The Vermont Connection

January 2006

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Alumni can play an important role in supporting diversity and diverse populations on campus, yet underrepresented communities such as women, people of color, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) alumni have been largely untapped by alumni and development offices. Proper training, sustained commitment, and culturally-specific targeted stewardship cannot only be financially rewarding, but can also work to combat myths, stereotypes and prejudice. This article will discuss the challenges and benefits involved in using stewardship to target these communities, followed by recommendations for practice and areas of further research.

Considering the research that explores marketing and recruitment strategies in higher education (Albrighton & Thomas, 2001; Dennis, 1998), the value of diversity in higher education (Green, 1989; Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004; Valverde & Castenell, Jr., 1998), and issues that impact retention (Braxton, 2000; Yorke & Longden, 2004), it is surprising that there is not more literature specifically discussing the role of active alumni in the recruitment and retention of diverse students. Stewardship of underrepresented communities should be a key component in any plan of recruitment and retention.

Women, people of color, and the LGBT community represent a significant financial incentive for development offices. This article will discuss the challenges and benefits involved in using stewardship to target these communities, and conclude with recommendations for practice and areas of further research.

Stewardship

Generally, stewardship refers to "taking good care of resources entrusted to one" (Lih, 2003, p. 8). In an environmental context, humans are stewards of the earth; in an organizational context, stewardship refers to management's duty to properly utilize and develop the talents of the members; and in a religious context, Christians are stewards of God's gifts, as established in Genesis. Stewardship is most often used in religious contexts as it serves to underscore an individual and organization's accountability and responsibility to safeguard the "material, intellectual, emotional and human resources that are entrusted to us"(Lih, p. 8). We are "always accountable to somebody, either a higher authority (civil, military and/or spiritual) or people who work for us or are served by us" (Lih, p. 8).

In the context of higher education, stewardship is a term most often used in departments dealing with alumni relations and development. Stewardship in higher education refers to a university's responsibility to properly utilize and develop the financial strength and giving patterns of its alumni. Stewardship can be as simple as making a personal phone call or sending a birthday or thank you card (Lowenstein, 1997). Other typical examples of stewardship include offering VIP tickets, providing discounts to sporting events or campus speakers, and organizing class reunions and networking opportunities. One common example of stewardship that occurs before students become alumni is the creation of mentoring and networking initiatives typically run through or in conjunction with the career services office. Another example would be creating class councils (junior class, senior class, etc.) that organize programs and activities.

Rhodes & Reichenbach (1997) discuss the key role that alumni volunteers and donors play in a successful capital campaign. At Cornell University, for example, a successful campaign depended on leadership from no less than seven volunteer committees made up of alumni and friends, including the Campaign Advisory Group, the Reunion Committees, Class Officers Council, and the Regional Campaign Committees. The campaign exceeded all of its goals, but the authors add, "Perhaps the greatest benefits to the institution came from the expanded partnership, greater commitment, and heightened expectations of the university community, and especially, the alumni body" (p. 22). A diverse representation of cultures and backgrounds on these committees could potentially open up access to an even larger donor base and creative fundraising strategies.

Alumni also play an important role in institutional evaluation and assessment. Kuh (2005) recommends making alumni surveys a strong component in quality assurance and institutional improvement. These surveys need to

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be distributed to people with a diverse amount of voices and perspectives in order to produce relevant and generalizable results.

<p align="center">Underrepresented Communities</p>

The term "underrepresented communities" can be broadly defined to include first-generation students, persons with disabilities, women, people of color, and LGBT people. This article discusses women, people of color, and LGBT students as examples of underrepresented groups. Women and people of color are commonly accepted categories of underrepresented populations in higher education. Although many of the barriers to higher education that women and people of color face are similarly faced by LGBT students, including economic and institutional discrimination, research that treats the LGBT community as an underrepresented population is limited (United States Student Association, 2005). Those cultural and social factors, combined with the lack of research, merit the inclusion of LGBT community as underrepresented.

Despite similar characteristics shared by underrepresented constituencies, there are specific barriers and assumptions that cause each to remain untapped by alumni and development offices. These barriers, as well as the qualities within each group that make finding ways of offering stewardship worthwhile, will now be discussed.

People of Color
For various reasons, development offices may be discouraged from attempting to raise money amongst alumni/ae of color. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have also traditionally experienced difficulty raising money amongst their alumni/ae. In 1998, for example, 31-64% of alumni/ae of Ivy League colleges gave money to their alma mater. In contrast, only 15% of alumnae gave money to Spelman College. Howard University has had as low as 5% alumni/ae giving rate ("Solid Alumni Base," 2000). The low rates of alumni gifts could be related to employment discrimination and income disparity still faced by many African-American graduates, resulting in employment in low-level and low-wage jobs. Another reason for the low giving rate could be due to a lack of tradition of giving back to their alma mater, whereas such tradition may exist in a White family with a legacy at an institution ("Alumni," 2001).

That is not to say that the Black community does not donate. Giving patterns of Black Americans indicate that they traditionally give more to their churches than to higher education ("Alumni," 2000). Howard University capitalized on the religious tradition in the Black community by holding several successful alumni fundraisers in 2000 with the theme of "Those who have been blessed have an obligation to give back" ("Solid Alumni Base," 2000).

Prejudice, bias, and suspicion may also impact the charitable track record of communities of color. Capek (n.d.) presents data from a study that suggests Blacks and Latinos are not asked to give at the same rate as the rest of the population, although findings show they are even more likely to give when asked than other groups. She quotes one of the respondents in her research saying Latino donors "mistrust 'organized' philanthropy, particularly community foundations, because…'they don't know me nor do they take the time to ask'" (p. 3).

Women
Women have good reason to be suspicious of development professionals as well. Capek (n.d.) found that many myths about the giving patterns of women persist. These myths include: "Women don't know how to manage money," "Women need to get involved in organizations they care about," "Women give more than men," or "Women give less than men" (p. 1). These myths typically impact decisions made in crafting campaigns targeting women's issues and therefore support gender stereotypes. The truth, Capek said, was "that none of the existing data prove conclusively that women give more–or that women give less. Based on the survey data available, gender is not a reliable predictor of philanthropic behavior; nor does it account for significant differences among givers" (p. 3). In a study of male and female alumni/ae contributions to a large public university over a fifteen-year period, researchers found "a lack of statistically significant difference between gift-giving women and men" (p. 5).

Although Capek points out that men and women have similar patterns of giving, she acknowledges that more research needs to be conducted to explore what impact, if any, gender income disparities and underrepresentation of women in higher education have on the size of the gifts received. Capek and other researchers did find data that indicated women's incomes are on the rise. When UCLA development officers realized data from national studies indicated rising incomes among women, they created a Women and Philanthropy organization targeting women alumnae. The group's primary mission was to fundraise. Each of its members raised $25,000 (Young, 1997).

LGBT Community
A similar group comprised of LGBT alumni/ae could prove just as financially rewarding. A 2003 study of gay and lesbian consumers revealed that 37% are college graduates and one-fifth have graduate degrees (Garber, 2004). Additionally, the study reported that gay consumers are coming out at an early age. According to this study, 16% of respondents said they came out between the ages of 12-17 and 45% between the ages of 18-24. This means that if gay college students are not arriving on campus already out of the closet, they will most likely be coming out of the closet by the time they graduate (Garber, 2004).

A survey conducted by the Institute for Gay & Lesbian Strategic Studies (I-GLSS) and the Working Group on Funding Lesbian & Gay Issues (1998) indicates that individuals who are out are more likely to donate to LGBT causes than closeted individuals. The survey also indicates that on average LGBT donors contributed 2.5% of their personal income to nonprofit organizations, compared to 2.2% national average (I-GLSS, 1998).

The I-GLSS and consumer survey suggest that not only does the LGBT community possess significant spending power, but it also represents a significant funding source for LGBT causes and issues. However, social stigma may make development offices reluctant to tap this community. Cunningham (2004) identifies three major funding barriers faced by LGBT organizations: a low comfort level with the issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, fear of backlash, and a general lack of knowledge and understanding of the LGBT community and its issues. It is important to point out that funding to support underrepresented communities does not need to come specifically from these communities. Development offices can instead create campaigns or funds that are earmarked for initiatives that support diversity in general and solicit contributions and participation from all alumni/ae. This strategy offers an opportunity to continue encouraging alumni/ae to appreciate and provide ways to support cultural difference in their campus community. Donors may be more likely to support LGBT issues if they are a part of a comprehensive campaign that promotes diversity.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

Alumni/ae can play an important role in supporting diversity and diverse populations on campus, yet underrepresented communities such as women, people of color, and LGBT alumni have been largely untapped by alumni and development offices. The following recommendations illustrate how proper training, sustained commitment, and culturally-specific targeted stewardship cannot only be financially rewarding, but can combat myths, stereotypes, and prejudice as well.

Foster Alumni-in-Training
Pumerantz (2004) explores the concept of "alumni-in-training," a philosophical approach that treats students as if they are already alumni/ae. One example of using an alumni-in-training approach is creating student alumni/ae associations that include and use current students to solicit during an annual fund campaign. This approach would provide an opportunity for cross-collaboration between academic affairs, student affairs and institutional development offices to support student retention and foster increased alumni/ae giving.

Start Early
The alumni-in-training philosophy underscores the idea that stewardship of underrepresented groups should begin with strong campus support while they are students. Any efforts made by development and alumni offices will be hindered by an on-campus climate that is not supportive of diverse populations. If underrepresented students do not feel supported before graduation, they will lack interest in remaining

connected to the institution afterward. Development professionals should work to ensure that the student's first contact with the development office is not after they have graduated.

Collaborate
Development professionals can gain access to these students by collaborating with student affairs professionals who work within a specific community. In many cases, the director of the office that serves a particular community (Women's Center, LGBT Center, etc.) must also conduct fundraising, which ranges from soliciting co-sponsorships to writing grants or appealing to private donors (Kasper, 2004; Ritchie & Banning, 2001; Sanlo, 2002). Additionally David A. Bruns, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, noted that the staff within those offices have often developed informal networks or knowledge of successful alumni/ae who have not been approached by the development office (personal communication, October 31, 2005).

Provide a Variety of Opportunities
As Rhodes & Reichenbach (1997) reveal in their Cornell example, alumni/ae can continue to strengthen the campus community through financial contribution or in other ways. If recent graduates or graduates of low financial means are provided with meaningful interactions and roles, they can remain involved until they can afford to support the institution monetarily.

In addition, events and programs offer a way of including underrepresented groups in the solicitation or production of revenue without necessarily being the sources of those funds. Gaier (2003) stresses the importance of providing opportunities for alumni/ae to participate in events and programs sponsored by the alumni association. Alumni offices may be able to use those informal networks to generate support and additional volunteers from their communities.

Make a Long-Term Investment
Development professionals do not operate in a vacuum. There are certain social forces such as discrimination, educational and income disparities, and privilege that development professionals cannot dismantle by themselves. Many forces in society are often needed in order to remove the barriers which make a community underrepresented in higher education. However, awareness and open acknowledgement of the community's unique needs can serve to combat greater social issues. Cultivating strong relationships with underrepresented communities may mean long-term investment with low financial returns. On the other hand, Lowenstein (1997) likened stewardship to pulling a bowstring and sending many arrows into the air. One never knows where or when an arrow will hit a bull's-eye.

Target Affinity Groups
Pumerantz (2004) suggests that targeted appeals to alumni/ae of color may be valuable. "Ethnicity …may be a significant factor that could impact the outcomes of campus fund raising efforts" (p. 3). Ultimately, he admits his dissertation only "skims the edge of this issue" and recommends further research into the relationship between ethnicity and alumni/ae giving (p. 3). However, the use of affinity groups, groups organized around a common identity, is notable when discussing stewardship of underrepresented groups. While they are enrolled in college, students are encouraged and offered ample opportunity to organize themselves in affinity groups. Student organizations exist for a wide variety of niche interests or identities. However, when they become alumni/ae, they are asked to solely identify with the institution as a whole. Pumerantz reasons that this approach is flawed, saying, "It seems evident that a structure that supports the affinity-based relationships of alumni would be more effective" (p. 115). He recommends the alumni-in-training approach as a way to allow alumni/ae to continue claiming allegiance to a particular program or cohort when they are writing checks back to their alma mater.

Future Research

Research into the relation of particular student organization involvement to alumni/ae giving may provide a way of capturing and including underrepresented communities in the data. Gaier (2003) was surprised to find "participating in certain organizations (e.g., Greek system) during the undergraduate experience may result in different forms or levels of alumni involvement" (p. 95). In his research, he found the samples of non-

Caucasian alumni/ae in his study were too small to make any reliable statistical analyses or comparison. However, if he sorted or classified for organizational involvement, he may have been able to include those alumni/ae who were lost.

Although this article focuses on outreach to women, people of color, and LGBT communities, further research can be conducted into other communities that are traditionally untapped by alumni and development offices. Specifically, it would be helpful to understand the actual or potential giving patterns of these particular communities, such as first-generation students or the differently abled. Lastly, more culturally appropriate research is needed concerning specific practices for each target community.

Conclusion

The reliance of public institutions on external or private sources of income has never been more pronounced. "Without exception, public institutions of higher education are now, and will most assuredly continue to be, required to seek external support for an ever-growing share of their total budgets" (Pumerantz, 2004, p. xv). State and federal governments are beginning to severely restrict and drastically cut their endowment of education. In such a climate, alumni/ae become an ever-more important source of financial support, making a discussion about the ways that higher education approaches alumni/ae giving and stewardship especially relevant. As development officers strive to maximize the financial potential of alumni/ae and student affairs professionals work to support increasingly diverse student bodies, collaboration is essential. This research is meant to provide a basic introduction to the ways stewardship of underrepresented communities can be a part of an overall development strategy as well as a component of retention efforts.

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