

THE DONORS NEXT DOOR

RAISING FUNDS FROM FACULTY FOR
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

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As a result of waning institutional support and charitable foundation interest, teaching and learning centers and other faculty development units may have little choice but to turn to private donors. Although faculty and staff giving is an important part of higher education fundraising, considering faculty as potential donors for faculty development centers is uncommon. In this chapter, we provide information on faculty and staff giving, review the related literature, share findings from a new study on faculty major donors, and provide a series of recommendations, stemming from the literature and the major donor study, to inform fundraising efforts by faculty development centers.

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A quick review of the headlines in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Education* yields results such as: “Financing for Higher Education Shifts to Private Sector Worldwide,” “State Budgets Weaken, and May Get Worse,” “NSF Budget Would Remain Flat Under House Bill, Despite Earlier Promises,” “Where Universities Can Be Cut,” and

“Welcome, Now Start Slashing.” Although financial struggles are not new to institutions of higher education (Thelin, 2004), the recent recession has created additional financial pressures, resulting in cuts to university budgets as well as to funding organizations such as the National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation (Basken, 2011).

In recent years, institutions like the University of California at Berkeley and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have hired management consultants to analyze their university budgets and identify potential savings. The consultants’ findings revealed that major savings could occur if cuts were made in administration (Kiley, 2011). Similarly, other institutions are working to protect the academic core and trim the fat by focusing on cuts to administrative units. Despite the importance of teaching centers and other faculty development units, it is not unusual for them to be subject to major fiscal cuts or to function with small budgets (Gray & Hohnstreiter, 2010).

In the past, faculty development units were able to secure funding from external sources such as the Bush, Ford, and Lilly foundations (Ouellet, 2010). In some cases, however, financial support from foundations has also been on the decline (Preston, 2010), and in other cases, the focus of these foundations has shifted from funding teaching innovations (“Bush Foundation Announces New Priorities,” 2008). In Dotson and Bernstein’s (2010) comparison of teaching centers at large state universities, 82 percent of the centers in their study reported that 90 percent or more of their total budgets were from institutional sources.

It is evident that teaching and learning centers and other faculty development units may have little choice but to turn to alternate sources of support, most prominently private donors. Faculty and staff donors make significant contributions to higher education (Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, 2011). Faculty and staff fundraising therefore should be a foundational component of faculty development center strategies for building support.

In this chapter we provide information on faculty and staff giving, review the related literature, share findings from a new study on faculty major donors, and provide a series of recommendations, based on the literature and study of major donors to inform fundraising efforts by faculty development centers.

Data on Faculty and Staff Giving

Employee giving campaigns are a regular occurrence at many colleges and universities (March, 2005), as is calculating faculty and staff

participation within larger campuswide campaigns. Faculty, staff, and retirees are known to give millions of dollars back to their departments, schools, and campuses. A series of examples from multiyear and single-year campaigns, as well as from public and private institutions, is revealing in its scope and significance. At the University of Minnesota, eleven thousand faculty, staff, and retirees gave \$67 million during the Campaign for Minnesota (Palmer, 2004), and at Penn State they gave \$41 million during an equivalent campaign (Penn State University, 2010). In the mid-1990s, the University of Georgia reported that faculty and staff gave \$4.4 million during their annual campaign, accounting for just over 10 percent of all giving that year. Furthermore, over 73 percent of their faculty and staff contributed to this campaign (Bailey, 1994). Around that same time, 91 percent of Wittenberg University employees contributed to its annual campaign (Bailey, 1994). At our institution, Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis, hundreds of retired and current faculty and staff gave \$2.4 million during fiscal year 2011.

Data drawn from the Voluntary Support for Education survey show that at research and doctoral institutions, 18.5 percent of faculty and staff gave, with an average total per institution of \$685,997; at master's institutions, 24.5 percent gave, with an institutional average of \$103,418; at baccalaureate institutions, 26.3 percent gave, with an institutional total average of \$64,716; and at associate institutions, 43.7 percent gave, averaging \$27,793 per institution (Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, 2011).

From these examples and figures, it is evident that faculty and staff giving varies by institutional type and that it has been an important source of support for all colleges and universities for at least two decades. What we know about which faculty and staff give, and where, how, and why, comes from only a handful of studies focused at the individual, unit, and institutional levels. Although the majority of the studies we review here are not focused specifically on giving to faculty development units, it is important to understand the motivations for giving and conditions under which faculty and staff give. This information can then underpin any fundraising efforts made by those in faculty development.

Literature on Faculty and Staff Giving

A mid-1990s study explored who gives and why through a survey of 183 full-time faculty at a research university, a comprehensive university, and a liberal arts college (Holland, 1997; Holland & Miller, 1999). Senior, tenured faculty who were not alumni of the institution were the most

likely to give. The top giving motives, as selected from a list of thirty options, were altruism, social responsibility to the institution, self-fulfillment, professional attitude, conviction, and institutional loyalty; of these, institutional loyalty was most prevalent. Although there were institutional differences in the motivating factors, especially between the research university and the other institutions, differences in motives by faculty rank, tenure status, or length of service were muted. In response to questions about preferred means of solicitation before e-mail was common, mailed correspondence was deemed important, and telephone calls and visits from fundraising professionals were not.

When staff were added into the equation in a mixed-method study conducted at Bowling Green State University, giving was most likely among those in full-time administrative professional positions than among full-time faculty, part-time faculty, or hourly staff (Knight, 2004). Those who had worked at the institution longer, received higher salaries, gave previously, lived in the town of Bowling Green, or were alumni of the university were also more likely to be current donors. The qualitative portion of the study consisted of twelve faculty interviews in which the participants posited that the top reasons others gave were allegiance, especially at the department and school levels, and connectivity. Barriers were thought to include poor morale, lack of community spirit, low salaries, limited resources, and philosophical concerns related to fundraising priorities and employee campaigns.

March (2005) surveyed chief advancement officers at 164 public universities, seeking institutional differences in faculty and staff philanthropy. Institutions with fewer than one thousand students and Carnegie-classified baccalaureate institutions had higher levels of giving. Furthermore, faculty members at midwestern institutions were more likely to give than elsewhere. Department chairs and faculty and staff campaign cochairs were deemed the most effective solicitors of funds. March concluded that faculty and staff were more likely to restrict their giving rather than rely on the institution to determine how to use their contributions, a finding that mirrors overall trends in philanthropic giving to higher education (McClintock, 2000).

A recent study focused on giving by faculty and staff in two annual on-campus campaigns, but rather than examining giving to the institution, both campaigns encouraged employees to support external nonprofit organizations (Agypt, Christensen, & Nesbit, 2011). One campaign aimed at raising funds for local arts organizations and the other for human and social services. The longitudinal study at a large public university explored various individual characteristics in relation to donations between 2001

and 2008. Higher salaries were found to be a constant in predicting giving, while longer lengths of service were an accurate predictor only in one of the two campaigns. Neither sex nor age was found to have significant effects on giving. When the two campaigns were looked at together, hourly staff gave more money than did full professors, assistant professors, and salaried staff; however, their giving was somewhat consistent with that of associate professors. Although the giving was external, these findings may have some value for those raising money for internal purposes.

Two case studies, one of a fundraising model developed by a faculty development center (Gray & Hohnstreiter, 2010) and the other of a redesign of a faculty and staff campaign at Southern Utah University (Cardon, 2009), show how practitioners are working to create and refine fundraising programs and provide information on the results of their efforts. In 2008, Southern Utah sought to increase the number of employees donating to the campaign. Through a well-designed program that involved training faculty and staff to cochair the campaign, engaging faculty and staff to serve on the steering committee, and designing specific fundraising materials for employees, Southern Utah saw its participation rate increase from 27 percent to 85 percent. The effectiveness of friendly competition, importance of promoting departmental fundraising successes, ability to build on the momentum of campus events, centrality of methods for gift designation, and importance of employee giving for external fundraising efforts are among the lessons learned in the study (Cardon, 2009).

In a 2010 POD session, Gray and Hohnstreiter presented a fundraising strategy fine-tuned by one teaching center over five years that included development of a case for support and a fundraising plan built around mail appeals, one-on-one solicitations, pitches at workshops, and special events. In their subsequent chapter in 2011 in *To Improve the Academy*, the researchers revealed that teaching center “alumni”—university faculty—with ten or more hours of participation a year in center programs were not only the first to be asked for support but 30 percent of them became donors (Hohnstreiter & Gray, 2011). In 2010, the center had one hundred faculty and community donors who gave \$30,000, an amount that constituted nearly one-third of the center’s budget. The largest commitments came from two community members who together pledged more than \$300,000 in future support. Nevertheless, they conclude, “Your center’s most natural donors are its participants, but they don’t know how to give, and they haven’t been asked” (Hohnstreiter & Gray, 2011, p. 274). The case that Hohnstreiter and Gray presented shows that as at the institutional level, faculty are an important population of potential donors for faculty development centers.

These studies give faculty developers important baseline information about faculty and staff donors and a window on strategies for increasing giving from this population. In response to the lack of literature on faculty and staff giving, particularly qualitative literature and literature focusing on those who make larger gifts, one of us interviewed faculty who are major donors. This study, which took place in one school within a single institution, can help faculty developers delineate the best prospects for large gifts and, building on the prior research, determine how a culture of giving can be fostered among our faculty and staff that will support both annual giving and major gift fundraising.

A Study of Faculty Major Donors

To learn more about faculty donors, one of us interviewed six women and four men who were senior and retired faculty and administrators who had made significant gifts and pledges directed toward a large school with more than three hundred faculty and staff on an urban university established in the latter half of the twentieth century. The individuals considered for this study had made at least one gift or bequest at or above twenty-five thousand dollars (and therefore they were deemed by the institution to be major gift donors). In the institutional review board–approved study, interviews were conducted until the point of saturation, when additional conversations produced little new knowledge (Kvale, 1996). Participants took part in sixty- to ninety-minute, digitally recorded interviews and answered questions about their professional histories, institutional experiences, and philanthropic activities. A semistructured protocol created a conversational exchange, which encouraged openness by the participants and allowed interviewer flexibility (Burgess, 1984; Seidman, 2006). A cross-case analysis served as the method for examining the interviews collectively and in a strategic manner (Eisenhardt, 2002). A series of analytical techniques including clustering, categorizing, reduction, and drawing comparisons generated the set of common characteristics among the faculty donors that follows. An illustrative quote highlighting one or more aspect follows each characteristic. Reviewing these results, from the lens of a faculty developer provides insight on the motivations for giving and circumstances under which faculty made major donations:

1. All of the participants had worked between fifteen and forty years at their institution and had successful and fulfilling careers. This created a meaningful institutional bond and sense of gratitude and responsibility.

“Except for my family of origin, I’ve [probably] been in a relationship with [the university] longer than just about anyone else.”

2. The participants were deeply involved in the life of the university throughout their careers, serving on committees, participating in institutional governance, creating new programs, and helping to shape the institution’s development.

“I’ve always been a strong believer that wherever you are, you participate in what makes it go.”

3. All participants served in administrative positions at one time or another, at one level or another. Although not all of them enjoyed these appointments, the positions gave them a perspective beyond individual disciplines and some experience with fundraising and philanthropy.

“I think that the faculty who have made larger gifts are primarily citizens of the campus more than of the discipline, who see the potential of [the university] to make a difference, who see the potential of gifts to make a difference. And, I think it’s because most of them have had assignments that have taken them outside of their department.”

4. The professional and personal lives of the participants were integrated through friendships, interests that spanned work and home, and spousal connections to higher education. Distinctions were rarely drawn between work activities and private life.

“We always feel like we’re ambassadors for the university even when we’re out in other social venues. So, frequently, a lot of events or things we might attend, you meet people where you can find there are things you could do with them or some person you could get in contact with at the university that would help. So, I tend to carry my business cards with me for most of those occasions.”

5. The donors believed in the importance of higher education as a public good. Most shared an interest in scholarship with a community connection and were civically engaged, incorporating this commitment into their teaching, research, and service activities.

“It was my idea when the [state] bicentennial came along that our department do something for the bicentennial. So, I thought we should do a book [on the state]. I got all my department people, Latin American people as well as European people, to do

some [state] topics. . . . That book came out and was made into a [traveling] exhibit.”

6. Most of the participants were generous annual donors who realized that philanthropy could perpetuate their professional values. Though they gave outside of the university, higher education emerged as their philanthropic priority.

“[Philanthropy] gives you the feeling that you’re doing something longer lasting for the campus and the program. It’s satisfying.”

7. The philanthropy of colleagues and mentors inspired the participants to make significant gifts of their own. The behaviors of colleagues and friends led the faculty to consider whether they could and should do something similar. They wished also to inspire philanthropy in others.

“I don’t want to suggest that some of the faculty who gave similar size gifts were persuaded by what we did but I think that we all had similar kinds of thoughts about what will this represent and what will this say to other people who are potential donors.”

Reviewing these results from the lens of a faculty developer provides insight into the motivations for giving and circumstances under which faculty made major donations. Although this study did not focus specifically on faculty who gave to teaching centers or faculty development units, the findings reveal patterns about those who give, which are similar to what studies presented in the review of literature found. As a result, this information can be used to navigate the fairly uncharted waters of fundraising for faculty development units.

The recommendations in the next section are directed to faculty developers interested in raising funds from faculty and staff. These recommendations are based on our review of the common themes in the literature, as well as the seven characteristics of faculty who are major donors. Because a goal of fundraising is to inspire annual givers to become major donors, it makes sense to apply lessons learned from major donors to overall approaches to cultivating giving prospects and stewarding annual supporters.

Recommendations: Building a Culture of Giving

Why should a teaching center director, dean of faculties, or associate dean for academic and faculty affairs engage in fundraising? Eckert and

Pollack (2000) point out several reasons that faculty and administrators should be central players in this effort. Faculty development leaders are in the best position to articulate the vision for the faculty development unit. A development officer would be hard-pressed to convey the enthusiasm of faculty developers for the work or to as effectively delineate the value of philanthropic resources in advancing student learning. Faculty donors want to know that their gifts will support, improve, and shape educational efforts, and faculty developers are best positioned to tell them how this will happen. Moreover, while fundraising personnel would likely be thought of as administrators with only loose ties to academic work, faculty developers would be more likely to be considered faculty peers and thus could inspire colleagues to give in a different manner. This is not to say that faculty developers should not partner with development professionals in these efforts. Indeed the subsequent set of recommendations begins with building connections to existing fundraising efforts. The main lesson here, however, is that fundraising efforts for faculty development programming and needs will be more successful when faculty developers are involved.

The following framework focuses on developing strategies within faculty development units for creating cultures of giving and inspiring major gifts. Many of these strategies apply to both faculty outside the center and to those with even closer affiliations—your own staff, leadership, advisory board, and faculty fellows, all of them among your faculty and staff prospects.

Explore Existing Institutional Fundraising Resources and Programs

Start by finding out what support for fundraising is available to you through your college or university. A development professional may already be charged with faculty and staff fundraising; if not, someone who specializes in annual gift fundraising may be able to work with you to build a strategy for your center. Whether or not you can obtain this kind of support, faculty development leaders must understand institutional policy and practice when it comes to fundraising. Therefore, getting to know your local development officer or institutional foundation is critical.

It is likely that your institution already holds an annual campaign to raise money from its own faculty and staff, and your center staff may be participants. Piggybacking on an existing initiative with an established time line, materials, and approach will make getting started much less daunting and may inspire additional giving by your colleagues in the

center, as well as developing new donors from elsewhere on campus. Gifts from these campaigns are likely to be made close to home, so reminding faculty about your center as their home for professional development may go a long way.

Seek and Provide Education About Philanthropy

Faculty developers who decide to become fundraisers (if even modestly so) should consider getting training about fundraising or perusing some of the many books, articles, and electronic resources on the subject. Opportunities may be available through home institutions or local fundraising organizations for those who want to understand the basic tenets of the field. For example, the Center for Philanthropy at Indiana University offers the Fund Raising School that teaches “the historical and philanthropic context, the current issues, and the art and science of fundraising and philanthropy” (Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 2011). The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) provides trainings and materials specifically directed at fundraising for higher education (<http://www.case.org/>), and your institution may well already be a CASE member. A range of articles about faculty and staff giving, as well as many about partnering with faculty and staff on fundraising efforts, has also appeared in the organization’s magazine, *Currents*.

Training and self-driven education will not only prepare faculty developers to raise money; it will develop their own philanthropic awareness. Furthermore, once they are trained, this new knowledge can be passed on to faculty, and as we learned from the major donors, some experience with philanthropy is a plus when it comes to learning to make gifts of your own. The average faculty member likely lacks a strong understanding—and even may have big misconceptions—about fundraising practices, administrative processes, and avenues for giving. Education can take place through planned internal communications as well as informal individual conversations.

Develop Giving Opportunities

Regularly asking faculty to give will establish philanthropy within the life of the center. Although mini-campaigns for a teaching center require significant effort, it is for these most personal purposes that faculty may make their first gifts or will be persuaded to make more than an obligatory contribution. For many teaching centers, non-tenure-track and part-time

faculty who do a majority of the teaching are the most likely to benefit from the services provided. As a result, they may see the teaching center as a unit that closely matches their interests and may be inclined to give—even if they do not give elsewhere.

By providing opportunities for faculty and staff to give, centers can get over what is typically the largest hurdle in raising funds: failing to ask for support. Creating a community of giving will allow interested faculty to come together in support of shared priorities and self-determined initiatives.

Promote Involvement in Fundraising Among Center Staff and Faculty Users

From helping set campaign priorities to involvement with external fundraising efforts, involving center staff, faculty users, or advisory board members in the fundraising process will educate everyone involved about fundraising. Moreover, developing fundraising friends and allies among the faculty will expand your circle of influence and have a ripple effect. Inviting faculty to serve as volunteers during annual fundraising efforts may lead to more gifts and inspire the faculty to begin making gifts of their own. Once a faculty member has made a significant gift, involve that person in your fundraising activities because that gift will likely inspire others to contribute. As Collins (2000) writes, “If faculty and staff members want to help out, don’t limit their involvement to signing appeal letters or soliciting each other. Let them get to know your prospects by including them in campaign events and activities. . . . They can be your most valuable partners in making the case for support” (p. 6).

Make Philanthropy Visible

The ways in which philanthropy enhances the work of your center is a story worth telling again and again. Hosting special events or providing print or electronic venues for recognition of faculty and staff support, for example, can provide others with models of giving. Writing about the activities of one teaching center, Hohnstreiter and Gray (2011) explain how an online and classroom wall of honor, fundraising pitches at workshops, luncheons for campus and community prospects, and a yearly gala all provide venues for sharing stories of philanthropy and its outcomes.

As a faculty developer, you have credibility in the eyes of faculty donors. Eckert and Pollack (2000) discuss faculty members’ (and faculty developers’) firsthand knowledge of what is happening in the classroom and

awareness of the challenges faculty and students face as significant assets in fundraising: “As a result, faculty will listen to you, even when you’re just chatting with them at a cocktail party. A few well-considered remarks could lead you into the process of cultivating the next gift to your department” (p. 12).

Treat All Faculty—and Center Staff—as Potential Donors

Faculty development professionals tend to form strong and lasting relationships with faculty and administrators on campus. Individuals with a relationship with the potential donor should be the ones to ask for support (Eckert & Pollack, 2000). Think about the faculty member who was asked to create an online program and turned to your center for ongoing support; the senior faculty member who continues to win teaching awards year after year; the department chair who sought counsel and support to become an inspiring leader. Center staff should also be considered among those with the greatest proclivity to give; indeed, gifts by center leadership and staff may be among the first you seek.

A casual interaction in passing with someone may have an effect that you do not expect, particularly if that person has been quietly considering making a gift. Formal and informal conversations and behavior can influence these important decisions. Pay attention to important events in the professional lives of your faculty because these may set the time frame for their gifts. Remember that everyone may be a future donor.

When Fundraising for Major Gifts, Begin with the Right People

Let the literature be your guide when it comes to identifying possible major donors. As Hohnstreiter and Gray (2011) suggest, begin your annual fundraising efforts by soliciting faculty who are regular participants in your faculty development offerings and seeking funds from your colleagues in the center. The same principle holds for major donors: those with an established relationship to your center are more likely to give because the opportunity is closely related to their work and values. Identify faculty who are currently, or have in the past, served as administrators. As discussed in the major donor study and as in Knight’s (2004) research, faculty who hold administrative appointments are more likely to understand the big picture, realize the importance of fundraising, and be willing to contribute at higher levels. Furthermore, ongoing annual gifts most often precede larger gifts; therefore, it is wise to consider those who become consistent donors to your program as your best prospects

for large gifts. Remember that faculty with many years on campus as well as those with strong local connections to the community may be more philanthropically inclined. Consider what you know about where your faculty and staff prospects are in life, including their current financial obligations (for example, their children may be in college, or their partner may be out of work) and capacity; your development professional can help out with this information. But as the annual giving data (Agypt et al., 2011; Holland & Miller, 1999) demonstrate, do not be too hasty in eliminating prospects based solely on what you know about their salaries or professorial rank. Call on fundraising staff when you are ready to review your list of potential donors, discuss next steps, and plan individual strategies.

Conclusion

Applying the seven principles strategically and intentionally can lead to a cohort of faculty and staff donors who give year after year, become significant supporters, and emerge as strong partners in fundraising. Moreover, as you gain financial support, you will also be strengthening your professional ties to those you serve and building their investment, philanthropic and intellectual, in the work of your center. Fundraising is not easy, and it requires a commitment of time and resources. It is, however, an undertaking with a significant return, and looking for the faculty and staff donors next door is the best place to begin.

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