

granddaughter, but also they flirt with you a little bit. That's sort of what the dynamic is.

I've never been in a position where I'm like "Whoa, whoa, whoa. You're being

inappropriate. I understand that that's kind of the culture with that age of man."

Vivian recalled that the overall fundraising process was comparable to dating, with social media

"stalking" to learn more about prospects, going to dinner to learn more about one another, and

keeping an eye on landing the next "date". All with the goal to grow the relationship and

hopefully close a gift. Madeline thought of a specific example of when the dating metaphor felt

uncomfortable:

Traditionally it's men because I'm thinking of a guy and this sounds so bad too because

then I almost joke about it because I'm uncomfortable. I'll call him the Silver Fox, right?

I'll go, "Oh, the Silver Fox." I try to downplay it. He is harmless. He likes my attention,

and you know that. I can call him up right now and get a visit. I could get any kind of

time I wanted with him because he thinks I'm cute or he thinks ... Whatever I make him

feel, he likes my company. Now I usually go with a colleague because I'm like, "Eh, this

feels gross."

All the women fundraisers discussed a need to find their own personal boundaries in working

with donors. They needed to feel comfortable whether it was how they represented their political

beliefs, shared details about their families, or in the way they dressed. The attire of fundraisers

was an interesting topic of conversation with the women recognizing that there's an expectation

to be professional and well-dressed. Vivian saw this within her organization:

> I think you could probably look around at the [university's] female fundraisers and
>
> probably understand that you have to be well-dressed. You have to be put together. You
>
> have to kind of look a certain way. You have to be appealing looking. I don't know how
>
> to say it. We don't have a lot of crazy, disheveled slobs on our staff.

Madeline added, "I think there's a look. I think about the attractiveness." And, Hailey, described

calibrating her professionalism to the status of the individual she was meeting,

> You just have to put on a little extra effort. It's fine. I also think it depends sometimes on
>
> who you're meeting with again, and I think that's mostly because of the world that I work
>
> in right now, which is if I'm meeting with someone that I know is of higher wealth in the
>
> community, and they put a high emphasis on that appearance, that is something that then
>
> I'm like, I'm making sure that I'm doing my hair that day, my nails are done, little things
>
> like that. And there is a thought process that goes through that, for sure.

The importance of grooming and appearance, and the associated assumptions made about

women, was drawn into sharp relief for Vivian during her ovarian cancer chemo treatment:

> … you can't really distinguish a man with ovarian cancer as well as you can a woman.
>
> There's bald men all the time. You don't necessarily think all bald men are going through
>
> chemo like you do a woman. Relating to me as a maternal, womanly person, it sort of
>
> exacerbated that. Now I was the sick single mom or the sick woman that might die. It
>
> made my job extremely difficult. In retrospect, I probably should have just quit. It's hard.

Ivy navigated a different dilemma, she struggled with what to wear and whether or not to reveal

she was Black prior to meeting with a donor:

> …as a woman, my question is what do I put when I'm meeting when I'm meeting a donor
> at coffee shop? How do I describe myself? That's the thing I really struggle with in that I
> ... I don't know. I just hate the fact that I have to be like I'm Black. Do I have to put this
> and if I don't put it, is that weird? And if I do put it, is that ... So I've kind of just gone to
> the no descriptive and just stalking the donor and hoping that they will stalk me and we
> will meet.

Ivy tried polos in her university colors, to distinguish herself as the person that the donor was meeting with. This was successful to some degree, but then she was left feeling less than professionally dressed.

 "Are you whoring yourself out?" Women in higher education fundraising leveraged a host of strategies to develop relationships with prospective donors. Each of the women fundraisers I interviewed wrestled with their performance, what it meant to "chameleon" without losing themselves, while working with donors with different interests, beliefs, and expectations. The negotiation of what's right and what's wrong, what's acceptable and what isn't, seemed to be a journey that each woman took on their own. There were some informal conversations on these issues in passing with colleagues, supervisors, and mentors, but ultimately it came down to an individual, internal ethical code. In imposing fundraising goals and metrics, without considering the complexities of relationship-building with donors, advancement organizations and leadership created a sense that women fundraisers were commodities and tools to raise money by any means necessary. Vivian shared,

> For lack of a better term, I sort of feel like sometimes [this institution] is pimping me out
> for their gain and they're not really following through on making the people feel really
> good about what they're doing.

Madeline felt similarly, especially during difficult times on her campus, she explained,

> I'm not on a date. It can feel very date-like. I've been hit on. I've been made to feel
>
> demeaned. It's interesting. It's interesting that in how you act because then at the end of
>
> the day I need to get this money so there's sometimes you feel like a prostitute. I'm not
>
> surprised that it's a female dominated field because we are really, we're asking for money
>
> and I've had people say, "Do you ever feel like a whore? I mean you know all these bad
>
> things that are happening right now. Are you whoring yourself out?"

Hillary articulated a practical, perhaps brutal, recognition that sexual harassment was more likely

for women fundraisers, purely because of the number of prospective donors they visit. The

likelihood of meeting someone that would try to take advantage of or misread the relationship

with a woman fundraiser was higher:

> I think in this work in particular, because I think it's partly a numbers game. We deal with
>
> so many people, like we literally have 170, 180 people that we're assigned to deal with,
>
> you know what I mean? And that's 180 more people perhaps that other people interact
>
> with on a daily basis. So I think the likelihood of it happening is just increased by that
>
> sheer fact let alone.

Hillary highlighted the risks associated with meeting with donors in what could be interpreted as

intimate spaces like at a restaurant over dinner:

> I think also the situations that we are, the spaces in which we do our work sometimes.
>
> Like I had a friend who went to dinner with a donor, who was literally just like grabbing
>
> her hand over the table, and touching her leg. It's physically easier to do that at a dinner
>
> table than it is if you're in seminars, it's kind of hard to just reach across and stroke
>
> someone's leg. So I think that that's part of it. I think that the ... And I also I think that

sometimes the worst incidents I've seen besides that one workplace one, were always

after an event after somebody's had a couple drinks and that happens a lot in where we

work.

Women fundraisers grappled with political affiliations, race and ethnicity, gender roles and

norms when determining their approach to prospective donors. They also thought about their

personal safety, noting the details of their donor meetings on their work calendars, avoiding rides

home from men donors, and avoiding certain hotels. Women fundraisers faced these

complexities head on in their day to day work with individual donors, while simultaneously

navigating their institutions and advancement organizations.

Navigating the Advancement Organization

Women fundraisers were motivated by the differences they could make in the lives of

their respective university's students and faculty and, on good days, the broader mission of their

institutions. They enjoyed collaborating with donors, listening to their stories, and matching

donor interests and passions with their institution's fundraising priorities. On bad days, women

fundraisers were disheartened by the management of donor funds within the institution and the

challenges associated with building relationships with hundreds of prospects and donors. This

dichotomy, the good days and bad, was also present for women fundraisers within the

advancement organization as they navigated relationships with colleagues and supervisors.

Women fundraisers described their experiences working with colleagues in development and

across campus, understanding how success was measured and, relatedly, evaluating how pay

increases and opportunities for promotion were determined within their universities.

Working with colleagues. The number of relationships managed by fundraisers

appeared overwhelming at times, with prospective donors, donors, faculty, university

administrators, students, and development colleagues all playing a role in fundraising work. Two

internal audiences seemed the most salient for the women I interviewed. First, development

officer peers, simultaneously partners, competitors, and sources of support, were discussed

frequently. And, second, managing the expectations of and relationships with campus partners,

faculty and leadership, was an important dimension of fundraising.

Fellow development officers, of all genders, served as partners in cultivating prospects

and donors. Depending on a donor's major or interests, development officers from different

academic colleges or programs, or units (i.e., athletics) could help move relationships with

donors forward. Similarly, development colleagues assigned to and/or based in different

geographic regions, sometimes multiple states or specific cities, could add local knowledge and

meet with the donor more frequently. Regardless, women fundraisers described the importance

of collaboration with development colleagues. Madeline found the opportunity to partner with

colleagues made the work "more fun" and one of the primary reasons she enjoyed her regionally-

assigned role. Hailey provided an example of the sort of discussions that development officers

would consider together:

> …it's an interesting conversation sometimes that we'll have just around the table if we're
>
> talking about a donor strategy or how to reach out to this prospect, or new money versus
>
> the old money and how different it is.

Women fundraisers described instances in which partnering with a male colleague could be

beneficial when working with older heterosexual couples, especially if the donor couple ascribed

to traditional gender roles. For example, they would find that men would open up more to male

development officers at the golf course, while women would meet over lunch. Hailey recalled

how this sort of separation was rooted in the advancement organization's history;

So some of the way the development office was run 20 years ago in terms of, this is like a

Florida trip where the men go golfing and the women have lunch, you know? These are

kind of the separations. It's been interesting to try and then cross over to that area where

it's like, okay, maybe I'm at the lunch but we're talking to you right now as a couple, or

we're talking to you as an individual and we're having these conversations, and taking me

seriously in that way because they've kind of created this whole weird separation in a way

too, if that makes sense.

Hailey was fully aware of these traditional notions of gender roles and coordinated around them

to "tag-team" with a male colleague regularly. For example, if they were doing a joint visit and

the conversation with the wife shifted to fashion, the male colleague would make sure to involve

Hailey. It was a very purposeful strategy.

The relationships between women fundraisers were simultaneously strategic, supportive,

and competitive. Women fundraisers shared their experiences with one another from the road.

They shared stories ranging from stories of sexual harassment to the excitement of closing large

gifts. Each woman fundraiser described at least one close relationship with a peer woman

fundraiser within her organization that helped them process their experiences, whether through

advice, humor, or listening. Hailey highlighted her relationship with a colleague in the same

fundraising unit. They discussed personal safety while traveling to large cities, when they were

often times traveling alone and meeting with prospective donors one-on-one:

…we've both joked like, "Well, I'll text you after. I'll text you when I'm on my way back

to my hotel" or something like that. So I think sometimes you find you do that with

someone who at least understands the job a little bit. Or it's like, "Hey, I'm leaving here.

If I don't text you in like an hour, here's where I'm at." Kind of joking thing, but I think

there is a level of seriousness even when you're joking about it.

Vivian pointed out that not all relationships are as supportive. She exposed the competitive

nature of the relationships between fundraisers:

This is a huge dynamic that happens when you work in a predominately woman-based

department. I'm sure it's with a company as well. Given the nature of what we do it's

competitive. I'm sure that is across the board. Higher ed fundraising is competitive.

Competitive against your own colleagues. Even though it doesn't necessarily need to be

there's always a tiny bit of that there. Even if it's totally taken away it's still there. You

still want to be one of the top performers and all of that.

Competition, she shared, was positive in an environment in which meeting specific fundraising

goals was imperative. That said, she explained the negative consequences of competition for

women:

There's a lot of cattiness. There's a lot of gossip. All of the really bad stereotypes that

women get, they all come out in this more competitive environment. I hate that dynamic

but it's definitely there.

Considering these dynamics, many of the women fundraisers were cautious about establishing

trust and careful which colleagues to whom they shared personal information.

Hillary made an important observation about the "blind spots" around race and racism

amongst her primarily White colleagues. In her organization, there was *one* other Black woman

fundraiser with whom she could discuss these issues without fear of confusion or retaliation:

I genuinely do think that almost everyone I've met, I feel is very well-meaning. But I do

think there are some blind spots and I think that it's… I think other places I've worked,

there have been biases but the difference between a bias in my mind, at least the way I

think of it, is you can recognize a bias. I think there are people who have blind spots but

they cannot see their bias. And then anyone who slightly points it out, they're really not

trying to hear it. And so that's been a little like, okay. 'Cause they're just like, "I would

never do any of these things," I'm like, "You just did four of them, you literally just sat

here in this meeting and did four of them." But you can't say that's why.

Competitive and supportive, forthright and guarded, women fundraisers carefully leveraged

relationships with development officer colleagues to succeed in fundraising. With colleagues

across campus, the role of the fundraiser appeared to be more about managing expectations.

Hailey explained her role as a conduit between a prospective donor and the dean of students:

I had one yesterday that was for the dean of students, and I'm reaching out to him about a

specific program and more details on it, so I can talk to this donor about this, or get back

to them about our conversation. And it's still like, "Okay, I have to set the stage. I have to

set the stage for him that I want to know more about this program, because I do have this

individual who's expressed some interest in learning more about this area. But that

doesn't mean ..." You know, "I want you to dream big because they have the capacity to

do something large, but I also need you to understand the reality is, we're in very early

stages. So don't give me something that you want funded next month, because that's not

going to line up." How do we navigate that kind of conversation, too? Get them to dream

big, but at the same time also have the understanding that this may or may not come

through, or may or may not come through at the level that you want it to, so I need a

couple different avenues that we could take. And so sometimes that is a lot to juggle.

Strong relationships with faculty and administrators were also helpful when connecting with donors. For instance, Hailey partnered with engineering faculty members to explain the technical aspects of research projects to engineering alumni and prospects. The relationships maintained within the organization were viewed as important as those developed with prospective donors.

Questioning success, pay & promotion gap. Women fundraisers revealed constant negotiation within their organizations around the definition of success. The process by which fundraisers were rewarded and promoted, and how it was perceived they could be rewarded and promoted, was under continual scrutiny. For Ivy, this scrutiny was compounded given her experience in the corporate world in which she was paid more than in higher education. For Vivian, the obvious subjectivity around these issues, even in a profession the bottom-line seemed to be whether a fundraiser was raising money or not, seemed obvious:

> You look at some people that have moved up that have horrible numbers and metrics, then you look at some people that really rock it out a lot of the time and they don't get to move up. A lot of it, again, and this is the way of the world, it's who you know. If you know somebody, you're in good with somebody, that has an opportunity to move somebody up, then you're good. If you're not, you might not. Of course, it's in the end money. It's how much money you bring in. You can have all the great visits in the world and you can qualify so many people. If you're not bringing in money then I don't think you're deemed successful. I also don't think it's a "one size fits all" for everybody.

Madeline elaborated on the reasons why measuring success in fundraising could be so subjective. She outlined the importance of your supervisor's status and the hierarchy of fundraising colleges and units:

> I don't think we have a lot of shared norms when it comes to evaluation. I think if you
>
> have a good relationship with your supervisor and they're able to help you learn, that's
>
> great. That's great, and I think that they are if your supervisor is accepted by leadership
>
> then you're good. It goes down the line. If there's one person that perhaps isn't doing what
>
> they're supposed to be doing and you're ... They're not in favor, if you will, I don't know,
>
> I'm kind of talking in code so let me think about this. If you don't have a boss that
>
> advocates that way for you, you're stuck.

No matter how well you perform, Madeline explained, the opportunities presented to some

fundraisers and not others was always going to be unequal given the fundraising potential and

perceived value of certain colleges and units over others:

> I think it matters where you're placed. I think if you're placed in one of the favorable
>
> units, let's take. They're going to bring money in no matter what. If you're in athletics
>
> here you're left alone because you know what? They're different…They're going to be
>
> successful regardless because we have a donor base that loves athletics.
>
> I think if you're in a place that is a smaller college or unit and you don't have a
>
> constituency, and you have a portfolio that is not worth much. You're going to be set up
>
> for failure. We keep creating these positions, and I think, "Do we really need [all these
>
> fundraisers] in [arts and languages]?" I'm not real sure. I hope the people are successful
>
> there but I don't see it, so anyway that's ... It's an interesting question.

Titus-Becker (2007) confirmed that gender was at the root of the marginalization the women

faced from their employer by being under compensated and excluded from the boy's club. In this

study, women fundraisers also expressed a lack of appreciation for and consideration of the work

and commitments that tend to fall on women in and around the fundraising workplace. These

roles included serving as a mentor, acting as diversity educator (especially for Black women), and balancing child-care and work travel schedules. Madeline added that advanced degrees were not considered.

There is a well-documented pay gap between men and women in the fundraising profession (Nathan & Tempel, 2017). Men are also more likely to ascend into leadership roles than women (Nathan & Tempel, 2017). Madeline shared that early in her career she was told to "accept what you get" by a supervisor. The irony of this advice was not lost on her:

> I find it really interesting that we are so comfortable asking for money in this profession but we don't ask for things for ourselves. We ask because we're representing donors, or representing students, or faculty.

Similarly, Vivian questioned if men were socialized to ask for promotion and pay increases more frequently and more aggressively than women:

> It just seems that the men in this environment seem to move up the ranks quicker than women. There could be a variety of reasons. Maybe they're more aggressive with wanting to be promoted and be vocal about that and all of that. But I do. I think that's the case.

Hailey pondered opportunities for promotion and professional growth differently. Citing the small size of her organization relative to other larger, public universities, Hailey felt there were fewer opportunities for her to ascend up the leadership ladder and limited resources to provide raises. She questioned how she was setting herself up for opportunities to grow, to partner on new and innovative projects. To Hailey, the reward was more responsibility, not a title change or raise.

Women fundraisers expressed a desire to feel valued by their organizations, to be fairly compensated, and to be presented with opportunities for professional growth. With few

exceptions, they saw these fundamentals as unlikely within their organizations. Vivian, battling

ovarian cancer as a new fundraiser at her institution, felt that the organization considered her a

tool that broke too soon. She reflected that from the organization's perspective, it would have

been easier to replace her, rather than support her. It was her personal strength that carried her

through. Madeline and Hillary both recalled reporting sexual harassment by men working in the

organization, only to be ignored until students reported the same sorts of behavior. Leading

Madeline to question, "You didn't think I was worth enough?" A question that resonated, for me,

across all the experiences of women fundraisers both outside and inside the organization.

Summary

Women fundraisers described feeling motivated by the difference they could make for

their institutions and students, shared the ways in which they tailored their personal

performances and strategies to engage prospective donors, and revealed the complexities of

navigating fundraising organizations.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Through individual portraits and thematic analysis, this study illuminated the experiences of women working in higher education fundraising. Individual portraits provided a window into the joys, fears, opportunities, and challenges faced by each woman fundraiser in their own words. Each story was unique while revealing a collective sense of resiliency in the face of many common adversities. Captured in the thematic analysis, the women fundraisers described their motivations for fundraising, strategies for working with donors, and navigating their advancement organizations. Women fundraisers were drawn to the profession to "make a difference" and improve opportunities for college students. They revealed the complexities of building relationships with prospective donors that may hold differing views, perceptions, or biases involving race, ethnicity, political beliefs, and gender role. These views sometimes manifested as explicit racist and/or sexist remarks and actions. Within their organizations, women fundraisers questioned the definition of success and shared the importance of working with colleagues across their institutions.

Throughout the portraits and thematic analysis, there was an intentional focus on the intersection of gender and race considering the dynamics between individual fundraisers, prospective donors, and colleagues. The theoretical lens of intersectionality acted a as a NorthStar through the portrait creation, coding, and analysis. Findings from this study substantiated and extended previous work that examined the experiences of women in fundraising, specifically Titus-Becker's (2007) research. In the next chapter, I will discuss, explicitly, the experiences of women of color at the intersection of race and gender through the lens of intersectionality. The following discussion revealed many experiences that have not been examined within fundraising research until now, but have been in explored in other disciplines. I have done my best to integrate related studies from journals focused on race and gender,

psychology, communications, and leadership, to advance the discussion. Grounding my thoughts

in this collection of research, individual portraits, and thematic analysis, I also present two

models to make sense of the lived experiences of women in fundraising, inclusive of the

complexities, pressures, relationships, power, and privilege. The first model advances the idea

that predominantly White institutions are pressuring, in both explicit and implicit ways, women

in fundraising to conform to a standard, a fundraiser prototype. The further the woman fundraiser

from the prototype, with all its unattainable expectations and contradictions, the more dissonance

the woman fundraiser experiences. In the second model, I present a way of understanding the

thought process behind donor cultivation strategies, named, using the words of one of the women

fundraisers, the on-paper/off-paper strategy. The model surfaces the dimensions of donor

relationship building that are often unspoken in advancement organizations.

At the Intersection of Gender & Race

As they do throughout society, the fundraisers I interviewed navigated racist and sexist

attitudes, beliefs, and actions in their roles. They persisted in the profession with a keen

awareness of their own power and privilege, advantages and disadvantages, and how they shaped

the performances required to succeed in fundraising and in their universities. For the women of

color interviewed, their performances included conscious processing of whether or not to tone

down or play up their identities as people of color depending on the race and/or perceived

prejudices of their donors and expectations of their White colleagues. Carbado and Gulati (2013)

described the ongoing performance of Black Americans:

> There are roles one has to perform, storylines one is expected to follow, and dramas and
>
> subplots one should avoid at all cost. Being an African American in a predominantly
>
> White institution is like playing a small but visible part in a racially specific script. The

main characters are White. There are one or two Blacks in supporting roles. Survival is

always in question. The central conflict is to demonstrate that one is Black enough from

the perspective of the supporting cast and White enough from the perspective of the main

characters. The "double bind" racial performance is hard and risky. Failure is always just

around the corner. And there is no acting school in which to enroll to rehearse the part.

These nuances complicated the fundraising profession for Black women and women of color

more broadly. In the following pages, I will review the theory of intersectionality, apply an

intersectional lens to surface the experiences unique to women of color in this study, and discuss

those experiences in relation to relevant literature to create a more holistic, inclusive view of the

profession.

Intersectionality. Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the

complexity in the world, in people, and in human experience (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 25).

Because of their intersectional identity as both women and of color within discourses shaped to

respond to one or the other, women of color are marginalized within both (Crenshaw, 1991, p.

358). I have intentionally decided to utilize intersectionality primarily to illuminate the unique

experiences of women of color, rather than to center it as a tool to interrogate intersections

present for White women and the identities that cause them marginalization. This is not the

"Oppression Olympics" (Hancock, 2011) in which there is a competition between

unidimensional constructions of oppression (Yuval-David, 2012). The intention was to use the

theoretical perspective to underscore stories of marginalization that are often unseen and

misunderstood within fundraising practice and situate them in a broader social context. Hillary, a

Black woman fundraiser, expressed the essence of the intersection of race and gender

experienced in her own life:

You live in a space of it's almost like you got two factors possibly working against you.

And so, be aware of that. Don't be naive to the fact that sometimes that's an advantage,

sometimes it's a major disadvantage. But don't shrink from it.

At the intersection of race and gender, the women of color in this study spoke of triumphs,

challenges, frustrations, and hope. Being a woman of color fundraiser meant being the "only" in

many contexts, employing strategies to make White donors and prospects feel safe, consciously

utilizing different strategies to engage donors of color, and assuming the responsibility of serving

as a diversity educator in their organization.

   "Being the only." Black women fundraisers reported "being the only" women of color in

many settings within the organization and when interacting within their university's donors. This

is unsurprising as the participants all worked in pre-dominantly White institutions and across the

profession, 88% of advancement professionals are White (CASE, 2016). Vivian, a White

participant, took stock of her own institution's racial make-up with a loaded statement:

   The 100+ fundraisers, how many Black people do we have? Two? Maybe three? And I'm

   being generous. I think it's just two. I don't know if that is just because of the local

   population and who lives here or if that's because maybe people doing the hiring know

   that numbers won't be as good out of a person of color. I don't know. But I do think that

   it's a huge problem.

Vivian expressed the idea that Black women were not hired as fundraisers at the same rate as

White women because those with hiring authority anticipated they would perform poorly.

Stereotypes about the character and/or competency of Black female employees, whether

conscious or unconscious, may cause some White supervisors to view a Black employee as a

significant risk which may block entry to a job or result in unfavorable and different treatment

(Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012, p. 213). Amongst the small minority community that

made it into fundraising, "being the only" or frequently 1 of 2 or 3 women of color fundraisers,

meant there was the added challenge of finding others that understood your experiences. This

form of isolation could be very stressful (Hall et al., 2012). Ivy shared that finding the one other

women of color did not result in an instant connection or sense of relief:

> So I think sometimes the other issue is we as minorities, because there's one other
>
> woman... That's why I wanted to look up how many other minority development officers
>
> there were at [my institution], but there's one other woman and I would just love ...
>
> Originally I was like okay is she a mentor or whatever? Just like so close, so standoffish,
>
> and I think that that comes from different areas, right. Having to have fought yourself to
>
> get so far and to just feel like I am here now, and I don't want more holding me back. I
>
> am just out in the open.

Hillary acknowledged that "being the only" "anything" can be exhausting and that all too often

in fundraising "being the only" as a woman of color means being alone for long periods of time:

> …I don't like being the only. Being the only can be very exhausting. The only anything.
>
> If you're the only young person in a room, it's exhausting. The only Black person in the
>
> room for too long, is exhausting. We're all gonna be the only at some point in our lives.

At her current institution, Hillary maintained a close relationship with the other Black woman

fundraiser, Nora. Hillary and Nora met at another institution and their friendship continued. In

the new context, Hillary expressed the value of this friendship:

> I'm very glad to have Nora here at the same time, I think you need to find allies to be able
>
> to sometimes just, "Whew, oh my god." Yeah, yeah I think that's important. I feel like I

have many allies, I don't, I think that the sense of having people who fully understand is

more rare.

Hillary drew a distinction with Nora, relative to her peers and colleagues; Nora could "fully

understand" her raced experience of the workplace. This relationship helped to counter the

forced separation between hardships facing the Black community and the institutional Whiteness

of the roles they played as they could be mentally taxing and make it harder to perform well at

work (Cheeks, 2018).

> "Being the only," Hillary posited, could be an advantage at times because she was
"noticeable" within the organization. She explained,

> Truly like at [my last institution], if you're the young Black fundraiser, the one young
>
> Black fundraiser, people can't really forget Hillary. It's just Hillary. I think in that way, I
>
> think you have to learn to take it and not let it be a challenge to the extent that you can.
>
> 'Cause sometimes it's just going to be a challenge.

Ivy pinpointed another example in which she tended to be the only Black person, meeting a

donor for an appointment at a coffee shop. Providing directions on how to find her in room full

of fellow coffee drinkers, she explained,

> I have said before that I'm petite and have a short Afro or something like that. You know,
>
> kind of indicating without [saying my race] but then I also know that I will likely be the
>
> only Black person in the coffee shop or wherever we're meeting more than likely so that
>
> also makes it really easy.

"Being the only" Black woman could be stressful, both Hillary and Ivy explained separately, but

both found ways to turn it to their advantage and minimize risks.

Making White donors feel safe. For women of color, gender and race intersected to compound their marginalization and presented challenges, and some opportunities, not present for White women fundraisers. The raced experiences of women fundraisers were demonstrated in a variety of ways. All of the interviewees mentioned that the majority of their prospects and donors were White men. In this context, Madeline, a Hispanic woman fundraiser, acknowledged her ability to "pass as White" so that she could make [White] donors comfortable and selectively choose when to identify as Hispanic. Her ability to "pass as White" a privilege afforded to her and seen as an advantage in the fundraising profession.

While Madeline could essentially toggle between identities as needed, Hillary and Ivy, both Black women, found that connecting with White donors was a matter of language and culture. Ivy credited her upbringing as an adoptee in a White home. She declared, "White people love me." Ivy acknowledged, "My phone voice does not let people know that I am Black and so people do not expect me to be Black when I show up." Meaning she could speak in a way that was "comfortable for them and everything." Hillary's up-bring was different, born and raised within a Black family. She grew up to become a notorious code-switcher, understanding the different norms of behavior and language in Black and White communities. Cheeks (2018) described code-switching as embracing the dominant culture or vernacular among certain groups and switching to a more authentic self when around friends and family. Hillary found ways to use ability at work:

> I grew up in a home where Black English was something that was really respected and
> was kind of like almost our native language, so to speak. Which is not very different from
> the rest of language. It's just, I don't know. I believe very strongly that there is value in
> the language style that's, what's the word I'm looking for, lexicon of a culture I think is

important, but we were always like, when you're out in the world, my dad's always like, "Use the King's English." You know when to use both. And I don't know, I think that that's something I've always found kind of fun in some ways.

Ivy, Hillary, and Madeline all thought intentionally about how their identities as women of color shaped their interactions with White donors. They did the same when working with donors of color, but far less often given the majority of their prospects and donors were White.

Connecting with donors of color. Hillary articulated the benefit of "code-switching" as a strategy for working with donors. She saw her mastery of Black English as a way in which to connect with African American donors more quickly than her White colleagues could. The choice of language style is often strategic to mark solidarity with other Black people or to mark identity as a Black person in predominantly White environments (Scott, 2013). Hillary shared an example at a college football tailgate for Black alumni.

I think it was like you would go into a group of Black alums and it's like, "Are we all, oh, okay. You're good, okay you're in the club, you're good, you're good. You're really in the club, really in the club. Okay." I think it does help build those relationships.

Ivy's experience was different given her up-bringing with White adoptive parents, she never learned how to navigate Black culture: "I've had issues when I've met with minority, and especially Black donors, that I'm not who they expect because my culture doesn't reflect what they expect from me."

As a White person, it would be easy for me to over-simplify this experience and dismiss it as an intra-group, social speed bump. In fact, it represented a much larger tension within the Black community as cultural codes, linguistic styles, and communicative patterns signify a shared experience of the legacies of colonization, slavery, disenfranchisement, and

marginalization (Davis, 2015, p. 26). Ivy felt "friction" between her up-bringing and the

assumptions made of her because of her skin color and speech patterns:

> …there is still friction between the two sides. I would say it's much like a mixed
>
> individual who has that, where each side kind of wants you to claim them wholly but you
>
> can't, right. So I can't give up who raised me and who developed me but I also can't not
>
> represent the Black woman that I am. That's where me as the individual is difficult, and I
>
> find that in development because I appear in that lens and I do meet with Black donors
>
> that there may be friction there based on what their expectation of meeting with me and
>
> what that is.

More than ever before, universities are adopting programs to attract diverse donors, particularly

donors of color. Hillary found an advantage in being connected to the greater Black community

both in her university's community and across the country. These cultural and family ties granted

her access to donors that White fundraisers might not know:

> …I think the fact that I'm really tapped into the Black community here and kind of on the
>
> East Coast has been really helpful. Because I think that I'm able to sometimes reach
>
> donors that other people just don't really know and it's easier for me to say, "Oh yeah, my
>
> parents know them, I'll just call them, or like mom, can I call my mom my development
>
> assistant, mom can you tell me," or like she knows all the dirt. And not even dirt, just she
>
> knows all like really helpful actually background information on people, "Oh yeah, this
>
> person just sold their company, you should do this." And so I find that helpful.

Serving as diversity educator. As one of two Black fundraisers at her institution, Hillary

detailed the challenges of performing "diversity work" to educate her White colleagues about

how to work with racially diverse donors. This sort of work was often routine for her and,

undoubtedly, compounded by the fact she was a woman. Women are often asked to assist with administrative tasks, mentorship, and diversity efforts as they are viewed as women's work. Black women, in particular, often experienced being the spokesperson for the entire race (Hall et al., 2012). Ivy concurred with Hillary, questioning why she was always asked to lead diversity-related initiatives: "They're always like ah, you want to do diversity initiative and you're like why are you looking at me? You can do it, too. We can all do it. We all have responsibility to do it."

Compounded bias, danger, and stress. As Black women, Hillary and Ivy faced a unique set of biases and dangers that were compounded by the intersection of gender and race. Ivy shared her initial anxiety around driving into rural areas due to the fear of interrelated racism and sexism:

> That was kind of my first anxiety about this job, was like oh. I mean, I'm just going to go into some of these places where my location are, I'm going to be in [Midwestern state], driving around, no cellphone service. Who the heck knows and you just have to like oh ... But sometimes you're like this is kind of crazy like if you look at it from a broader lens, you're like this is kind of a crazy job, right? I'm literally just driving around, meeting people solo, and it's almost, in a crazy way, all men. I think that that is really interesting.

Ivy was parallel processing a fear of her own personal safety, concerned about men that may mistreat her or be violent, while also considering the risk of being pulled over by the police and what that would be mean for her as a Black person. Every day, Black Americans feel pressured to work their identities to reduce the likelihood that they will interact with the police (Carbado & Gulati, 2013). Ivy shared,

… I am in no man's land and have a different state ID or whatever. Thankfully I don't

have to worry about it that much because I don't get pulled over a lot, and it's not an issue

for me. Again, it's that being smart in the back of your mind you're thinking what if I get

that one officer that just is like complete jerk face about whatever. For the most part I

haven't been super late to meetings and I drive the speed limit, but it's just one of those

things that's in the back of your mind as drive from meeting to meeting. It's like this can

go a lot of different ways.

Hillary experienced similar a dynamic with a donor that was known to be both sexist and racist

(not to mention a xenophobe). Prior to meeting him, she was warned by another staff member

that he was "one who had made comments in the past about people's boobs." After one visit with

him, she was disturbed, irritated, offended, and very upset. She pushed back, set her limits, and

sought the buy-in of her supervisor. Ultimately, after a fairly long process, she was able to

minimize his role in the college and end his interactions with students.

Ivy and Hillary, both relatively young and new in the fundraising profession, described a

process of scanning, listening, and observing within their organizations to determine if it was

safe to be themselves and to question the actions of leadership and the broader institution. For

many Black women, the conclusions of ongoing evaluation processes were not positive ones,

leading them to engage in the strenuous practice called "shifting" (Hall et al., 2012). Shifting is

an internal process. It reflects a chipping away of the Black woman's sense of self, wholeness,

and centeredness that can have devastating effects (Hall et al., 2012, p. 216). Hillary and Ivy

both expressed a sense that they were rectifying two different worlds, a sign of shifting (Jones &

Shorter-Gooden, 2003).

While they may have developed strategies to cope with the divergence and convergence of their worlds, the roles they play in each, both fundraisers were cautious about their well-being. And, justifiably so, based on the research of scholar William Smith (2004). Smith coined the phrase racial battle fatigue to describe the health impact of racial discrimination and microaggressions faced by faculty on college campuses (Smith, 2004). The cumulative symptoms of racial battle fatigue can be both physiological and psychological and include, but are not limited to, tension headaches, elevated blood pressure, loss of appetite, inability to sleep, loss of self-confidence, and hypervigilance (Smith, 2004). At the intersection of race and gender, compounded with the stresses of major gift fundraising, Black women fundraisers seem to be likely candidates for racial battle fatigue. As noted by all the participants, fundraising organizations are concerned with fundraising results, not particularly concerned with the people that help them achieve those goals. For Black women, then, it is even more essential that they find supportive others that understand their experiences. Hillary and Ivy both pointed out that this can be quite difficult. Hall et al. (2012) affirmed that much of the support for Black women employees came from outside their organizations in the form of social support (female friends), spirituality, physical activity, and professional guidance.

Summary. Women of color fundraisers experienced fundraising differently than their White peers. Their experiences, at the intersection of race and gender, were often ignored by advancement organizations. Black women fundraisers grappled with "being the only" amongst their institution's development officers; used cultural code-switching to make White donors feel safe and engage Black donors; managed additional, un-paid responsibilities as diversity educators/experts, and compounded bias, danger, and stress during their fundraising travels. That these experiences are discussed infrequently in fundraising operations at predominantly White

institutions (PWIs) is unsurprising. PWIs have been found to centralize Whiteness and reinforce White privilege and power (Willie, 2003; Chancellor, 2019). The women fundraisers in this study helped to illuminate how that occurred in higher education fundraising through a set of contradictory standards reinforced by the organization and by the White donor majority.

Fundraiser Prototype

Women in our patriarchal society mostly work in organizations shaped by White, cisgender, heterosexual men and the system that benefits them (hooks, 2010). Power in masculinity and Whiteness are perpetuated in organizational structures, policies, and practices (Acker, 1999). The same is true for fundraising units at predominantly White institutions. Compared to other professions, however, women are asked to navigate a complicated, bureaucratic internal organization and perform for donors to solicit large sums of money. Their success is based on their ability to win over donors with the university's case, use persuasive strategies, personality, and yes, their visible and invisible identities. Women fundraisers may raise money for noble causes and their universities may be eloquent with their mission statements, sources of motivation, happiness, and job satisfaction, but women fundraisers are also surrounded by contradictions and tension that impact their health and well-being.

One way to understand these contradictions, paradoxes even, is to explore what women fundraisers said about their challenges and advantages working with donors and across their universities. Essentially, what are their sources of power and privilege and how do they wield, camouflage, or change behaviors to survive/succeed in the fundraising profession. Thankfully, intersectionality as a theoretical framework allowed for this sort of analysis. Intersectionality concerns itself with multiple inter-locking forms of oppression and scrutinizes power and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989, Collins & Bilge, 2016). It also allows for mapping larger societal

forces and context when considering the experiences of individuals (Crenshaw, 1989, Collins &

Bilge, 2016). Women at the intersection of various marginalized identities have different

experiences and face exponential levels of marginalization (Crenshaw, 1989, Collins & Bilge,

2016). In fundraising, difference was found to be a liability. Different from what standard? It's

dangerous to norm the experiences of a diverse group of women against a White patriarchal

standard, but that's exactly what is happening within the fundraising profession. The further

from this "prototype," if you will, the greater amount of tension, stress, and energy were required

to succeed. The fundraiser's performance became increasingly complicated. It could be

exhausting.

There are various ways to theorize about the "fundraiser prototype" at predominantly

White institutions. From the perspective of gendered organizational theory, Acker (1999)

challenged the assumption by organizational logic, structure, theory that there was a

"disembodied worker" for whom all organizations are designed. She explained,

> The abstract, bodiless worker, who occupies the abstract, gender-neutral job has no
>
> sexuality, emotionality, and procreation in organizational logic and organizational theory
>
> is an additional element that both obscures and helps to reproduce the underlying gender
>
> relations.

In reality, she argued, the bodiless workers were men and that organizational leadership,

structures, policies, and job expectations were defined by them, contributing to the reproduction

of their societal power (Acker, 1990). In the fundraising profession, now dominated by women,

changes in structure, job roles, time-off, and parental leave are occurring, but seem more like

band-aids rather than an overhaul of the system. Vivian, fundraiser and mother of two, explained,

I think that in a profession that's 90% woman-lead that the lifestyle of our jobs and the

work-life balance is not at all conducive to a good work-life balance environment for

women. Women have children. That is just what we do. That is what our bodies do. We

cannot help it that we are the sex that has to have the children. Do you know what I

mean? To further on our population.

Kelly, Ammons, Chermack, and Moen (2010) explained the expectations that clashed in

Vivian's account. White-collar workers, especially managers and professionals, are expected to

work long hours, arrange their responsibilities around their paid work, and be willing to relocate

or travel signaling devotion to one's work throughout adulthood (Kelly et al., 2010). These

expectations reinforce gender inequality because of differences in men's and women's family

work as well as different cultural expectations of mother and father (Kelly et al., 2010). Women,

and mothers in particular, are less likely to live up to these expectations of the "ideal worker

norm" and less likely to reap the economic rewards associated with being an ideal worker (Kelly

et al., 2010). Vivian expressed the balancing of paid work and unpaid work in the home:

You're hiring these women constantly, but we also are the ones, the go-to people, for

everything in our lives. We get sick. WE have babies. We get hospitalized. We break our

wrist, which also happened to me. Things happen. That's not taken into account in our

work life. It's "We're going to work you to the bone. If you can't work then uh-oh."

Clearly women were left out of the process of organizational design, leading to much of the

friction within the organization described by the two mothers in this research, Vivian and

Madeline.

To succeed in higher education fundraising, women simultaneously concerned

themselves with three realities: who they are and their sense of self, what the organization wants

them to be, and what prospective donors want them to be. The "fundraiser prototype" is an

amalgamation of the pressures, contradictions, biases, and forces five women fundraisers

experienced in the act of fundraising, in their organizations, and in society. It represents a

synthesis of the voices of the participants in this study and literature related to the experiences of

women.

The prototypical woman fundraiser. The prototypical woman fundraiser is White,

blonde, attractive, healthy, able-bodied, cisgender, and heterosexual. She's old enough to have

some experience, but looks younger than her age. She knows when to speak up and when not to.

She's a chameleon. She's assertive with donors when asking for donations, but strategically

silent when faced with comments and actions she may deem offensive. She's charming, always

polite, and a great listener. She may have a husband and kids, but only talks about them enough

to affirm her heterosexuality and compliance in the patriarchy. She's quick to smile and projects

confidence. She's persistent, but never annoying. She's knowledgeable about her university, but

not a know-it-all.

The prototypical woman fundraiser rarely lets her family obligations impact her work and

travel schedule. She keeps her head down, securing donations at a rapid and brutal pace with no

complaints. She works seamlessly with colleagues even in times of uncertainty and change.

She's never bogged down by institutional politics or the complexities of the academic

bureaucracy. With men in power, she shows deference and respect. With women leaders, she

never complains about balancing work and family or negative experiences with male donors.

After-all they made it to their mid-tier management positions, so why not her?

She's a woman, but fits in the organization like a man. In her theory of gendered

organizations, Acker (1990) posited that organizational roles were designed within men in mind.

The abstract worker, a man, and the man's body, its sexuality, minimal responsibility in procreation, and conventional control of emotions that pervades work and organizational processes (Acker, 1990). Thus, while the fundraising organization is structured for men, and even men's biology, the profession is now dominated by cisgender White women. There's reason to believe that women fundraisers are drawn to their work and are good at it because of their feminine characteristics (Titus-Becker, 2007).

She's White. White, cisgender women were found in most of the fundraising roles at predominantly White institutions. Vivian declared "being White" was an advantage, Madeline, a Hispanic woman, acknowledged that "passing as White" was a useful strategy, and Hillary and Ivy found ways to manage their Blackness to make White donors feel safe. Black women, in particular, are consistently contending with many negative racial stereotypes, which can obstruct their professional lives and connections with others (donors and colleagues) in the workplace (Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas, & Harrison, 2008).

She's married to a cisgender man and has children. If not, she's regularly affirming she that's what's expected of her. Women fundraisers received many questions about their family, husbands, and children from prospective donors. The women fundraisers used various tactics to conform their performances to these expectations. Vivian went as far as lying about her relationship status to avoid revealing she had a child out of wedlock. Hailey leaned heavily on relatable anecdotes about her niece and nephew to compensate for not having children.

She's old enough to have some experience, but looks younger than her age. Donors want to feel confident in the counsel that fundraisers provide them, especially when it relates to large sums of money and experience with age is one of those dimensions. For example, a youthful Hillary recalled an example of praise from one of her supervisors: "That's why it's

good that you dress so nicely because it helps you appear older." Being perceived as older

provided her with legitimacy. However, fundraising visits with older men required attention to

the male gaze. Many donor visits with older men felt "date-like" and the attraction of these men

to younger, "grand-daughter" type fundraisers meant youth was a premium.

     She's professionally attired and concerns herself with being attractive. Women

fundraisers reported paying attention to their apparel, hair, and professionalism. Hillary

described it as being "blazered" referring to her uniform of choice to project professionalism.

Vivian pointed out, "We don't have a lot of crazy, disheveled slobs on our staff." Madeline

expressed that she thinks regularly about "looks" and "attractiveness" in her work.

     She's healthy (or at least looks it) and is able-bodied. Vivian's experience battling

ovarian cancer begged the inclusion of this prototypical dimension. The reaction of donors to her

hair loss and illness intersecting with her identity as a mother caused an added layer of difficulty

in her fundraising practice. It also tested the limits of her organization's support of her and the

empathy of her supervisor, co-workers, and advancement leadership.

     She's well-mannered and assertive only in appropriate circumstances. Women are

perceived as caring, nurturing, and emotional. If a woman speaks up, she's angry, out of line, and

marginalized. Hailey shared that "you never want to come across rude as a development officer."

For instance, a male donor asked her if she needed a ride to her hotel, she shared,

    "But it is an awkward professional issue because you're like, "Oh, but I don't want to

    seem rude, and I don't want to burn a bridge or burn this relationship or somehow ruin

    that, or make him think that I'm not super nice" or whatever the case may be. So that was

    an interesting kind of delicate dance, and I ended up just making a reason [to leave]…

Inside the fundraising organization, a woman's emotions must be controlled too. After being

sexually harassed by her supervisor, Madeline, for fear of retaliation, hid her rage and

disappointment from her division's leadership.

       The prototype's impact. The fundraiser prototype is reflective of an impossible set of

standards women fundraisers experienced as they interacted with donors. None of the women

fundraisers in this study embodied the prototype, nor did they uniformly describe all the same

dimensions described previously. However, each fundraiser, in her own way, described pressures

to perform and conform to the contradictory standards it represented. Be assertive, but not too

assertive. Be pretty, but not too pretty. Be professional, but be relatable. Be married, but also

available. Women fundraisers expressed strategies to leverage aspects of their identities that

aligned with the prototype, while also describing ways to "chameleon" when they did not. The

fundraiser prototype loomed in the background of the experiences of women fundraisers.

Women actively decided to wield the power and privilege that conformity to these expectations

could mean in fundraising. In some instances, women re-appropriated gendered skills and

stereotypes in their fundraising relationships, drawing power from marginalization in the context

of their work. That process could, at times, generate increased stress and required intentional

time to plan "off-paper strategies" to improve the likelihood of fundraising success.

On-Paper and Off-Paper Strategies

       Women fundraisers recognized the complexity of relationships in the fundraising process.

Prior to meeting with prospective donors, women fundraisers engaged in extensive preparation.

They discussed and developed strategies to engage their assigned prospective donors with

supervisors and colleagues. Women fundraisers revealed an interesting dichotomy in the

strategies created, executed, and evaluated in the process of engaging prospective donors. Some

strategies were discussed openly their organizations, on-paper strategies, while others were left solely for the woman fundraiser to think through on her own or with a trusted peer in an informal setting, off-paper strategies. Fundraiser Vivian differentiated between the two sets of strategies in the context of a meeting with a prospective donor:

> First you spend the majority of the time actually preparing for the meeting. What are you going in talking about? Where are your next steps in this conversation? And all of that. Then I instantly think "Okay. Where are we meeting? Is this a daytime meeting or an evening meeting? What should I wear to reflect that? What are we doing? What drink should I order? I've met with this person before. I know that they drink very high-end scotch. I need to do my homework on what is a high-end scotch. Maybe I should order that too so that he's impressed by that" kind of thing. Yeah. I'm constantly thinking about that kind of stuff.

On-paper strategies centered on financial capacity, meeting locations, meeting materials, and talking points. They involved educating prospective donors, determining their passions and interests, engaging them with relevant campus units and departments, timing the "ask" for support, and stewarding the relationship moving forward. Off-paper strategies were centered on navigating the dynamics of power and privilege, considering how to reject or confirm to gender roles and racial stereotypes and to navigate perceptions of age and politics.

On-paper strategies. Many advancement professionals describe fundraising as both an art and a science (White, 2018). On the art side, fundraisers focus on building strong donor relationships, engaging board members, and other key volunteers (White, 2018). The art of fundraising recognizes the subjectivity of human experiences, philanthropic motivations, and creativity required by development officers. The science of fundraising focuses on donors,

markets, campaign trends, and capacity ratings, data and analytics play a major role in determining where to spend energy and time (White, 2018). There are predictive models for major gift fundraising, identifying prospective donors, and managing relationships with major gift prospects (Lindahl & Winship, 1994; Knowles & Gomes, 2009). Knowles and Gomes (2009) articulated a model that reflected both the art and science of major-gift decision-making and relationship-building. They proposed a six-stage process: (a) awareness and understanding, (b) interest and involvement, (c) desire to help, (d) trial gift, (e) information about what/how to give, and (f) major gift action.

Women fundraisers described similar process-oriented components of major gift fundraising. Many of them emphasized the need for preparation and several underscored the importance of a "strategy" to cultivate individual prospective donors. Women fundraisers were involved in researching the financial capacity of donors and assessing their relationships with the university. Women fundraisers traveled to different cities, markets, and regions to meet with prospective donors. They intentionally thought about their talking points for prospective donors depending on their majors, occupations, and affinities. Women fundraisers, in formal settings with supervisors and colleagues, regularly considered:

- What's the strategy for engaging this prospective donor?

- Where should I meet the prospective donor?

- What's the prospective donor's financial capacity?

- When is the right time to ask for a donation?

- What's the plan for the prospective donor meeting?

- What motivates the prospective donor?

- Should I pass the prospect to another fundraiser based on their interests, major, location?

Discussing these questions was a recurring part of the fundraising practice and occurred, as Hailey stated, "at the table" in fundraising organizations. However, in office hallways, at home, and with trusted peers, women fundraisers considered a host of other questions.

Off-paper strategies. Women fundraisers consciously and intentionally calculated the impact of other, more personal choices in the fundraising process. They considered what to wear, how to style their hair, whether to present themselves as mothers, wives, or daughters. If out for an evening meeting with a man, Vivian shared that she thought about her choice of scotch. Women fundraisers contemplated warnings from peers about male donors that openly discussed women's "boobs" and had a history of making sexist comments. If that happened in a meeting, what was the woman fundraiser's exit strategy or excuse? Was it worth telling him off or should she smile and exit quietly? Next time, should she take a colleague? These realities of fundraising and fundraising strategy ensured women fundraisers expressly thought about their own ethical, professional, and personal boundaries. The off-paper strategies employed by women fundraisers reflected an intentional effort to manage the power dynamics between themselves and prospective donors. For example, women of color fundraisers made strategic choices to enact their identities as women of color to relate to donors to differently. Vivian, a White woman fundraiser, explained her own thought process when working with donors of color:

> There's definitely this thing that happens. I don't really know how to explain it so I'll just sort of describe it. We obviously don't know from our portfolio and people's names and all that. It doesn't say "This donor is White." So I schedule lots of meetings with people not knowing if they are White or a person of color, but I always use LinkedIn or Facebook or something to try to learn about everybody I meet with.

When I see that somebody that I'm meeting with is a person of color, it immediately makes me a little bit intimidated. I wonder "How are they going to accept me as a White person? What are their thoughts on the diversity of [this institution]?" Is that a thing? Are they going to roll their eyes and say "Of course [the institution] sends a White person to meet with me"? You know what I mean?

There's all of these things that happen behind the scenes, these thoughts. That's just there. It's there when you walk in and sit down with somebody that doesn't look like you. There's always a tiny, tiny bit of uncomfortableness. Probably for both people. But, yeah, I wonder "Do I need to approach this person differently?"

Whether this is right or wrong I don't know, but I instantly think "Okay. They're African American. I need to make sure I'm bringing stuff about the Black Caucus at [my institution] and about the stuff we're doing in downtown [major city]." I try to guess what sort of information they may want from me based on their skin color.

Vivian revealed that she was proactively considering the race of prospective donors to tailor her cultivation strategies. She processed what her White privilege meant in the context of meetings with donors of color in comparison to White donors, and prepared herself accordingly. With donors of color, for instance, she made sure to take information that she perceived would be of interest to Black donors.

Women fundraisers expressed a host of "off-paper strategy" questions that emerged when developing plans to engage with prospective donors.

- What do I know about the prospect's religious and political beliefs?

- What are the prospect's views on the role of women in society?

- What are the prospect's views on campus diversity?

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- What's the racial identity of the prospect?

- What components of my personal story will be an advantage with this prospect?

- What components of my personal story will be a disadvantage?

- What should I wear and how will my outfit be perceived by the prospective donor?

- What personal details am I willing to share, change, or embellish?

Many of these questions can only be answered upon meeting a prospective donor in person. This required women fundraisers to adjust their performances quickly, ask probing questions, and reveal information about themselves judiciously. The intelligence gathered in the first meeting was critical to inform the longer-term cultivation strategy, both the on-paper and off-paper dimensions.

Summary

The pervasiveness of Whiteness and its impact on the fundraising process became abundantly clear by looking at the experiences of women fundraisers through the lens of intersectionality. In particular, Black women, at the intersection of race and gender, experienced a unique set of experiences and burdens. Collectively, women fundraisers described a set of expectations placed on them by society, advancement organizations, and donors. These contradictory standards depicted in the women's portraits and fundraiser prototype model underscored the pressure and challenge to conform, exploit, and minimize different aspects of their identities to succeed in fundraising. In the process, women fundraisers, with a keen sense of self-awareness, enacted both on-paper and off-paper strategies to advance donor relationships.

Chapter 7: Implications, Future Research, & Lasting Impression

This study provided a platform for five women in higher education fundraising to tell their stories and to explain, in their own words, how they navigated a traditionally White patriarchal system of philanthropy, interacted with fundraising prospects and donors, and experienced the fundraising profession. Through detailed individual portraits and thematic analysis, the study surfaced their lived experiences and actively centered their meaning to each woman fundraiser. The women fundraisers were motivated by the opportunity to "make a difference" in the lives of students and for their institutions. They drew strength from this sense of purpose while navigating the complexities of donor relationships and their advancement organizations. An intersectional lens helped to surface the unique experiences of women of color while simultaneously connecting all the women's experiences to the societal forces shaping perceptions of their power and privilege in fundraising practice. Women fundraisers actively leveraged their varying identities and "chameleoned" to succeed in fundraising. In this chapter, I re-visit the study's initial research questions, discuss the implications of the study's findings, and make recommendations for future research.

Addressing the Research Questions

This study was broadly designed to explore the lived experiences of women working as higher education fundraisers and to understand their perceptions of access to professional advancement (pay and promotion), to understand their perceived advantages and barriers in fundraising practice, and to explore race as a mediator of their experiences. Each woman's story was unique and reflected within their individual portraits. From several predominantly White, public institutions in the Midwest, women fundraisers explored the joys, triumphs, and challenges of working in the fundraising profession.

Women fundraisers expressed divergent views about pay discrepancies between women and men and opportunities for professional advancement. In some instances, women fundraisers pinpointed specific examples of men ascending the professional ladder more quickly with no perceived justification. They attributed this to men being more aggressive asking for promotions and pay increases. Madeline noted the irony that women fundraisers were comfortable asking for large sums of money for others, but not themselves. Another fundraiser noted, given her organization's relatively small size, that promotions were uncommon for anyone, regardless of gender. In this case, she saw the opportunity to take on new projects and help leaders envision the organization's future as her reward for strong performance.

The women fundraisers in this study expressed numerous advantages and barriers in fundraising. They included being a good listener, organized, curious, relatable, and adaptable. Women fundraisers described a "look" for fundraisers. One woman described it as "blazered" and professional, while another specifically considered the male gaze and whether or not her appearance appealed to the desires of straight, White men. A White fundraiser explicitly named her Whiteness as an advantage in fundraising and, similarly, a Latina woman shared that her ability to "pass as White" made her White donors feel safe. Women re-appropriated gendered roles such as subservient, dutiful daughter, and good listener. Women fundraisers that diverged from traditional stereotypes of women had to overcome those questions in order to proceed with fundraising discussions. For example, one middle-aged woman fundraiser without children had to relate to donor prospects with children by discussing her experiences with her niece and nephew.

Women fundraisers acknowledged that most of the donors and prospective donors they worked with were White. Confirming previous research, women fundraisers shared that most of

the major gift fundraisers at their institutions were White. The two Black women fundraisers could only identify one another Black woman fundraiser in their organizations. Race mattered in donor relationships, being the same race was an advantage. However, Ivy revealed, having the same racial identity did not mean there was necessarily a shared cultural experience. In her case, her identity as an adoptee into a White family meant she experienced dissonance with many Black donors when she didn't code-switch. Within advancement organizations, women of color, in particular Black women, were cautious about "surveying the landscape" to understand racial dynamics and to determine if they could risk speaking up about racial issues. Black women often dealt with the isolation of "being the only" minority and serving as diversity educator for the entire organization.

Implications

First and foremost, this research matters because women fundraisers matter. They should not be treated simply as cogs in an ever-expanding fundraising machine. The nuances of their experiences, their safety and well-being, and perspectives matter and should inform the decisions of higher education leaders, and matter just as much as the audacious fundraising goals on the horizon. This study explored the stories of five women fundraisers. The richness of their portraits underscored the complexity of the fundraising profession. It also encourages advancement leaders and fundraisers to appreciate one another's unique experiences. The study highlighted that there's no simple formula for fundraising success, that major gift fundraising is hardly a step-by-step process. It's subjective. It's messy. While the study's findings are hardly generalizable given the small sample, it generated some important questions and implications for colleges and universities, advancement organizations, and fundraisers:

- There is a need to challenge the "commodification" of women fundraisers.

- The lack of diversity in higher education fundraising is more than a recruitment problem.

- There is a need to critique the "off-paper" strategies in fundraising.

- Men in leadership and fundraising roles must step up for women's equality.

Value women fundraisers as people, not commodities. A great paradox existed across the stories of women fundraisers. In explicit and implicit ways within their respective organizations, women fundraisers were encouraged to be caring and listen, to develop meaningful relationships with prospective donors, to play the dutiful daughter, and to use their femininity. At the same time, they were pressured to reach fundraising goals in shortening time frames. An ever-accelerating drumbeat quickened the march from one fundraising campaign to the next. That pressure, for some, felt like their organizations and leadership only valued their contributions if they secured donations. Leaving women fundraisers to struggle with whether they were expected to be robots with Terminator-like focus on fundraising prospects or operate as emotionally intelligent institutional ambassadors working to improve the lives of others. Vivian explained,

> On a good day, where I'm feeling like the work that I'm doing is directly benefiting students and the good parts of the university, I would say that it's such a cool job. Especially doing it for my alma mater is really, really cool. On a bad day, where things are not going well or feeling a little icky, I do sometimes feel like I'm manipulating people into giving me their money.

Madeline and Vivian both used the vocabulary of sex work to describe their "bad days" in fundraising: being pimped out; feeling like a prostitute; and being asked, "Are you whoring yourself out?" by individuals outside the profession. These notions all derived from the

omnipresent patriarchal norm in our society that women's bodies aren't their own, that they are

owned by men and can be used as men see fit. Vivian's experience was exacerbated by her battle

with ovarian cancer during which she felt like a tool that broke to soon. It, in her estimation, was

easier for the organization to throw her away and buy a new tool than invest in her. In practice,

resolving this ongoing professional conflict left women fundraisers feeling somewhere in the

middle, excited for some of their work and disheartened by other aspects.

As discussed in the fundraising prototype model, contradictory expectations of women

fundraisers abound. The central lesson, I believe, is that women fundraisers must be valued as

people, not as commodities. Women fundraisers should be valued for their contributions and

compensated fairly. The system should be compatible with the realities of women's lives that

often, and still, includes a larger share of family responsibilities at home. It should be possible

for women to bring their whole selves to the workplace and when working with the donors. A

degree of "chameleoning" is inevitable, but women fundraisers shouldn't be expected to deceive

or hide, nor contort their beliefs or appearance so drastically that it causes them stress, anxiety,

or pain.

Advancement leaders should "practice what they preach" about the importance of

listening and connecting with donors, using those same skills with fundraising staff. Compassion

and empathy go a long way, especially when women fundraisers face illness or extenuating

circumstances. Knowing the pace of fundraising and intensity of fundraising campaigns, it is

even more essential for advancement leaders to make space to examine *how* the fundraising

process works in their organizations. If burn-out, unhappiness, stress, and anxiety are

commonplace, then fundraising practices must be examined to understand how the system's

demands are impacting the health and well-being of fundraisers. Women fundraisers cannot be

made to feel that their experiences, with sexual harassment, for example, are dismissed or are less important than the perceptions of White men - whether they are donors, prospects, or supervisors. Madeline's experience with sexual harassment by a supervisor led to intense pain, dissatisfaction, and stress. She described herself as a "bad actor" struggling to hide her feelings. Similarly, Vivian's cancer treatment revealed the impersonal and callous approach that can be employed when women are treated as commodities and fundraising goals reign supreme.

It may sound contrary to tie the worth of women fundraisers to salaries while advocating that they should not be treated like commodities, but salary parity with men is essential so women are not second-class citizens of the fundraising profession. It is time to evaluate salary data by gender, looking to see where men and women in similar positions receive different wages and correct the imbalance (Dale, 2017, p. 8). There should also be an evaluation of employee trajectories to leadership roles including a critical examination of where women meet road blocks. Increased succession planning and mentoring of women may help, but structural barriers and bias will undoubtedly need to be addressed (Dale, 2017). Stronger family leave and flex-time policies for both men and women are essential (Dale, 2017).

Across the fundraising profession, the donor bill of rights is a commonly accepted set of guidelines for the ethical treatment of donors (Association of Fundraising Professionals, 2019). It was created by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP), the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and the Giving Institute: Leading Consultants to Non-Profits (Association of Fundraising Professionals, 2019). Donors, the organizations agreed, have a right to be informed of the way the organization intended to use donated resources, to have access to financial statements, and to feel free to ask questions and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright

answers. What about fundraisers, in particular women fundraisers? What rights do they have in

the fundraising process? Based on this research and literature review, I propose expanding on

Carolyn Appleton's (2014) idea to create a fundraisers' bill of rights. Fundraisers should have a

baseline understanding of how they can be expected to be treated by the organization, leaders,

colleagues, prospects and donors. While the organization does not control prospects and donors,

it can refuse a gift if they donor's behavior runs counter to institutional values and priorities. A

woman fundraiser should have confidence that if a donor sexual harasses her, her organization

will have her back. No matter the donor's financial capacity. Relatedly, if the organization is

committed to diversity and inclusion, then prospects and donors that engage in racist behaviors

should not be tolerated. A woman fundraiser shouldn't have to weigh her professional worth to

the organization in relation to the value of a bigot's estate.

Lack of diversity & inclusion is more than a recruitment problem. Women

fundraisers confirmed what we know, there are very few people of color working as major gift

fundraisers. As a supervisor, Madeline felt pressure to hire people of color into entry level roles

and felt tokenized as a Hispanic woman. She could pass as White but could be counted by the

organization as a person of color when convenient. Hillary, too, grappled with the lack of women

of color in the profession. She even questioned whether it was wise to recruit more women of

color, noting that she hesitated to recruit fellow women of color to a profession that might be

unpleasant for them. Fundraising organizations within predominantly White institutions, it

seems, need to shift from solely focusing on recruiting more fundraisers of color to retaining the

fundraisers of color they have by challenging both systemic racism and the increased

marginalization of women at the intersection of gender and race. White people in fundraising and

leadership roles must be realistic about their racial privilege and use leverage it to re-shape their organizations and relationships with prospects and donors.

For Ivy and Hillary, Black women fundraisers, "shifting" was an everyday occurrence as they navigated relationships and organizations dominated by Whiteness. Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) explained the realities for Black women:

> Perhaps more than any other group of Americans, Black women are relentlessly pushed to serve and satisfy others and made to hide their true selves to placate White colleagues, Black men, and other segments of the community. They shift to accommodate differences in class as well as gender and ethnicity. From one moment to the next, they change their outward behavior, attitude, or tone, shifting "White," then shifting "Black" again, shifting "corporate," shifting "cool." (p. 7)

"Shifting" has physical and mental repercussions including disproportionately high rates of hypertension, obesity, and depressive symptoms among Black women (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). In fundraising work, all women fundraisers revealed a need to "chameleon" to meet the expectations of prospects and donors. For Black women fundraisers, one of the desired outcomes of "chameleoning" was to make White donors and prospects feel safe. Meaning, "shifting" was both an ongoing, mentally taxing personal reality and essential to success as a fundraiser with predominantly White prospects and donors. White colleagues and peers need to be aware that these complexities are ongoing realities for Black women and many women of color. For instance, when a Black women fundraiser says to her White male boss "I'm exhausted" after returning from a fundraising visit, it could be related to a whole set of racialized and gendered experiences the boss might not immediately recognize or even understand. I suspect the frequency, intensity, and negatives outcomes of "shifting" in fundraising at predominantly White

institutions is one of the main reasons why there are so few women of color in frontline

fundraising roles.

At least two things must occur simultaneously to de-center Whiteness and improve the

fundraising experience for women of color in PWIs. First, the organization must develop the

capacity to understand and value the unique experiences of women of color fundraisers. At a

basic level, this means listening to and believing women of color. Organizationally, it may

involve diversity and inclusion training opportunities that interrogate power and privilege

(Stanley-Anderson, 2017). Second, it requires a thorough examination of the organization's

fundraising efforts, including its prospect and donor pool, through the lens of diversity and

inclusion. In what ways is the organization benefitting from patriarchy and White supremacy?

It's not only the right thing to do, it's also the practical strategy as wealth shifts to a more diverse

community of prospects and donors (Stanley-Anderson, 2017).

Acknowledge and critique off-paper strategies. Women fundraisers utilized a variety

of strategies to cultivate relationships with prospects and donors. "On-paper strategies" centered

around a linear stage model that emphasized moving a prospect from general awareness of the

organization to making a major gift with deeper knowledge and involvement. These strategies

were openly discussed in meetings with supervisors and in portfolio reviews, and often

documented in a formal way by the organization. Conversely, "off-paper strategies" were

enacted by individual fundraisers and rarely documented by fundraising organizations. These

strategies involved managing issues of race, age, gender and gender roles, family, politics,

fundraiser identities, and physical appearance in the process of cultivating prospects and donors.

Off-paper strategies were deemed by women fundraisers as equally important to more

formal activities, but discussed far less often with supervisors. They were often reflected upon

individually or with trusted peers. This is problematic for organizations and advancement leaders

for several reasons. Off-paper strategies were highly subjective, depending on the interaction of

the individual fundraiser's characteristics and the attributes of prospective donors. Like a

chemical reaction, there is potential volatility. For example, Vivian had serious concerns about

revealing that she had a child with her boyfriend to prospective donors for fear that it would

confuse them and impede the fundraising relationship. It was easier to hide this detail and say

she was married. Given the pervasiveness of traditional gender roles, she found it to be the best

way. (This by no means judgement. I have deceived many donors about my sexuality using

gender neutral pronouns to discuss my husband.) The questions for advancement organizations

and leaders are as follows: Do we care if development officers misrepresent personal details to

donors? Does it matter or is that really just the way it is? Is the pressure to perform from the

organization the root cause or is it simply the donor's beliefs? I suspect advancement

organizations and leaders would prefer to create an environment in which fundraisers can have

open, honest dialogues about power and privilege, the ethical boundaries of "everyday acting,"

and the "chameleoning" process. For all involved, surfacing issues and concerns about

interactions with donors, working through individual and organizational strategies, seems to

make more sense for the safety and well-being of women fundraisers than letting the realities of

their experience go unspoken.

Men, it's time to be accomplices. This research focused on the experiences of women

fundraisers, their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives. The five women fundraisers grappled with

the inequality between men and women in the fundraising workplace. They underscored the

imbalance of power between, collectively, the community of women that make up the majority

of front-line fundraisers and a relatively small number of men in leadership roles. Women

fundraisers also highlighted the power differential between them and, though times are changing, the majority of prospects and donors that are White, heterosexual, cisgender men. Vivian, for example, found a way to manipulate her image to impact how men saw her and, in the process, re-claimed her power to use it to her advantage as an aggressive fundraiser. Others were more subtle in the way they adapted their performances to manage the perceptions of and power differential with men in leadership or as prospects. In the experiences of women fundraisers, re-appropriating patriarchal gender roles was essentially a necessity in the fundraising system at predominantly White institutions. Women of color, in particular, needed to consider their identities as women and as person of color to understand how they would be perceived by prospective donors in order to succeed.

To dismantle the patriarchal system and its damaging effects on people of all genders, requires all people to work together. Most men never think about patriarchy or what it means, how it is created and sustained (hooks, 2010). Women, too, play a role in perpetuating and sustaining patriarchal culture (hooks, 2010). Out of sense of necessity and obligation, women fundraisers leave many men unchallenged to succeed in fundraising. For instance, Hailey noted an offhanded comment made by an older, male donor, and she dismissed it as "an offhand comment that he doesn't mean to be offensive." Hillary emphasized that fundraising was a numbers game in that women fundraisers met with so many people, so many men, that it was inevitable to come across sexual harassment or other inappropriate behavior. Madeline downplayed a donor that made her feel "gross" by jokingly referring to him as the "Silver Fox" and dismissing his need for attention from her. Vivian highlighted the prevalence of the belief that "boys will be boys":

That is just how middle-aged White men behave. That's how they've always been allowed

to behave and I don't even think that they know that they're doing it or that it's

inappropriate a lot of the time.

She explained further:

Being a woman in my 30s, it's not just meeting with donors. It's life in general. Older

men look at you. They treat you sort of like a little granddaughter, but also they flirt with

you a little bit. That's sort of what the dynamic is. I've never been in a position where I'm

like "Whoa, whoa, whoa. You're being inappropriate. I understand that that's kind of the

culture with that age of man."

Women fundraisers recognized when they were making excuses for men. They viewed the

patriarchal actions and beliefs of prospective donors of all genders as their realities. Men,

conversely, were oblivious to how their actions reinforced patriarchal culture.

As a White man in fundraising, I will take this moment to use my own privilege and say

it explicitly: men in fundraising, time's up! In the experiences of women fundraisers, there are

numerous lessons for men in leadership and fundraising roles about how to confront patriarchal

culture both within their organizations and while working with prospects and donors. To end

patriarchy we must challenge both its psychological and its concrete manifestations in daily life

(hooks, 2010, p. 5). The same is true of White supremacy. Men in fundraising must acknowledge

their roles in perpetuating inequality and take risks to support women. Men, especially White

men, must use their privilege to call out peers and donors that act in inappropriate, sexist, and

racist ways. And, men in fundraising must take up the fight for structural change to ensure equal

pay and opportunities for women.

Men in fundraising, it is essential to reflect on the times you have perpetuated the "boys will be boys" mentality. If you are downplaying or flat-out dismissing the experiences of women fundraisers, that has to stop. Being a passive friend or ally to women fundraisers is not enough. It's time to co-conspire, to be an accomplice in the fight for women's equality and racial justice to improve advancement organizations and the institutions they serve (Love, 2019). An accomplice takes up the fight as their own to fight back or forward together becoming complicit in a struggle toward liberation (Powell & Kelly, 2017). Accomplices can begin by moving their gaze inward and reflecting on their own intentions, motivations, and emotions, with a radically honest view of how they are engaging in this work and why (Powell & Kelly, 2017, p. 59).

An important starting point for men in fundraising that wish to be accomplices is to understand the experiences of women in their organizations. This research gives you a starting point, a framework, to make sense of those experiences. It hopefully empowers you to ask good questions to better understand women's motivations for fundraising and how they navigate donor relationships and advancement organizations. Accomplices engage in continuous, critical investigations of race, self, and society (Powell & Kelly, 2017, p. 59). Understanding women's experiences, men in fundraising must use their various platforms to share stories with donors, prospects, colleagues, and supervisors to the move the conversation forward (Powell & Kelly, 2017). Men in fundraising have an opportunity to take direct action to inquire about pay discrepancies and question promotions tinged with the pervasiveness of sexism and racism. Men in leadership roles can call for an analysis of these disparities and make change. The first step is taking on the mentality of an accomplice. To the "silver fox" donor: your time's up too. It's highly doubtful you are reading a dissertation about the experiences of women in higher

education fundraising. If you are, good for you, become an accomplice in the fight for women's equality and racial justice.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study generated a number of interesting and meaningful questions to consider for future research. The theory of intersectionality empowered me to magnify and uplift the experiences of women of color and, specifically, the stories of Black women. It would be beneficial for the profession to encourage additional research on Black women fundraisers representing a diversity of ages and professional fundraising roles. The two Black women participants in this study were both early in their careers. They were evaluating their surroundings and cautious about their raced experiences. It would be enlightening to know why senior Black women fundraisers left the profession. This could inform advancement leaders as they work to improve the recruitment and retention of fundraisers of color. Similarly, there's an opportunity to push the boundaries of our understanding of LGBTQ fundraisers, in particular transgender, non-binary, and genderqueer fundraisers.

In addition to more qualitative research on the experiences of fundraisers, it would be very helpful for a large-scale analysis of salary and promotion trends along the lines of gender, race, and ethnicity. Pieces of that data exist, but it was difficult to isolate specific, current details about the ways in which inequality manifests in the fundraising profession. At the organizational level, too, additional research would benefit the profession and inform organizational-level strategies to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. The field of organizational development offers a promising direction for this research (De Welde & Stepnick, 2015). De Welde and Stepnick (2015) recommended pushing beyond suggesting interpersonal solutions and proposed action at organizational and extra-organizational levels of colleges and

universities). A case of study of a fundraising organization with a serious focus on combatting gender inequality and racism would be beneficial to advancement leaders, scholars, and practitioners.

Summary

Women in fundraising saw the importance of their work in providing scholarships to students and other financial resources to their respective institutions. The central purpose to "make a difference" grounded the women fundraisers. It should be reinforced by organizational leaders as an authentic connection to the larger of mission of public higher education. An over-emphasis on fundraising goals and performance was viewed as stifling happiness and general well-being of the women interviewed. A lack of empathy surrounding significant life events such as pregnancy, child-care, or serious illness, was offered as a serious critique of higher education fundraising leadership. Advancement leaders must practice empathy and demonstrate a commitment to people over fundraising dollars.

Much of the responsibility for change falls on men in advancement leadership roles. Discussions about sexual harassment and racism, and how deal with them, cannot only occur in hall-way conversations between colleagues. Addressing these issues honestly and transparently must be part of the organization's strategy and culture. Women in leadership, too, must challenge their own biases and critically examine their roles in replicating sexism and racism in the workplace. Because these women "made it through" some of these same challenges, doesn't mean that they are required rites of passage for other women fundraisers. Dismantling and changing patriarchal culture is work that men and women must do together (hooks, 2010, p. 2). Advancement organizations and women fundraisers would benefit from frank conversations about the issues women face during new hire orientations and professional development

programs. Leaders should articulate a clear policy that women will not be penalized if they report sexual harassment or racist behaviors. And leaders should make it clear to prospective donors and donors that such behavior is unacceptable and, if they don't agree, be unafraid to refuse a gift, no matter the size.

Lasting Impression

Madeline, Hillary, Hailey, Ivy, and Vivian's experiences in higher education fundraising were complex and nuanced. In addition to substantial expertise in fundraising and knowledge of their universities, their personal characteristics, beliefs, and values were leveraged to build relationships with prospective donors. These five fundraisers were adept at assessing first impressions of prospective donors, intuitively and explicitly leveraging their own power and privilege to connect more quickly on a personal level. They crafted their performances considering both their own individualized ethical boundaries and the perceptions and beliefs of prospects and donors.

Madeline, Hillary, Hailey, Ivy, and Vivian clearly enjoyed working with people, being engaged in improving their universities, and increasing opportunities for students. While challenging at times, they found joy, humor, and excitement in their everyday interactions with donors and colleagues. Tension emerged when they questioned or tested the system around them. Madeline's sexual harassment by a supervisor was dismissed. Vivian's illness revealed the inadequacies of the organization to care for its most vulnerable. Hillary carefully scanned the organization to determine if she could challenge racism. She was unsure. Hailey wrestled with her path to professional growth and whether that was possible in her relatively small organization. Ivy was unable to locate a mentor of color within her organization and she struggled to find a meaningful professional network of women of color fundraisers in her broader

community. There's clearly work to be done to improve the ways in which advancement organizations support women fundraisers.

This project was a labor of love, critique and story-telling. It was born of a desire to improve a profession that is only becoming increasingly important as public university funding declines, increases in tuition are challenged, and competition for prospective students grows. The lasting impression of this work crystalized for me during my interview with Vivian and was reinforced by my other conversations and reflection. Her powerful story revealed the dehumanization and commodification that can occur in a profession in which your worth is often measured clearly and explicitly by how much money you raised last fiscal year. As Madeline questioned, "You didn't think I was worth enough?" There's a cautionary tale here for the organizations and leaders that become so quick to measure, judge, and quantify solely by the dollars raised. It has to matter *how* we are doing the fundraising, not just how much we raise for our universities. And it's essential to have forthright discussions about the realities of fundraising experience to improve the lives of women fundraisers and, I argue, succeed as advancement organizations. For women of color, in particular, ignoring the taxing effects of "shifting" can be damaging to their health and well-being resulting in racial battle fatigue.

I believe that my theoretical and methodological choices mattered greatly in crafting authentic depictions of the experiences of women fundraisers. This is a testament to the power of intersectionality theory, developed by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and further explored by Patricia Hill Collins. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's pioneering portraiture approach gave me license to blend aesthetics and empiricism, and to build a community with the women fundraisers I interviewed. They became research partners and friends, and welcomed me as an accomplice in the fight for women's equality and combatting racism.

It seems fitting to close by reflecting on two thoughts from Black feminist, bell hooks. First, I struggled throughout this project to describe the set of forces shaping each woman's power and privilege as well as their experiences of the profession and of life. That was until I found my way to bell hooks. She speaks about the "imperialist, capitalist, White supremacist patriarchy" to describe the power structure underlying the social order. It situates these forces as an interlocking system shaping our reality and, I believe, most accurately reflects the forces that have shaped fundraising and philanthropy. I would add "ableist" to the list. Second, interviewing Madeline, Hillary, Hailey, Ivy, and Vivian was a tremendous amount of fun. We laughed frequently and sometimes loudly. I initially dismissed this as a function of our outgoing fundraising personas until Hillary, giving advice to Black women in fundraising, shared, "Have a sense of humor, be ready to laugh, or else you'll be ready to look at people very sideways sometimes." hooks (2015) took the importance of humor even further:

> We cannot have a meaningful revolution without humor. Every time we see the left or any group trying to move forward politically in a radical way, when they're humorless, they fail. Humor is essential to the integrative balance that we need to deal with diversity and difference and the building of community.

The changes we need to make in the fundraising profession will require intensity, focus, and persistence. They will require candid conversations about race, gender and gender roles, pay and promotion opportunities. It will require a collaborative effort amongst people of all genders. But, as hooks (2015) reminds us, we can't forget to laugh or we won't get anywhere. Madeline, Hillary, Hailey, Ivy, and Vivian will have no problem leading the way.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

EMU

Daniel Mathis <dmathis@emich.edu>

UHSRC-FY17-18-223 - Initial: Initial - Exempt
1 message

human.subjects@emich.edu <human.subjects@emich.edu>   Wed, Jan 17, 2018 at 4:25 PM
To: dmathis@emich.edu, rreyno15@emich.edu

Jan 17, 2018 4:25 PM EST

Daniel Mathis
Leadership and Counsel, Users loaded with unmatched Organization affiliation.

Re: Exempt - Initial - UHSRC-FY17-18-223 Negotiating Philanthropy, Power, and Privilege: An Examination of the Lived Experiences of Women in Higher Education Fundraising

Dear Dr. Daniel Mathis:

The Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee has rendered the decision below for Negotiating Philanthropy, Power, and Privilege: An Examination of the Lived Experiences of Women in Higher Education Fundraising. You may begin your research.

Decision: Exempt

Selected Category: Category 2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Renewals: Exempt studies do not need to be renewed. When the project is completed, please contact human.subjects@emich.edu.

Modifications: Any plan to alter the study design or any study documents must be reviewed to determine if the Exempt decision changes. You must submit a modification request application in Cayuse IRB and await a decision prior to implementation.

Problems: Any deviations from the study protocol, unanticipated problems, adverse events, subject complaints, or other problems that may affect the risk to human subjects must be reported to the UHSRC. Complete an incident report in Cayuse IRB.

Follow-up: Please contact the UHSRC when your project is complete.

Please contact human.subjects@emich.edu with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Interview Purpose:

The purpose of this interview is to explore the lived experiences of women working in higher education fundraising and to understand how power and privilege affect their professional practice.

Script:

Thank you for speaking with me today regarding your experiences as a fundraiser in higher education. This interview will help inform my dissertation research project focused on the experiences of women in higher education fundraising. We have scheduled two hours for this interview in which I will ask questions regarding your fundraising experience, identity, and professional advancement. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or wish to stop the interview, please let me know. Your participation is completely voluntary. Please review the consent form and, if you wish to proceed, provide your signature.

The content of this interview will be kept confidential and your name will be removed from all materials associated with this dissertation. I will ask a set of standard questions, but will also generate new questions based on our discussion.

It is possible that some of what you disclose may be quite personal and/or critical of this organization, its leadership, and donors. If for any reason you need additional resources to process these experiences beyond the scope of the interview, I have included the contact information for Human Resources & the Counseling Center on the consent agreement.

Furthermore, you will have the opportunity to review the dissertation's findings and the representation of your interview responses. If, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable about how your responses are presented or worry that their inclusion presents professional and/or personal risks, they will be removed or altered in consultation with you.

BEING A FUNDRAISER

- How did you get into higher education fundraising?

- What is it like to be a fundraiser in higher education?

- Describe an ideal higher education fundraiser.

IDENTITY/INTERSECTIONALITY

- How do you describe your personal identity?

- What's it like to be a woman in fundraising?

- In what ways do you see your identity influencing your fundraising practice?

PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT, ADVANTAGES & BARRIERS

- What challenges have you faced in your fundraising career?

- What advantages do you perceive you have in fundraising?

Script:

Thank you for meeting with me today. As you reflect on the interview today, please don't hesitate to reach out and share any additional thoughts and ideas.

During data analysis and as I interpret the information collected, I will need to engage in "member checking" to ensure I am representing the findings in an authentic way and capturing your meaning in a way that makes sense to you. I will be in touch in the coming months.

I am happy to share my completed dissertation with you in the future. Thank you for your willingness to partner with me on this project.

Appendix C

Consent Agreement

Brief Information:

I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at Eastern Michigan University. My dissertation is an interview-based qualitative research study in which I explore the experiences of women in higher education fundraising. The study involves one recorded interview of approximately two hours in which I will ask you questions about your perceptions and experiences as a woman in higher education fundraising and, with your agreement, may request to meet with you for a second short follow-up interview for further clarification. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and you will be assured of complete confidentiality if you choose to participate.

For information about your rights as a participant in research, you can contact the Eastern Michigan University Office of Research Compliance at 734-487-3090 or human.subjects@emich.edu

Benefits of the Project:

This research project will enhance awareness of the experiences of women in higher education fundraising amongst institutional advancement leaders and scholars. The benefits to you as a participant may be an opportunity to reflect on your own perceptions about and experiences in higher education fundraising as you describe them in the interview process.

Dissemination of Results:

Findings from the research project will be shared as part of my dissertation to fulfill the requirements of the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at Eastern Michigan University. The research findings may be shared in conference presentations and articles.

If you would like to participate in the research study, please read and sign the consent form on the following page.

Resources:

Human Resources – (517) 353-4434
Counseling Center – (517) 355-8270

Consent Form

I agree to participate in one or more interviews conducted by Daniel Mathis Spadafore as part of a dissertation research project about the experiences of women in higher education fundraising. I understand that the interview(s) will last approximately two hours and that the interview(s) will focus on my perceptions and experiences in fundraising. I will be asked questions about the challenges I face in my profession, career path and growth, interactions with donors and colleagues and any other issues that I would like to discuss about fundraising in higher education.

I understand that my participation in the interview(s) is completely voluntary; that I may choose not to answer certain questions, and that I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time with no negative consequences, no penalty, nor loss of benefits. I further understand that my confidentiality will be protected at all times and that a fictitious name will be assigned to me after the interview(s) are completed, and that any identifying characteristics about me or my family will be deleted.

The transcripts of the interview tapes will be assigned a numerical code and kept in a locked filing cabinet in the interviewer's home and in a password protected computer file. I further understand that if I decide at any point after the interview that I do not wish to participate, my tapes and transcripts will be destroyed and no material will be used from the interviews.

Findings may be disseminated through conference presentations, journal articles, and other forums.

Interview Respondent's Name: _____

Signature: _____   Date: _____

For further questions or concerns, please contact:

Daniel Mathis Spadafore
Doctoral Student in Educational Leadership
Tel: (734) 777-7621
dmathis@emich.edu

OR contact Daniel's Dissertation Committee Chair:
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